I. Early attempts to frame a hermeneutic for Genesis One
   A. The Christian belief in God's two books of revelation: nature (general) and Scripture (special) (see Psalm 19)
   B. Augustine (354-430), On the Literal Interpretation of Genesis
      1. His attempt to reconcile Greek natural philosophy (science) with Genesis
      2. His hermeneutical approach in cases of apparent conflict: If natural philosophers are not agreed on a controversial point of science, then Scripture should be accepted literally, if they are agreed, and appear to controvert Scripture, then Scripture ought to be interpreted figuratively.
   C. Galileo (1564-1642), Letter to the Grand Duchess Christina
      1. Geocentrism: the interpretation of scriptural passages that seem to require a belief that Earth is the centre of the universe
      2. The Bible teaches us how to go to heaven, not how the heavens go (i.e., Scripture should never be cited as an authority in science).
   D. John Calvin (1509-64)
      1. The principle of accommodation: God limits himself in divine revelation to human understanding by the use of phenomenological language of nature.
      2. In Genesis 1 Moser provides a popular (i.e., non-scientific) picture of Creation

II. Debate over the age of the earth
   A. Physical theology (theories of the earth that weave together science and biblical chronology)
   B. Geological history in the 17th-18th c., diluvium, catastrophism
   C. The challenge to a young Earth in the 18th and 19th centuries
      1. Biodiversity of exploration: It becomes hard to fit all animal species in the ark.
      2. Charles Lyell and the theory of uniformitarian geology (1830-33)
      3. The rapid acceptance of uniformitarianism. Why was there no strong Christian opposition? Scriptural (Mosaic) v. professional geologists
      4. The Flood, confined to a local area, ceased to be an organising principle.

III. Current issues
   A. Distinction between primary (supernatural) and secondary (natural) causation. Does Genesis 1 intend to teach science or theology?
   B. Does Scripture always require a literal interpretation? Dispensationalism (yes), historic Protestantism (no). Emphasis on accommodation is crucial here.
   C. To what extent does Genesis 1 need to be harmonised with modern science?
      1. Examples of the gap theory; the day-age theory; the revelatory-day theory
      2. Concordian (the framework hypothesis): parallels in order of Creation
      3. Genesis 1 as a metaphorical account written for popular understanding that teaches theology, not science, and does not require harmonising with science.
   D. Retrieving the Augustinian formula among evangelicals
      1. Do we permit scientific theories have some cheek on biblical interpretation? Augustine believed that doing so prevented the Bible from falling into diacritic when it appeared to contradict a scientifically-demonstrated preposition because God's two books of revelation must be in harmony
      2. Protestant exegetes have since the 17th c. granted scientists the freedom to study nature without condemning their views as biblically unacceptable, which has encouraged scientific investigation (James Moore).
The Literary Genre of
Genesis, Chapter One

Bruce K. Waltke

Preface

The creation account of Genesis 1:1-2:3 needs desperately to be heard today is the social-science classroom as a viable option in the marketplace of world religions. This biblical creation story provides the foundation for the biblical world and life views. In view of God, human creation, and each other, truths that the Spirit uses to convict sinners of sin, righteousness, and judgment and to point to Jesus Christ as the Saviour. Biblical values and ethics are based on this account.

Unfortunately, instead of contending that this message be heard in the social science classroom as an option to the pagan worldview that are coming more and more to the fore in our modern world, some Christians, led by "scientific creationists," are contending boisterously that it be taught in the hard science classroom. This is due to their conviction that the biblical story and scientific data must and can be harmonized. But, however, the attempt to harmonize the scientific data with a straightforward reading of Genesis is not credible, and as a result the Bible's message is rejected as a viable option in the marketplace of competing world and life views.

Whether Genesis 1:1-2:3 should be taught in the social sciences or in the hard sciences depends on its literary place. If it is a scientific and/or straightforward historical account, then it is the latter; if not, then Christians should be contending that it be given a hearing in the former. In this paper I will attempt to identify its genre with the hope that it will encourage Christians, and especially Christian educators, to see that students again hear this famous story and rightly understand it in the classroom.

Genesis identification depends on a text's context and function. George Brookes' reason: "The determination of literary genres is assumed by most literary people more of the time; however, when the debate is heard, it is necessary to be precise lest we miss the writer's point, for genre and intention often go hand in hand." In light of the biblical text's literary genre, the reader will be in a better position to decide the compatibility or incompatibility of this creation account with scientific theories of origin.

Part I: Its Purpose

A
n author's purpose is determined in part by his perception of his audience's need. Genesis 1:1-2:3 was originally addressed to Israel in the Wilderness of Sinai c. (400 B.C. Both Psalm 8, by David c. 1000 B.C., and Psalm 104, a poetical against the Hymn of Aton dated c. 1350 B.C., transform our prosaic narrative into poetry and set it to music. Empirical evidence confirms the tradition that our text goes back to Moses, the charismatic founder of Israel.

Through Moses' mediation, Israel, after its Exo-
dus from Egypt, entered into covenant with their Saviour, "the LORD," who promised to reward his faithful worshippers with life and threatened the disobedient with death. To undergird this covenant an inspired Moses gave Israel this creation story, allowing only the God, Creator of heaven and earth, who alone deserves worship, trust and obedience.

Pagan mythology about the creation is ever-threat-
ent to annihilate Israel's witness to ethical mono-
theism. Paganism, not atheism, universally informed their myths, which demanded no moral restraint. Believing in magic, their liturgical personnel usual-
ly mimed their myths hoping that by re-creating the drama of their-lunful gods they would re-create life. Their myths and rituals, such as Babylon's...
famous Exodus theme with its dramatic tyranny, symbolized the world and life views that animates their pagan cultures. God’s revelation annihilated them and re-issued to Israel new and true symbols by which to live. John Sack” argues:

He [the author of the Pentateuch] sees seemed to break the power of age-old religious notions that still held many in thrall. He was not grappling with issues arising out of modern scientific attempts to understand the structure, forces, and dimensions (temporal and spatial) of the physical universe. He was not interested in the issues involved in the modern debate over cosmic and biological evolution. Moses aimed to produce through a true understanding of God a right perception of the universe and humans, including their relationships to God and one another, and to proclaim that truth in the face of false religious notions dominating throughout the world of his day. Conrad Hyatt notes:

In the light of this historical context it becomes clearer what Genesis 1 is undertaking and accomplishing: a radical and overpowering affirmation of monotheism vis-à-vis polytheism, syncretism and idolatry. Each day of creation takes on two principal categories of divinity in the pantheon of the day, and declares that these are not gods at all, but creatures—creations of the one true God who is the only one, without a second or third. Each day gives an additional cluster of deities, arranged in a cosmological and symmetrical order.

On the first day the gods of light and darkness are dismissed. On the second day, the gods of sky and sea. On the third day, earth and gods of vegetation. On the fourth day, sun, moon and star gods. The fifth and sixth days take away any associations with divinity from the animal kingdom. And, finally, human existence, too, is emptied of any intrinsic divinity—while at the same time all human beings, from the greatest to the least, and not just plausible, kings and heroes, are granted a divine likeness and mediation.

The Genesis creation narrative gives the faithful a firm foundation for their covenant with God. Why have no other gods (Exod 20:5)? Because he alone is Maker of heaven and earth (Gen 1:1). Why not murder (Exod 20:13)? Because humans alone are created in his image (Gen 1:26-28). Why be apart a day for rest (Ex 20:1-11)? Because he set it apart (Gen 2:2-3).

Our text continues to speak to the Christian Church, the new Israel, and to separate it on its journey through the “Wilderness” to the “Promised Land” from competing world-views and values. On the one hand, it guards the pilgrim people against the myriad of the Enlightenment; materialism (the philosophical theory that regards matter and its movements as constituting the universe, and all phenomena, including those of the mind, as due to material causes), secularism (the system of political or social philosophy that rejects all forms of religious faith and worship), and humanism (the system or mode of thought of action in which human interests, values, and dignity pre-dominate). On the other hand, it also fortifies them against pagan New Ageism, which fails to distinguish adequately between the Creator and his creation and right from wrong.

Part II: Its Content

The Genesis creation story falls into five parts: a summary statement (1:1), the negative stage of the earth at the time of creation (1:2), the six days of creation (1:3-31), a summary conclusion (2:1), and an exhortation about the Sabbath day (2:2-3). For our purposes we may treat the first two together, not develop the last two at all, and focus on the process and progress of creation during the first six days as recorded in this account of creation.

Summary statement (v. 1)

Three lines of evidence validate that verse one summarizes the rest of the chapter. First, “heaven and earth,” is a headadys (a single expression of two apparently separate parts) denoting “the cosmos,” the complete, orderly, harmonious universe. For example, the headadys “koh and kin” indicates all of one’s relatives. More specifically, the headadys is a merism, a statement of opposites to indicate totality like the compounds, “day and night,” “summer and winter.”

Now the elements of a compound must be studied as a unit, not its isolation. The headadys “heaven and earth,” cannot be understood by treating “heaven” and “earth” as separate elements any more than “butterfly” can be decoded by investigating “butter” and “fly” in isolation. Umberto Eco

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continued:

In language, as in chemistry, a compound may be found to possess certain qualities absent from its constituent elements. Any one who does not know what 'broadcast' denotes, will not be able to guess the composition of the word from its separate elements 'bread' and 'cast'.

The Semitic compound word, composed of 'heaven,' "heaven," and kI, "earth," also signifies "universe." The intertestamental book, Wisdom of Solomon (11:17), actually renders the merism by the Greek word, "cosmos." In poetry the stereotyped phrase, "heaven and earth" is often split apart. Note how the trope stands as an equivalent of "all things" in Isa 44:24:

I am the Lord who makes all things, who stretches out the heavens by myself, who alone spreads out the earth.

If verse 1 were translated "In the beginning God created the cosmos," one would see more clearly that it is a visionary statement about what God made during the six days of creation, not about what God made before them.

Second, the verb bara, "create," for both biblical and grammatical reasons refers to the finished cosmos, not a state before its completion. Regarding its meaning J. Stark commented:

It is silent as to the utilization of pre-existent materials or the time (whether at the beginning of one or in the midst of time, whether instantaneous or over a period of time) as the means involved. In biblical language, bara affirms of some existent reality that God conceived, willed and effected it.

"Create" in Gen 1:1 embraces the process and progress of creation over the six days of creation in verse 3-31. Grammatically, it is a telic verb, that is, it refers to a culmination that involves a process that leads up to a well-defined terminal point, beyond which the process cannot continue' according to the Cambridge Linguist, Bernard Comrie. Other telic verbs include "sell" and "die." Although "sell" and "die" include processes up to a definitive point, one has not said until property is exchanged or died until life finally ceases. "Create" involves the processes narrated for the six days of creation, but the cosmos was not created until, as the summary statement in 2:1 puts it, "the heavens and earth were completed in their vast array."

Third, the grammar of the Hebrew text, as the writer argued in detail elsewhere, supports rendering the first verse, "In the beginning God created the cosmos," not "when God began to create the earth." For the purposes of this essay, namely, to decide the literary genre of Genesis 1:1-2:3 and its compatibility with scientific theories of origins, the point of grammar need not be pursued.

In sum, verse 1 is amphoteric in the rest of the chapter.

Earth's Negative State (v. 2)

Verse 2 describes earth's quadripartite condition when God began to create the cosmos. First, it was tohu wabohu, "unformed and unfilled." Tohu wabohu is also a hedonits, not a merism, like drabs and drabs, epic and sion, hem and haw, meaning "interchaos." By chaos I do not mean the earth was unstructured in a scientific sense but that it was unhabitable and uninhabitable. "Unformed and unfilled" ("atter chaos") is the synonym of "heaven and earth." E. Jacob13 wrote:

where it [tobu wabohu] is met (Is 34:11; Jer 2:23), [it] denotes the contrary of creation and not merely an initial stage of creation. Against Luther and Calvin, the text cannot mean that God created the "heaven and the earth" and what he brought into existence was an "unformed and unfilled" earth. The cosmos of verse 1 and the chaos of verse 2 cannot have co-existed. E. Jacob13 continued: "Evidently we must regard Gen 1:2 as apocatastasis which seeks to describe the condition before creation and 1:1 as the leading of the whole chapter." In sum, Genesis one represents the Heavenly King transforming the pre-existing chaos into the present cosmos.

Second, there was "darkness over the surface of the deep." The Bible does not explain the origins of the darkness and of the abyss, both so hostile to life. Other Scripturists (e.g., Isa 44:24; Jer 10:16; Ps 92:9) affirm that God, and inferentially not matter, is eternal. Of Jesus Christ Paul said: "He is before all things, and in him all things hold together" (Col 1:17). The Genesis creation account, however, teaches only that God brought the pre-Genesis darkness and chaotic waters within his protective restraint, not when or how they happened. The writer of Hebrews says: "By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what was seen was not made of what was visible" (Heb 11:3). But in Gen 1:2, in contrast to verses 3-31, no divine command is heard. The first heaven and
good," as William Dünstreit shows, instructs that everything fulfills the divine intention for them. Humans should not fear the good creation but rather the Heavenly King, the universal and absolute monarch, who rules them. The cosmological framework reveals that God created the cosmos in an orderly and, as will be seen in the discussion on "the prefiguration of creation," typical way. 

Claspe noted the conspicuous, not the collective, use of the important number seven along with the number three and sex to structure text and to determine many of its details. Embedded in ancient Near Eastern literature the number seven represents incompleteness and the number three represents resolution, wholeness, completeness. The seven days of creation are marked off by seven paragraphs in the Masoretic Text. The into announcements, "and God said," are clearly divisible into two groups: the first group contains seven divine commands in a unitive form (e.g., "let there be," "let the earth bring forth") enjoining the creation of the creatures, and these imperatives in other grammatical forms for humans. The evaluation, "it was good," appears seven times, being omitted for the second day and repeated twice for the third. The first verse has seven words, and the second fourteen, twice seven, and so forth. To these Join Eichler adds the seven completion formulas, "and it was so," and the seven times that a further statement is added (God names or blesses).

b) Progress of creation

Since the time of Herder (c. 1750 A.D.) students have noted that Genesis 1:1-2:3 represents the creation as occurring in two trials of days, days 1-3 matched by days 4-6:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Unformed</th>
<th>Unfilled</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Light</td>
<td>4. Luminous</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Sky/atmosphere</td>
<td>5. Fish and Water</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Land</td>
<td>6. Green Vegetation</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| Humans |

During the first trial God separated the formless chaos into static spheres: light and darkness, the sky and its atmosphere, water and land; and in the second trial he filled those spheres that house and shelter life with moving forces: that is in the second God populated the first. Each trial progresses from hieven
The Literary Genre of Genesis, Chapter One

to earth: from light to dry land, from heavenly luminaries to earth creatures. Each triad progresses from a first day with a single creative act, light matched by luminaries, to a second day with one creative act with two aspects, sky and sea paired with fish and birds, to a third day with two separate creative acts, dry land and vegetation coupled with land animals and humans. Each triad ends with the earth bringing forth: first flora and then fauna. The inhabitants of the second triad rule over the static spheres of the first: luminaries over the light, birds over the sky, fish over the sea, beasts over the land that houses them and the vegetation that feeds them, and humans over all living things.10

In sum, the Genesis account’s remarkably symmetrical representation of the process and progress of creation supports Heart Blotcher’s10 claim that it is at the least a magnificent literary-artistic representation of the creation. Is it more?

Its Genre

We will judge its literary genre by critically appraising other suggested possibilities.

A Hymn?

Is it a hymn? Hardly, for the poetic mode, the linguistic conventions, and doxological tone of known ancient Near Eastern hymns are notably absent in Genesis 1.

Cult liturgy?

Is it a cult liturgy composed for a New Year festival like other pagan cosmogonies? No. The reconstruction of such a ritual in Israel is a hypothetical fiction. In fact, this account polemizes against the magic that made those rituals cogent within their social structures. Nahum Sarna12 said:

The inexorable tie between myth and ritual, the mimetic enactment of the cosmogony in the form of ritual drama, which is an essential characteristic of the pagan religions, finds no counterpart in the Israelite cult. In this respect too, the Genesis story represents a complete break with Near Eastern tradition. To be sure, there are points of contact between ancient Near Eastern cosmogonies such as creation out of chaos, creation by separation, and creation of opposites, but pantheism, polytheism, and annual recreation through magical myths and rituals, are not among them.13

Myth?

Is it myth? Here the answer may be “yes” or “no,” depending on one’s definition of myth. J. W. Rogerson14 catalogued twelve different definitions of the term. If one means by myth nothing more than a story that explains phenomena and experience, or a story about God/gods, or a story about him/them as working and having his/her being in this world among humans in the same mode as men speak and work, then Genesis 1 can be labelled “myth” for it satisfies those definitions. In its popular sense, however, “myth” has come to be identified with a fairy tale, imaginary and fantastic events that never happened. As will be shown the narrative of Genesis 1 connects his creation account with real history, and so the designation, “myth,” is best rejected. Peter says, “We did not follow cleverly invented stories [Gr. myein] when we told you about the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ, but we were eye-witnesses of his majesty” (2 Pet 1:16).

History?

Is it history? Here our answer is both a qualified “yes” and “no.” The Genesis creation account sets forth as historical fact that God created the universe with its vast array of moving forms. Furthermore, the author of Genesis links this prologue to the rest of his book structured about ten historical accounts by clearly linking it with his first two accounts. The first account, “the account of the heavens and earth,” recounting the origin, development and spread of sin (1:1-2:26), is unmistakably coupled with the prologue by the addition, “when the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” Likewise, he clearly binds his second account, “the written account of Adam’s line” (5:1-3), with 1:26-28 by repeating such crucial terms as “image” and “likeness,” and “male and female.”

On the other hand, he is just as clearly not giving us in his prologue a straightforward, sequential history. Henry Morris15 misleads us when he claims: “The creation account is clear, definite, sequential and master-of-fact, giving every appearance of straight forward historical narrative.” If not, he argues, it is a blatant deception. The text, however, is begging us not to read it in this way.
First, consider how much a reading creates an irreconcilable contradiction between the prologue of Genesis and the supplemental creation account in Genesis 2:4-25. According to the prologue, the first creation narrative, God created vegetation on the third day, fish and fowl on the fifth, and beasts and humans on the sixth. According to the second, a supplemental, creation account (2:4-25), however, before the creation of man (2:7) and the creation of woman (2:18-22), God placed in a garden (2:8) trees to grow (2:7) and a river (2:10) flowered from the top of Mount Eden through the garden whereupon it divided into four rivers flowing to the four corners of the earth (2:10); put the man he formed into the garden to work and keep it and placed him on probation (v. 15); and apparently, before he built the woman, formed the birds and animals (v. 19), and the man named them all (v. 20). Glaucon Archer1 exclaimed, "Who can imagine that all these transactions could possibly have taken place in 120 minutes of the sixth day (or even within twenty-four hours, for that matter)?"

Take the trees alone. Even if the calendar in view was planted three days earlier, we see to put our imaginations in fast-forward and see its growth as growing to maturity and bearing fruit within three days? Unlike chapter 1, where one could appeal to apparent age with reference to such things as the stellar bodies, one cannot make a similar appeal to the planted trees. To be sure God could have caused these trees to grow instantly, even as he does in a moment turns water into wine (2:3-11), but the Genesis narrative, using the verb "plant" and "cause to grow," gives no indication that an extraordinarily quick growth of trees is intended, whereas John labels Jesus' work as "the first of his miraculous signs." A straightforward reading of the Genesis prologue is impossible in light of its supplemental account of creation.

As so often happens in Scripture, historical events have been disenchanted and reconstructed for theological reasons. For example, the events listed in Genesis 10 came into existence after the confusion of languages at Babel, reconceived in Genesis 11, but the writer has disenchanted events in order to put the nations under Noah's blessing, not under the Babylonian's curse.12 According to Genesis 15:16-18, Benjamin was born in Canaan, but less than ten verses later a list Benjamin among the twelve sons born in Padan-Aram, presumably to represent the youngest patriarch as taking part in the return of all Israel from the exile in Padan-Aram. Biblical writers display a freedom in representing historical events or theological reasons.

Second, the creation of light on the first day and of luminaries on the fourth, confirms our suspicion that Genesis 1 ought not fit into the historical or chronological scheme. John Sellwood13 argues, "the division between the 'day' and the 'night'... leaves little room for an interpretation of 'the light' in v. 3 as other than that of light from the sun." A straightforward reading of Genesis 1:4 and 14 leads to the incompilable notions that the sun was created on the first day and again on the fourth day. The suggestion that the sun was created on the first day and marks visible on the fourth is unlikely.14 If "there were three" v. 3 means "there were three existences," it should have the same meaning in v. 14, not "then let there be visible." More plausibly, Moses, representing God as the Ultimate Source of light and the luminaries as his immediate source, separates the two sources in this matching pair of triads to reduce his audience that God is transcendent, not dependent on means.

Furthermore, verse 14 cannot be reconciled readily with verses 5, 8 and 13. Our narrative begs us not to read this in a straightforward, sequential account by marking off three days (v. 5, 8, 13), each with its own "evening" and "morning," before narrating that on the fourth day God creates "the luminaries... to separate the day from the night... and to mark... days" (v. 14). A sequential reading of the text lacks coherence. How can there be three days characterized by day and night before the creation of the luminaries to separate the day from the night and to mark off the days? Are we clueless?

Finally, the language of our creation narrative is figurative, anthropomorphic, not plain. The writer's vantage point is with God in His heavenly court.15 As a representation of what has transpired in this transcendent sphere, the narrative must employ metaphors. John Stott16 observes, What occurs in the arena of God's action can be surmised after the manner of human events, but accounts of "events" is that arena are fundamentally different in kind from all forms of biography. As representations of what has transpired in the divine arena, they are of the nature of metaphorical narratives. They relate what has taken place behind the veil, but transcribe it into images we grasp—as do the biblical visions of the heavenly court. However realising they seem, sensorial as
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if quality pervades them.

H. Riddleston's concurs: Is the author not under the necessity of employing such a method, because this is the only way to speak about something that is really beyond all human thoughts and words.

Even the very conservative theologian E. J. Young admits: "It is certainly true that God did not speak with physical organs of speech nor did he utter words in the Hebrew language." If the other pastors in the process of creation are anthropomorphic representations of creation, is it not plausible to suppose the same is true of the chronological framework, the six days? God shaped so that Israel could mime him, working six days and resting the seventh (Exod 20:11). To be sure the six days in the Genesis creation accounts are our twenty-four hour days, but they are metaphorical representations of a reality beyond human comprehension and imitation.

Science?

Is science? The answer is qualified "yes," but finally "no." To be sure it deals with the life supportive systems, air, water, land, with heavenly bodies, sun, moon, stars, and with species of plants and animals, but it treats them in a way unlike scientific literature. Contrary to Henry Morris' assumption that "the Biblical record, accepted in its natural and literal sense, gives the only scientific and satisfying account of the origins of things," we argue it cannot give a satisfying scientific account of origins for it is not scientific literature.

First, the subject is God, not the forces of nature. The canons of the scientific method do not allow supernatural causes to be included in a theory.

Second, their concerns differ. The Bible is concerned with Ultimate origins ("Where did it all come from?") not scientific questions of proximate origins (How did A arise out of B, if it did?). The biblical account makes no sharp distinction between immediate cause and Ultimate Source. Langdon Gilkey complains: They [the creation scientists] ignore the (scholastic) distinction between primary causality of a First Cause, with which philosophy or theology might deal, and second causality, which is causality confined in finite factors." What our text says, "and God said, "Let the water teem with living creatures" (v. 20), and, "Let the land produce living creatures," it traces the origins of living creatures back to their ultimate Source, God, not explaining how the proximate sources, water and land, produced them. Genesis does not attempt to link phenomena with phenomenon but with the covenant keeping God. It is as mischievous to pay a scientific theory of evolution against Genesis as pitting David's account of his ultimate origin, "You [O, God] created my inmost being" (Ps 139:13), against a geneticist's account of his contingent birth. Third, its language is non-scientific. The account reports the origins of the cosmos phenomenologically, not mathematically or theoretically. From a geocentric perspective, the sun, moon and stars are "in the expanse of the sky;" from a heliocentric perspective they are not. Scientific and biblical languages about origins, like their contents, also supplement, not oppose, each other. People err, however, when they think scientific language is more "correct" than the Bible's. Both languages are relative, not absolutely, correct or incorrect, depending on their purposes.

Fourth, its purpose is non-scientific, whereas science aims primarily to answer with as much mathematical precision as possible questions about the "when" and "how" of the origins of physical things, Genesis aims primarily to answer questions about "Who" and why they were formed, and passes the value judgment, "it was good." To be sure, it tells us that God created the cosmos "in the beginning" and by his word, but its aim is theological, not mathematical precision. Because the intentions differ so radically one can safely say that Genesis does not attempt to answer scientific questions, and scientists cannot answer those addressed in the biblical creation account. Augustine said of that account, "The Spirit of God who spoke through them did not choose to teach about the heavens to men, as it was of no use for salvation."

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Galileo* was more cautious: "The intention of the Holy Ghost is to teach us how to get heaven, not how the heaven goes." Pope John Paul II, humbly reversing an earlier papal decree, agrees: "The Bible itself speaks to us of the origin of the universe and its makeup, not in order to provide us with a scientific treatise, but in order to state the correct relationship of man with God and the universe.... Any other teaching about the origin and makeup of the universe is alien to the intentions of the Bible, which does not wish to teach how heaven was made, but how to go to heaven."

The biblical goals remain outside the parameters of the scientific method. "The function of setting up goals and passing judgments of value toward the domain of science," says Albert Einstein, "the purpose of the Bible and of science, like their contents and languages, also differs from one another but complete each other. Persons are impoverished intellectually and spiritually by limiting themselves to either one."

Finally, the biblical and scientific accounts are validated in different ways: the former by the Spirit of God, the latter by empirical testing.

Since the biblical narrative is non-scientific, we draw the double conclusion that it cannot be a satisfying scientific account of the origins of things and that it can be supplemented by scientific theories. The Bible and a scientific theory of origins both can be true, so that the later is not seen as the complete explanation of origins and the former is interpreted as a scientific treatise.

Is it theology?

Is it theology? In substance, "yes," for it treats divine matters, but in style, "no," for the narrative reports God's actions, not reflections upon them.

We come back then to Henri Blocher's suggested genre identification: it is a literary-artistic representation of the creation. To this we add the purpose, namely, to ground the covenant people's worship and life in the Creator, who transformed chaos into cosmos, and their ethics in His created order.

Conclusion

The sixteenth century Belgic Confession states: "We know Him by two means: First, by the creation, preservation, and government of the universe, which is before our eyes as a most elegant book, wherein all creatures, great and small, are as many characters testifying to us clearly the invisible things of God, even his everlasting power and divinity, as the apostle Paul says (Rom. 1:20). All which things are sufficient to convince men and leave them without excuse. Second, He makes Himself more clearly and fully known to us by His holy and divine Word, that is to say, as far as is necessary for us to know in this life, His glory and our salvation."

Now these two books about creation complement one another, but they cannot and should not be harmonized. With the one hand, we praise Henry Morris and other creation scientists for their yeoman work in pointing scientists to the Creator through their researches in his creation. Creation points humans to the Creator; Genesis identifies him as Israel's covenant-keeping God. We hold out the palms of the other hand, however, in caution against the danger of harmonizing scientific studies in natural theology with a misunderstanding of Genesis 1:1-23. These two books clash when scientists, attempting to speak about metaphysical matters, substitute creationism with naturalism, and when exegetes use Genesis to construct a scientific theory of cosmic and biological origins. Natural theology and exegetical theology are both hindered by a continued adherence to the epistemic principle that valid scientific theories must be consistent with a woodenly literal reading of Genesis. Because of the attempt to harmonize Genesis with science, such implausible inferences of Genesis 1 as "the Restoration Theory," commonly called "the Gap Theory," and "the Day-Age Theory" have vexed biblical exegetes and scientific theories presupposing a young earth and denying evolution, unnecessarily have discriminated their advocates, despite their unconvincing prowess that they are not influenced by Genesis. Let each book speak its own language and be appropriately extolled and explicated, and let each in its own way bring praise to the Creator, the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Endnotes

1. I am grateful to Dr. Denis O. Lamoureux of the University of Alberta for helpful criticisms of my original essay.


3. For a more complete discussion of this point, see the University of Alberta for helpful criticisms of my original essay.
authority of the final form of the Pentateuch, which was composed of several sources, including both Mosaic and post-Mosaic materials.


7. The terms "pros" and "proess" are used in their non-technical senses. The writer rejects Process Theology as unphilosophical. Also, he does not find by these terms that Genesis is teaching evolution. It uses them merely as an economic method to express the manner of creation.

8. Also, a system, a series of different elements forming a systematic unit.


14. Ibid.


16. Better than "anthropomorphism" we should speak of "anthropomorphisms": humankind’s physical aspect through spiritual functions.


25. Morris, 44.


28. John H. Sailhamer, Genesis, in Expositor's Bible Commentary, Vol. 5 (Wheaton: Tyndale House Publishers, 1982) 146. The word "hah" in 13:7 (And God said, Let the lights ... in the expanse of the sky separate) expresses "totality," (p. 23), including the celestial bodies. He further renders v. 14 as "and God said, Let the lights (created in v. 1) be the expanse of the sky separate." Although a synchronal possibility, his interpretation of Gen 1:17 causally entails the creation of everything before the sixth day of creation rather than a summary abbreviation in those days.

30. Since all six days are based upon the diurnal appearance of the sun, they presumably have the same character. It would be very curious if the first three days were calibrated by a different measure of time from that applied to the last three. All six days are the same as our twenty-four hour days.

31. The appeal to "day" in compounds such as "in the day" (Gen 2:4) and "the day of the LORD" to calibrate the "Day-Age Theory," the theory that "day" in Genesis I does not necessarily denote the twenty-four hour diurnal day but may designate a geologic age or stage in linguistically flawed. The use of "day" in synchronisms, the ordered and unified arrangement of words in distinctive ways, such as those closely differentiates its use with mometaries: "first day," "second day." The argument is as fallacious as saying that "apple" does not necessarily indicate the round edible fruit of the rosaceous tree because this is not its meaning in "pippinace." A". The "ae" in verse 26 is best interpreted as referring to God and the divine being gathered about Him. The first person plural pronoun assumes these coincidences in its two other uses in Genesis, 1:25 and 1:7. In Isaiah 6:8, the only other passage using "ae" with reference to God, Isaiah, upon being transported into the heavenly court and overhearing God’s consultation with the seraphim, records God’s statement of singular and plural first person pronouns as Moses, "Whom shall I send? And who will go for us?" (v. 8). In spite of the "ae" in his deliberations with his Court, He is the sole Actor. He created humans (Gen 1:26-27), and David the king (Ps 8:5). Isaiah 43:13 is Isa 5:21, not Isa 5:6, as some have argued. In the Hebrew, I think of the University of Sheffield, 1978).


The word genre comes directly from the French word meaning ëœkindë€ or ëœsortë€. Further back, it stems from the Latin word genus and the Greek word genos (Gatt). In reading the Book of Genesis, especially the early chapters, many fail to appreciate the different literary forms. They want the creation stories to be science or exact history when in fact they are more poetic and theological than scientific. The stories advance the real and true point that God alone created everything there is out of nothing, and did so in an intentional and systematic way in which He was involved at every stage.