

General Comments on Genesis

The Creation of Israel

It is easy to conclude the book of Genesis is about the beginning of the world, as that is what it starts with. But, the book of Genesis is about the beginning of Israel in specific, and not the world in general. The Creation account is presented in a cultural context suited for Israel. It then traces the history of the patriarchs and it ends with Jacob and Joseph dying in Egypt, setting the stage for Exodus, the national birth of Israel. The stories in Genesis should be read in the light of their being an explanation of who and what Israel is, a definition of Israelite culture and the origin of their specific covenant with the Lord.

Semitic Response to Mesopotamian Mythology: Theology Matters

The Genesis Creation account is a theological polemic intended to counter the influence of the Mesopotamian, or Babylonian, creation account of the [Enuma Elish](#) ([see also](#)) and the [Epic of Gilgamesh](#) ([see also](#)) [the Sumerian creation account, the [Eridu](#), [parallels](#) the Mesopotamian account and may have been the original version; the Babylonian account inspired the Assyrian [Atrahasis Epic](#), and the Egyptian [Book of the Heavenly Cow](#); the Enuma Elish and Epic of Gilgamesh get the most attention at present because they are the most complete accounts available in the archaeological record, which could change if other records are uncovered over time]. The Enuma Elish and the Gilgamesh Epic present the gods as violent, capricious and selfish. Humans are largely a nuisance who are only occasionally addressed when the gods bother to notice them, are irritated by them, or catch their momentary interest.

There are three specific events addressed in the Genesis accounts that are intended to counter events from Babylonian theology: The Creation, the Deluge, and the Tower of Babel. The Creation account addresses the Enuma Elish, Noah's Flood addresses the [Utnapishtim](#) flood account from the Epic of Gilgamesh, and the Tower of Babel addresses the conclusion of the Epic of Gilgamesh, where Gilgamesh realizes that while humans are mortal as individuals they will live on as a population and the great works they do continue on, as represented by the great walls and writings of Babylon.

Overall, these myths present a theology of fickle, selfish

gods who play favorites for no good reason, and the futility of human mortality which is outlived by the things humans can create and pass on to the next generations. The Genesis account presents the opposite of this: a caring, patient God who deliberately interacts with humans to guide them to better things and makes specific covenants with them to help improve their lot. In the beginning, humans were in God's presence, and they fell out of God's presence as a result of their choice. A choice God wanted them to make, but their choice nevertheless. The Semitic God works hard behind the scenes to ensure a favorable outcome, despite human foolishness and foibles. In the Babylonian theology, the gods are just as bad, if not worse than humans. In Semitic theology, God is good, people are the problem, and the adversary is the source of evil. This contrast is called into question when Abraham sets a bad example among the Egyptians and Philistines, such that he develops a reputation of being untrustworthy (cf. 21:23), and risks making the Lord look like one of the local pagan gods. The result is the Lord chastens Abraham in ch. 22, the last time the two speak.

A common theme in Christianity is the "Old Testament God is an Angry God", but when reading through Genesis, that is clearly not the case. The Lord in Genesis is exceedingly patient and frequently fixing problems caused by human characters (e.g., Abraham's repeated dissembling about Sarai being his sister not wife, the conflict between Jacob and Esau, the brothers turning against Joseph, etc.). When He destroys people (e.g., Noah's Deluge, Sodom & Gomorrah), it is because they are overwhelmingly corrupt, murderous and self-destructive, and God has to intervene to protect the righteous from the evil and preserve humanity from self-annihilation, not because He is capricious or selfish. Not at any point does the Lord behave like the gods portrayed in the Mesopotamian religion. The Semitic God is the source of good, and the adversary is the source of evil. This clear dichotomy is in sharp contrast to the Mesopotamian stories, and that is intentionally the case. The Genesis account is intended to overturn the contemporary theology of the surrounding Gentile nations. The Semitic God is a God of order, justice and patience. The Gentile's gods are gods of chaos, capriciousness, and selfish impetuosity. The Lord explicitly identifies bad behavior and encourages His people to transcend it with a culture and civilization that promotes selflessness and harmony, where the Gentile gods give license to and excuses for bad human behavior. The Genesis account counters that.

The Lord as Social Engineer, Part One: Individual Theology

Throughout the book of Genesis we see the Lord actively managing humanity for a favorable outcome that is productive and constructive. The Lord creates the world (ch. 1-2) and establishes a perfect peaceful Garden and puts humans there, but they choose to disobey and are expelled (ch. 3). They then start murdering each other, so He intervenes to discourage mass slaughter (ch. 4), separating the evil from the good (v. 5). The mass slaughter commences anyway (ch. 6), so He has to decimate humanity in order to preserve it (ch. 7). Humanity prospers, but becomes arrogant and self-important, so the Lord humbles them (ch. 11).

The Lord changes approach in managing humanity by establishing a lineage-based covenant with specific geographical constraints (ch. 12). He then actively manages the geography to clear the land of the current inhabitants, because they are wicked (ch. 15). The lineage-based covenant is preserved miraculously at times, despite the fitness of actors involved (ch. 16-50). All of this is done to prepare the covenant population for their inheritance (as predicted in 15:13-14, and fulfilled in the Exodus, when covenant theology begins).

As the narrative unfolds throughout the book of Genesis, the Lord moves more and more into the background. But, there is no question His guiding hand is present throughout human history in general and Israelite history in specific at pivotal moments. The Lord then makes a literally thundering return in Exodus, when He moves His people back into their allotted land.

God's Justice among Human Rebellion: Agency and Consequences

The narrative of the book of Genesis is very much about the agency of both humans and God. Everything God creates is good and perfectly obedient. Then God grants humanity the freedom to choose, warning them of accountability in the Garden. The adversary introduces opposition to God and humanity starts rebelling, with God correcting them as He sees fit: Adam and Eve are expelled from the Garden, Cain is cursed, everyone except Noah's family is drowned, Babel's language is confounded, Abraham is censured for making the Lord look bad, Isaac's blessing is usurped, Jacob faces constant family conflict, Joseph is humbled by circumstance, Ishmael and Esau's genealogies are muddled and ultimately lost.

God wants humanity to exercise their agency by choosing to listen to Him. When they don't, and their behavior endangers

His plans, then He steps in and takes action to correct them. How exactly that manifests itself is neither predictable nor mechanistic. The meting out of divine Justice in a hard and fast way would impinge on human agency. As such, God is presented as acting conservatively, to minimize impact.

This narrative of rebellion and consequence then transitions to Exodus where the Pharaoh rebels against the Lord, and the Israelites rebel against Moses, and ultimately God Himself. This then transitions to the book of Numbers. The tension between obedience and rebellion and blessings and curses is explicitly formalized in Lev. 26 and Deut. 28, both placing emphasis on the rebellion. The rebellions and consequences then continue through the rest of the Old Testament.

Literature and Theology

The book of Genesis is both exceptionally well-written ancient literature (cf. ch. 44-45) and a primer on Semitic theology. The literary aspect concerns itself primarily with the practical reality of living in difficult times, often made more difficult by the foibles of the main characters. It focuses on the relationships between people, mainly family, how they hurt each other, and usually, but not always, reconcile and forgive each other. The text presents these events as morality plays.

The theological aspect looks at how God forges a relationship with eminently flawed humans and crafts a covenant with a specific family in order to achieve His own goals, occasionally stepping in when necessary to prevent catastrophe. God is frequently presented as being largely ignored or overlooked, when He is patiently overseeing and managing the outcome, prodding the main characters to do the right thing, chastening them when they're out of line.

Annotated Bibliography for Genesis

Following are reference texts used in this commentary, all of which are recommended, presented in no particular order.

The Anchor Bible: Genesis, Ephraim A. Speiser, 1964, Doubleday & Company, Inc. While this commentary forwards the regrettable JEPD view of the Pentateuch, it offers good insight into Biblical Hebrew and otherwise obscure relevant ancient cultural context.

The Epic of Gilgamesh, Andrew George, 1999, Penguin Classics. This is the most current and complete translation of the ancient poem, with explanatory commentary and cultural context by the world's leading expert. For those who wish to understand the ancient cultural context the book of Genesis was seeking to upend, this is essential reading.

The Five Books of Moses, Everett Fox, 1995, Schocken Books Inc. A modern translation with commentary on the Biblical Hebrew and exegesis on the text. Translates Hebrew wordplay into corresponding English so the modern reader can sense the poetical content frequently lost in translation. Commentary is typically brief and perceptive.

The Five Books of Moses, Robert Alter, 2004, W. W. Norton & Company, Inc. A modern translation with commentary on the Biblical Hebrew and exegesis on the text. Alter is widely respected for his expertise in translating Biblical Hebrew into English, and his commentary is often insightful.

Genesis Rabbah, Jacob Neusner, 1985, Brown University. A translation of the ancient Rabbinical commentary on Genesis into English, with explanatory comments by the author to shed light on obscurities. Invaluable on understanding the ancient Jewish approach to the book of Genesis.

Understanding Genesis, Nahum Sarna. 1966, Schocken Books, Inc. A textbook discussion of the history, cultural context, thematic messages and theological relevance of the book of Genesis. More prose than commentary, it is very approachable for the lay reader.

Jewish Publication Society Commentary on Genesis, Nahum Sarna, 1989, Jewish Publication Society. A detailed and technical commentary on both Biblical Hebrew and meaning of the text, with discussion of historical and cultural context.

General Comments on Genesis 1

Given the importance and complexity of the Creation accounts, a number of general topics are discussed in an effort to make the text more transparent.

Approaching the Creation Texts

When discussing the Creation accounts, the question is, "How literally or figuratively should we read this?" The Creation accounts have some content that clearly forwards a literal reading, yet at the same time some of the text forwards a figurative approach. How do we address such a topic without resorting to dogmatism, shoulder shrugging, or arm waiving? Address all of the possibilities that Scriptures external to the Creation accounts will support. A list follows:

- 1) Literal: God actively creates in a specific order
- 2) Mythical: Anti-Babylonian polemic, a new concept of God
- 3) Figurative: Symbolic and allegorical theology
- 4) Liturgical: Formalized worship of God by His creation
- 5) Moral: Relationships of and between God and His Creation

Does this water down the Creation account? Not at all. The Creation is an eminently important event, so much so it figures into the Scriptures at every level and for many applications.

Attempting to forward any one account to the exclusion of the others will certainly result in problems for those who favor one over another. A lengthier discussion follows:

1) Literal. The literal approach should be plain. The peshat (a Hebrew term meaning "the simple, or straightforward, reading") of the text is God personally created the universe. It was His will and He made it as He saw fit, it obeyed and was therefore pronounced good. There are numerous references presenting the creation as literal with various characters involved such as Adam and Eve being literal persons.

2) Mythical Story. The Hebrew version of the Creation is unquestionably influenced by competing creation myths of the time, the Mesopotamian epic the Enuma Elish, but more notably the Babylonian Gilgamesh epic. The Babylonian account presents a violent clash between competing gods

(the chaos gods versus Marduk the sun god) who do battle for supremacy. The physical world as we know it is created when Marduk splits Tiamat, the watery chaos serpent, in half and forms the heavens and earth out of each half. Marduk then creates man from blood, and from that point on man and earth figure in as pawns in this monstrous battle between competing gods (this summarized account is one of the several variations of the story that exist). The Hebrew account contradicts this by presenting a very peaceful creation where God's will is obeyed at every turn and all things turn out good with man being in God's image.

The Babylonian and Mesopotamian epics attempt to explain the creation of the various gods. The Hebrew creation story makes no such attempt, as God is presented as independent and pre-existent. The Hebrew God simply is. These points make unmistakable position statements when it comes to man-made idolatry. (See the book entitled Understanding Genesis by Nahum M. Sarna for a comprehensive treatment of the polemical nature of the Creation account.)

It is especially important to note the Hebrew Creation account avoids the Hebrew Yahweh versus Yam and Nahar myth which are well documented elsewhere (cp. Isa. 27:1, Isa. 51:9, Ps. 24:12-17, also cf. Rev. 13:1) and arguably a derivative of the Babylonian Myth. Such an exclusion was certainly deliberate in order to emphasize the difference between the God of the Israelites and the gods of the Gentiles (an oblique reference is preserved in the Genesis account as the "deep" in v. 2 is the Hebrew term "tehom", which is the philological equivalent to the Babylonian Tiamat, see Understanding Genesis, page 22). While the Christian reader would equate this event with the War in Heaven, the Hebrew reader would equate it with the Babylonian version, hence it not being used in Genesis.

3) Figurative. The text presents patterns of creation which are increasingly complex, culminating in the creation of mankind, made in the image of God. In addition to the presentation being successional, it is also complimentary and indicative of God's deliberate order in Creation. The complimentary parallels are as follows:

Object
Days 1-3

Subject
Days 4-6

=====

Light & dark
Atmosphere
Oceans
Land Mass
Seed-bearing plants
Fruit-bearing trees

=====

Luminaries
Birds in the sky
Fish in the oceans
Animals on the land
Eaten by animals
Eaten by mankind

Thus, a succession is juxtaposed in parallel in the order of creation which connects the object with subject that is to benefit from its creation. The result is a pattern seemingly less chronologically strict and more intended to be conveying the orderly nature of the planning and execution of creation. That a chronology is implied is without doubt, but under this theme it is secondary to the theme of order, deliberation on God's part, and progression. However, note the parallelism does not appear as orderly in the text as it is presented above, showing that while the parallelism is generally adhered to, the details of the chronology are not entirely interrupted to present it. There is a tradeoff between the literalistic chronology and thematic poetry.

Also consider the way the "greater light", "lesser light" and "stars" from Gen. 1:16 are used by subsequent authors in a symbolic fashion. Take for example Paul's usage in 1 Cor. 15:41. That the Jews preceding Paul interpreted it as such is manifest by its application in one of the texts appearing among the Dead Sea Scrolls:

Surely [all] His [pr]ecepts are truth! May He establish you as holy among His people, as the "greater [light" (Gen. 1:16) to illumine] the world with knowledge, and to shine upon the faces of many [with wisdom leading to life. May He establish you] as consecrated to the Holy of Holies! [You shall] indeed [be san]ctified to Him, glorifying His name and His Holy Ones! [excerpt from a "A blessing for the priests, the Sons of Zadock" appearing on page 149, The Dead Sea Scrolls: A New Translation, Wise, Abegg & Cook, Harper Collins.]

Isaiah also makes use in Isa. 44:23 of the three parts of

the earth presented in Gen. 1:6-10 (also cp. Exod. 20:4), as does Paul in Phillip. 2:10. These metaphorical triplets we would think of as being "New Testament" have their roots in the Creation story.

4) Liturgical. God's act of Creation is the object of his affection and the link between eternal and the temporal, the incorruptible and the corruptible. Note the repetition in the text of "God said...God saw...God called...there was...evening, morning, a day" presenting God's action in an increasingly complex system that ends in a formalized relationship between God and humans. The Creation figures prominently in various Hebrew liturgical psalms. Consider Ps. 24 (Jewish Publication Society Translation):

The earth is the Lord's and all that it holds,
the world and its inhabitants.
For he founded it upon the ocean,
set it upon the nether-streams.

Who may ascend the mountain of the Lord?
Who may stand in His holy place?--
He who has clean hands and a pure heart,
who has not taken a false oath by My life
or sworn deceitfully.
He shall carry away blessing from the Lord,
a just reward from God, his deliverer.
Such is the circle [lit. "generation"] of those who turn to Him,
Jacob, who seek Your presence.

O gates, lift up your heads!
Up high, your everlasting doors,
so the King of glory may come in!
Who is the King of glory?--
The Lord, mighty and valiant,
the Lord, valiant in battle.
O gates, lift up your heads!
Lift them up, you everlasting doors,
so the King of glory may come in!
Who is the King of glory?--
the Lord of Hosts,
He is the King of glory!

The psalm is divided into three strophes, the first

presents the Lord as the Lord and Creator of all things (implicitly including mankind), the second asks who is eligible to ascend into the Lord's House to receive a Blessing from Him, and the last portrays an exalted God who condescends to visit man within the Temple doors. The Creation, referenced in the first strophe, is the unifying principle. The Creation is what connects God to man, it is where God and man meet in this Temple of materials made by God but built by man. The Creation is His handiwork, and while He is exalted above it, He is still connected to it by virtue of authorship.

In contrast to this, review D&C 88:14-35. Here man is being held up to and compared with Creation. Herein is a very tight parallelism in the text as follows:

- A - (v. 18-19) Sanctified body
 - B - (v. 20) Celestial glory
 - C - (v. 21-22) Terrestrial glory
 - D - (v. 23) Telestial
 - E - (v. 24) Perdition - no glory
 - F - (v. 25-26) "the earth abideth the law...be sanctified"
- A - (v. 27-28) Spiritual body
 - B - (v. 29) Celestial glory
 - C - (v. 30) Terrestrial glory
 - D - (v. 31) Telestial glory
 - E - (v. 32) Perdition - they who remain
 - F - (v. 33-35) "That which breaketh a law...cannot be sanctified"

The F's are of interest on this point. Note v. 25-26 presents the earth as abiding the law and v. 33-35 present man as breaking the law, an antithesis, where men ideally are to be as obedient as Creation (recall all of the statements in the Creation account about how the various things created were obedient and pronounced "good"). Thus, man is to follow the example of Creation and be obedient, and in doing so will be found "good".

In a liturgical context, God's act of creating is the unifying agent between Him and His Creation, and Creation's goodness serves as an example to men how they should act. Both of these symbols are employed in modern LDS temple worship, and the former was

obviously employed in ancient Jewish temple worship.

5) Moral. The text explores the ethical relationships between God and His Creation. It also discusses the relationships between the things God created, with respect to how man and nature are intended to interact, as created by God.

The text also addresses questions of [theodicy](#), or the problem of evil. If God is all powerful and all good, then why would He create evil, or allow evil to exist? And where does human agency relate to good and evil? God does not create chaos or evil, the adversary does. God allows humans to choose and consequences follow.

It is plain the Creation account figures prominently in different themes and is used in more than one way.

Synthesis of Two Different Versions of the Same Thing

The meaning of the scriptures dealing with the Creation sequence has always been difficult to determine. What is particularly puzzling is the presence of two seemingly separate creation stories (e.g., Gen. 1:1-2:4a being the first and Gen. 2:4b-3:24 the second), which superficially contradict each other.

Jewish commentators typically see the text as two independent stories with two different purposes. The first exhibits God's power, the goodness of Creation, and is intended to be an anti-idolatry polemic (i.e., God-centered). The second presents man's relationship to Creation and his Creator (i.e., Man-centered). Christian commentators typically see the two stories as being the products of two different authors, and differences between the accounts are a result of different literary and/or editorial style. It is not uncommon for Christian commentators to simply ignore the presence of the two seemingly different and independent accounts.

An obscure passage in the Doctrine and Covenants section 77 enables the LDS community to synthesize the seemingly two different Creation stories into a single story. D&C 77 presents interpretations revealed on John's Revelation, so it is not directly commenting on the Creation, yet in one particular verse reference is made to the Creation. Verse 12 reads:

Q. What are we to understand by the sounding of the

trumpets, mentioned in the 8th chapter of Revelation?
A. We are to understand that as God made the world in six days, and on the seventh day he finished his work, and sanctified it, and also formed man out of the dust of the earth, even so, in the beginning of the seventh thousand years will the Lord God sanctify the earth, and complete the salvation of man.

According to this, man was created on the seventh day, not the sixth day as is the common interpretation of the first Genesis Creation account.

The so-called second Creation story, which chronicles the creation of man, and all living things can safely be placed on the seventh day. It is therefore not a second story at all, but the continuation and conclusion of the first one.

In support of this are the extra-biblical Creation accounts. The Genesis account runs through the first six days of creation in chapter 1, with plants, then animals, then mankind, then mentions the seventh day's rest from creation in 2:1-4. However, in 2:5 it states: "The Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the earth." Then, v. 6-25 detail the creation of Adam, then plants, then animals, and finally Eve. The statement in v. 5 and the ensuing seemingly reversed order of creation of living things is what causes commentators to assume that a different story or version of the story is being told. The PofGP Moses account of the creation follows the Genesis account closely. But, the Abraham account differs in some significant ways.

Abraham 4 presents a series of days similar to Genesis 1 with the exception that all references to the creation of living things is phrased in the future tense while the creation and preparation of the earth is spoken of in the present tense. For example 4:9-12 states:

"And the Gods ordered, saying: Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the earth come up dry; and it was so as they ordered; And the Gods pronounced the dry land, Earth: and the gathering together of the waters, pronounced they, Great Waters; and the Gods saw they were obeyed. And the Gods said: Let us prepare the earth to bring forth grass; the herb yielding seed; the fruit tree yielding fruit, after his kind, whose seed in itself yieldeth its own likeness upon the earth; and it was

so, even as they ordered. And the Gods organized the earth to bring forth grass from its own seed."

According to this account the physical aspects of the earth were created and prepared for the ultimate inhabitation of plants, but no plants have been put on the earth at this point. Abraham's account continues through the rest of chapter 5 in the same fashion where physical modifications are made to the earth in preparation for later habitation by the living things. In Abraham chapter 5, on day seven, the creation of all living things occurs separate from the physical preparation of the earth. Thus, the Abraham account is similar to the Genesis account in that it has two creation periods that follow each other. But, the Abraham account differs by explicitly separating the physical preparation of the earth for forthcoming inhabitants from the creation of the living inhabitants. The Genesis account alludes to this same separation between the creation of the earth and its inhabitants in Gen. 2:5, but the preceding text in Gen. 1 that documents the previous six days of creation makes it difficult to recognize the distinction made.

This requires the reader to assume there was in fact creating on the seventh day of Sabbath. What the Genesis text states is the seventh day was a cessation of "work" and it was "sanctified". Assuming there was creating on the Sabbath the cessation of "work" would mean the end of the organizing of non-living matter. The sanctification would then be referring to the placement of living things upon an otherwise lifeless planet. It is lawful to do good on the Sabbath as well as to heal (cf. Matt.12:12), and to save life (cf. Luke 14:5), and to keep the Law (cf. John 7:23). There are no Scriptural prohibitions on the procreative act on the Sabbath, the human act of creation. Thus, things pertaining to the creation and maintenance of life, which in itself is a good thing, are apparently not "work" and are therefore allowable of the Sabbath. Thus the "work" that is not performed on the Sabbath of the seventh day is the labor of preparing non-living physical matter for subsequent inhabitation.

The two seemingly contradictory Genesis Creation stories can thus be synthesized into a single sequential story where all non-living matter was organized and prepared during the first six days, and all living things were created on the seventh day of Sabbath. This unifies the creation accounts, and agrees with the statement of D&C 77:12 which indicates man was created on the seventh day. Assuming this is the case, the book of Abraham

Creation account is the most literally accurate with respect to sequence of events.

Overview of the Days of Creation

Given the obscure imagery, it is sometimes unclear what is being performed on the various days of Creation. The days can be summarized as follows:

Day 0 (not explicitly addressed in the Creation accounts, but tangentially referred to in Moses 3:7) The spirits of all living things are presumably created. At the very least, human spirits must have pre-existed the days of Creation (cf. Abr. 3:22), and Moses 3:7 suggests all spirits pre-existed the physical Creation.

Day 1 (Gen. 1:1-5, Moses 2:1-5, Abr. 4:1-5) The War in Heaven occurs, separating out those who would participate in the creation from those who would not (cp. John 1:1-5, 9:5, 2 Peter 2:4, Rev. 12, D&C 6:21, 95:7), hence a spiritual separation of light from darkness (cp. Isa. 9:2). The sun, moon and other planets were apparently created, being the physical components of light and darkness from a terrestrial perspective.

Day 2 (Gen. 1:6-8, Moses 2:6-8, Abr. 4:6-8) Atmosphere and oceans are formed over the earth with appropriate compositions of various elements to support life.

Day 3 (Gen. 1:9-13, Moses 2:9-13, Abr. 4:9-13) Oceans subside and the continent emerges. Physical structure of vegetative life designed. The land is prepared for vegetative life with geological processes of creating soil and appropriate habitats for various plants.

Day 4 (Gen. 1:14-19, Moses 2:14-19, Abr. 4:14-19) Periodic motion of the earth around the sun and the moon around the earth set into motion as we know it so as to establish days, months, seasons and years for our reckoning.

Day 5 (Gen. 1:20-23, Moses 2:20-23, Abr. 4:20-23) Physical structure of aquatic life and birds designed. Oceans prepared for inhabitation with appropriate salinities, temperatures, currents, etc.

Day 6 (Gen. 1:24-31, Moses 2:24-31, Abr. 4:24-31) Physical structure of beasts of the earth and Humans designed. Land prepared to host animal and human life with the physical geography being laid out for appropriate habitats.

Day 7 (Gen. 2:1-22, Moses 3:1-22, Abr. 5:1-21) Work (i.e., the organizing of non-living physical matter in the preparation of the earth for living inhabitants) ceases and the earth is sanctified by filling it with living creations of God. First, Adam is created, then vegetative life, then animal life, then Eve. (Note that in the Abraham account he dislocates Eve's creation in the text to put it immediately after Adam's, but he references it's temporal occurrence later in verse 21 [One would assume he did this to emphasize her equality and unity with Adam and her superiority to all of the other creations]).

In the first six days of creation note the strict pattern of the text with sevenfold repetition: "And God said", (Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 14, 20, 24), "God saw that it was good" (Gen. 1:4, 10, 12, 18, 21, 31), and "Evening and morning were...day" (Gen. 1:5, 8, 13, 19, 23, 31). This tight structure indicates God's order, power and sovereignty in the Creation, His will was worked upon Creation and it obeyed Him, no conflict, no discussion, no disobedience. Those things do not become an issue until Day 7, thus this strict pattern in the text emphasizes the obedience of Creation in general with the deliberate rebellion of the serpent and the naive disobedience of Adam and Eve.

The book of Abraham has some material in it that is simply unique to it. One of the more obvious statements in the text is that the various things created in their respective days are "good" because they "obey". In this account Creation is "ordered" to obey and "watched" until it obeys, once it obeys it is pronounced "good". Another unique feature is the text consistently referencing "Gods" plural as doing the Creation and not "God" singular. The Moses account hints at the Father doing things via the Son and therefore implies plurality, but the Abraham account is explicit. While the Genesis account presents a singular God as acting, Gen. 1:26 presents a first-person plural, "Let us make man in our image". Those who reject the idea of plurality of Gods consider this a reference to God and the angelic courts (also cp. Gen. 3:22, 11:7). The Abraham

account is didactic when it is stating the beginning and ending of Creation days, why it is so is unclear.

Also of note is Abraham 5:13, where Abraham says, "Now I, Abraham, saw that it was after the Lord's time, which was after the time of Kolob; for as yet the Gods had not appointed unto Adam his reckoning." This suggests Adam was living under an eternal time frame as the Lord's time is eternal time. Thus the various stages of Creation all apparently occurred under an eternal time frame. It is safe to assume Adam and Eve continued under this time frame until the Fall occurred and they entered into mortality, which then instituted a temporal time frame. The point being the Creation occurred under an eternal time frame and not temporal time as we know it. Thus an indefinite amount of eternal time elapsed during the Creation and up until the fall, so estimates of the length of time the Creation took in temporal time units are meaningless as how can one compare temporal time to eternal time?

Along these lines, of speculative interest, would be that apparently only Adam and Eve would have been immortal during this lapse of indefinitely long eternal time as the issues of the Fall and Atonement regarding free agency, sin, repentance and judgement are only in effect upon humans and their offspring (this is not to say that animals are not resurrected or redeemed and so forth, as they are, but they are not subject to issues of the Fall). As such, the equivalent of millions of years of temporal time could have elapsed while Adam and Eve enjoyed immortality. And all of the events of those millions of years, which are apparently attested to in the geological record, could have transpired around Adam and Eve until the Fall actually occurred.

Rhetorical Devices

There are several rhetorical devices at work in the text, helping the reader to understand the intent and meaning. Parsing the text by these rhetorical devices makes it more obvious what the intention of the text is.

Bracketing the chapter is a rhetorical device identifying the start and finish of the Creation. The first bracket is that of "the heavens and the earth" in Gen. 1:1 and Gen. 2:1, then appearing again in Gen. 2:4. The first set of brackets addresses the first six days of Gen. 1, setting them apart. The third appearance of "the heavens and earth" in Gen. 2:4 brackets

the seventh and final day where God communes with His creation as a united and flawless entity. This seventh day sabbath is the kind of communion presented in an eschatological setting in OT Prophets (cf. Isa. 51:3, Ezek. 36:35) and in John's Revelation (Rev. 21:1-22:4) as the unified, cleansed creation, or new Eden, which is the ultimate fulfilment of God's creation of the heaven and earth.

The second bracket is that of "to till the ground" in Gen. 2:5 and Gen 3:26, which explains God's intent in creating mankind. Bracketing the story of the Fall is the identification that there is no man to till the ground, and after the Fall there is now a man to till the ground. This informs us God's intention was to have a man to till the ground, which was absent at the end of ch. 1. See the comments on Gen. 2 for additional discussion of this subject.

Within the text of chapter 1 are a number of different rhetorical devices used to convey meaning. Following below are sets of the text divided by rhetorical device to show the intention of the device. The first set presents a combination of all the identified rhetorical devices, and those that follow are separated out by device. Noting the differing divisions in the text by rhetorical device provides different insights into the message of the text.

1 In the beginning **God created** the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ **And God said, Let there be light:** and there was light. ⁴ **And God saw the light, that it was good:** and God **divided** the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. **And the evening and the morning were the first day.** ⁶ **And God said, Let there be** a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it **divide** the waters from the waters. ⁷ And **God made** the firmament, and **divided** the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. **And the evening and the morning were the second day.** ⁹ **And God said, Let the** waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he seas: **and God saw that it was good.** ¹¹ **And God said, Let** the earth **bring forth** grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding **fruit after his kind**, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹² And the earth **brought forth** grass, and herb yielding seed **after his kind**, and the tree yielding **fruit**, whose seed was in itself,

after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day. ¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. ²⁰ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. ²¹ And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. ²³ And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. ²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. ²⁹ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. ³¹ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

By day

A clear rhetorical device documenting the linear elapse of time during the creative process. It also implies an intentionally planned beginning and end, as it occurs

within a known and understood timeframe, a week of days. The creation was not an act of caprice or whim, it was organized and deliberately planned by God, with known starting and ending points.

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. **And the evening and the morning were the first day.**

⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. **And the evening and the morning were the second day.**

⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. ¹¹ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ¹³ **And the evening and the morning were the third day.**

¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ **And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.**

²⁰ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. ²¹ And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after

his kind: and God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. ²³ **And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.**

²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. ²⁹ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. ³¹ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. **And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.**

By God speaking

The power of God's word is manifest. God's speech initiates and precedes all of God's action. God's clearly communicated speech precedes God's action. God's speaking results in the blessing of life, which God specifically identifies.

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.

³ **And God said, Let there be** light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶ **And God said, Let there be** a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

⁹ **And God said, Let the** waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

¹¹ **And God said, Let the** earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴ **And God said, Let** there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰ **And God said, Let** the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. ²¹ And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

²² **And God blessed** them, **saying**, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. ²³ And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴ **And God said, Let** the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ **And God said, Let** us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

²⁸ **And God blessed** them, **and God said** unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

²⁹ **And God said,** Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. ³¹ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

By God's creating, making

God does not only speak, God is involved by making and creating. The act of speaking is not magical or mystical, it is means of communication separate from making and creating.

1 In the beginning **God created** the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. ⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

⁷ And **God made** the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. ⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. ¹¹ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is

in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶ And **God made** two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: **he made** the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. ²⁰ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

²¹ And **God created** great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. ²³ And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. ²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

²⁵ And **God made** the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ And God said, **Let us make** man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So **God created** man in his own image, in the image of **God created** he him; male and female **created he** them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. ²⁹ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

³¹ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

By God seeing good

God oversees and is involved in the creative process and everything in creation is good, nothing is bad or indifferent. Nothing bad is present until the serpent appears. Note in the first day the light is called good, the darkness is not. At the very end of the sixth day, all of God's creation is collectively called "very good".

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ **And God saw the light, that it was good:**

and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day. ⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. ⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: **and God saw that it was good.**

¹¹ And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹² And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: **and God saw that it was good.**

¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day. ¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: **and God saw that it was good.**

¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day. ²⁰ And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. ²¹ And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: **and God saw that it was good.**

²² And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. ²³ And the evening and the morning were the fifth day. ²⁴ And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: **and God saw that it was good.**

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. ²⁹ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. ³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so. ³¹ **And God saw** every thing that he had made, and, behold, **it was very good.** And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

By dividing and bringing forth and multiplying after its kind

This emphasizes permanent division by natural kingdoms and species with increasing complexity through the process. It starts with formless chaos and ends in complete interdependent order with humans in the image of God presiding over all of it. The darkness and light are divided from each other, the land and the seas are divided, grass, plants and trees are divided, fish and birds divided, insects, animals and men all separated and will all continue to propagate in those divisions.

1 In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ² And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. ³ And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. ⁴ And God saw the light, that it was good: and God **divided** the light from the darkness. ⁵ And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

⁶ And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it **divide** the waters from the waters. ⁷ And God made the firmament, and **divided** the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. ⁸ And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day. ⁹ And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. ¹⁰ And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, Let the earth **bring forth** grass, the herb yielding seed, and the **fruit** tree yielding **fruit after his kind**, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. ¹² And the earth **brought forth** grass, and herb yielding seed **after his kind**, and the tree yielding **fruit**, whose seed was in itself, **after his kind**: and God saw that it was good. ¹³ And the evening and the morning were the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to **divide** the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: ¹⁵ And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. ¹⁶ And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. ¹⁷ And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸ And to rule over the day and over the night, and to **divide** the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, Let the waters **bring forth** abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. ²¹ And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters **brought forth** abundantly, **after their kind**, and every winged fowl **after his kind**: and God saw that it was good. ²² And God blessed them, saying, Be **fruitful, and multiply**, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl **multiply** in the earth. ²³ And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, Let the earth **bring forth** the living creature **after his kind**, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth **after his kind**: and it was so. ²⁵ And God made the beast of the earth **after his kind**, and cattle **after their kind**, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth **after his kind**: and God saw that it was good.

²⁶ And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. ²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. ²⁸ And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be **fruitful, and multiply**, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth. ²⁹ And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the **fruit** of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

³⁰ And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

³¹ And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Comments on Genesis 1

This chapter covers the first Creation account, which actually continues up to 2:3. This account is episodic with each episode of Creation likened to a day.

1 IN the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 2 And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness [was] upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters. 3 And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. 4 And God saw the light, that [it was] good: and God divided the light from the darkness. 5 And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

v1-5 At the very start God creates everything (v. 1), but it is chaotic and without order (v. 2). God uses the light to separate day and night, light and dark, and so the chaos begins to abate (v. 3-5).

v1 "God created", there is a lot of discussion in commentaries about how the Hebrew verb "bara" used here is unique and exclusive to the God's divine creating. It is unique to this account in the particular conjugation it appears in (the qal form). But various conjugations of the same verb appear elsewhere in the OT texts in reference to non-divine creations, so the uniqueness argument is based upon the particularly conjugated form.

"heaven and earth", Jewish commentators consider this a merism, i.e., an idiom speaking inclusively of all things. So, in other words, "In the beginning God created everything above and below", because there isn't anything that isn't either heaven or earth. The heavens are everything above, and the earth is everything below.

This phrase is revisited at the end of the six day Creation process in 2:1, providing the rhetorical close to God's act of creating.

v2 "without form, and void", the intended meaning is that of chaos. The matter was without order and God imposed order upon it and made something good out of it. The Hebrew here is "tohu, va vohu", so a translation that would preserve the alliterative quality of the Hebrew would be "wild and waste" (see Everett Fox's Schocken Bible translation entitled The Five Books of

Moses).

"darkness..upon...the deep. Spirit of God...upon...the waters", note the obvious antithetical parallelism. The "deep" and the "waters" are the same thing, and the "darkness" and the "Spirit" are together upon them. Then comes the "division" wherein light and darkness are divided in v. 3-4. This reads like a poetical version of the War in Heaven. Especially compare John 1:1-5, where the word is equated with the light, creation is by the word, and the darkness rejects the light, also cp. Rev. 12 where the woman is clothed in the sun, moon and stars and persecuted by the dragon, who is subsequently thrown down.

The "War in Heaven" interpretation appears in the libretto for Hayden's Creation, written in 1798. Here is the pertinent excerpt:

Recitative - Uriel (tenor)

And God saw the light, that it was good:
and God divided the light from the darkness

Now vanish before the holy beams
The gloomy shades of ancient night;
The first day appears.
Now chaos ends, and order fair prevails.
Affrighted fly hell's spirits black in throngs:
Down they sink in the deep abyss
To endless night.

Chorus

Despairing, cursing rage attends their rapid fall.
A new-created world springs up at God's command.

Baron Gottfried van Swieten of Vienna adapted the libretto from an oratorio text by [an unknown English author](#), which author compiled it from [Genesis 1 and the 7th & 8th books of Milton's Paradise Lost](#). Milton's work, however, does not forward the first day as being the War in Heaven, as he places the War in Heaven before the Creation account altogether. So, whoever the original unknown English author was, they must have developed this interpretation themselves or taken it from some obscure or presently unknown source.

"the deep", Christian commentators (e.g., Interpreter's

Bible) equate the Hebrew "tehom" with "tiamat", the watery chaos monster from the Babylonian creation story based on philology and little else. Among Jewish commentators, Nahum Sarna in Understanding Genesis (see page 22 of the 1966 Schocken Books edition) makes a similar equation and indicates the reference is an oblique nod to the Yahweh versus Yam and Nahar myth, but kept deliberately obscure so as to remove any similarities between the Hebrew Creation story and the Babylonian version.

This is apparently why the War in Heaven motif is downplayed in the Genesis account, because if it were explicitly referenced then Hebrew Creation story would have elements of conflict and battle, as did the Babylonian and Mesopotamian accounts. Combat between the various idolatrous gods was a fundamental component of their creation myths. Avoiding that was essential for a Hebrew audience to differentiate them from their Gentile neighbors.

"Spirit of God", some contemporary translators render this "wind from God" because of the ambiguous Hebrew term "ruach". They use the Exodus account of the dividing of the Red Sea as the rationale. However, the PofGP Moses version of this passage (see the harmony of Creation accounts) makes it plain the intended meaning is in fact the personage of the Holy Spirit of God.

v3 "light", the reference here could easily be taken as both or either literal or figurative light.

v4 Note the light is pronounced "good". The darkness is not pronounced "good", no comment is made on it. But, given its opposition to light, it is clear the darkness does not merit such a label as does light.

v5 The night precedes the morning, which is the basis for the Jewish observance that a day begins at sundown.

"day", regarding the meaning of the word "day" Strong's Concordance lists the following:

03117 yowm {yome}

from an unused root meaning to be hot; TWOT - 852; n m

AV - day 2008, time 64, chronicles + 01697 37, daily 44,

ever 18, year 14, continually 10, when 10, as 10, while 8, full 8, always 4, whole 4, alway 4, misc 44; 2287

- 1) day, time, year
- 1a) day (as opposed to night)
- 1b) day (24 hour period)
- 1b1) as defined by evening and morning in Genesis 1
- 1b2) as a division of time
- 1b2a) a working day, a day's journey
- 1c) days, lifetime (pl.)
- 1d) time, period (general)
- 1e) year
- 1f) temporal references
- 1f1) today
- 1f2) yesterday
- 1f3) tomorrow

Clearly, a "yowm" is not strictly a "day" in the sense of 24 hours composed of 60 minutes, which are each composed of 60 seconds. The Abraham account (cf. Abr. 4:8) pushes for the usage of this term is that of 1d above.

On v. 5 the PofGP Moses account appends "this I did by the word of my power", that is the Father created all things by the Son per Moses 2:1. This agrees with Col. 1:16.

6 And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. 7 And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which [were] under the firmament from the waters which [were] above the firmament: and it was so. 8 And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

v6-8 The atmosphere and oceans are created on the second day.
v7 The waters above the firmament and the waters below the firmament are the sky above and the oceans below. This is made plain when one considers in v. 20 that creatures are made for the seas and birds for the skies. One would presume the waters above are the clouds and rain.

As an interesting aside, there is an ancient Rabbinical reading on this that there was an antediluvian giant water bubble up above the sky and that is what Gen. 7:11 was referring to. This is what burst and flooded the earth. Thus they would equate the water above in this verse with the water bubble

presumably referenced in 7:11.

9 And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry [land] appear: and it was so. 10 And God called the dry [land] Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that [it was] good. 11 And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, [and] the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed [is] in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. 12 And the earth brought forth grass, [and] herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed [was] in itself, after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good. 13 And the evening and the morning were the third day.

v9-13 On the third day the oceans recede and continents appear. Vegetative life appears on the land.

v11 "the fruit tree yielding fruit, after his kind", this verse is a popular polemical argument used against Evolutionists (note the capital "E", meaning that organized group of atheistic polemicists who use the science called evolutionary biology as a foil against the capital "C" Creationists [there are religious persons who accept evolutionary biology as a principle of science and research in whole or part without it conflicting with their faith as religion and evolution are not mutually exclusive, although the Evolutionists and Creationists would like to make it appear that way and couch their arguments to present it as such]). The reading the Creationist would forward from this is that there is no "evolution" because fruit yield seeds "after their kind". The problem with this is that it relies on a poor translation from the KJV. A good translation would be "trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it" (JPS). It is not until you cross reference it with the PofGP Abraham account that you see the kind of statement the Creationist is looking for "whose seed in itself yieldeth its own likeness" (cf. Abr. 4:11). So the PofGP seemingly salvages the Creationist reading. But regardless, attempting to use this against atheistic Evolutionists is acontextual as the authors clearly had no such idea in mind when they were writing the text.

14 And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: 15 And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. 16 And God made two great lights; the

greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: [he made] the stars also. 17 And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, 18 And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that [it was] good. 19 And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

v14-19 The days, months, seasons, and years are put in motion. The tilt of the earth, the period of it's rotation, and how elliptical the earth's orbit is around the sun are all positioned to what we presently now observe. It is similarly done for the moon as well.

Note there are lights in both the day and the night.

v14 This verse emphasizes the setting of the periodic motion of the sun, moon, and stars over their particular creation. While the first day saw the creation of the sun, moon, and stars, only with the fourth day are the times set as we presently know them.

Also of note is that from the position of the man on the ground, it would not have been until after the separation of the waters in day three that there would have been clear skies such that you could even discern the sun, moon, and stars (this assumes the vision of the Creation granted Moses, Abraham, and Smith was that of the man on the ground, which is not necessarily the case).

20 And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl [that] may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. 21 And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good. 22 And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. 23 And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

v20-23 On the fifth day animals are created for the waters beneath and the sky above. This compliments day two of Creation where waters beneath are separated from waters above.

24 And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. 25 And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that [it was] good.

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our

likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his [own] image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

29 And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which [is] upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which [is] the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat. 30 And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein [there is] life, [I have given] every green herb for meat: and it was so. 31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, [it was] very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

V24-31 Land animals are created, but only man is created in God's likeness. While men are below God, they are above all other animals. Vegetation is dedicated to animals and mankind to eat so they may live and populate the earth.

v26 "man", the Hebrew term "'adam" is a neutered pronoun, and is therefore referring to mankind in general and not the male of the species.

"in our image, after our likeness", Jewish and Christian commentators alike do not want to interpret this statement as saying what it says, namely that we look like God. The alternative interpretations are interesting (e.g., the very presence of man on earth indicates God exists and is a Creator and is therefore a symbol of God's presence on earth; the passage connotes royalty because each person is God-like in that they know good and evil and are therefore above the animals per Ps. 8).

v28 "subdue it: and have dominion", man is presented as the master of nature and not subservient to it. While this can easily be interpreted as an anti-paganism polemical (i.e., targeting nature worship, which was common among Israel's Canaanite neighbors), the context suggests it is indicative of the relationship God has placed man in. Mankind is the epitome, focal point, and ultimate purpose of this surrounding Creation, the purpose of its existence is to serve man's needs.

Lest one assume mankind is granted license to exploit nature herein, note man's food supply is presented as being entirely dependent upon God's created vegetated life in v. 29. This imposes an obvious limit on how much license God has granted man. God need only stop the bounty of His vegetative creations and man is left without subsistence. This is precisely what happens in Gen. 3:17-19 when Adam is cursed for partaking the fruit, the earth is presented as no longer supplying him with its unyielding bounty. Instead, he will have to labor for it. Also, famine is a common curse on the wicked, cf. Lev. 26:20, Deut. 28:38-40. Creation is not here for us to use as we please, but is a blessing from God's hands for our well-being.

v29 Man in the beginning was not permitted to eat the flesh of animals. This changes in Gen. 9:3, but vegetarianism is apparently to be instituted again in a Millennial setting (cf. Isa. 11:7). D&C 89 itself presently encourages us to be meat-avoiders, but does not completely prohibit it as this verse apparently does. While meat-eating was obviously not encouraged in Gen. 1, note in Gen. 3:21 the Lord makes "coats of skins" for them to wear. Thus the position forwarded appears similar to that forwarded in D&C 89, namely they are to avoid it but not utterly abstain from making use of the creatures of the earth.

v31 At the end of His creating God sees everything He has made and sees it is all very good. The emphasis is clearly on its good nature. This is deliberately done to contrast Creation in its original state with Creation after the Fall. After the adversary pollutes God's creation it is no longer "very good".

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