

Biblical Cosmology
Westminster Confession of Faith, Chapter 4, Section 1
by Preston Graham, Jr.

You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens and all their host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything and the multitudes of heaven worship you.

Nehemiah 9:6

It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, for the manifestation of the glory of his eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good. WCF 4.1

I. Questions and Observations from Confession

1. Why did the Assembly add the qualification “of nothing” in paragraph 1 and why is this significant?
Hodge, p.81, #4.
2. Note the qualification “visible or invisible” (from Col. 1:16). Why is this significant?
3. What is significant about the qualification “and all very good”?
5. Notice how Hodge relates science to revelation?
p.82-83

The book of revelation and the book of nature are both from God and will be found when both are adequately interpreted to coincide perfectly.... The one (revelation in the bible) was designed and is admirably adapted to lay the foundation of an intelligent faith in Jehovah as the absolute Creator and the immediate former and providential ruler of all things. But it was not designed either to prevent or to take the place of scientific interpretation of all existing phenomena and of all traces of the past history of the world which God allows men to discover. Apparent discrepancies in established truths can have their ground only in perfect knowledge. God requires us both to believe and to learn. He imposes upon us at present the necessity of humility and patience.

Note the significance of this in its context:

Mark Noll on the Princeton Approach to Evolution:

Hodge and Warfield reached contrasting conclusions on questions of cosmology: Hodge thought that Charles Darwin formulation of evolution was tantamount to atheism; Warfield held that a comprehensive formulation of evolution could be reconciled with an orthodox Christian faith based on an inerrant Bible. Yet these differing conclusions are not as important as the goal, the mentality, the tradition, the substantial intellectual convictions, and the view on the role of theology in American civilization that the two shared.

The common goal was to preserve the harmony of truth. Hodge and Warfield refused to countenance any permanent antagonism between two of the fundamental realms of knowledge: what humans, by Gods grace, can discover about the natural world (which owes its origin to God); and what they can learn, again by grace, about the character and acts of God from special revelation in the Bible.*

[*Footnote*: In their belief in the compatibility of natural and revealed knowledge, Hodge and Warfield were maintaining a long-standing Christian tradition affirming the two books by which God has made himself known.]

Question: Do you see a "thawing trend" in the scientific fields toward God? What can scientist do in their fields to facilitate the thaw? What can Christians do to build bridges with the scientific community?

7. One of the more dangerous trends in recent history has been to allow "culture wars" to drive our interpretation of scripture such as to politicize scripture after our single issues. More and more today, as within this politicizing context, we have reduced the church to various "single issues" and about issues that are often secondary to the first issues regarding the gospel. How then should we read Genesis 1-3? Was it about cosmology for cosmology sake, or cosmology for redemptive purposes? This gets at the heart of the issue-- if Genesis is a covenant document and Genesis 1-3 is a covenant prologue, how then might this change what we expect from Genesis 1-3? Consider then the following.

8. What are the "non-negotiable" as recognized by our confession?

Definition of Creation: That work of the triune God by which he called all things that exist, both material and spiritual, into existence out of non-existence by His own will and for His own glory.

A. References in every part of Scripture:

Law- Genesis 1; Psalms- 90:2; Prophets- Isaiah 40:26ff, Jeremiah 10:12ff, Amos 4:13ff, etc.; Gospels- Matthew 19:4, John 1:3; Epistles- Romans 1:25, 1 cor 11:9, Col. 1:16; Revelation- 4:11, 10:6

B. Ex Nihilo (from nothing)

What are some of the implications drawn out by these passages pertaining to "ex nihilo creation?"

Psalm 33:6-9, By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and by the breath of His mouth all their host. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap. He lays up the deeps in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the Lord. Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. for He spoke and it was done. He commanded and it stood fast.

John 1:3-4, All things came into being by Him and apart from Him nothing came into being that has come into being. In Him was life and the life was the light of people.

Romans 4:17, even God, who give life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist...

Acts 17:24-25, The God who made the world and all things in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands; neither is he served by human hands as though he needed anything since he himself give to all life and breath and all things.

Hebrews 11:3, By faith we understand that the worlds (ages) were prepared by the word of God so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

C. All Three Persons of Trinity Present and Active in Creation

Father:

Malachi 2:10, "Have we not all one Father? Has not one God created us?"

Acts 17:28, "We are God's offspring..."

Son:

John 1:1-4, 14,

Col.1:16-17, He is the image of the invisible God (the "beloved Son", vs.13)... for in him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible... all things were created through him and for him. He is before all things and in Him all things hold together.

Holy Spirit:

Gen.1:1-2, In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was a formless void and darkness covered the face of the deep while the spirit of God swept over the face of the waters. The God said...

Psm.104:30; Job 26:13

D. The Historicity of Adam and Eve within the unique, covenantal role of federal headship.

Romans 5:12-19

9. On the issue of creation and evolution—what exactly is “the debate?” e.g. Is it really a debate between “pure” science and faith, evolution and creation, or something else!

- The issue of knowledge and the scientific method—as one way of knowing, do we presume a-priori that empirically verifiable knowledge is the only way to know—e.g. “nothing-buttery *modern scientism!* E.g. *what constitutes a “fact” and why the priority of empirically verified knowledge over intuitive knowledge, participation knowledge, historical knowledge, even communal knowledge?*

Science acknowledges no objective world of values in the light of which human purpose could be judged right or wrong... Man is left under the control of whichever is the strongest impulse of his nature. He becomes, in fact, an agent of nature. Man's mastery of nature turns out in the end to be nature's mastery of man."

Lesslie Newbigin

- This issue of Darwinism considered:
Does the scientific theory of evolution include, not merely the idea that the living world has been produced by a process in which natural selection is the chief mechanism, but the vastly more ambitious idea that this process has been unsupervised, unplanned, unintended by God or any other intelligent agent? That hardly seems to be an appropriate part of an empirical scientific theory. It looks instead like a metaphysical or theological add-on.

Alvin Plantinga

E.g. if you confuse Darwinism with *unguided* Darwinism, you will see science and faith in God in conflict. But if you distinguish Darwinism from *unguided* Darwinism, you will see faith in God in conflict only with the "nothing buttery scientism" that is inherent to *unguided* Darwinism. And so the real question is-which metaphysical system makes most sense-the system we call "faith in God" or the system we call "faith in *nothing buttery scientism?*" Back then to the two questions that I posed in the beginning of this discussion.

- Windows of transcendence that point beyond “nothing-buttery” Darwinianism:
 - The issue of individual worth against even utilitarian survivalist theory.
 - This issue of “love” against self-propagation.

What are at least four views of how to interpret Genesis 1-3 that can be reconciled with our confessional standards of orthodoxy? (see PCA "Creation Report")

10. The Covenantal Purpose of Creation within Redemptive History Context:

By act of gracious condescension, God chose the media of "covenant" as would have been common to the people of the Ancient Near East (no less than today even) as the basis for framing a relationship with Israel. AS then demonstrated by Meredith Kline in *The Treaty of the Great King*, his following six covenant elements common to the Ancient Near East are perfectly reflected in a literary structure of Gen-Exodus, and then again in Deuteronomy. There would have been:

- *The Preamble*: Wherein the treaty maker is named in a way to motivate respect and loyalty ("I am..." Dt. 1:1-5).
- *The Historical Prologue*: Wherein a survey of history relative to the great accomplishments of the treaty maker is presented in order to encourage respect and trust (Dt. 1:6-4:49).
- *The Covenant Requisites*: Wherein "laws" or "stipulations" themselves are presented as conditions relative to the reception of the covenant sanctions (Dt. 5-26).
- *The Covenant Sanctions*: Wherein a description of the curses or blessings is given related to either breaking or keeping the treaty respectively (Dt. 27-30).
- *The Instructions Concerning Covenant Renewal and Succession*: Wherein there were instructions about how then to utilize the treaty document itself is in so far as covenant renewal and safe keeping was concerned (Dt. 31-34).
- *The Covenant Oath Ceremony*: Wherein there is the oath ceremony itself wherein the two parties would take their vows in so far as a promising covenant faithfulness.

Thus, in poetic fashion:

- Genesis 1-2: 3 functions as the *covenant preamble* of the Mosaic covenant itself wherein the seventh day-framework names the great creator God as "sovereign King of Kings and Lord of Lord's" over the lesser kings (day-frame 2, 4, 6) who rule over their related kingdom spheres (day-frames 1,3,5).

As Meredith Kline describes it in his *Kingdom Prologue*, the covenant preamble of Genesis 1 presents a "pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week whereby God identifies Himself as the one for whom all things are and were created, the Lord worthy to receive glory and honor and praise." That is, the first creation account is less "history" as it is poetic theology for the purpose of "naming" God as the *covenant King* within the Covenant Preamble.

- The first creation account is then followed by a second creation account presented as the first of ten histories that make up the *historical prologue* portion per the above description in 10 historical periods.
 - In Genesis 2:4 the first "history" itself is a redemptive historical sequence of "covenant making, covenant breaking, covenant keeping by a promised *penal* substitute as received by faith.
 - Altogether the ten "histories" (or "generations") tell the history of a sovereign God who elects some by grace vis-à-vis five "elect" lines of human history in contrast to the five non-elect lines of human history. The tenth "history" itself carries over to Exodus and God's miraculous salvation of Israel from Egyptian slavery.

- Upon completion of the historical prologue, the covenant pattern is continued in Exodus 20 with the Covenant requisites, sanctions, covenant renewal instructions and oath ceremony vis-à-vis covenant sacrifices as to fill out the rest of Exodus and its instructions.

A. Significance of Sabbath Framework in Creation:

Pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week whereby God identifies Himself as the one for whom all things are and were created, the Lord worthy to receive glory and honor and praise. (Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue)

Genesis 1:1 *In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth. 2 The earth was without form and void, and darkness was over the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters.*

God, in His creating the heavens and earth out of chaos is Yahweh the Sovereign Redeemer who is establishing a new heaven and new earth. The same God who brought salvation to the cosmological realm-- is bringing salvation to humanity-- for those that is who are in covenant with God through Christ

Keep in mind that in vs.2, the fact of creation is here expanded upon so as to be redemptive.

e.g. the point of the story is not as a science text, but a prologue to God's dealings with humanity as through a covenant.

As the preamble to the Mosaic covenant, one would expect that themes of redemption would be here initiation-- and would show up again as through the divine acts of redeeming history!

We will not be disappointed...

*And the **earth** was confusion and void ("tohu va bohu"-- formless chaotic waste, absolute nothingness) and the dark was over the face of the abyss (deep) and the spirit of God fluttered over the face of the water.*

1. Apart from God there was but a realm of chaos

"without form (tohu) and void (bohu)--**chaos-- formless, void, confusion**"

Cosmological categories or redemptive?

The same combination is used to describe God's curse upon the world in prophetic contexts:

Jer. 4:23 I beheld **the earth, and indeed it was without form (chaotic), and void; And the heavens, they had no light.** 24 I beheld the mountains, and indeed they trembled, And all the hills moved back and forth. 25 I beheld, and indeed there was no man, And all the birds of the heavens had fled. 26 I beheld, and indeed the fruitful land was a wilderness, And all its cities were broken down **At the presence of the Lord, By His fierce anger.**

Is. 34:11 But the pelican and the porcupine shall possess it, Also the owl and the raven shall dwell in it. And He shall stretch out over it The line of confusion and the stones of emptiness.

Therefore, if we Interpret the context of the "chaotic void" in light of what is to follow in vs 3ff, together with prophetic use throughout scripture-- --Moses points is that existence not only lacked cosmological order, but kingdom order!

2. Enter the "spirit/wind" -- ruach

lit-- the spirit hovering-- (fluttering as in the image of a great bird-- hold on to this...!)

This "presence" of the spirit is described elsewhere as a "saving" presence...

Is. 42:5 Thus says God, the LORD, who **created** the heavens and stretched them out, who spread out the earth and what comes from it, who gives breath to the people upon it and spirit to those who walk in it:

a. Establishes creation as God's habitat--

God the ruler of all things. Creates a royal dwelling where He may govern:

Presence theology-- the cosmic structure was built as a habitation for the Creator himself. Heaven and earth were erected as a house of God, a palace of the Great King, the seat of sovereignty of the Lord of the covenant.

Is. 37:16 "O Lord of hosts, God of Israel, the One who dwells between the cherubim, You are God, You alone, of all the **kingdoms** of the earth. You have made **heaven and earth**.

Isa. 66:1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?"

Heb. 4:13, And before him no creature is hidden, but all are open and laid bare to the eyes of him with whom we have to do.

**Therefore, creation was a royal construction of a place for God-- the center of a Kingdom!
I.e. The presence of the spirit sets into motion a divine history of redemption-- indeed a prolegomena to Redemptive History**

"Creation as connected theologically with the saving history... what had been opened up for her through Jahweh's revelation was the realm of history, and it was in the light of this as starting point that the term creation had first to be defined." (p.136)

1. Parallels with the Flood

abyss (deep) -- used also to describe flood

Gen. 7:11 In the six hundredth year of Noah's life, in the second month, the seventeenth day of the month, on that day all the fountains of the great **deep** were broken up, and the windows of heaven were opened.

Gen. 8:2 The fountains of the **deep** and the windows of heaven were also stopped, and the rain from heaven was restrained.

The "saving" presence of the Spirit of God to subdue the "abyss"

Gen. 8:1 But God remembered Noah and all the beasts and all the cattle that were with him in the ark. And God made a **wind** blow over the earth, and the waters subsided;

The rare word of "hovering" used to describe the ark over the "the face of the waters-- ark representing God's kingdom presence amidst judgment

Gen. 7:18 The waters prevailed and greatly increased on the earth, and the ark hovered about on the surface of the waters.

2. Parallel with the Exodus Account

There is no doubt that there was an intentional literary connection between exodus and vs. 2 of creation-- thus establishing the exodus as a kind of re-creation act on the part of God...

Note for instance:

a. Deut. 32:10-11 "He found him in a desert land And in the **wasteland**, a howling wilderness; He encircled him, He instructed him, He kept him as the apple of His eye. As an eagle stirs up its nest, **Hovers** over its young, Spreading out its wings, taking them up, Carrying them on its wings,

The verb "hover" used in Gen.1:2 is used again in the Pentateuch only here. By the use of the verb in Dt.32-- it describes God's divine activity as symbolized by an eagle, leading Israel through the "waste" land of the wilderness-- again, the same word "tohu" for chaos... . By describing the wilderness as "chos" and using this verb "hovering" to describe God's saving activity-- there is no doubt that Moses wants us to understand creation as a prologue to redemption itself-- most especially the redemption of Israel.

Notice secondly...

Exod. 14:21 Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the LORD drove the sea back by a strong east **wind** all night, and made the sea dry land, and the waters were divided.

Thus we see the purpose of the Genesis as Prologue to the Mosaic covenant where the Shikana glory was the form of the spirit's presence, "The glory-spirit represented God's personal presence and it was therefore called the face of presence." In it God was present in power to act on behalf of Israel.

Therefore, The flood episode, like the exodus salvation, is portrayed on an elaborate scale as a re-creation event, the decisive moment is the presence of God's ruach!

3. Notice then how often the theme of creation, using language very much like this language in Gen., is coupled with themes of redemption throughout the Bible...

Is. 42:(notice in vs. 1-- "I have put my spirit upon him" who-- the great redeemer/savior...)
5 ¶ Thus says God the Lord, Who **created** the heavens and stretched them out, Who spread forth the earth and that which comes from it, Who gives breath to the people on it, And spirit to those who walk on it: **6** "I, the Lord, have called You in righteousness, And will hold Your hand; I will keep You and give You as a covenant to the people, As a light to the Gentiles.

Is. 43:1 ¶ But now thus says the LORD, he who **created** you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have **redeemed** you; I have called you by name, you are mine.

Pss. 74:12 For God is my King from of old, Working salvation in the midst of the earth. **13** You divided the sea by Your strength; You broke the heads of the sea serpents in the waters. **14** You broke the heads of Leviathan in pieces, And gave him as food to the people inhabiting the wilderness. **15** You broke open the fountain and the flood; You dried up mighty rivers. **16** The day is Yours, the night also is Yours; You have prepared the light and the sun. **17** You have set all the borders of the earth; You have made summer and winter.

Here, comparing the exodus with creation... " a hymn like section-- it begins with a call to Jahweh "who does deeds of salvation" and then records works of Jahweh's creation"

Is. 45:18 ¶ For thus says the LORD, who **created** the heavens (he is God!), who formed the earth and made it (he established it; he did not create it a **chaos**, he formed it to be inhabited!): I am the LORD, and there is no other.

Genesis 1:1-2:3,. Literary Pattern-- A Day framed schematic toward the naming of God

1. Pre-creation-- poetically described as Chaotic, formless, orderless-- more than the absence of existence, but the absence of rule and order.
2. Creation is described both as a creative and governing activity-- The establishment of various creation kingdoms over which various kings rule-- yet even these kings are ruled by a great "king over the kings"-- this as poetic illustrated through a *pictorial framework of a Sabbath-crowned week whereby God identifies Himself not only as the lord of history but the lord of lords...*

Clues:

Clue #1: Dual use of "day" within this passage

(5) *And God called the light "day" and called the darkness "night" and so the evening and morning were the first day.*

Here-- "yom" refers both to that period of "light" over against "dark" (literally we would think of a 12 hrs period) but then immediately in the same passage "yom" also used for that period which contains both darkness and light-- (i.e. if literally trans. would be a 24 hrs period.)

Note: "evening and morning" (order corresponding the Hebrew concept of when the calendar day begins-- in the evening)

This points to the semantic flexibility of this Hebrew word "yom" such that we discover the that "yom" can refer to just about any period of time

So for instance, as a period of time-- the word "day" can is used to mean in effect "years" or eve some indefinite period of time in scripture...

Gen. 25:7 This is the length of Abraham's life, one hundred seventy-five years.

Gen. 38:12 In course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; when Judah's time of mourning was over, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

And yet more to the point of our passage today, "Yom" can also refer to a concept-- a kind of "frame of reference" such as in...

Is. 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty!

So from vs. 5 and the dual use of "yom"-- we have our first clue that something else might be going on here than mere literalistic history... a picture of creation set in what I will call 7 "day frames"-- less about a definite period of time and more about a "concept" as related to the "day of the Lord" perhaps...

2. Clue #2-- We have "light" on the 1st day, but the source of light consisting of the Sun and moon not till the fourth day frame

3. Clue # 3-- The Same expressions closes each "day frame" illustrative of the poetic symatry that is maintained through this passage.

"and it was so"

"and there was evening and morning on the x day..."

4. Clue # 4 Peculiar things are commanded of otherwise inanimate and even irrational entities...

So for instance-- "ruling" language attributed to the inanimate creation of

vs.14-19: Sun and Moon, *"The greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night"*

Or for instance-- the Directives "to be fruitful and multiply" given to nonrational beings

5. Clue # 5-- When we get to the creation of humanity-- we discover a repetition of both the directive to "govern" (yet as over all other creatures who had been ordered to "rule") and orders to "be fruitful and multiply" yet as over the other creatures who were given to possess their respective spheres...

i.e. our clue that something "Hierarchical" is going on here...

And God blessed them and said to them, be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and govern over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on earth.

6. Clue # 6: And then there is our final clue-- the uniqueness of the seventh day as if to climax all the previous days...

Seventh day is unique

A. Blessed So God blessed the seventh day

B. Sanctified and hallowed it

C. No "evening and morning" A day different from the other days, in that it has no end. It is as everlasting as the One who dwells there.

D. No realm created; no ruler created. A day unlike the other six.

What's going on?

Gen.1:1-13:

First three day-frames describes the origin of three vast spheres over which rule is to be exercised.

Day-Frame 1: vs.1-5: Day and night

Day-Frame 2: vs. 6-8: Water below and sky above

Day-Frame 3: vs. 9-13: Dry Land and vegetation

Genesis 1:14-31, Day frames 4-6 describes the rulers of each of these created spheres in by divine appointment.

Day-Frame 4: vs.14-19: Sun and Moon, *"The greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night"*

Day-Frame 5: vs.20-23: Fish and Birds given to possess their spheres, *"be fruitful and multiply and fill the waters... and earth.*

Day-Frame 6: vs.24-31: Land animals with the investiture of man with Kingship (Gen.1:26-29)

Genesis 2:1-3, Seventh day frame describes the supreme rule of Him who is Lord of the Sabbath.

1. The Sabbath marks the completion of God's work of creation-- to bear the name the "last" along with the name "the first." -- God is not only the author of creation but the finisher of it... the "Alpha and the Omega"

-- 2.1, Thus the heavens and the earth were **finished**, and all the host of them. Realms are completed, and those who dwell in the realms are completed.

-- 5 references to completion:"all the host of them," v. 1"all his work which he had done" (2 times, v. 2 and 3) "finished" (2 times), from same Heb. word for "all"

2. The Sabbath is marked as a celebration of the finishing of God's Creation palace... Through the creation, there is a succession of judgment expressing the builder's pleasure in the work of each day-- (Six "it was good's")--in the Sabbath this "celebration" reaches its climatic level as the the final verdict of delighted satisfaction, for God say everything that he had made and behold it was VERY good." (1:31)

Sabbath Coronation (enthronement)

1. The great builder/architect of a creation palace is described as resting

One of two meanings-

- a. A tired wiery builder slumping down for a long days nap...
- b. A great king as surrounded by his servant kings not being "seated" in session!

Clearly the effortless fiat character of the work of the sex days prevents any misconception of the Creator's rest being that of a wearied workman!

--This fits the image of Isaiah 66:1-- where after identifying heaven and earth as God's "throne-room" this word "shabbat" for "rest is used when God asks-- "what manner of house will you build me and what shall be the place of my "rest."

Isa. 66:1 Thus says the LORD: "Heaven is my throne and the earth is my footstool; what is the house which you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest? Application (caveat re next week)

--Thus the image of "worshipping" or at God's "resting place" in Psalms. 132-- "Let us go to his dwelling place, let us worship at his footstool (throne). Arise, Yahweh to your resting place, the ark of your strength!

--In the decalogue (Ex.20:11) the verb "menuchah"-- a term used for God's enthronment in the temple-- is substuted for the verb "shapath"

Thus the "shabath" of God in the seventh day is expressive of God's being seated, as with sovereign authority to rule in "session." It is "the day of the Lord"

Sabbath Consecration-- "sanctified"

So God blessed the day and sanctified (consecrated) it because on it he rested from all the work which God did in creation.

The seventh day is "sanctified" so far as it is blessed and made holy as apart from the other day-- thus putting all other day frames in a subordinate role to the seventh... all other rulers in submission to the great creator-ruler.. so that while humanity is given very high status in the creation order of things-- this is done so as to not dethrone the God Who is King of kings...

Therefore, if we are to read Gen 1 right- it is a covenant theology concerning the kingdom of God-- that under God-- there is appointed many "servant-kings" who are then to rule on God's behalf and for his glory!

But not only does the literary structure point to this, not only does the idea of sabbath point to this-- but so also the semantics of this passage-- where over and over "kingdom language" is used so as to establish God's soverinty-- (only here elaborated upon ever so briefly)

III. Notice then the Kingdom Language attributed to God as the King of kings!

1. Sovereign Decree-- "And God said..." 9 times in this pericope-- the creative words testify to God's sovereignty over existence, as by his sovereignty to degree all things came into existance... but by a word spoken-- such that through scripture-- God's word is more than mere somatics-- it is a creative effecting power and authority!

Pss. 148.1-5 Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens, praise him in the heights! 2 Praise him, all his angels, praise him, all his host! 3 Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars! 4 Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens! 5 Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created.

Psa. 33.6 By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all their host by the breath of his mouth.

Heb. 11.3 By faith we understand that the world was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was made out of things which do not appear.

Rom.4.17b the God in whom he believed, who gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist. Not only does God have power to create all things, but he does so as easily as speaking

2. The description of a Sovereign place-- palace canopy

The word "firmament" which is said to separate the water in sky from the seas and rivers is the picture of a great "dome".

In Exodus 39:3, it means to "spread by hammering" and Job 37:18 speaks of the skies being "spread out as a molten mirror" It is described as "shinny" in Dan.12:3..

I.e. ought to be viewed as poetically describing a great dome over the earth-- as in that of a palace--

God then is building a palace from which he will rule... where the "earth is his footstool" and the heavens his throne"

3. Sovereign Election-- dividing and gathering

vs. 4-- God separated... this world is one of the most central ideas of this chapter(vs.4, 6, 7, 14, 18)

-- Elsewhere in scripture, is synonymous with divine election

Lev. 20:24 "But I have said to you, "You shall inherit their land, and I will give it to you to possess, a land flowing with milk and honey." I am the Lord your God, who has **separated** you from the peoples.

Deut. 4:41 ¶ Then Moses **set apart** three cities on this side of the Jordan, toward the rising of the sun,

Deut. 10:8 At that time the Lord **separated** the tribe of Levi to bear the ark of the covenant of the Lord, to stand before the Lord to minister to Him and to bless in His name, to this day.

1Kings 8:53 "For You **separated** them from among all the peoples of the earth to be Your inheritance, as You spoke by Your servant Moses, when You brought our fathers out of Egypt, O Lord God."

Here-- the idea is that God is exerting his divine sovereignty toward the creation of a divine kingdom...

Acts 17:24 "God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands. 25 "Nor is He worshiped with men's hands, as though He needed anything, since He gives to all life, breath, and all things. 26 "And He has made from one blood every nation of men to dwell on all the face of the earth, and has determined their preappointed times and the boundaries of their dwellings,

4. Sovereign Naming--and he called it

5 times-- God is said to "name" what he created... (vs. 5 [2x's] 8, 10. In the OT, to name something is to assert sovereignty over it... so then (Gen.2:20, 2 Kings 23:34; 24:17)

6. Sovereign Mandate-- be fruitful and multiply

We see God giving "orders" to that which he creates-- orders to rule, be fruitful and multiply-- again, indicating that though empowered with authority, the ruling bodies and ultimately humanity is under the divine orders of God, the great king of kings...

Conclusion: By now we have begun to see just how boring in many respects are the questions raised by natural science as compared to the focus of this passage-- while scientist are busy following the footprints of God in the sand of his creation--- the author has himself caught up to God and is here giving us a description, not of creation per se, not of the footprints-- but of the Creator himself-- We see that the intention of Gen.1:1-3:3 is to name the God of the Covenant as the great King of Kings?

But all this pomp and majesty of the six days simply subserves the revelation of the ultimate and absolute dominion celebrated in the seventh day. Even during the pageant of the creature-kings in the narrative of days four through six, their royal splendor is paled by the surpassing glory of the Creator-King who commands them into existence, identifies them in his fiat-naming of them, and invests them with their subordinate dominions. And then when the creation apocalypse has reached the vicegerency of the God-like creature-king of the sixth day, and moves beyond it, we observe the glory of all the creature-kingdoms of all six days being carried along as a tributary offering with the gates of the Sabbath day to be laid at the feet of the Creator-King, now beheld in the brilliance of his epiphany as Sabbath Lord.

THE WHOLE OF LIFE IS TO BE THE LIVED UNDER THE SABBATH PRINCIPLE

1. All of life (Day 1-6) is what is *mirrored* in the Sabbath ordinance of Day seven.
2. Sabbath is intended to *mirror*, not supplant, the meaning of Sabbath as intrinsic to the six days of work.

IV. Other relevant questions:

1. The English word "day" in Genesis:
 - a. This is not a question raised against the Literary Framework of Genesis since the "framework" does not even speak to the issue of "day." Like Calvin, one can hold to a literary framework and still believe that the word "day" refers to a 24 hour period.
 - b. If it is argued that "day" must necessarily mean "24 hour period" if but for the sake of being true to the word. Remember that the Original is not "day" but "mOy" which can have a range of meaning including "day as in 24 hour period" or "period without specification of duration." The question remains as to whether or not the word "day" or "period" is an appropriate interpretation of the original word in Genesis 1 and 2. As it turns out, no doctrine of the Christian faith rest on whether or not the "day" is a "period" or a "24 hour period."
Range of Meaning Illustrated:
Gen. 2:17 but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall die
Gen. 5:4 The days of Adam after he became the father of Seth were eight hundred years; and he had other sons and daughters.
Gen. 5:5 Thus all the days that Adam lived were nine hundred thirty years; and he died.
Gen. 25:7 This is the length of Abraham's life, one hundred seventy-five years.
Gen. 25:24 When her time to give birth was at hand, there were twins in her womb.
Gen. 27:44-45, and stay with him a while, until your brother's fury turns away--

until your brother's anger against you turns away, and he forgets what you have done to him; then I will send, and bring you back from there. Why should I lose both of you in one day?"

Gen. 35:20 and Jacob set up a pillar at her grave; it is the pillar of Rachel's tomb, which is there to this day.

Gen. 38:12 In course of time the wife of Judah, Shua's daughter, died; when Judah's time of mourning was over, he went up to Timnah to his sheepshearers, he and his friend Hirah the Adullamite.

Gen. 47:9 Jacob said to Pharaoh, "The years of my earthly sojourn are one hundred thirty; few and hard have been the years of my life. They do not compare with the years of the life of my ancestors during their long sojourn.

Is. 13:6 Wail, for the day of the LORD is near; it will come like destruction from the Almighty!

Is. 13:9 See, the day of the LORD comes, cruel, with wrath and fierce anger, to make the earth a desolation, and to destroy its sinners from it.

Is. 58:13 If you refrain from trampling the Sabbath, from pursuing your own interests on my holy day; if you call the Sabbath a delight and the holy day of the LORD honorable; if you honor it, not going your own ways, serving your own interests, or pursuing your own affairs;

Is. 58:14 then you shall take delight in the LORD, and I will make you ride upon the heights of the earth; I will feed you with the heritage of your ancestor Jacob, for the mouth of the LORD has spoken.

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2. The "Slippery Slope" or "guilty by association" Argument related to hermeneutic: I.e. Since the framework theory applies a "literary" hermeneutic rather than a "literalistic" hermeneutic, it shares some tenants often associated with atheistic evolutionists. Therefore, the door is opened whereby atheistic assumptions may be held. (Examples: Naturalism, The loss of "soul" in humankind, antisupernaturalism, etc.)

Response:

a. The fallacy of *ad hominem* arguments.

One of the most common errors of reason is the argument "against the person." In this fallacy, a view is argued to be wrong because a bad person believed it, or right because a good person believed it. No individual has been consistently wrong about every thing nor consistently right about every thing. Thus, one cannot argue that a view is either right or wrong by referring to an individual who holds the view. In fact, the matter is entirely irrelevant. If a wicked person such as Hitler believed that the earth was round, his belief in a round earth would not make it square.

b. The fallacy of the "slippery slope":

This fallacy occurs when someone argues that embracing a particular view exposes one to the *risk* of embracing a dangerous or erroneous view. An Arminian might argue that embracing predestination exposes one to the risk of becoming unconcerned about

evangelism. A liberal might argue that believing in inerrancy could lead one to being intolerant of others. Often, a slippery slope argument is “enhanced” by citing an example of someone who “slipped.” It is then suggested that the view under consideration, while not wrong in itself, should be rejected because of what it might lead to. This abuse, however, does not make the truth dangerous in itself, or wrong. It is still a truth, to be embraced by everyone who loves truth.

V. Creation as Temple: (A “mediated” presence of God

God’s creation-temple, if not in itself a salvific temple, is a temple that for those with eyes to see and ears to hear, is a means toward communion with God.

Meredith Kline in his *Kingdom Prologue* has meticulously documented how the creation story in Genesis is told in terms of the formation of a cosmic temple-sanctuary formed by the presence of God in Word and Spirit! When God placed man in the Garden of Eden, Eden is depicted NOT merely as a biosphere, but a *theosphere*- as God’s heavenly dwelling place. As such Eden was envisioned as a temple where man would meet with God!!!

Clues:

- The same spirit-glory that introduces God’s entrance into Eden (Gen 1:2) is the image of God hovering over the tabernacle/temple as the “glory-cloud” in Exodus 13:21, 14:19, and in Ezekiel (Ezek 28:13ff.). (cf. *Isa. 51:3; Ezek. 28:13 ff.; 31:8f.*),
- Same Hebrew word used throughout Gen 1 (6, 7, 8, 14, 17, 20, etc) for “firmament”(KJ)/“expanse” (ESV) is used to describe the temple ceiling in Ps 150 (“mighty heavens” ESV) and in Ezekiel 1.
- The same Hebrew verbal form of *hithallek*, used for God’s “walking back and forth” in the Garden (Gen 3:8), also describes God’s presence in the tabernacle (Lev 26:12; Deut 23:14 [15]; 2 Sam 7:6-7).
- Isaiah described God as a great architect-artist who created the world “not to be empty (of Himself)... but as a place or God to dwell!” (Isa. 45:18)
- Humanity in the “image of God” (Gen. 1:26-27) and later “anointed by the Spirit (2:7) is a reference to the priestly vestment worn by a priest in the temple as t—e.g
 “The production of these vestments (as recounted in Exodus 28 and 39) Like putting on of the image of God. For immediately following the directions for the construction of the tabernacle (Exodus 25-27), are the prescriptions for Aaron’s sacred garments and his investiture (Exodus 28-29; cf. 39:1-13). And when examined these high priestly vestments turn out to be a scaled down, sartorial version of the tabernacle and especially the radiant glory-cloud of the Spirit of God that is given breathed unto humanity...” Meredith Kline
- The temple benediction is given to humanity in Eden: *And God blessed them. And God said to them, Gen. 1:28*
- *The responsibility given to humanity to “guard” (Heb. “shamar” (Gen. 2:15 The LORD God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden to work it and keep (guard) it.)* Elsewhere in the Bible, especially in passages dealing with the functions of the priests and Levites in Israel, the verb *shamar* (trans “keep”) occurs frequently in the sense of guarding or better “protecting” the holiness of God’s sanctuary against profanation by unauthorized “strangers” (cf., e.g., Num 1:53; 3:8,10,32; 8:26; 18:3ff.; 31:30,47; 1 Sam 7:1; 2 Kgs 12:9; 1 Chr 23:32; 2 Chr 34:9; Ezek 44:15f., 48:11). It is a word assigned to priests!
***Num. 18:3** They shall keep guard over you and over the whole tent, but shall not come near to the vessels of the sanctuary or to the altar lest they, and you, die. **4** They shall join you and keep guard over the tent of meeting for all the service of the tent, and no outsider shall come near you. **5** And you shall keep guard over the sanctuary and over the altar, that there may never again be wrath on the people of Israel. **6** And behold, I have taken your brothers the Levites from among the people of Israel. They are a gift to you, given to the LORD, to do the service of the tent of meeting.*

- There is the reference to the garden of Eden facing the East in Gen. 2:8 just as temple was always facing the East. (2:8 And the LORD God planted a garden in Eden, in the east (e.g. associated with entrance to temple)
- The curse that was enacted against fallen humanity is stated in terms of being excommunicated from out of the God's presence —from "before the face of God (Gen.3:8) as descriptive of the presence of God in the temple (c.f. Lev.23:3).

How then does it change our understanding of creation to see it as a "temple" of God?

VI. The Harmony of Faith and Science Illustrated

1. B.B. Warfield (19th century)

Discussion of the question (method of the divine procedure in creating man) became acute on the publication of Charles Darwin's treatise on the Origin of Species" in 1859, and can never sink again into rest until it is thoroughly understood in all quarters that "evolution" cannot act as a substitute for creation, but at best can supply only a theory of the method of the divine providence.... The question of the antiquity of man has of itself no theological significance... The Bible does not assign a brief span to human history: this is done only by a particular mode of interpreting the Biblical data, which is found on examination to rest on no solid basis. ("On The Antiquity and the Unity of the Human Race", Biblical and Theological Studies, p.238ff)

(speaking about how Calvin who in preserving ex nihilo, also made room from evolution... Accordingly his (Calvin's) doctrine of evolution is entirely unfruitful. The whole process takes place in the limits of six natural days. That the doctrine should be of use as an explanation of the mode of production of the ordered world, it was requisite that these six days should be lengthened out into six periods - six ages of the growth of the world. Had that been done Calvin would have been a precursor of the modern evolutionary theorists.

"Calvin's Doctrine of the Creation" *Princeton Theological Review* 13 (1915) 208-9.

(Also see on Warfield view of evolution: Dec. 1888 lectures on anthropology, Speer library, Princeton U. and his "Editorial note" in *Bible Student* 8 (1904) p. 243)

2. Charles Hodge: (19th Century)

"The Church has been forced more than once to alter her interpretation of the Bible to accommodate the discoveries of science. But this has been done without doing any violence to the Scriptures or in any degree impairing their authority." (p. 573 of Vol. I of Systematics, and pp. 210-11 of the abridged addition)

"It is of course admitted that, taking this account by itself, it would be most natural to understand the word (Yom) in its ordinary sense; but if that sense brings the Mosaic account into conflict with facts, and another sense avoids such conflict, then it is obligatory on us to adopt that other. Now it is urged that if the word day be taken in the sense of an indefinite period of time, a sense which it undoubtedly has in other parts of Scripture, there is not only no discrepancy between the Mosaic account of the creation and the assumed facts of geology, but there is a most marvelous coincidence between them." (pp. 570-1 of V. I and from p.210 abr.)

3. J. G. Machen (20th Century)

The book of Genesis seems to divide the work of creation into six successive steps or stages. It is certainly not necessary to think that the six days spoken of in the first chapter

of the Bible are intended to be six days of twenty four hours each. We may think of them rather as very long periods of time....

Gen. 1-3 point 2: "...The meaning of 'day' in Gen. 1 has been debated in the church at least since the days of Augustine. The literary form of the passage in its relation to other Scriptures is important for its interpretation. Responsible Reformed theologians have differed as to whether Genesis 1 teaches a young earth or allows for an old earth. While one of these interpretations must be mistaken, we believe that either position can be held by faithful Reformed people. (Christian View of Man p. 115)

4. Meredith Kline: (20st Century)

In this article I have advocated an interpretation of biblical cosmogony according to which Scripture is open to the current scientific view of a very old universe and, in that respect, does not discountenance the theory of an evolutionary origin of man. But while I regard the widespread insistence on a young earth to be a deplorable disservice to biblical truth, I at the same time decommitment to the authority of scriptural teaching to involve the acceptance of Adam as an historical individual, the covenant head and ancestral fount of the rest of mankind, and the recognition that it was the one and same divine act that constituted him the first man, Adam the son of God (Luke 3.38), that also imparted to him life (Gen. 2.7)." "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony," "Perspectives on Science and the Christian Faith" March 1996, p. 15.> note 47.

12. How to relate our doctrine of Creation with Modern Science:

"The gospel of Jesus Christ is the same for scientists as for anyone. Evolution is basically a red herring."

John Suppe, (Professor of Geology, Princeton)

IV. Conclusion:

1) *As reflected in the Framework of Genesis 1, and as reflected in Scripture throughout, the topic of Creation ought to move us to worship. God's Sabbath was His entrance as an enthronement of the Creator, as the assumption of His rightful position as Lord of Creation. Creation ought to be understood more as a Covenant made between the Creator and Creation than simply the object of debate and controversy. CREATION IS REDEMPTION AS WITHIN THE COVENANTAL CONTEXT OF HOLY SCRIPTURE...*

C.S. Lewis put it like this:

"Nature never taught me that there exists a God of glory and of infinite majesty. I had to learn that in other ways. But nature gave the word glory a meaning for me. I still do not know where else I could have found one. I do not see (either) how the 'fear' of God could have ever meant to me anything but the lowest, prudential efforts to be safe, if I had never seen certain ominous ravines and unapproachable crags." (The Four Loves, chapter 2)

Psa. 150:1

Praise the LORD!

Praise God in his sanctuary;

praise him in his mighty heavens!

2 Praise him for his mighty deeds;

praise him according to his excellent greatness!

Praise the LORD!

2) Creation ought also to entice us to heaven!

T. S. Eliot, when he wrote his poetry, testified less to the theological distinctions of the faith than to how those distinctions frame the great Christian exploration of the Creation that will be consummated by the final redemption of the earth. In the poem "Little Gidding," the title of which refers to a prayer colony in northern England, he put it this way:

*With the drawing of this Love and the voice of this Calling
We shall not cease from exploration
And the end of all our exploring
Will be to arrive where we started
And know the place for the first time.
Through the unknown, remembered gate
When the last of earth left to discover
Is that which was the beginning:
At the source of the longest river
The voice of the hidden waterfall
And the children in the apple-tree
Not known, because not looked for
But heard, half-heard in the stillness
Between two waves of the sea.
Quick now, here, now, always—
A condition of complete simplicity
(Costing not less than everything)
And all shall be well and
All manner of thing shall be well
When the tongues of flame are in-folded
Into the crowned knot of fire
And the fire and the rose are one. (T. S. Eliot, "Little Gidding," Four Quartets)*