

The Knowledge of God in Creation

Praising God in his Temple

³ And God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

⁴ And God saw that the light was good. And God separated the light from the darkness.

⁵ God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And there was evening and there was morning, the first day.

⁶ And God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."

⁷ And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so.

⁸ And God called the expanse Heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, the second day.

⁹ And God said, "Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear." And it was so.

¹⁰ God called the dry land Earth, and the waters that were gathered together he called Seas. And God saw that it was good.

¹¹ And God said, "Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, and fruit trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind, on the earth." And it was so.

¹² The earth brought forth vegetation, plants yielding seed according to their own kinds, and trees bearing fruit in which is their seed, each according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

¹³ And there was evening and there was morning, the third day.

¹⁴ And God said, "Let there be lights in the expanse of the heavens to separate the day from the night. And let them be for signs and for seasons, and for days and years,

¹⁵ and let them be lights in the expanse of the heavens to give light upon the earth." And it was so.

¹⁶ And God made the two great lights-- the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night-- and the stars.

¹⁷ And God set them in the expanse of the heavens to give light on the earth,

¹⁸ to rule over the day and over the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. And God saw that it was good.

¹⁹ And there was evening and there was morning, the fourth day.

²⁰ And God said, "Let the waters swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the heavens."

²¹ So God created the great sea creatures and every living creature that moves, with which the waters swarm, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its 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 birds multiply on the earth."

²³ And there was evening and there was morning, the fifth day.

²⁴ And God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures according to their kinds-- livestock and creeping things and beasts of the earth according to their kinds." And it was so.

²⁵ And God made the beasts of the earth according to their kinds and the livestock according to their kinds, and everything that creeps on the ground according to its kind. And God saw that it was good.

Genesis 1:3-25

Creation: The Place of Worship

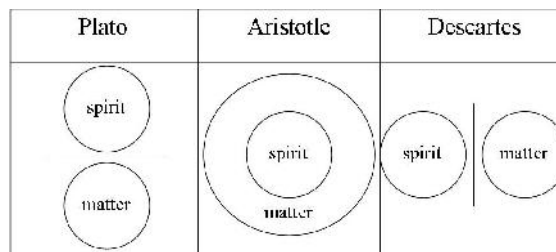
WE ARE CONTINUING TODAY IN GENESIS 1. Before we do anything else, I want to give you two sets of words. Your job is to think about what comes to mind with each. The first set is: light, firmament/expanse, lights (sun, moon, stars), seas, beasts, plants, mountains. The second set is vaulted domes, pillars, beams, doors, chambers, windows, foundations, storehouses, ritual baths, curtains, separation of space, workman, measuring, building, fastening, hammering. What comes to your mind in the first set of words? Given what we are studying, I think most people would say *creation*. What comes to your mind in the second set of words? Most people would probably say sanctuaries or *temples* or holy places.

Now, let me ask a question. When I mentioned the first set, why didn't a temple come to your mind and when I mentioned the second set, why didn't creation come to your mind? Let this question sit a moment. Think about why this might be the case. Why is it that if I speak of "natural" things we think of creation but not temples, and when I think of holy things in the context of a particular kind of building and work, we think of temples but not creation?

The answer isn't that the two sets are not interchangeable. In fact, they are. The first set of words are used to describe tabernacles and temples throughout the Bible. The second set of words are used to describe creation in many creation stories throughout the Bible. (I have provided a chart on this as an appendix to the sermon). So the answer isn't that the Bible prevents us from doing so. We have to look elsewhere—to philosophy and worldviews.

I believe the answer is that the modern mind bifurcates, or splits into two, concepts that in the ancient mind were inextricably tied together.¹ Rationalism and

¹ **Digging Deeper:** There have been three basic ways of viewing the relationship between spirit and matter in western thought.



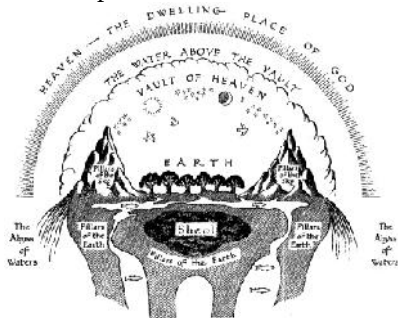
modern scientific inquiry are two outcomes of this philosophy. Not that it is bad to be rational or to do science, but the more we do it our way, the less we understand that ancient peoples didn't divorce creation and temples the way that we do.

The [names of their temples](#) show this: *Temple of the Foundation of Heaven and Earth* (Babylon), *Temple of the Wielder of the 7 Decrees of Heaven and Earth* (Borsippa), and so on.² You would be hard pressed to find a church being called something like that today. The way they built [their temples](#) shows this (the pyramids of Giza are a copy of Orion's Belt, Ankor Thom is a copy of Draco, etc).³ You would be just as hard pressed to find church architecture made in the last 200 years that did anything remotely like this. Not that this is good or bad, it's just different.

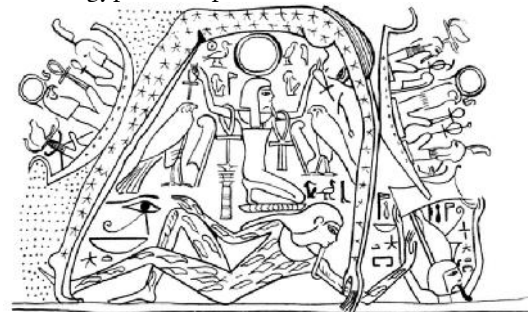
We like to think of creation in physical terms so that we can speak of it scientifically and materially. This causes us to ask, "[What happened?](#)" This isn't wrong, but we have to understand that our question and their question were very different. They were asking, "[Why has this happened](#)" and "[Who did it?](#)" To mix our question and theirs together often creates contradictions between modern science and Bible reading where no contradiction actually exists. I know this is hard for some to accept, so we'll look at some examples of this as we get into the passage.

As we can see, Plato put spirit into the heavens, while matter resided down here. For Aristotle, spirit was to be found inside of matter. For 2000 years, the western mind took one of these two views. The third shift is the one most western people today have in mind. It is a radical separation between spirit and matter, a kind of compartmentalizing of the two so that you can only talk about one or the other. The result of this has been our inability to merge spirit and matter in our minds the way ancients did. A good example of this can be seen in comparing two drawings of ancient cosmology. Though they depict the same three-tiered universe, the modern depiction is utterly void of the supernatural. So even when we understand ancient cosmology, we seem unable to describe it as they did. We fail to grasp how their metaphysics was intertwined with it.

Modern Depiction of Ancient Cosmology



Ancient Egyptian Depiction of the Same Cosmology



² [John Walton](#), "The Mesopotamian Background of the Tower of Babel Account and Its Implications." *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 5 (1995): 155-75.

³ See [Douglas Van Dorn](#), *Giants: Sons of the Gods* (Erie, CO: Waters of Creation, 2013), 93ff.

“Why” is a question they cared about. This is clearly what the Bible cares about along with “for what purpose.” Thus, when they wrote about creation, **worship** was their chief and perhaps only real concern. We looked at this in much detail last time. Worship is the “function” for which God created all things. This is why we looked at creation as a temple in our last sermon. Today, I want to get a little more specific about this and then look at what humans have done with the “for what purpose” part of the Bible’s explanation. I believe this to be extremely practical and important.

Forming

Day 1

We are going to make our way through the first six days of creation, stopping just prior to the creation of mankind. These six days are arranged **topically** so that they reverse the conditions found upon the earth in **vs. 2**. The earth was “**without form and empty**.” Thus, the days of creation are arranged such that the first three days see God **forming the formless** and the last three days see him **filling the empty**. Forming and filling is how the Scripture presents creation to us. This is functional in nature. It teaches us through the structure that creation has purpose and this purpose results in the chief end of all creation.

On day 1 (**vv. 3-5**) there is one very important work that God is said to do. God fills the darkness with light (**Gen 1:3**). The Word of God speaks saying, “**Let there be light**.” And **there is light**. There is no struggle. There is no conflict. There is no hint of any difficulty. God speaks and there is light. The word and light remind us, as we have seen previously, of the Lord Jesus Christ, for he is the Word and Light of God.

There are two actions said to take place after speaking light into darkness. God is said to “**separate**” the light from the darkness (**Gen 1:4**). This divine separation is an act of the Great Priest-King who is separating the unholy from the holy. After God separates light from darkness, he gives them both **names** (**vs. 5**). These names continue to teach us about the function that they will now serve. It is not just that there is light, but that the **light is called Day**. It is not just that there is darkness, but that the **darkness is called Night**.

It is important to note that Day and Night are not deified here. They are not gods or goddesses as they are in the rest of the ancient world. However, the ESV does capitalize them, and I think this is interesting. Just as you and I have capitalized names, Day is the name given to light and Night is the name given to darkness.

These names tell the light and the darkness what they will now do. They will separate time into constant rhythms which exist for the sake of the life that God will soon create. *They* will exist for *us*. Day exists for working. Night exists for sleeping. So the emphasis is *not* on the bare things formed (light and dark), as it often is in other places where light represents God and darkness represents evil. The focus is on the *names* and the *functions* that Day and Night will soon serve. In naming them, God shows that he has rulership over them both, and they are subservient to his commandment, no matter if we conceive of them as natural laws (as moderns do) or as wrapped up in metaphysical and spiritual ideas like the ancients.

A final point about vv. 3-5 is the last two words. In Hebrew they are *yom ehad*. This phrase translates literally as “day one.” In the scientific debate, much time is taken up with the meaning of this phrase. This is done in order to bring “concord” between the Bible and science. Some say that it clearly points out that what is in mind is a 24 hour day. Others say that a day is like a thousand years, and so no such time scale can be gleaned from this. Both sides are zealously trying to guard the Bible and science from contradiction. I think both sides are also missing the point, and creating problems where none exist, sort of like when people pit human responsibility and predestination against one another.

There is no question but that the text presents us with evening and morning, day and night, and day 1. The *framework* is such that it gives us *something tangible that we can grasp* in order to make sense of it all. The question is whether this framework is meant to be taken as scientific history as a modern person would do it or as a religious analogy like you find when they completed Baal’s temple in seven days (did they really build such a magnificent palace for Baal in only seven days when it took Solomon 7 years to build his?). This was one of my chief purposes in raising the questions I asked at the very beginning today. The question is *not whether* God created, every Christian believes that. The question is whether its focus is on how God created or why he created.

You might think this is a false dichotomy, that it might care about both how and why. This is logically possible, but I think incorrect.⁴ In answering this question

⁴ I suppose that Moses could be describing things according to his *ancient* science and a religious analogy. But Moses was not a modern person. He was not doing modern science. That wouldn’t be possible. If we say that perhaps God was doing modern science here and encoded it all for us modern people to decode even though it was unbeknownst to Moses, I believe that we enter into a labyrinth that allows us to turn God’s words into anything we want it to mean at any place we want it to mean that. Why? Because there is simply no way we can prove the claim other than to say that “God knew (or perhaps, God told Moses) that he was doing modern science. Just trust me. I know.” It is a claim to know information that isn’t derived from the text itself, but

for yourself, consider these points. **First**, it is often said that no one questioned the length of creation until the advent of modern science (and Darwin is almost always thrown in here, thus attaching the stigma of long ages to the theory of godless macro-evolution). While it is technically true that no one seems to have proposed long ages until modern science came along, it is most certainly not true that the length of creation went unquestioned or that this was some kind of a litmus test for whether a person was truly a Christian in the thousands of years of interpretation prior to this. **Augustine, Basil, Origen, Ambrose, Bede, Anselm, and Aquinas** all interpreted the creation as having occurred in something like a single moment, with varying degrees of literalness attached to the word “day.”

The idea of reading Genesis 1 as a literary framework, which doesn’t really comment one way or the other on actual scientific length of creation, appeared at least as early as **Robert Grossteste** (c. 1168-1253), and Aquinas, borrowing from him, was a pioneer of what some want to dub an abnormal, novel way of reading the passage, even though it is now 1,000 years old.⁵ Because of this, one Reformed theologian asks, “**If the text of Genesis is so clear-cut why did the church down the centuries not see it that way? Does that not say something not only about the interpreters but also the text? Claims that a literal reading of the days of Genesis 1 is obvious fall down when the history of interpretation is taken into consideration.**”⁶ I think this question needs to be considered in formulating a final opinion on the matter. The church has never been of one mind on the matter of “when.” Perhaps this shows us that the focus isn’t on that question in the first place.

A second point comes from **Zechariah 14:7**. It says, “**And there shall be a unique day, which is known to the LORD, neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light.**” The context here is apocalyptic, the famous Day of the LORD. It is also filled with temple imagery, just like Genesis 1. It concludes with the LORD being king over all the earth.

The phrase “unique day” is the same *yom ehad* we find in **Genesis 1:5**. It is sometimes said that “yom + the ordinal” always means 24 hour days in the Bible. But the point of the Day of the LORD is not scientific; it is not trying to say that this is a 24 hour day that somehow ends. Rather, it is theological and religious and apocalyptic. There is coming a day when God will judge all people for their sins and

from mysterious insight that individual simply has. The language of modern science just isn’t here; but the language of ancient science may very well be (see below).

⁵ See the survey in **Robert Letham**, “In The Space Of Six Days”: The Days Of Creation From Origen To The Westminster Assembly, *Westminster Theological Journal* 61:2 (1999): 166 [149-74].

⁶ Letham, 174.

set himself up as ruler of the universe for all to see and acknowledge in a way that they cannot escape as they presently are inclined to do. In fact, the new creation here echoes the original creation in that both exist to create worship in the creature. In this passage, almost all commentators will argue that *yom ehad* is to be taken like “day” is in **Gen 2:4**—“**in the day that God created.**” It represents a new coming age, as John says in Revelation, a never ending day where there will be no sun for light, because the light of Jesus illuminates all things.⁷

A third point is that we mustn’t come to the text presupposing that science is in it, especially knowing how religious it is. But we may look for scientific clues—if there are any—that would lead us this direction. I don’t believe there are any (at least not “modern” science), because science as we know it is a very new phenomenon. But I know people who disagree with me. What follows in the next section (day 2) should be allowed to speak in this regard.

Day 2

The second work of forming takes place on “day 2” (**vv. 6-8**). This day has some important concepts that we understand very differently than an ancient person would have. The two concepts are something called the *raqia* and the “**waters above the heavens.**” This is probably the most difficult part of the entire chapter for us to wrap our minds around, because we just don’t think the way they did about the world. Modern science is not ancient “science.”

The passage says that God said “**Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters. And God made the expanse and separated the waters that were under the expanse from the waters that were above the expanse. And it was so**” (**vv. 6-7**). What does this mean?

First, let’s try to understand this “expanse” or the Hebrew *raqia*. Expanse is the ESV’s word.⁸ The Living Bible, reflecting modern science, has “space.” **Henry Morris** in his influential book *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings*, popularized this definition when he said, “It seems ... that the essential meaning of the word [heaven]⁹ corresponds to our modern term space, such as when we speak of the universe as a universe of space and time. Apparently there is no other Hebrew word used in this sense in the Bible,

⁷ Indeed, John gets part of this very idea from this passage as well as **Isaiah 60:19-20**.

⁸ Also the NAS, TNK, NET, YLT. The word is partially correct in that there is an “expanse” that is formed by the beating out or hammering of metal into a roundish surface. See below.

⁹ Here, “heaven” is the *shamayim*. But later (see next note), he says the same thing about the *raqia*.

whereas the use of ‘heaven’ is everywhere consistent with such a concept.”¹⁰ So, some people think they have found scientific evidence right here that demonstrates Genesis 1 is trying to explain the world as we conceive of it.

However, it is translated very differently by other English Bibles. In fact, every translation prior to the advent of modern science renders it as “firmament” (WYC, COV, GNV, KJV, also NKJV, ASV, RSV, DRA, ERV). This includes the Greek LXX, the Latin Vulgate, and the Aramaic Targums. Why would not a single pre-scientific translation in any language call it “space” if that is what it really meant? **What is a firmament?** Well, as the word itself helps us see, it is **something that is firm or hard; solid**. *Raqia* comes from a Hebrew word *raqa* meaning “to beat out, to stamp, to spread out by hammering,”¹¹ something that was done during the construction of the tabernacle when they beat gold foil for use as the “sky” in the top of the holy place (**Ex 39:3**). Reflecting the ancient idea you have other translations calling it a “dome” (CJB, NRS, CEB) or “vault” (NIV) or “solid arch” (BBE). This is obviously vastly different than “space.” Space is part of the firmament, but the space ends in a solid dome.

The Greek and Latin words both mean this and no one questions that. In a painstakingly meticulous journey through **Borneo** (the Dayak people of Indonesia), the Mortlock Islands and Melanesia (New Guinea), **South Africa**, The **Congo** (the Ngombe people), **Sudan** (the Nyimang people), **Mali** (the Dogon people), **North American** (the Seneca, Navaho, and Cherokee Indians), **Siberia** (the Yakuts), **Russia** (the Chuckchee people), **Mongolia** (the Lapp and Buriat people), **Northern reaches of Europe**, **Japan**, **China**, **India**, **Sumer**, **Egypt**, and **Babylon**, Paul Seely concludes, “[A]ll peoples in the ancient world thought of the sky as solid,”¹² adding, “I know of no evidence that any scientifically naive people anywhere on earth believed that the firmament was just empty space or atmosphere.”¹³

The Bible describes this too. Job says, “**Can you, like him, spread out [raqa] the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror?**” (**Job 37:18**). The Proverb says, “He

¹⁰ **Henry R. Morris**, *The Genesis Record: A Scientific and Devotional Commentary on the Book of Beginnings* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Book House, 1976), 41. This is a previous comment he refers to when discussing the meaning of *raqia* a little later on when he says, “It may well be synonymous with our modern technical term ‘space,’ practically the same as discussed earlier in connection with the meaning of ‘heaven’” (p. 58). Notice how Morris’ book title presupposes the very thing that must be proved, namely that Genesis is a book of science.

¹¹ See **John D. Currid**, *Genesis: Volume 1* (Webster, NY: Evangelical Press, 2003), 65.

¹² **Paul Seely**, “Water Above Part I: The Meaning of *raqia* in Gen 1:6-8, *Westminster Theological Journal* 53:2 (1991): 228 [225-40].

¹³ *Ibid.*, 231.

established the heavens ... when he made firm the skies above” (Prov 8:27). Ezekiel describes it this way, “Over the heads of the living creatures there was something like a dome (*raqia*), shining like crystal, spread out above their heads” (Ezek 1:22 NRS). Amos, reflecting perfectly the temple theme says, “[God] builds his upper chambers in the heavens and founds his vault upon the earth” (Amos 9:6).

But people have questioned the meaning of the Hebrew word, claiming that ancient people’s didn’t understand modern science, so they used the wrong word in all their translations. But God knew modern science, and the Hebrew word has this meaning, even if no one else knew about it. We (modern people) can finally decode that meaning because of science. I asked some friends about this and here is how one answered. “No amount of evidence will convince me, because if *raqia* means firmament then that would mean the Bible was wrong and so cannot be inspired.” This is what presupposing modern science in Genesis 1 can do. It forces upon the mind this thought that if the Bible doesn’t conform to modern science, then everything in it must be wrong (we might ask the question here, what if 1,000 years from now future science discovers that today’s science is completely wrong?). And so, rather than take these many parallels to Genesis 1:5 literally as there being a hard dome over the earth, many will take them poetically, even if they aren’t in a poetry section, which seems to me a double standard.

I know that the things I’m talking about right now make some of you uncomfortable. There was a time when they would have made me that way too. Believe me when I say that I’m not trying to convince you of any particular scientific position. In fact, I really don’t care what scientific position you take. I am trying to gently prod us though to consider the Bible on its own terms rather than on ours. Reading the Bible through its eyes rather than our own is vitally important to correct interpretations. I want to see all of us learn to do that, even if it is difficult for us to come to grips with. I could be wrong, but I’m giving you the reasons why I hold the view that I hold.

Consider. What if the presupposition of my friend is wrong? What if, like Amos and Ezekiel, the purpose is to describe a temple, rather than to give a scientific explanation for how the heavens work? If that were the case, then Genesis would not be contradictory to science, because its purpose isn’t scientific. It is religious. The earth has a hard dome because that’s how temples are made, as you might understand if you went into the Hagia Sophia for example. This doesn’t mean Genesis 1 is not real history or that God didn’t literally create anything. It simply means that its purpose is to convey creation as something profoundly religious.



To further see this, think about this idea of “waters above the earth.” Again, I had one friend say something like this. “I wouldn’t be surprised if one day, science discovered that at the outer reaches of the universe, it was discovered that water surrounded the whole thing.” The point seems to be to make science harmonize with what is so obviously non-scientific. The ancient mind thought that there was, literally, huge reservoirs of water above the crystalline firmament. This, again, is confirmed by a tour of the Bible and of the ancient world.¹⁴

Psalm 148:4, “Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!” Psalm 104:2-3, “Stretching out the heavens like a tent. He lays the beams of his chambers on the waters. Jeremiah 10:13, “When he utters his voice, there is a tumult of waters in the heavens.” This isn’t talking about rain and clouds. It has something much, much higher in mind. At least my friend knew that much. But this is so patently false scientifically, that people go to great lengths to bring “concord” between the text and science, even though that entire program, it seems to me, misses the point and actually invents contradictions where there are none.

Like day 1, the emphasis on day 2 then turns to God separating and naming. God separates the waters with the *raqia*. The dome keeps the waters at bay. In this way, God puts a boundary on the chaos, sort of like a beach to an ocean, a boundary that they could not cross. And this allows God to create life on this once watery waste. Then he calls the *raqia* “heaven.” In the same way that night is not pure darkness (they are not synonyms), the heavens are not fully and only composed of the *raqia*. In their minds, there were various levels of heaven (recall Paul’s “third heaven” idea; 2 Cor 2:12). In what we would call “space” or “air,” birds and demons lived. Then there is the *raqia* itself. And above the solid dome we have been talking about, God dwelt in the third heaven. The dome or tent of the *raqia* separated them all and brought order to the *choas*. God is enthroned above the flood

¹⁴ Paul H. Seely, “Water Above Part II: The Meaning of ‘The Water above the Firmament’ in Gen 1:6-8, *Westminster Theological Journal* 54:1 (1992): 29-45.

(Ps 29:10) as a depiction of his sovereignty over this temple.¹⁵ It is that simple and that straight forward.

Day 3

The idea of waters being related to temples is universal, and in my mind, that's the point. As it says in **Ezekiel 28:2**, "You say, 'I am a god, I sit in the seat of the gods, in the heart of the seas.'" In fact, this is made clear on day three when the waters are gathered together (**vs. 10**). The word here is *mikveh*, and this is an ancient Jewish ritual baptism. Until I finally realized that Genesis 1 describes a temple, I couldn't understand why it would use this word, when there are other words that work better. Now I understand. So on day one, there is a separation of space. The same goes for day 2. Then on day 3, there is a ritual baptism as the final climatic act of separation. God is setting apart his temple, consecrating it in this baptism. At this moment, God calls the gathered waters "Seas." This just happens to be the name that Solomon gave to the gigantic washing basin in his Temple. Solomon

¹⁵ See **Brian Godawa**, "Mesopotamian Cosmic Geography in the Bible," <ftp://classes.waynesburg.edu/Philosophy/PHL215/Godawa%20CosmicGeo.pdf>. A word about Brian's paper (and the paper from Dr. Hess in n. 16) is in order, since he writes for *Biologos*. *Biologos* states that it is "A community of evangelical Christians committed to exploring and celebrating the compatibility of evolutionary creation and biblical faith, guided by the truth that 'all things hold together in Christ' [**Colossians 1:17**]." However, not all writers for *Biologos* hold to macroevolution, and this includes Brian, as he told me face-to-face last week (Oct 4, 2013). I don't not know where Dr. Hess stands on the issue, because I haven't asked him.

The point is, Brian wrote for them because to him, the question is a moot point. If Genesis isn't talking about science, but is giving ancient cosmology for different purposes, then the question of evolution isn't a biblical question, as B.B. Warfield and others recognized over a century ago (see **B. B. Warfield**, *Evolution, Science, and Scripture: Selected Writings* (ed. David N. Livingstone and Mark A. Noll; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000; see the important article by **Mark Noll** and David Livingstone, "Charles Hodge and B. B. Warfield on Science, the Bible, Evolution, and Darwinism, in *Perspectives on an Evolving Creation*, ed. Deith B. Miller, [Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2003], 61-71). Brian does not personally believe in macroevolution, and neither do I, but it isn't on the grounds that it contradicts Scripture. We just aren't convinced by the science (or logic) of it. If God did create through evolution, then he would both have that ability and that right and nothing in Scripture would be compromised. But that is not to say that God *did* create through evolution. One final point, following the last comment made by Noll in his article, one of the things I am profoundly concerned about when it comes to concordism (**Concordism** is the idea that the Bible and science must be in concord or harmony. Both young earth creationists like Ken Ham and old earth creationist like Hugh Ross are concordists) is how it artificially pits science against the Bible, or to put it another way, one form of God's revelation against another. I can't count how many times I've heard people say that we can't trust modern science because it goes against the Bible or that the Bible doesn't really mean that, because it goes against science. This creates suspicion and casts great doubt on either the scientific enterprise or God's word, something that **Calvin** was aware of, even though he took a literal 24 hour approach to creation. But humans can interpret God's world just as well as they can interpret God's word. Similarly, they can make interpretive mistakes reading God's word just as easily as they can make mistakes interpreting God's world. On this see the discussion on Calvin in **Robert Letham** (above, n. 4).

understood this relationship between creation and the temple that we have forgotten.

Suddenly, the focus on day 3 shifts to the sprouting of vegetation, plants with seeds, and fruit trees “according to their kinds” (vs. 11-12). Now things can grow in this temple, because it is a holy place. (And all this before there is even a sun for photosynthesis on a literal, chronological reading). What is the focus here? Again, using modern science as our filter, we like to think that the focus is on taxonomy. “Kinds” becomes a synonym for “species.”¹⁶ And while it can have this meaning, it also has a narrower meaning than this, so that it can refer to animals within a kind (i.e. different kinds of birds, etc).¹⁷ It is curious that the only uses of this word outside of Genesis 1 are in religious contexts, especially of clean and unclean animals, ritual purity, and temples. (Gen 6:20; 7:14; Lev 11:14, 15, 16, 19, 22, 29; Deut 14:13, 14, 15, 18; Ezek 47:10). The only root word scholars know with certainty is related to this word is the word for an idol.¹⁸

Filling

Day 4

At this point, the focus is shifting from forming to filling. Beginning on day 4, God puts light in the firmament (vv. 14-19). The idea as presented elsewhere is literally that he sets them like a jeweler would set a diamond into a ring. But again, the focus is not on the science of it. Rather, it is on the divine separation. These sun will perform the identical function that the light performed on day 1—to separate the day from the night. Next, something hinted at previously is now spoken about directly. They will be for signs and seasons, for days and years. The natural rhythm of the day and night is broadened to include months and years. What needs the

¹⁶ Meanwhile, the problem of not having a sun with vegetation present presents itself to the scientist, who has to figure out both how and why God would create a temporary light source on day 1 that creates photosynthesis, but then had to replace it prior to the fall on day 4. Either this, or simply say that there was no photosynthesis occurring during day 3, contrary to observable physics.

¹⁷ See Richard Hess, “The Meaning of *min* in the Hebrew Old Testament, Parts 1 and 2, <http://biologos.org/blog/the-meaning-of-min-part-1>.

¹⁸ Ibid. One more point about the word *yom* with the ordinal can be seen here. Hosea 6:1-2 has *yom* with two and *yom* with three. “Come, let us return to the LORD for he has torn us, but he will heal us; he has wounded up, but he will bandage us. He will revive us after two days; he will raise us up on the third day, that we may live before him.” This passage may be a kind of typological reference to the resurrection of Christ. However, in the immediate context, it speaks about Israel returning to the LORD. The focus is certainly not on literal 24 hours, but on returning quickly to God whom they have forsaken.

seasons? Living creatures do. So this is all in anticipation of the living creatures to come.

Before it gets to them, it adds something else. These lights are placed here to “rule.” It calls the sun the “greater light” and the moon it calls the “lesser light.” They will rule the day and the night. That is their domain. Curiously, it does not name them, presumably, because Moses does not want to give any hint at this early juncture that there is something here to worship. Indeed, they are given for signs, and signs signify something else. They are not an end to themselves.

Critically, it adds, “and the stars” at the end as an afterthought. You see, throughout the Ancient Near East, including throughout the Bible, stars are sacramentally linked (for lack of a better term) to the heavenly host, angels if you will. In their creation stories, they play significant parts. But in this story, the point is perfectly clear to the reader. There is only one being here to be worshipped, and it isn’t the sun, the moon, or the stars, even if they were to have specific angels presiding over their courses. Their job is to serve the earth (vs. 18), to be lights upon it. Consider the idea of idols again here, you will understand why in a moment.

Day 5

On the fifth day, God spoke the word and the waters began to swarm with living creatures (20). These are the first living creatures mentioned in the Scripture. It includes, curiously enough, “great sea creatures” (vs. 21). This is the *tannin*, elsewhere said to be the *leviathan*. If an Israelite were familiar with, say, the Enuma Elish, he would probably start laughing at this point. In that story, Tiamat is very much like the leviathan. She begins their story. But here, she does not even exist until day 4. She serves God. She is not worthy of worship.

Immediately thereafter, birds begin to fly above the earth across (but not “in”) the space hollowed out by the *raqia* (20). It tells us that each of these were made after their kinds (21). Later, in the Flood story, these kinds will become clean and unclean things that God distinguishes from one another. One more important part of day 5 is how God tells these creatures “be fruitful and multiply” (22). This same command will be given to the man, which we will look at next week.

Day 6

The final day begins with God telling the earth to bring forth living creatures according to their kinds (24). Like the other creative acts, God simply speaks, and it is so. This ends with the words, “God saw that it was good.” This phrase is used throughout the creative week. Since it is used of things other than moral beings (like

men and angels), this does not refer to some kind of sinless perfection, but simply to God's ability to speak, command, and cause things to come into existence exactly as he wants them to. It is therefore a reflection on him, rather than us. It is here, in his temple, that we will praise and worship the Creator.

Who Will You Worship?

Throughout the entire story, God is presented as the only actor here. He is the creator. He is the separator. He is the namer. He is the King. He is the one to be worshipped. And make no mistake, this story exists for this purpose. For the rest of our time together, I want to call our attention to the way other parts of the Bible use Genesis 1 in this regard. I want to start with Psalm 19.

Psalm 19 explains exactly why God created—the purpose and end of his amazing creation. “The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork” (Ps 19:1). Day pours out speech; night reveals knowledge (2). The sun under his tent (4) comes out of his chamber (5) and gives heat to all things (6) so that all may know the glory of God. Do you hear the temple language in Psalm 19 as it reflects on Genesis 1? God created this world so that he might be worshiped in his temple.

Psalm 148 adds another dimension. It is that of a command. “Praise the LORD! Praise the LORD from the heavens; praise him in the heights!” (Ps 148:1). “Praise him, all his angels; praise him, all his hosts!” (2). I mentioned them earlier in connection with the heavenly lights. Thus, the next verse says, “Praise him, sun and moon, praise him, all you shining stars!” (3). Then, “Praise him, you highest heavens, and you waters above the heavens!” (4). Even the material, non-sentient creation is commanded to praise God. Not only are we to praise him in his created temple, the created temple exists to praise him. “Let them praise the name of the LORD! For he commanded and they were created. And he established them forever and ever; he gave a decree, and it shall not pass away.” (5-6).

“Praise the LORD from the earth, you great sea creatures and all deeps, fire and hail, snow and mist, stormy wind fulfilling his word! Mountains and all hills, fruit trees and all cedars! Beasts and all livestock, creeping things and flying birds!” (7-10). “Let them praise the name of the LORD, for his name alone is exalted; his majesty is above earth and heaven” (13). This is how the Scripture time and again reflects upon and applies Genesis 1. This is its concern.

But what do people do with this knowledge of God in creation? Romans 1 tells us what men have done. It begins the argument by stating that in creation, God

has revealed certain of his attributes to all people. “What can be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them” (Rom 1:19). This is like Psalm 19. It defines the attributes as invisible things, namely his eternal power and divine nature. That is, in creation everyone can see that God is extremely powerful and that God is totally sovereign. He is God. This, it says, is “clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made” (20). This leaves everyone without excuse. No atheist can say, “I didn’t know that you existed, that you were omnipotent, and that you were the sovereign lord of all.” Do you notice the focus, then, of Romans 1? It is on God as the creator of all things; the “who” rather than the “how.”

Next, it tells us what we have done with this knowledge. “For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened” (21). It then uses the language of Psalm 14 saying that they became fools (22). Again, what they do is they exchange the glory of the immortal God for images. Idols! False worship. Here I return the relationship between things being made after their kind (m-y-n) and idols (t-n-m-h). Rather than worshipping the creator for making the kinds, they worship the kinds themselves and turn them into idols that resemble “man and birds and animals and creeping things” (23). Thus it concludes, “they exchanged the truth about God for a lie and worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator, who is blessed forever! Amen” (25).

There is always a danger in this, no matter how careful we are with the text. For it is our own hearts that drive us to it. But when we understand that the point of Genesis 1 is to teach us about worship, we become more culpable when we stray from this path. If the world worships the wrong thing and is without excuse, how much more would those who have the Holy Scripture and yet refuse to worship the God of creation be judged? Sadly, western civilization falls into this category, for we have thrown off the fetters of the Bible, run towards our philosophies and away from God. What the world needs most is to be called back to the truth that God’s creation exists so that he might be praised and thanked and worshiped in his temple. It must start in the church.

Therefore, what will you do? “Praise God in his holy places: praise him in the firmament of his power” (Ps 148:17). “Praise the LORD! Praise God in his sanctuary; praise him in his mighty heavens!” (Ps 150:1). “Praise God in his holy place! Praise him in the heavenly dome of his power!” (Ps 150:1 CJB). And know

that if you praise God through the Son and the Spirit, that he will not condemn you, but will save you on the great and final Day.

Appendix

Hallelujah. Praise God in His sanctuary; praise Him in the sky, His stronghold. (Psa 150:1 TNK)

'Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done, On earth as it is in heaven. (Mat 6:10 NAS)

(all verses from NAS unless otherwise noted)

Description	Creation		Temple	
Storehouse	Job 38:22	Have you entered the storehouses of the snow, Or have you seen the storehouses of the hail.	1Ki 7:51 GWN	All the work King Solomon did on the LORD's temple was finished. He brought the holy things that had belonged to his father David—the silver, gold, and utensils—and put them in the storerooms of the LORD's temple.
Chambers	Amos 9:6	The One who builds His upper chambers in the heavens,	1Ki 6:5	⁵ And against the wall of the house he built stories encompassing the walls of the house around both the nave and the inner sanctuary; thus he made side chambers all around.
Vaulted Dome	Amos 9:6	And has founded His vaulted dome over the earth.	1Ki 6:15	Then he built the walls of the house on the inside with boards of cedar; from the floor of the house to the ceiling he overlaid <i>the walls</i> on the inside with wood, and he overlaid the floor of the house with boards of cypress.
Doors	Ps 78:23	He commanded the clouds above, And opened the doors of heaven.	1Ki 6:31	And for the entrance of the inner sanctuary he made doors of olive wood, the lintel <i>and</i> five-sided doorposts.
Pillars	1Sa 2:8	For the pillars of the earth are the LORD's.	2Ch 3:17	And he erected the pillars in front of the temple.
Beams	Ps 104:3	He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters.	1Ki 6:36	And he built the inner court with three rows of cut stone and a row of cedar beams .
Ritual Bath (mikveh)	Gen 1:10	And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering (mikveh) of the waters He called seas.	Isa 22:11, cf. Lev 11:36.	And you made a reservoir (mikveh) between the two walls For the waters of the old pool. But you did not depend on Him who made it, Nor did you take into consideration Him who planned it long ago.
Curtains	Isa 40:22	He who sits above the vault of the earth, And its inhabitants are like grasshoppers, Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain And spreads them out like a tent to dwell in.	Ex 26:2	"The length of each curtain shall be twenty-eight cubits, and the width of each curtain four cubits.
Windows	Gen 8:2	The fountains of the deep and the windows of the heavens were closed.	1 Ki 6:4	Also for the house he made windows with <i>artistic frames</i> .
Separation of space	Gen 1:4	And God saw that the light was good; and God separated the light from the darkness.	Ex 26:33	"And you shall hang up the veil under the clasps, and shall bring in the ark of the testimony there within the veil; and the veil shall serve for you as a partition between the holy place and the holy of holies.
	Job 26:10	"He has inscribed a circle on the surface of the waters, At the boundary of light and darkness.		
foundations	Isa 6:4	the foundations of the thresholds trembled at the voice of him who called out, while the [heavenly] temple was filling with smoke.	Ezra 3:10	The builders had laid the foundation of the temple of the LORD.
	Ps 104:5	He established the earth upon its foundations , So that it will not totter forever and ever.		
Workman	Prov 8:30	I was beside him, like a master workman , and I was daily his delight,	Ex 36:8 (see Jer 52:15)	And all the skillful men among those who were performing the work made the

				tabernacle with ten curtains; of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet <i>material</i> , with cherubim, the work of a skillful workman , Bezalel made them.
Measure	Job 38:4-5	Where were you when I laid the foundation of the earth? Tell me, if you have understanding. Who determined its measurements —surely you know! Or who stretched the line upon it?	Ezek 42:20	He measured it on the four sides. It had a wall around it, 500 cubits long and 500 cubits broad, to make a separation between the holy and the common.
Build	Amos 9:6	The One who builds his upper chambers in the heavens, And has founded his vaulted dome over the earth.	1 Kgs 6:1	He began to build the house of the LORD.
Fasten	Job 38:6	Whereupon are the foundations thereof fastened ? or who laid the corner stone thereof (KJV)	1 Kgs 6:10	He also built the stories against the whole house, each five cubits high; and they were fastened to the house with timbers of cedar. (NAS)
Hammer	Job 37:18 (see Gen 1:6 and the <i>raqia</i>)	Can you, like him, spread out (<i>raqa</i>) the skies, hard as a cast metal mirror?	Ex 39:3	And they hammered (<i>raqa</i>) out gold leaf, and he cut it into threads to work into the blue and purple and the scarlet yarns, and into the fine twined linen, in skilled design.
Firmament/ <i>raqia</i>	Gen 1:6	Then God said, "Let there be an expanse in the midst of the waters, and let it separate the waters from the waters."	Psa 150:1	Praise Him in His mighty expanse .
Lights in the Firmament/Dome	Gen 1:16-17	God made the two great lights , the greater light to govern the day, and the lesser light to govern the night; <i>He made</i> the stars also. ¹⁷ And God placed them in the expanse (<i>raqia</i>) of the heavens to give light on the earth.	Exo 26:1	"Moreover you shall make the tabernacle with ten curtains of fine twisted linen and blue and purple and scarlet <i>material</i> ; you shall make them with cherubim , the work of a skillful workman.
Lights	Job 38:18-19	"Have you understood the expanse of the earth? Tell <i>Me</i> , if you know all this. ¹⁹ "Where is the way to the dwelling of light ? And darkness, where is its place.	Exo 25:37	"Then you shall make its lamps seven <i>in number</i> ; and they shall mount its lamps so as to shed light on the space in front of it.
Sea	Gen 1:10	the gathering of the waters He called seas .	1Ki 7:23	he made the sea of cast <i>metal</i> ten cubits from brim to brim, circular in form, and its height was five cubits, and thirty cubits in circumference.
beasts	Gen 1:24	Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth living creatures after their kind: cattle and creeping things and beasts of the earth after their kind"; and it was so.	1Ki 7:28-29	And this was the design of the stands: they had borders, even borders between the frames, ²⁹ and on the borders which were between the frames <i>were lions, oxen</i> and cherubim; and on the frames there was a pedestal above, and beneath the lions and oxen <i>were wreaths</i> of hanging work.
plants	Gen 1:11	"Let the earth sprout vegetation, plants yielding seed, <i>and</i> fruit trees bearing fruit after their kind, with seed in them, on the earth"; and it was so.	1Ki 6:29	Then he carved all the walls of the house round about with carved engravings of cherubim, palm trees , and open flowers , inner and outer <i>sanctuaries</i> .
mountains	Amos 4:13	He who forms mountains and creates the wind.	Micah 3:12	The mountain of the temple <i>will become</i> high places of a forest.