

# GENESIS

*Highland Park Baptist Church*

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*January 5 through March 23, 2022*

## **I. Primary Purpose of the Course**

To understand the plan of God, which is to establish His rule and authority on earth as presented in the book of Genesis. God uniquely created man to exercise authority over the entire earth in order to mediate God's sovereign rule over His creation, but Adam rebelled against God's authority. God immediately established His plan to reconcile His sinful creation to Himself, and establish His righteous kingdom through the political nation of Israel.

Also, for this course, one will understand that God's ultimate goal of redemption for His creation began in the covenant relationship established with Abraham. Through chosen Abraham, Genesis presented God's plan to place His chosen people in a specific chosen land, through whom the nations of the world would be blessed.

## **II. Objectives of the Course**

1. The student will study the general context, structure, and the historical background of the book of Genesis.
2. The student will see the progressive revelation of God's plan for His creation.
3. The student will learn the major people introduced in this book and how God uses them to accomplish His plan for mankind.
4. The student will interact with all of the positions concerning the debates surrounding the creation. Also, this discussion will extend to the question of the Noahic flood.
5. The student will interact with the issues related to the fall of man and the impact of Adam's expression of sovereign independence. How did Adam's decision to eat from the forbidden tree change his relationship with God, with Eve, and with creation itself?
6. The student will study the covenant God made with Noah.
7. The student will study the covenant God made with Abraham.
8. The student will follow the life of growing obedience and faith in the life of Abraham, the declining faith seen in the life of Isaac, and the struggle with faith in the life of Jacob.
9. The student will study the later events in the book of Genesis to see how God's promise made to Abraham is eventually passed through Judah.

## **III. Class Schedule**

**Dates:** January 5, 12, 19, 26; February 2, 9, 16; March 2, 9, 16, 23

**Time:** 6:30-7:15; 7:25-8:00

**Location:** South Atrium

\* Note: Each class lecture/presentation and accompanying notes will be uploaded to the HPBC website by Friday of the same week.

## **IV. Requirement of the Course**

Read the book of Genesis.

*Genesis* is a word derived from the Septuagint (the Greek version of the Old Testament) and means “origin” or “beginning.” This is indeed a most appropriate title for this first book of the Bible, for it is in a most distinctive sense the book of beginnings. Important beginnings described are:

- (1:1-2:3) The beginning of the earth as man’s habitation
- (2:7-25) The beginning of the human race
- (3:1-8) The beginning of human sin
- (3:9-24) The beginning of redemptive revelation
- (4:1-15) The beginning of the human family
- (4:16-9:29) The beginning of civilization
- (10:1-32) The beginning of nations
- (11:1-9) The beginning of human languages
- (11:10-50:26) The beginning of the Hebrew race

(Merrill Unger, Unger’s Survey of the Bible, pgs. 118)

The key word of *Genesis* is *election*. Divine electing grace pervades the book. *Genesis* records a number of family histories in which God personally chooses individuals through whom he will work out his redemptive plan for the fallen race. Of Adam’s posterity, Cain drops out and Seth is chosen instead. Of Noah’s progeny, Shem is selected over his younger brothers, Ham and Japheth. Of Terah’s family, Abram is called over his younger brothers, Nahor and Haran. Of Abram’s sons, Ishmael is rejected and Isaac is chosen. Of Isaac’s sons, Esau is bypassed and Jacob comes into the line of blessing. Of Jacob’s sons, Judah is selected to perpetuate the line of Messiah (Ben. 49:9, 10). Underlying the divine plane of redemption in its progressive unfolding is eternal election (Eph. 1:4). (Merrill Unger, Unger’s Survey of the Bible, pgs. 119)

**Introduction.** “The book falls into two unequal parts, of which the second begins with the emergence of Abram at the junction of chapters 11 and 12. Chapters 1 to 11 describe two opposite progressions: first, God’s orderly creation, to its climax in man as a responsible and blessed being, and then the disintegrating work of sin, to its first great anticlimax in the corrupt world of the Flood, and its second in the folly of Babel.”

“With this, the general history of man gives way in chapter 12 to the germinal story of ‘Abraham and his seed’, with God’s covenant no longer a general pledge to all mankind as in chapter 9, but narrowed down to a single family through which ‘all the families of the earth’ will be blessed (12:3). Abram, landless and childless, is made to learn that the great promise, lodestar (*definition: guiding principle*) of his life must be fulfilled divinely and miraculously or not at all.” (Kidner, *Genesis*, p. 13-14)

**Author.** Jesus states in John 7:22 that “Moses” gave the regulations concerning circumcision, which are found in *Genesis* 17:9-14, not *Leviticus* 12:3. Therefore, this strongly indicates that ***Moses was the author of Genesis.***

Who wrote the Pentateuch? MOSES!

- Exod. 17:14, "Then the Lord said to Moses, 'Write this in a book . . .'"

- Exod. 24:4, "And Moses wrote down all the words of the Lord."

- Numbers 33:1-2, Moses recorded the journeys of Israel.
  - Deut. 31:9, "So Moses wrote this law and gave it to the priests".
  - I Kings 2:3, a reference to the law of Moses.
    - I Kings 6:1, We know Moses lived in the 15th century B.C.
  - II Kings 14:6, a reference to the law of Moses.
  - Ezra 6:18, a reference to the book of Moses.
  - Nehemiah 13:1, a reference to the book of Moses.
  - Daniel 9:11-13, a reference to the law of Moses.
  - Malachi 4:4, a reference to the law of Moses.
- Jesus affirms the Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch in Matt. 8:4 & 19:7-8.  
Also, in Mark 7:10 & Luke 24:27, 44 & John 1:45.

“It is entirely plausible to expect that Moses had many sources of information available to him, both in written and oral form. In this scenario inspiration enabled him to select sources that were accurate and to weave that material together into a purposeful composition that is essentially the book of Genesis as we have it today. Whatever limited additions or revisions may have been made after the time of Moses must likewise be considered inspired. We contend, however, that the principal inspired, purposeful, and creative mind behind Genesis was Moses.” (Walton, *Genesis: NIV Application Commentary*, p. 42)

In confirmation of Walton’s conclusion John Currid adds (*Genesis*, p. 32, and he is quoting R. D. Wilson), “That the Pentateuch as it stands is historical and from the time of Moses; and that Moses was its real author though it may have been revised and edited by later redactors, the additions being just as much inspired and as true as the rest.”

Merrill also concurs with the above statements, though “there no doubt had been an unbroken oral (and perhaps written) tradition about their origins, history, and purpose, it was not until Moses gathered these traditions and integrated them into the corpus now known as the Torah that a comprehensive and authoritative synthesis emerged.” (Merrill, *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament*, p. 8)

These references provide *internal evidence* that *Moses* wrote this book, because he adds material that is pertinent to his time period but does not belong during the age of the patriarchs.

- (6:19-7:3) Noah distinguishes between clean and unclean animals. Obviously, this teaching from the Law was not yet given to Noah.
- (12:6; 13:7) Canaanite was then in the land – This reference indicates the hostile nature of the Canaanites that was not present/evident in Abraham’s day, but sure was during Moses’ era.
- (22:6) Burnt offering – which was very important in Moses’ day (see Lev 1).
- (35:14) Drink offering – which is described in Numbers 15:5, 7. Drink offerings (which always consisted of wine) accompanied all burnt and peace offerings (see Lev 23:10-14), never with sin or trespass offerings. The drink (and meal) offering recognized the sovereignty of God and was the same as presenting one’s tithe to the Lord.
- (47:11) The Land of Rameses – Kidner (p. 15) questions if this is Rameses II who was a contemporary of Moses (but this also presupposes a late date for the exodus).

**Date.** 1446-1406 BC

The date of composition of Genesis hinges on the date of the exodus, when Moses led Israel out of Egypt. Commentators assume that Genesis was written early in the 40-year desert experience, whereas Deuteronomy was written toward the end. *When we determine the date of the exodus, then we will establish the period of time when Moses wrote this book.*

The purpose for this discussion centers on the question of Biblical authority. The **Biblical evidence** from 1 Kings 6:1 and Judges 11:26 firmly establish an early date for the exodus of Israel from the bondage of slavery in Egypt. But the **physical evidence**, especially related to the destruction of Hazor and Lachish (and Joseph's rise to power in Egypt), sways many scholars to accept the later date for the exodus. What's at stake is the historicity of Scripture and the accuracy of historical details.

*Arguments for a late date, 1290 B.C.*

- 1) The Egyptian cities Pithom and Rameses (Exodus 1:11) were being built during the reign of Pharaoh Rameses II (c. 1304-1236 B.C.).

The biblical narratives report that the enslaved Israelites were building the store or treasury cities of Pithom and Rameses (Ex. 1:11). While neither site has been positively identified, it seems fairly certain that the cities were constructed by or in honor of Rameses II (1279-1212 or 1290-1224 BC), who was a prolific builder during his long reign. So it seems logical to assume that this was the pharaoh who constructed the city of Rameses.

- 2) The civilizations of Ammon, Edom, and Moab did not exist in the 15th century.
- 3) The destruction of Lachish, Debir, and Bethel in the 13th century, as evidenced by a layer of ash.

Excavations at three key cities taken by Joshua and the invading Israelites, Lachish (Josh 10:31-32), Debir (Josh 10:38-39), and Bethel (Jud 1:23-25) reveal a level of ash marking the burning of the cities that dates to the late 13th or early 12th century.

*\* Arguments for an early date, 1446 B.C.*

- 1) 1 Kings 6:1 is the best evidence for an early date of the exodus.  
We know the fourth year of Solomon's reign was 966 B.C., therefore 480 years prior to the Temple's dedication is 1446 B.C.
- 2) Jephthah states in Judges 11:26, that Israel was in the land already 300 years. Jephthah lived c. 1100, therefore adding the 300 years, plus the 40 years of wandering, places the exodus in the middle of the 15th century.

### **Reliability of the Old Testament Text.**

The quality of the present Old Testament text is highly reliable and whatever changes that have occurred, according to the claims of various Biblical critics, do not affect the life and practice of believers today. The preservation of the Old Testament text, in light of the frail process of transmission from one generation to the next, is evidence of God's providential work

through the centuries. (VanGemen; New International Dictionary of OT Theology and Exegesis (NIDOTTE); 1:51)

Waltke (NIDOTTE 1:51-67) identifies six periods of transmission for the Old Testament text.

1. From the 10 commandments (c. 1445 (or c. 1290) to Nehemiah's library (c. 400 BC))  
There is virtually no external information related to this formative period of the OT canon.
2. From 400 BC to 150 BC (the time when scholars believe the OT canon was stabilized)  
The Biblical texts of the Dead Sea Scrolls were written in this time period, as well as the LXX (also called the Septuagint, the Greek translation of the Old Testament).
3. From 150 BC to AD 135 (Bar Kokhba's revolt begins in 132 CE and Rome re-conquers Israel in 135 CE)  
The OT canon is fixed and the "Proto-MT" (consonantal form – no vowel pointings) is established.
4. From AD 135 to AD 1000  
In the latter half of the first millennium C.E., groups of Jewish scribes known as the Masoretes, created a system of signs to ensure proper pronunciation and recitation of the biblical text.
5. From AD 1000 to AD 1500  
This is the period of the Medieval MSS to the time of the invention of the printing press (1454).
6. From AD 1500 to the modern day  
The printing of the Great Rabbinic Bible (c. 1525) became the standard Masoretic Text (MT) text until 1936, when the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Biblia Hebraica (BH) was produced.

The Old Testament portion of our English Bibles is translated from the Masoretic Text (MT), and the MT agrees with the Old Testament manuscripts from the Dead Sea Scrolls and the LXX (Septuagint). Therefore, we can conclude that the translation of Genesis we use in our Bibles today is very reliable!

### ANE Myths.

For example:

- The **Atrahasis Epic** is an Akkadian epic that contains a creation myth and flood story.
- The Babylonian creation story, **Enuma Elish**, to Genesis 1.
- The **Adapa myth** (the Sumerian *Tale of Adapa* who accidentally rejected the gift of immortality) relates to Genesis 2-3.
- The **Gilgamesh Epic** – A Babylonian account of a universal flood with parallels to the flood of Noah's day.

Ross (p. 61, 62), “Much has been written during the past century about the Mesopotamian background of the early part of Genesis. It now seems clear that both the Hebrew and the Babylonian traditions are independent versions. The foundational points of contact are the creation, the frame of lists of seven or ten names, the story of the flood, Nimrod, and Babel.”

### **Higher Criticism and the Study of Genesis.**

An overview of the Documentation, or Source, (JEDP) theory. A French physician, Jean Astruc, in 1753 composed a documentary theory for the origins of the Pentateuch. Moses wrote the Pentateuch, in his opinion, but he used 2 different sources to compile his material. One source used Elohim to describe God and the other Jehovah (Yahweh).

Later, in 1877, Julius Wellhausen developed his JEDP theory initially started by Astruc. Wellhausen's work impacted Biblical studies as forcefully as Charles Darwin's work in biology. These are the sources and corresponding dates.

J	850 B.C.	From religious circles in the southern kingdom. This deals with events from creation to the entry of Israel into Canaan.
E	750 B.C.	From the northern kingdom and focuses on Joseph's life in the north. This source is not recognized by many today.
D	621 B.C.	A product from Josiah's period of reform and emphasizes the period from Joshua to Kings. This theory assumes that some unknown scribes around 700 B.C. wrote Deuteronomy to deal with problems in Judah, but the document was somehow lost until Josiah discovered it in 621 B.C. This document served as the basis for the spiritual revival that occurred during his reign.
P	450 B.C.	By priestly authors. This pertains to material from ritual and legalistic practices after Israel's exile (in various stages from Ezekiel to Ezra). This account favored Judah, because Israel did not formally exist, after the return to the land from the Babylonian exile.

This theory assumes a redactor, or editor, pulled together all the material around 500 B.C.

Wellhausen rejects Mosaic authorship of the Pentateuch and the explanation of the origin and development of the Biblical truth as found in the Bible itself, and insists that the Bible must be judged according to certain literary, historical, and philosophical criteria. In other words, all aspects of supernatural revelation are rejected.

**Purpose.** Why was this book written?

Basic Statement: God establishes the historical basis for the rest of the Pentateuch and the Bible. From this writing Israel comes to know her origins and purpose, which is primarily stated in the most important event of this book – the **Abrahamic Covenant**, where God will establish the basic agreement through which God will relate to humanity through the rest of history.

Walton (actually written by the general editor, Terry Muck, p. 44), “He covenanted with Abram and his family for them to represent God by the way they lived according to the law they

embraced. *This covenant is about revelation (what God wants for us), not salvation (what we get from God).*”

The three highlighted items below are another way to state God’s purpose for this book (and the Pentateuch):

1) **Creator.** Moses wanted Israel to see God as founder and creator of life.

Psalm 19:1, "The heavens are telling the glory of God; And their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." Not only do we recognize God as the author, but He is the one deserving of honor and praise for this work.

2) **Control.** 1) Moses wanted Israel to see God in control of and distinct from His creation.

2) Then, God wants to give his representative on earth – Adam – full control over creation to fulfill the mandate in Genesis 1:26-28. It is Adam’s responsibility to “rule”, “fill”, and “subdue” the earth.

3) **Redeemer.** This is clearly a *sub-theme* in relation to Creator and Control.

God needs to redeem mankind and restore harmony in His creation (Isaiah 11:6-9, where the wolf will live with the lamb, the cow and bear feed together, and infants play near the den of the cobra). Then man will be able to function over creation as God had originally designed for him.

\* Why was the earth created? FOR GOD, not man!! See Rev. 4:11 & Col. 1:16.  
God designed creation for His purposes, not man's.

### **Outline of Genesis (as presented in most survey courses).**

#### I. Primeval (ancient or original) History (1-11)

1. (1-2) Creation
2. (3-5) Fall
3. (6-9) Flood
4. (10-11) Nations

#### II. Patriarchal History (12-50)

1. (12-23) Abraham
2. (24-26) Isaac
3. (27-36) Jacob
4. (37-50) Joseph

### **Outline of Genesis (for this course).**

#### (1:1-11:26) Primeval (ancient or original) History

##### (1:1-2:3) *The creation of the universe by the word of God*

(1:1) A summary statement concerning creation

(1:2) Conditions at the time of creation

(1:3-31) The six days of creation

(1:3-5) Day one

(1:6-8) Day two

(1:9-13) Day three

(1:14-19) Day four

(1:20-23) Day five

- (1:24-31) Day six
- (2:1-3) The seventh day 2:1-3
- (2:4-4:26) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) the heavens and the earth***
  - (2:4-25) Creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden
  - (3:1-7) Temptation and the Fall in the Garden of Eden
  - (3:8-24) Judgment and the removal from the Garden of Eden
  - (4:1-16) Story of Cain and Abel
  - (4:17-26) Civilization begins through ungodly Cain and god-fearing Seth
- (5:1-6:8) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Adam***
  - (5) The tragic consequences of sin as seen in the lineage of Seth
  - (6:1-8) The great extent of wickedness on earth
- (6:9-9:29) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Noah***
  - (6:9-22) God instructs Noah to build an ark
  - (7) The judgment of the flood
  - (8) Events after the flood, life begins on earth once again
  - (9:1-17) God's covenant with Noah
  - (9:18-29) The fall of Noah and the curse upon Canaan
- (10:1-11:9) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Noah's sons***
  - (10) The table of nations through the descendents of Noah
    - (10:1-5) Japheth
    - (10:6-20) Ham
    - (10:21-32) Shem
  - (11:1-9) The Tower of Babel – The nations are dispersed
- (11:10-26) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Shem***
- (11:27-50:26) Patriarchal History
  - (11:27-25:11) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Terah***
    - (11:27-12:9) The call of Abram and his obedient response
    - (12:10-20) Abram leaves the promised land and moves to Egypt
    - (13) Abram returns to the promised land, but there is a conflict with Lot
    - (14) Battle in the promised land; Blessing from Melchizedek
    - (15) Ratification of God's covenant with Abraham
    - (16) Abraham's attempt to fulfill God's promise of a son through Hagar
    - (17) The covenant is reconfirmed – Sarah will have a son!
    - (18:1-15) The Angel of the Lord confirms that Sarah will have a son
    - (18:16-19:38) Abraham rescues Lot, God destroys Sodom and Gomorrah
    - (20) Sarah's life is endangered by Abimelech
    - (21:1-21) The covenant is fulfilled – The promised seed (Isaac) is born
    - (21:22-34) Abraham's covenant with Abimelech
    - (22:1-19) The testing and obedient response of Abraham
    - (22:20-24) The descendents of Nahor – the family background of Rebekah
    - (23) The death and burial of Sarah in the cave of Machpelah
    - (24) Isaac's marriage to Rebekah
    - (25:1-11) Abraham and Keturah; Abraham's death and burial in the cave of Machpelah
  - (25:12-18) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Ishmael***
  - (25:19-35:29) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Isaac***



- (25:19-26) The birth of the twins – Esau and Jacob  
 (25:27-34) Esau sells his birthright  
 (26) Rebekah’s life is endangered by Abimelech; Isaac’s oath with Abimelech  
 (27) Jacob’s deception as he steals his brother’s blessing  
 (28) Jacob leaves the promised land; God confirms that Jacob will fulfill the covenant  
 (29:1-30) Laban’s deception and Jacob’s two marriages – to Leah and Rachel  
 (29:31-30:24) The birth of Jacob’s 11 sons  
 (30:25-43) Jacob’s new agreement with Laban and God’s blessing  
 (31) Jacob flees from Laban  
 (32-33) Jacob returns to the promised land and is reunited with Esau  
 (34) The massacre at Shechem at the hands of Simeon and Levi  
 (35) The covenant renewed at Bethel; Birth of Benjamin; Deaths of Rachel & Isaac  
 (36:1-36:8) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Esau***  
 (36:9-37:1) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Esau, the Father of Edom***  
 (37:2-50:26) ***This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Jacob***  
 (37:2-36) Jacob’s love for Joseph and the brother’s hatred of Joseph  
 (38) Judah’s sin and his relationship with Tamar  
 (39) Joseph’s faithfulness in Potiphar’s house  
 (40) Joseph’s faithfulness in prison and his interpretation of dreams  
 (41) Joseph interprets Pharaoh’s dreams; God establishes him as the 2nd ruler over Egypt  
 (42) The 10 brothers of Joseph – first journey to Egypt  
 (43) The 11 brothers of Joseph – second journey to Egypt  
 (44:1-45:15) Joseph tests his brothers, then all 12 brothers are reconciled  
 (45:16-47:31) Jacob (Israel) moves his family to Egypt  
 (48) Jacob blesses the sons of Joseph – Manasseh and Ephraim  
 (49:1-28) Jacob blesses Judah and the other 10 sons  
 (49:29-50:26) The death of Jacob and the death of Joseph

### **The *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* Structure of Genesis.**

- |                |  |
|----------------|--|
| 1:1-2:3        | The creation of the universe by the word of God                                |
| 1. 2:4-4:26    | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) the heavens and the earth |
| 2. 5:1-6:8     | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Adam                      |
| 3. 6:9-9:29    | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Noah                      |
| 4. 10:1-11:9   | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Noah’s sons               |
| 5. 11:10-26    | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Shem                      |
| 6. 11:27-25:11 | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Terah                     |
| 7. 25:12-18    | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Ishmael                   |
| 8. 25:19-35:29 | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Isaac                     |
| 9. 36:1-36:8   | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Esau                      |
| 36:9-37:1      | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Esau, the Father of Edom  |
| 10. 37:2-50:26 | This is what became of ( <i>tol<sup>e</sup>dot</i> ) Jacob                     |

### **An Explanation of the *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* Structure in Genesis.**

- This word was not simply added to the text sometime after the initial writing of Genesis, but the *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* formula serves as the backbone to this book’s structure. (Ross, p. 74)

- “The *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* heading announces the historical development from the ancestor (or beginning point) and could be translated paraphrastically ‘this is what became of \_\_\_\_\_,’ or ‘this is where it started from’ (with reference to the following subject).” (Ross, p. 72)
- “The person named after *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* is usually not the central character in the narrative but the person of origin”, (Ross, p. 73). This explains why there is no *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* of **Abraham** or **Joseph**. The stories of these two men are seen in the *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* of Terah and of Jacob.

### **An Overview of the *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* Structure in Genesis.**

#### **1:1-2:3      *The creation of the universe by the word of God***

- “The first section of the book is not headed by a *tol<sup>e</sup>dot*, and logically so. The section forms an introduction to the book. The significance of this section is that the work of creation is wrapped in divine blessing. Animal life (1:22), human life (1:28), and the seventh day (2:3) are all blessed specifically.” (Ross, p. 75-76)
- “The culmination of this creative development is that human beings and their world may enjoy the theocratic rest of God.” (Ross, p. 75-76)

#### **2:4-4:26      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) the heavens and the earth***

- “This *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* section begins with a detailed account of the creation of Adam and Eve to show how ominous the fall was. The stories in chapter 4 provide the aftermath, showing how evil advanced once it entered the human family.”
- “As if in answer to the three blessing of the creation account, this section supplies a threefold cursing (of the serpent, in 3:14; of the ground, in v. 17; and of Cain, in 4:11). Man no longer serves God but the ground; no longer does he rule, but he survives.”
- “In the deteriorating life, however, there is a token of grace and a ray of hope. God places a preserving mark on Cain, and people begin to proclaim the name of the Lord.” (Ross, p. 76)

The *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* formula helps to resolve the sequence problem many critics see between Genesis 2:3 and 2:4. The critics (as well as many conservative commentators) wish to align chapter two with chapter one, but the *tol<sup>e</sup>dot* formula places chapter two with chapters three and four. As a result, the focus of writing in 1:1-2:3 is on God, whose name is mentioned 35 times in this section. The second section of Genesis (2:4-4:26) is anthropocentric (but certainly does not exclude God’s presence or influence) and focuses on the events surrounding Adam – his creation, his responsibilities in the garden, his relationship with Eve, his rebellion under God’s authority, the punishment for his sinful choices, and the consequences of his sinful behavior.

#### **5:1-6:8      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Adam***

- The dominant theme of this section is death. And the plan of God at the end of this section is not merely the death of people, but the end of all life on earth. At the end of the creation account, God saw that everything was good (1:31). But “here he (God) saw that the intent of human plans was only evil continually.” “The cause was the great hubris on the part of the human, taking all the women they wanted and living in moral abandonment.” (Ross, p. 78)

**6:9-9:29      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Noah***

- This passage is best known for judgment and the annihilation of human life on earth. But, the blessing motif, that was prevalent in the garden, returns through the obedience and faithfulness of Noah. Also, God establishes a covenant of grace in which He promises never to destroy the earth by flood ever again.
- “The human race, however, retains an experiential knowledge of evil, a fact painfully displayed in the scene of Noah’s drunkenness. The theme of nakedness is repeated with this second Adam, but with an ironic twist. Here it does not represent integrity, but indecency and susceptibility to evil. The occasion brings out the worst in Ham, and so an oracle of cursing is pronounced on whole sections of the race that follow in that depravity.” (Ross, p. 79)

**10:1-11:9      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Noah’s sons***

- “The theme of this section is confusion and dispersion. It records the final stage in God’s universal judgments on the sinful race, for this judgment holds the race in check. The sin here is once again hubris – people in pride refusing to obey the Lord and attempting to make a name for themselves by their enterprise.” (Ross, p. 80)
- But we quickly discover that there is no race of people who will faithfully walk in obedience to God, nor is there a race of people who will faithfully honor God’s creation in His design of theocratic rest. It is apparent that God will have to create a new race of people through whom He will make His covenant of blessing.

**11:10-26      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Shem***

- This account is a transition from chaos and dispersion to the development of a new race of people, through whom God will bless the world.

**11:27-25:11      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Terah***

- “While chapters 1-11 portrayed the race in rebellion to what God had intended, chapters 12-25 recount God’s development of the promised blessing through Abram.” (Ross, p. 80)
- All of the stories in this section are not random accounts simply pieced together. Each narrative, or account, is related to the promises of the land (12:10-chapter 15) and the seed (chapters 16-21) given to Abram in 12:1-3.
- Chapter 22 is an important chapter of the book because Abraham’s faith is tested, again. At the end of his extraordinary life, Abraham has learned to completely trust in God and offers his ONLY son – the fulfillment of God’s promise given to Abraham many years ago – as a sacrifice to the Lord. This act of obedience greatly pleases the Lord.
- Chapters 23-25 begins the process of transferring the promise of blessing to the next generation, to Abraham’s son Isaac.

**25:12-18      *This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Ishmael***

- “This section on Ishmael is important because God granted a blessing to Ishmael as the son of Abraham and Hagar. Other sons of Abraham received no such blessing.” (Ross, p. 83)

- But God’s hand of blessing will be firmly placed once again on the promised seed, Isaac, as will be emphasized in the next section.

**25:19-35:29 This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Isaac**

- The literary parallels between Isaac and Abraham affirm the continuity that the covenant made with Abraham will pass through Isaac to his son, Jacob. For example,
  - Isaac’s wife was barren.
  - Isaac had to face the hardships of a famine.
  - Isaac deceives a ruler in order to spare the life of his wife.
  - Isaac makes a treaty with Abimelech.

“The repetition of the motifs shows that the promises were passed on from one generation to the next.” (Ross, p. 83-84)

**36:1-36:8 This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Esau**

- This account helps us to compare the life of Esau with Ishmael, Isaac, and Jacob.

**36:9-37:1 This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Esau, the Father of Edom**

- “A further accounting of the development of Esau’s line is added because of the great significance of these Edomite, and Amalekite, and Horite chieftains.” “The notion that these kings ruled in the land before any king reigned over the Israelites (36:31) suggests that this list carries up to the monarchy.” (Ross, p. 85-86)

**37:2-50:26 This is what became of (tol<sup>e</sup>dot) Jacob**

- “The narratives relate why the tribes were in Egypt and how they were each related to the promised blessings. The family had deteriorated to the point of merging with the Canaanites. To preserve the line of blessing, God amazingly moved through the exigency (*requirement or need*) of the evil will of the brothers to bring about good through Joseph’s administration.” (Ross, p. 86)
- The structure of this section “is built on repetition to stress the sovereign work of God in bringing good out of evil”, (Ross, p. 86). For example,
  - Two dreams for the teen-aged Joseph
  - Two dreams later in prison
  - Two dreams of Pharaoh
  - Two imprisonments for Joseph
  - Two journeys of the brothers
- “These narratives also teach the covenanters how to live in bondage when they know that the promise of God belongs to them, for participation in the blessings of the covenant requires obedience.” (Ross, p. 88)

**(1:1-11:26) Primeval (ancient or original) History**

"Gen 1-11 as we read it is a commentary, often highly critical, on ideas current in the ancient world about the natural and supernatural world. Both individual stories as well as *the final completed work seem to be a polemic against many of the commonly received notions about the gods and man*. But the clear polemical thrust of Gen 1-11 must not obscure the fact that at certain points biblical and extrabiblical thought are in clear agreement. Indeed Genesis and the

ancient Near East probably have more in common with each other than either has with modern secular thought." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary who is quoting Wenham, p. xlvii)

### **(1:1-2:3) The creation of the universe by the word of God**

Concerning the age of the earth let's consider **James Ussher's** (archbishop of Ireland in the 17th century) theory that the date of creation is 4004 B.C. Ussher simply took all the information provided in the Scriptures and added up the numbers of various genealogies (primarily Genesis 5 & 11). What Ussher did not take into account was the existence of gaps in these genealogies! For example:

Gen. 11:12 is missing Cainan (see Luke 3:35-36).

Matt. 1:8 is missing Ahaziah, Joash, and Amaziah (see I Chron 3:11-12).

In addition to the problem of gaps, there are continuous records of habitation in ancient Egypt & Mesopotamia dating to 7,000 B.C. Therefore, it is entirely consistent with Scripture to place the date of creation around 10,000 B.C., but no earlier.

### **(1:1) A summary statement concerning creation**

"There are three major views concerning the relationship of 1:1 to the rest of the creation account."

1. **A gap between verses 1 & 2.** "Verse 1 describes an original creation of the universe. God began fashioning the earth as we know it in verse 2 or verse 3. This view may or may not involve a gap in time between verses 1 and 2. Some advocates of this view believe that the original creation became chaotic as a result of divine judgment."

This view supports the **Gap Theory**, which is no longer embraced in evangelical circles.

2. **Verses 1-5 are a single literary unit with no gaps or breaks.** "Verse 1 describes part of what God did on the first day of creation (1:1-5). It is a general statement followed by specific details." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

This view supports the **young earth position**.

3. **Verse 1 is just a topic statement.** "Verse 1 describes what God did on the six days of creation (1:2-31). It is a topic sentence that introduces the whole creation account that follows." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary).

This view supports the **old earth position**. Verse one is *not* a reference to the original creation of all matter (whereas the first two views recognize verse one as the absolute origin of creation). In this view it is presupposed that God created matter (John 1:3) sometime before Genesis 1:1 and used preexisting material to fashion together all aspects of creation through the process described in the rest of Genesis one.

“Create” (Heb. *bara*) intends to communicate an absolute beginning to the universe – NIDOTT, 1:732.

“God created the universe from nothing (Latin *ex nihilo*). While the text does not state this fact per se, the reader can deduce it from the following evidence. The phrase "in the beginning" implies it as do the Hebrew word for "create" (*bara*) and the expression "formless and void." New Testament passages also support this conclusion (e.g., John 1:3; Rom. 4:17; and Heb. 11:3).” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

### **(1:2) Conditions at the time of creation**

Whereas verse 1 explains the origin of the universe, verse 2 pictures its original condition as it existed on earth *when* God created it originally. Verses 3-31 describe this original condition in more detail and explain the process of creation by which God formed what was formless and filled what was void.

#### Chaos is the result of God’s judgment on the world. Old earth position.

One view of the chaos described in verse 2: Ross (p. 75), “Genesis gives no explanation of the chaos, but we may gather from the words used and from parallel passages (Jer. 4:23) that it was a judgment on rebellion, that Satan was somehow involved, and that oppressive evil existed instead of the fullness of life.”

#### Chaos describes the original state of God’s unfinished creative work. Young earth position.

Geisler comments (Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics, p. 271) that “some scholars have noted a parallelism between the first three days (light, water, and land – all empty) and the second three days (light, water, and land – all filled with bodies).” This certainly supports the ***“form and fill” pattern*** (God formed creation on days 1-3, then filled His creation in days 4-6).

### **(1:3-31) The six days of creation**

- “Note that on the first and second days God did one work each day. He created light and the firmament.
- On the third day He did two works. He created the land and vegetation.
- Similarly on the fourth and fifth days God did one work. He created the lights' functions on the fourth day and the birds and fish on the fifth day.
- Then on the sixth day He again did two works. He created the land animals and man.
- On the first three days He gave form to what was formless, and on the last three days He filled what was void.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

"Both vegetation and humanity, symbolizing the fertility of life, were considered pinnacles of creation in the ancient Near East. The first triad [of days] ends climactically with the creation of **vegetation**; the second, the creation of **humanity**." (Waltke, p. 36)

### Formless

- 1 Light
- 2 Sky
- 3 Dry land & Vegetation

### Void

- 4 Two great lights (sun & moon)
- 5 Fish and fowl
- 6 Land creatures & Humankind

In this section which details the six days of creation Moses highlights God's usage of particular words and then identifies a definite pattern within each day of creation. "The key words – 'said,' separated,' 'called,' saw,' good' – as actions and thoughts of God, emphasize his omnipotent and omniscient presence in creation. The process of creation typically follows a pattern of *announcement, commandment, separation, report, naming, evaluation, and chronological framework.*" (Waltke, p. 56)

- **Announcement.** "Then God said" marks the beginning of each day and clearly indicates that God is in control. When He speaks, then the work of creation is begun and completed. Through the agency of His speech God directs, designs, and puts into place *all* aspects of creation.
- **Commandment.** The following phrase, "Let there be", demonstrates the intent of God to order the universe according to His design and plan. There is no randomness in His action, nor does the animal world have to display their strength and fitness in order to survive to the next generation. God intends all of life to be fully adapted and an integral part of creation from the moment of His directive.

[\* Note: "*Fiat*" (which is the Latin word for "Let there be") creation is another expression for the six-day, literal creation view.]

- **Separation.** Each day brings greater definition to creation. The order of creation that develops from the continuing process of separation (day and night, heaven and earth, land from water, fish, birds and mammals) through the course of the week displaces the chaos seen in the beginning in verse 2.
- **Report.** "God saw", "God separated", "God called", "God made", "God placed", "God created", "God blessed" are reaffirming statements that follow the initial "Then God said" announcement, which confirms God's divine control and expression of His sovereign will in this process.

Waltke astutely makes the observation that the Biblical creation story stands in direct contrast to the ANE accounts of creation, where the creative process is the result of battles amongst the gods. In Genesis, God is completely in control and He struggles with no one to achieve His creative purposes. All of His actions are unprovoked and He works freely, under the influence of no one, to bring the world into being.

- **Naming.** Each aspect of the process is identified and given a name. Whether it is "day", "night", "heaven", "seas", etc. God exercises His dominion and displays His right to rule by giving a name to all the elements of creation.

In the Old Testament, as well as in the ANE, the act of naming indicates one's sovereignty and right to rule (i.e. Gen 41:45; 2 Kings 24:17; Dan 1:7). In this chapter the process of naming or blessing follows an act of creation seven times.

- **Evaluation.** Each day Moses records that the work of that day "was good" (except in day two), and day six concludes with the emphatic "very good" to indicate the perfect state of completeness of the world.

- ***Chronological framework.*** Waltke states “the week becomes the basic unit of time: six days of work and one of rest. The careful use of numbers throughout the account attests to God’s logical and timely shaping of creation.”

**(1:3-5) Day one**

God created the sun, moon, and stars on the first day and assigned them their specific functions on the fourth day (cf. vv. 14-18). This is consistent with God’s plan of progressive revelation, where God progressively reveals His plan for creation through the course of the creation week.

**(1:6-8) Day two**

God names the expanse “heaven” (v. 8) and from this point forward, everything above the earth (from man’s perspective) is separate from those things on earth.

A longer discussion on the nature of the expanse is given in 2:5-6.

**(1:9-13) Day three**

(1:10) Moses uses the expression “good” for the first time in day one (v.4) in reference to the light He created. Now for the second time Moses says that His work is “good” which indicates that the dry land is in the desired state and ready for the habitation of plants, animal life, and human life.

(1:12) The ***young earth proponents*** will argue that ““kind” (Heb. *min*) is not a biologically exact term. It indicates that God created several different families of plants as separate acts of creation (cf. vv. 21, 24-25; 6:20; 7:14; Lev. 11:14-29; Deut. 14:13-18). All plants, therefore, did not evolve from one.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

Based on the words used by Moses “after their kind”, the ***progressive creationists*** will contend that plants (v. 12) and animals (vs. 21, 24, 25) evolved within their species (this is called the process of microevolution). According to this theory Moses provided firm biblical evidence supporting an old earth.

**(1:14-19) Day four**

“The writer's perspective throughout is geocentric (the earth is the center) rather than heliocentric (the sun is the center). He used phenomenological language (of appearance) that is very common in the Old Testament. Even modern scientific textbooks use such language without fear of being criticized as unscientific when they refer to sunrise, sunset, etc. Probably God created light on the first day (v. 3), but then on the fourth day the sun, moon, and stars appeared distinctly for the first time.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

***Does distant starlight prove that the universe is old?*** The immense size of the universe is completely acceptable to the young earth advocates. Based on the repeatable tests of (observational) science, measurements prove that the universe is large, which means that galaxies and starlight is very far away. But how do young



earth creationists explain starlight that is apparently billions of years away from us? These are a few of the arguments:

- Some young earth proponents try to reconcile the distant starlight by stating that God creating light beams in Genesis 1 “in-transit”, meaning already on their way to earth. But this means that the events that caused these light beams previous to 10,000 B.C. never really happened, and that means God made the events behind these light beams simply as illusions – this seems to be inconsistent with God’s character (according to old earth advocates).
- “Creationists have proposed several solutions to the problem of how light from stars that are millions of light years away could get to Adam if the universe was only days old.” Probably “the best explanation is the appearance of age. As God created humans, plants, and animals fully formed, so He created the light from distant stars already visible on the earth.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

### **(1:20-23) Day five**

““Great sea monsters” (Heb. *tauninim*, v. 21) were large fish, whales, squid, and all large creatures living in the water. The pagans worshipped these, but they were under God’s authority. The Old Testament writers adopted pagan imagery, but not pagan theology.”

“Note that Moses wrote that God created both marine animals and birds on the same day. **Evolution** claims that birds evolved from reptiles and that this process took millions of years.”

(Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

### **(1:24-31) Day six**

*Nephesh*. ““Creature” (Heb. *nephesh*) is usually translated “soul” (e.g., 2:7). This Hebrew word and the English “soul” imply conscious life, in contrast to plants that have unconscious life. So in the sense of having conscious life, animals as well as people have souls.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

**What happened to the dinosaurs?** Conservative Bible interpreters generally believe they existed but became extinct before the Flood or probably after it.

“Before the Flood, dinosaurs and man lived together on our planet. Extinction of the great marine reptiles, along with the majority of all other types of sea creatures, would have been caused by the violent upheavals of the Flood, many being buried and preserved as fossils.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary who is quoting Ken Ham, Andrew Snelling, and Carl Wieland, *The Answers Book*, pp. 10)

(1:26-27) "'Us" is probably a plural of self-deliberation (cf. 11:7; Ps. 2:3), though possibly God was addressing His heavenly court (cf. Isa. 6:8). This word involves "in germ" the doctrine of the Trinity. However, we should not use it as a formal proof of the Trinity since this reference by itself does not prove that one God exists in three persons." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

***Image and Likeness.*** "'Image" and "likeness" are essentially synonymous terms (see Genesis 5:2). Both indicate personality, moral, and spiritual qualities that God and man share (i.e., self-consciousness, God-consciousness, freedom, responsibility, speech, moral discernment, etc.) These distinguish humans from the animals. Some writers have called the image of God man's "spiritual personality." In another sense man *is* the image of God (e.g., he rules and creates [procreates] as God does thus reflecting God). The Fall marred but did not obliterate the image of God in man." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(1:28) "God's blessing enables humanity to fulfill its twofold destiny: to procreate in spite of death and to rule in spite of enemies. "Blessing" denotes all that fosters human fertility and assists in achieving dominion." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

***Man as king of the earth.*** "'Subdue" and "rule," the second aspect of this mandate, imply a degree of sovereignty and control that God delegated to man over nature. This constitutes God's "Magna Charta" for all true scientific and material progress. God commanded Adam and Eve to acquire knowledge so they could master their material environment, to bring all its elements into the service of the human race." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(1:29-31) "God gave man authority and responsibility to regulate nature and to advance civilization. Nature was to serve man, not vice versa. This does not give man the right to abuse nature, however. Neither does it justify giving animals and plants the "rights" of human beings." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(1:31) At the end of day six, "it was **very good**". This is solid reasoning to argue that God did not create evil. [Note: This verse undermines support for the Gap theory that states the earth is in a cursed condition in Gen. 1:2 – this cannot be logically correct.]

### **(2:1-3) The seventh day 2:1-3**

"Note that God did not command Adam to abstain from work on the Sabbath; this came later with the Mosaic Law. However, Scripture does teach the importance of periodic rest (cf. Exod. 20:8-10; 23:10-12; Lev. 25:2, 4; Deut. 15:1-18; Heb. 4:1-11; et al.). Part of bearing the likeness of God involves resting as He did after completing His work." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

**Is it biblically accurate to support the view that our universe is millions and billions of years old?**

Al Mohler, the president of Southern Seminary, presents four great challenges to the traditional reading of Genesis (that God created the earth in six, literal 24-hour days) that have developed over the last 200 years. These four challenges argue for an old earth and dismiss the presuppositions that support a young earth:

1. Geological Record. The geological record reveals that fossils and strata around the globe prove that the earth is much, much older than what the traditional, biblical account presents of early earth history.
2. Charles Darwin. The emergence of Darwin's theory of origins by means of **natural selection**, which has since become the bedrock for evolutionary theory across the sciences, presented a direct challenge to the traditional interpretation of Genesis.
3. ANE (Ancient Near East) Documents
  - Enuma Elish – is a **Babylonian creation myth** that was probably written before Moses and has many similarities to the Genesis one account. Perhaps this was written between the 18<sup>th</sup>-16<sup>th</sup> century BC, possibly as late as the 12<sup>th</sup> century BC. (Wiki)
  - Epic of Gilgamesh – was possibly written in the 3<sup>rd</sup> millennium BC, it is a **Babylonian account of a universal flood** with parallels to the flood of Noah's day. (Wiki)
4. Biblical Criticism. Higher criticism played a significant role in challenging the authenticity, accuracy, and the authority of the Genesis account of origins and earth history. Primarily, the Documentary Hypothesis (or JEDP theory) promoted by Julius Wellhausen questioned the authorship of the Old Testament books, which led these scholars to view the books of Moses and other writers as merely human documents.

There are four viewpoints concerning the creation of man that we will discuss in this course:

- Naturalistic Evolution
  - “Evolutionists believe that man develop from lower organisms through a series of changes brought about by purely natural processes, that this line of development can be traced from simple, presumably one-cell, living things, through more complex organisms, and finally through organisms which today would be classified as anthropoid apes, to man. ***Man's closest relatives are believed to be the anthropoid apes because of the great number of similarities between apes and humans.*** While it is true that there are many similarities and that the similarities between man and the anthropoids are greater than those between man and other animals, it is also true that

there are many differences between man and the anthropoids (apes). Some quite significant.” (Elwell, p. 681)

**Darwin’s Work:** Darwin, in The Origin of Species (1859), defines the evolutionary process in this way:

- Life began through a process called **spontaneous generation** (also called abiogenesis), when a single-cell came to life – *randomly by chance* – from non-living material about 3.5 billion years ago.
- Evolution hypothesizes that the development of these single cells comes through a series of **mutations** from simpler life forms to the more complex living systems we see today.
- Variation of species results because (some) offspring are stronger and superior to their parents. Therefore, the process of **natural selection**, or the survival of the fittest, is continuously working, which means the strongest and fittest of the species survive. Also, natural selection preserves and develops the changes made by mutations.
- Species develop and grow because new qualities of species are constantly appearing and being passed on to future generations. New species come into existence – over the passage of significant time – because of these new qualities.

*To summarize, the basic concepts that define the process of evolution (as developed by Darwin) are **spontaneous generation, mutations, natural selection, time, and chance**.*

*[\* Note: The **Big Bang Theory**, which was not part of Darwin’s original theory, was initially developed by Edwin Hubble (1889-1953). This theory states that the universe began, by chance, as a result of a massive explosion between 5 and 15 billion years ago. According to this theory, this event marks the beginning of the universe (which superseded the theory of spontaneous generation). After the Big Bang, then followed the evolutionary process as described by Darwin: mutations, natural selection, etc.]*

***Presuppositions of Evolution:***

- In general, evolutionists accept the age of the universe to be **13.5 billion years old**; the age of the earth to be **4.5 billion years old**; animals (larger than microscopic size) came to life 542 million years ago; dinosaurs became extinct 65 million years ago.

- Theistic Evolution

Theistic evolutionists are not accepted by either humanistic (naturalistic evolutionists) or creationists. They are not scientific enough to convince the evolutionists, or they do not fully embrace God's sovereign abilities and His miraculous deeds in the creation process, so therefore they are rejected by theists.

Theistic evolutionists harmonize the findings of science with the creation account of Genesis 1 and 2 in this way:

- They believe that ***God is the first cause***, the initiator of the creation process (unlike the naturalistic evolutionist, who contends that life came into existence by chance and spontaneous generation).
- They believe that ***God supervised the process of macroevolution*** (the process of forming new taxonomic groups (or species) over geological time).
- They believe that man (as well as plants and animals) evolved from lower forms, and that man is a product of macroevolution (in other words, man is NOT a product of God's creative action!).

"God created a human soul, and infused it into one of the higher primates, transforming this creature into the first human. Thus, while God specially created the spiritual nature of Adam, man's physical nature is a product of the process of evolution" (Erickson, p. 481).

Problems with theistic evolution:

- Progressive Creation

(sometimes called the ***Day-Age Theory*** or Uniformitarian Geology)

[***Uniformitarian Geology*** states that dating methods are based on a uniform rate of decay of all elements. Young earth proponents argue that the flood and/or the disappearance of a vapor canopy could significantly alter the rate of decay.]

Where the theistic evolutionists tend to lean more towards the theory of evolution, the progressive creationists lean more toward the Biblical account of creation – but still try to reconcile the origins of man (and the universe) with the teachings of science.

***Progressive creationists accept microevolution*** ("intra-kind" development, or the diversification within a biological species), ***but reject macroevolution*** ("inter-kind" evolution, or the changes that occur from ape to man). The progressive creationists are truer to the Biblical text of Genesis 1 and 2 than the theistic evolutionists.

[\* *Note: Theistic evolutionists accept both microevolution and macroevolution. Literal creationists reject both microevolution and macroevolution*].

1. Biblically, the progressive creationists cite these main texts that reject the theory of a literal six-day creation. According to these verses, a Biblical day is not a 24-hour period, but a geological age.

- **Genesis 2:4**, ". . . in the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven". Here, Moses uses the term "day" (yom) which he used frequently in Genesis 1 to describe the entire creation process.

[Note: Literal creationists respond by saying that Moses used an idiom in this verse to say “in the day that” or “at the time when” God created . . .].

- **Genesis 26:18**, “Then Isaac dug again the wells of water which had been dug in the days of his father Abraham”.
- **Job 20:28**, “. . . in the day of His anger”, a reference to a time when God will express His wrath.
- **Psalms 90:2**, “For a thousand years in Your sight are like yesterday when it passes by . . .”
- **2 Peter 3:8**, “. . . that with the Lord one day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years like one day.”

2. Furthermore, the progressive creationists contend that the *sun was not created until the fourth day*. The logical conclusion is that the first three days described in Genesis 1 were an indefinite length of time (and not 24-hour solar days).

3. In addition, progressive creationists believe that both the *physical and spiritual aspect of man is a special act of creation* (this is an obvious difference from the theistic evolutionist position, which states that the physical body is a product of macroevolution but the soul is created by God).

But, when animals and man were created on the sixth day, Genesis 2 describes this account and appears to take a long time to complete the process. Look at all of the events that occurred on day six:

4. Finally, the progressive creationist contends that this current geological age is not complete, because the process of microevolution continues on and the world is still developing. So, the Biblical record of Gen. 2:1-3, (that the heavens and the earth were completed and God rested on the seventh day), must be understood in a future sense, when the seventh geological age will commence at the arrival of the New Jerusalem (the new heavens and the new earth) in Rev. 21:1-8 (cf. John 5:17; Heb 4:1-11).

- Literal Creation

**Revelation 4:11** concisely summarizes the position of the creationists, who properly worship God as the Creator. This is in direct contrast to the evolutionists, who exalt man as the center and ultimate authority of the universe. The apostle John writes, “Worthy are You, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for **You created all things**, and *because of Your will they existed, and were created.*”

1. This view on the origin of mankind *completely rejects any aspect of evolution*. Literal creationists, in general, believe the earth to be only 10,000 years old – not

millions and millions of years old as the evolutionists, theistic evolutionists, progressive creationists, and gap theorists all assume.

2. Also, the literal reading of Genesis and a young earth view was understood throughout most of church history (only in the last 200 years has the literal interpretation and young earth view been significantly challenged). Also, “the normal conclusion one would most likely draw from the terminology in the text (e.g., evening, morning, day, night, etc.) is that God created the world in six 24-hour days. *This view is most consistent with the principles of literal, historical, and grammatical interpretation.* The fact that the number of days corresponds to the number of weekdays also favors this view” (Constable notes).

Literal creationists believe that:

- “The sovereign, infinite, triune God of Scripture has always existed, exists now, and always will exist independently from any finite creation” (Frederic Howe, “Walvoord: A Tribute”, p. 146). “God produced the world and everything in it, not by the use of any indirect means or biological mechanisms, but by direct action and contact.”

*No Use of Preexisting Matter.*

*No Evidence of Microevolution.*

- God created the world, and mankind, in six literal days. Biblical and scientific support for this argument is as follows:
  1. **Biblical.** Exodus 20:9-11 (and Exodus 31:17) is a reference to the Jewish work week, which strongly indicates that God worked in six literal days in Genesis 1.
  2. **Biblical.** The Hebrew term for “day”, *yom*, when accompanied by a number always indicates a 24-hour period in Old Testament grammar.
  3. **Biblical.** The phrase “evening and there was morning” strongly indicates a 24-hour period. The normal usage for this frequently used expression (variations of the phrase “evening and morning” are used 100 times in the Old Testament) refers to a literal, 24-hour day.
  4. **Scientific.** Life cannot exist without light.
  5. **Scientific.** Plants and animals are dependent on one another, because plants produce oxygen and take in carbon dioxide while animals emit carbon dioxide and breath in oxygen.

### **(2:4-4:26) This is what became of (*tol'dot*) the heavens and the earth**

The focus of this section is upon Adam. Moses describes the actual creation processes of both Adam (2:7) and Eve (2:21-24), then God entrusts Adam with work responsibility in the garden of Eden (2:15-17). But Adam fails the one test placed before him, and he takes from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (chapter 3). Adam’s relationship with God is broken and

humanity suffers the devastating consequences. The impact of sin begins to unfold in Adam's progeny, specifically through the lineage of Cain. But God's hand of blessing will return to mankind through Adam's third son, Seth. It is Seth's lineage that begins to call upon the Lord (4:26).

### **(2:4-25) Creation of man and woman in the Garden of Eden**

Note the following contrasts between the accounts of man's creation.

**1:1—2:3**

**2:4-25**

**Name of God**

**Purpose**

**Emphasis**

(2:5-6) "The absence of "rain" and the presence of the "mist" have led some writers to postulate a "canopy theory." According to this theory, a canopy of water vapor that watered the earth covered the earth initially. It reduced the destructive rays of the sun so that antediluvian man lived much longer, and it distributed heat more evenly over the surface of this planet. Such a water canopy covers Venus. This canopy supposedly broke up when God sent the Flood (7:11)." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

Concerning the "**canopy theory**" (developed by Whitcomb and Morris in the early 1960s and strongly supported by Dillow in the 1980s), which many commentators have accepted due to the absence of rain (5) and the perpetual mist that covered the earth (6). *The canopy theory states that this cover of water vapor protected the earth from the harmful rays of the sun and allowed man to live for many, many years. According to this theory, the canopy fell at the time of the flood.* Constable holds to this theory (Jan 1995). (From my OT 1 notes)

(2:7) "'Formed" (Heb. *yasar*) means to shape or mold and implies that God deliberately did this with tender loving care. It describes the work of an artist (cf. Job 10:8-9)." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

"The "breath of life" (Heb. *nesama*) was God's breath that gave Adam life, spiritual understanding (Job 32:8), and a functioning conscience (Prov. 20:27). Adam's life came from God's breath. His uniqueness consisted in his having been made in God's image. God's breath may be a synonym for His word (cf. Ps. 33:6). Man, therefore, is a combination of dust and Divinity." (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(2:8-15) "The trees in the garden were beautiful and edible, an orchard for man to enjoy (v. 9). The tree of life appears to have been a means whereby God sustained Adam and Eve's lives. Again God's desire to bless man comes through. The knowledge of good and evil (vv. 9, 17) probably refers to man's ability to decide for himself what is best for him and what is not (i.e., wisdom). "Good" and "evil" may be a merism for the things that



protect and destroy life.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(2:16-17) “God gave Adam great freedom of choice. He only forbade one of all the trees. God's command also implies that He alone knows what is good and not good for man. Adam would die because of disobedience, not because of the fruit of the tree.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(2:17) The concept of testing for obedience is presented in this passage and reiterated throughout Scripture (Deut 30:11-20; Judg 2:21-3:4; Jam 1:2-4). God allowed Adam and Eve great freedom and complete access to Him in the garden. They could eat of any tree, except one. God tested the obedience of Adam and Eve, to see if they would remain faithful, because without faith it is impossible to please Him (Heb 11:6).

(2:18-25) “Adam's creation was not complete because he lacked a "helper" who corresponded to him. This deficiency led God to pronounce Adam's condition "not good.” This follows the pattern of the triune God's own existence in which He is surrounded by His heavenly court. Man should normally live in community even as God does.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(2:18, 20) “The term "helper" does not mean a servant. Jesus Christ used the same word (the Greek equivalent) to describe the Holy Spirit who would help believers following the Lord's ascension (John 14:16, 26; 15:26; 16:7). It means one who supports us in our task of doing the will of God (cf. Deut. 33:7; Ps. 33:20; 115:9-11; 146:5; Hos. 13:9). It is not a demeaning term since Scripture often uses it to describe God Himself (e.g., Ps. 33:20; 70:5; 115:9).” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(2:19-20) “The text does not mean that Adam named every individual animal. He apparently gave names to the different kinds God brought before him. This exercise demonstrated Adam's authority over the animals and the dissimilarity between humans and animals. He became aware of his own need for a companion as he named the animals.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

**The name “Adam”** comes from the Hebrew term “ground” (adamah), which highlights the origins of “the man” made in 2:7 from the dust of the ground.

(2:23) “**The word "woman" (Heb. ishah)** sounds similar to the Hebrew word translated "man" (ish). This similarity reflects the close union between the two and that the woman was taken out of the man. Moses named Adam by his relation to the ground, but Adam

named himself in relation to his wife.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

(2:24) “In marriage a man's priorities change. Before they were primarily to his parents, but now they are primarily to his wife. Moses was probably correcting cultures that gave parental bonds priority over marital bonds. Marriage also involves physical consummation that unites two individuals as "one flesh." This is a strong argument for monogamy. "One flesh" is not the same as marriage (1 Cor. 6:16). For a marriage to exist there must also be a commitment to "leave" parents and "cleave" to one's spouse from then on (cf. Matt. 19:5; et al.). The bond of marriage (spouse) also takes priority over the bond of procreation (children).” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)

Several concluding thoughts concerning the institution of marriage.

(2:25) “The naked condition of Adam and Eve does not just describe their unclothed physical appearance. It also refers to the physical and psychological oneness and transparency that existed in their relationship. Physically they were naked; they shared their bodies with each other openly. Psychologically they were not ashamed; they hid nothing from each other. They were at ease with one another without any fear of exploitation for evil. Transparency should increase with trust, commitment, and friendship. It involves communicating what we know, think, feel, and are with the person or persons we choose. We should not be transparent with everyone, however, only with people who commit themselves to us. A transparent person is an open and vulnerable person.” (Thomas Constable, Genesis Expository Notes, Dallas Theological Seminary)