

THE SEVEN DAYS OF CREATION: A NEW APPROACH

ABSTRACT

The struggle to present the story of creation in such a way as to satisfy the inerrancy of the Bible against the assertions of logic and science is ongoing, and efforts to reconcile these views often raise additional concerns. The following article discusses a few of these attempts and goes on to present a new approach that seems to resolve many of the perplexities in these seven days and throughout the Bible. In the process, it suggests a redefinition of the Bible's standard of truth to approximate its inerrancy and a number of associated refinements in hermeneutics.

Keywords: creation, theology, exegesis, hermeneutics

THE DAYS OF CREATION AS HISTORICAL NARRATIVE

The first chapter of the Bible describes God's work as the author of creation. Over the course of six days, beginning with an empty universe, He works to create the heavens and the earth, culminating in Adam, the man made in the image of God.

Although the presentation of these days seems orderly, the story tends to provoke much discord among both believers and non-believers. Harvey Cox points out that Bible commentaries reveal a great deal of "disagreement among competent scholars, not just on what a particular verse *means*, but even on what it actually *says*."¹ The greatest harm, however, seems to arise from those whose arguments, based upon science or logic, tend to overturn the truth of the entire Bible.

In his recent *Defense of the Inerrancy of the Scripture*, Gbenga Aboyeji Adeniyi points out that "the doctrine of the prime authority of the Bible has

¹ Harvey Cox, *How to Read the Bible*, Harper One, 2015, pg. 23

been attacked on its historical and scientific authenticity and by allegedly tracing its teaching to finite (fallible) man.”² His words are in response to liberal apologists who insist the Bible cannot be inerrant because “human works” were involved. As proof, they, along with scientists and other skeptics, cite many “errors” or unexplainable anomalies, beginning with the story of creation. For instance:

1. The American Humanist Association points out, “Genesis 1:2-3 claims that God created light and divided it from darkness on the first day; but Genesis 1:14-19 tells us the sun, moon, and stars weren’t made until the fourth day.”³

2. On the third day, before the sun was created, plants and trees already covered the land. A site promoting Islam asks, “How can the vegetation come into existence without sunlight, and how can they survive without sunlight?”⁴

3. In the story of creation, God created the plants on the third day, and man on the sixth day. But in the story of Adam, man was created before the plants. This is one of many contradictions listed in the *Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*.⁵

In response, many authors, including Adeniyi, have worked to defend the inerrancy of the Bible. In *Origins: Christian Perspectives on Creation, Evolution, and Intelligent Design*, Deborah Haarsma discusses the many interpretations that have been put forth to counter scientific claims and to “show that the Bible does not conflict with nature’s testimony.”⁶ However,

² Gbenga Aboyeji Adeniyi, A Defense of the Inerrancy of the Scripture (*American Journal of Biblical Theology*, Volume 21(8), February 23, 2020)

³ American Humanist Association, *Some Reasons Why Humanists Reject the Bible*, americanhumanist.org/what-is-humanism/reasons-humanists-reject-bible/

⁴ Dr. Zakir Naik, *Bible’s Scientific Errors*, based on a live debate between Dr. Zakir Naik and William Campbell.
https://www.discoveringislam.org/bible_scientific_errors.htm

⁵ Steve Wells, *The Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*, SAB Books, LLC 1999-2020
<http://skepticsannotatedbible.com>

⁶ Pathname biologos.org/articles/comparing-interpretations-of-genesis-1. Post on January 9, 2018 features excerpts from *Origins: Christian Perspectives on*

despite “good motives,” she says, if “science drive(s) the interpretation of Scripture,” this creates a problem. For instance, where living plants spread across the land in the dark, before the sun was created, some authors say those are single-celled organisms – while the Bible even describes fruit trees. Alternately, others say where the text disagrees with science, then those words must necessarily be figurative – a concept which just as easily explains Jesus’ miracles and resurrection.

Instead, Haarsma suggests interpretations “must be driven by theological consideration and be consistent with the rest of Scripture.” Returning, then, to the standard approach of examining the “literary, cultural, and historical context” of the text, she offers that the primary conclusions to be drawn from the days of creation are God’s sovereignty, the goodness of creation, and the honor placed upon us as His image bearers.

Certainly, the story of creation honors God, but its mysteries remain targets of liberal apologists and offer “good cause” to those who ultimately reject the Bible on that basis.

It would appear that the struggle over the story of creation must continue until an interpretation is found that answers the many “errors” and anomalies that arise from it. Essentially, an interpretation must be found that meets the inerrancy of the Bible.

THE NEW PROPHETIC DAYS OF CREATION

So now, consider a new interpretation of the story of creation. Currently, the days of creation are considered historical, describing God’s work to create the universe, beginning with darkness and culminating in Adam, the man in the image of God, on the sixth day.

But might the story of creation have *two* interpretations, one historical and one prophetic? In other words, can there be a second interpretation of the

Nancy Smith

days of creation that depicts “something future, beyond the power of human sagacity to foresee, discern, or conjecture”?⁷

The suggestion that a story may be both historical and prophetic is typically shunned, but Isaiah seems to validate it:

¹⁰Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, (Isaiah 46:10)

The story of creation seems to conform to Isaiah’s words. It was declared by Moses in “ancient times,” the *beginning* suggests the historical darkness of an empty universe, and the *end*, suggests the future holy city and *new* heaven and *new* earth – “things that are not yet done.”

Essentially, for this new approach, the historical interpretation remains valid, carrying us to the story of Adam, and the prophetic interpretation starts the days over, beginning with the darkness which now depicts the wickedness into which mankind had fallen before the flood.

Of course, this new interpretation must be examined in much greater detail in order to gain confidence in it. To proceed, then, the Bible verses for each day of the story of creation are presented first, followed by its prophetic interpretation (as poetry⁸) and finally by additional evidence in the Bible that supports that interpretation. (Hopefully the associated Bible stories will be familiar to the reader.) However, an examination of the Bible’s standard of proof is included, to discover in what context it might be inerrant.

The poetic interpretation begins as follows:

⁷ Matthew George Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, entry for Prophecy. Pathname <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/prophecy/>

⁸ Nancy Smith, *Made in Seven Days*, copyright 2000. Illustrations based on pen and ink drawing by Scott Westgard, Wheeling, IL, USA



You know the Bible, God's own book, what plainly it portrays:
 How all the heavens, and the earth, were made in seven days.
 A myst'ry deep the words do keep, as questions do they raise.
 What secret might set truth ablaze, what key might clear the haze?
 A parable, the tale may be, with not one theme, but two:
 For later Biblical events, it tracks in symbols true.
 It mirrors Adam to the Lamb, as seed from which it grew,
 And proves the plan, from start to end, is always in God's view.

Day 1 – Darkness and Light

Here we begin a study of the first day of creation. Note: verses are KJV except JPS for Genesis or where marked.

*¹IN THE beginning God created the heaven and the earth. ²Now the earth was unformed and void, and **darkness** was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters. ³And God said: 'Let there be **light**' And there was light. ⁴And God saw the light, that it was good; and God divided the light from the darkness. ⁵And God called the light Day, and the darkness He called night. And there was evening and there was morning, one day. (Genesis 1:1-5)*

Poetic interpretation:



Day 1 starts out, it's dark as night; that's tied to Adam's plight.
 Where Truth is spurned grow guilt and sin; man fell and died to light.
 What wicked world then met God's sight, where violence was might.
 With mankind steeped in darkness deep, He vowed to end the blight.
 But God, though grieved, a plan conceived; in mercy did He say:
 "Let light there be! Set dark apart, restore the sweet bouquet!"
 And Noah, blameless in His sight, did God's command obey.
 Embarked on ark, through sky burst dark, came forth first rays of day.

Searching for a New Standard of Proof

As suggested in the poem, the darkness of the first day represents the fall of man, and the light separated from the darkness points to Noah and the ark. Thus, the story of creation is interpreted both historically and prophetically,

Nancy Smith

or both literally and as allegory. According to Easton, allegory “points to a hidden or symbolic parallel meaning.”⁹ However, he cautions that this interpretation is prone to “allegorizing errors,” leading to wrong conclusions.

What evidence exists, then, that this novel prophetic or allegorical interpretation might be valid? Again, we want to arrive at conclusions that conform to the inerrancy of the Bible. Unfortunately, although every author shows how the Bible proves his words, Cox points out that there are widely diverging views on precisely what it teaches.

The problem is certainly not the Bible but rather faulty methods of proof:

³³For God is not the author of confusion. (1 Corinthians 14:33)

So, let’s examine the Bible’s own standard of truth:

⁶At the mouth of two witnesses, or three witnesses, shall he that is worthy of death be put to death; but at the mouth of one witness he shall not be put to death. (Deuteronomy 17:6)

Significantly, both Jesus and Paul affirmed this verse:

¹⁷It is also written in your law, that the testimony of two men is true. (John 8:17)

¹In the mouth of two or three witnesses shall every word be established. (2 Corinthians 13:1)

Unfortunately, although many follow this rule, limiting themselves to instances where the Bible presents a topic more than once, conclusions still diverge. For instance, both Matthew 1:22-23 and Isaiah 7:14 speak of the virgin birth of Jesus, but the Hebrew word *alma* in Isaiah is challenged.

⁹ Matthew George Easton, *Easton’s Bible Dictionary*, entry for Allegory. Pathname <https://www.biblestudytools.com/dictionary/allegory/>

Some say it means “young,”¹⁰ others say it means “marriageable,”¹¹ and Jewish theologians insist it “says nothing concerning the chastity”¹² of the woman.

The rule, then, doesn’t necessarily serve as a reliable basis of truth. We appear to be at an impasse.

A New Definition of a Witness

But now let’s draw a distinction, saying that the definition of a witness in the above rule is one thing within the world (among the works of man), and another thing within the Bible (among the perfect works of God). This distinction will allow us to continue the search for an inerrant Biblical standard of proof, if one exists.

To proceed, we need to ask, what is a witness according to the Bible itself? It appears that it cannot represent one verse affirming another on the same topic. What, in fact, does God Himself use for witnesses? Examine, then, His appearance to Moses in Exodus 3:1-4.

1. First, Moses sees a burning bush that wasn’t consumed. Certainly, this would not be an actual fire, but instead spiritual, flames of *light* – that same light that came to shine from Moses’ own face:

³⁰And when Aaron and all the children of Israel saw Moses, behold, the skin of his face shone; and they were afraid to come nigh him. (Exodus 34:30)

2. Second, an angel appeared to Moses. Consider how angels “witness” to heavenly things, conveying a sense of the spiritual world far above the wilderness where Moses stood watching Jethro’s flocks.

3. Finally, God spoke to him: another witness. And as the story continues, we see that it’s a lengthy two-sided dialogue.

¹⁰ WRF Browning, *A Dictionary of the Bible*, Oxford University Press, 2004. Entry for virgin birth.

¹¹ D.F. Strauss, *The Life of Jesus*, Calvin Blanchard, New York, 1860, p. 114

¹² F. Skolnik, *Encyclopedia Judaica*, 2nd Edition, 2006, Volume 20, p. 540

Nancy Smith

Thus, we see three different heavenly manifestations. But are they representative of witnesses? Let's examine two more examples, below:

In the same way, for Jesus' transfiguration in Matthew 17:2-7, the apostles reported that Jesus shone like the sun, Elias and Moses appeared, and God spoke from a cloud.

Again, in Jacob's story in Genesis 28:10-15, he dreamed of a ladder from earth to heaven, there were angels ascending and descending upon it, and the Lord spoke to him.

So, each encounter was accompanied by three different heavenly manifestations. Since nothing else seems to qualify as the witnesses we are looking for, we will proceed with the above assumption and see where it leads us.

The first task, then, is to define the characteristics of a Biblical witness based upon the preceding examples. Consider the following:

1. A witness must speak from a different perspective, having a different context or frame of reference, such as a burning bush or an angel.
2. A witness must reinforce the topic, such as Elias and Moses appearing with Jesus.
3. A witness must add new insights, such as the burning bush prefiguring the light of Moses' face.

In every court of law, such a witness would be ideal.

A Test of the New Approach to Truth

Assumedly, then, if a story or teaching within the Bible meets the above criteria for a witness, it may theoretically meet the Bible's inerrant standard of truth.

So now let's carry this theory into the story of creation. Do we find a witness according to the above criteria? Yes. In Table 1 (Correlation Day 1 and Story

of Adam and Eve), notice how closely the words of the first day of creation correspond to the words that begin the story of Adam and Eve.

Table-1: Correlation Day 1 and Story of Adam and Eve.	
Genesis 1 ¹ In the beginning God created the <u>heaven and the earth.</u>	Genesis 2 ⁴ These are the generations of the heaven and of the earth when they were created, in <u>the day that the Lord God made earth and heaven.</u>
² Now the earth was <u>unformed</u>	⁵ No shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no herb of the field had yet sprung up; for the Lord God had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and <u>there was not a man to till the ground</u> ; ⁶ but there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.
(man is being formed here)	⁷ Then the Lord God <u>formed</u> man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.
² and <u>void</u> ,	Genesis 3 ²³ Therefore the Lord God <u>sent him forth</u> from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. ²⁴ So He <u>drove out</u> the man;
² and <u>darkness</u> was upon the face of the deep; and the spirit of God hovered over the face of the waters.	Genesis 6 ⁵ And the Lord saw that the <u>wickedness</u> of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only <u>evil continually</u> .
³ And God said: 'Let there be <u>light</u> ' ... ⁴ And God <u>divided the light from the darkness.</u>	⁸ But Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord. ... ⁹ a man <u>righteous and wholehearted</u> ; Noah walked with God. ... ¹³ And God said unto Noah: ... ¹⁴ Make thee an ark ... ¹⁶ A <u>light</u> shalt thou make to the ark, ... ¹⁷ And I, behold, I do bring the flood of waters upon the earth, to <u>destroy all flesh</u> , ... ¹⁸ But I will establish My covenant with thee;

Precisely here, at the beginning of the story of Adam and Eve, it appears that we have a story that *reinforces* the first day of creation. This conforms to one test of a witness.

But now, a problem becomes apparent. Above, the Table shows how six *chapters* of the Bible are as a witness to the first four *verses* of Genesis 1.

Nancy Smith

And in the same way, we should presume that the entire remainder of the Bible serves as a witness to the seven days of creation, little more than a single chapter at the beginning. The witness is thus much larger than the text it witnesses to. It becomes very apparent that these roles are reversed: the story of creation must actually be the witness, witnessing to the Bible stories that follow.

The Story of Creation as Witness to the Bible Stories

Having revised our understanding of these roles, we now want to prove the story of creation represents a witness according to our definition. Referring back to the Table, see what we find for the events of the first day:

1. First, Genesis 1 represents a different story, having a different *context*. The story of creation seems to represent a prophetic preview or the high point of the first day. In contrast, the story of Adam and Eve and Noah represents the associated historical narrative, describing the events that led up to the high point and continuing to the end of the story.

2. Second, the many underlined words in Table 1 lead to the conclusion that the story of creation portrays the same events, or *reinforces*, the stories of Adam and Eve and Noah. In fact, it appears that the above verses, so tightly interwoven, suggest the Bible itself leads us to this conclusion.

3. Finally, the story of creation *adds new insights*. For instance, God's words "let there be light" suggest that this is *our* role, to bear His light upon the earth, lest it descend into darkness.

The three features of God's inerrant witnesses in the Bible, then, appear also in the features of the first day of creation, suggesting it is likewise a witness, and likewise an expression of the same Author. As the popular saying goes, the Bible may be compared to a many-faceted diamond which sparkles with light when held at any angle.¹³

Since the first day of the story of creation seems to meet our definition of an inerrant witness, our next task is to examine the remaining days of creation

¹³ Mentioned by a Catholic priest in Chicago approximately 2007.

in the same way. Assuming we conclude the story of creation truly meets our definition of an inerrant witness, however, the Bible's standard of truth requires "two or three" witnesses. Reassuringly, there do exist additional witnesses to the Bible stories that meet the above definition of a witness. These must be studied separately.

Day 2 – the Firmament

⁶And God said: 'Let there be a **firmament** in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters'. ⁷And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. ⁸And God called the firmament heaven. And there was evening and there was morning, a second day. (Genesis 1:6-8)

Poetic interpretation:



Day 2 God made the domed expanse, between the waters spanned.
 This firmament, this heaven grand, resides in Holy Land.
 For God told man, "Go forth, expand," but Babel's fame we fanned.
 Though heart it strays when self we praise, for heaven we were planned.
 So God to Canaan Abra'm sent, a sacred place to found.
 Between the waters, Jordan west, the land with men God bound;
 Said, "Count the stars in skies above, or dust upon the ground.
 Your people they will worship Me, they'll be for Me renowned."

The word "firmament" is somewhat obscure, but see how it is described in *Strong's Concordance*.¹⁴

H7549 *râqîya'*, from H7554 – properly, an expanse, that is, the firmament or (apparently) visible arch of the sky.

Also notice *Strong's* listing for the root word, from which the above Hebrew word is derived:

¹⁴ James Strong, *The New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible*, Thomas Nelson, 1996

Nancy Smith

H7554 *râqa'*, a primitive root; to pound the earth (as a sign of passion); by analogy to expand (by hammering); by implication to overlay (with thin sheets of metal): — beat, make broad, spread abroad (forth, over, out, into plates), stamp, stretch.

From the above, we can associate the events on the second day with Abraham in four ways.

1. First, the firmament depicts something that is pounded out, being expanded or stretched into a thin plate. Accordingly, some Bibles translate the word “expanse.” This suggests the descendants of Abraham, one man, whose descendants were to “expand” to cover or overlay the land as they grew into multitudes.

2. The firmament therefore depicts the land of promise as the place God established for His name to be worshipped, countering Babel where man wanted to establish his own glory.

3. The firmament also describes the visible arch of the sky, and the word is also translated as a “dome.” This depicts the miniature sky or heaven portrayed in the interior dome of the temple, prefiguring the Jewish faith.

4. Finally, we are reminded that God promised not to repeat the destruction of the flood, when He had opened the windows of heaven. And now a firmament separates the waters above from the waters below.

So, the firmament, as the antithesis of Babel, and in the context of the dome of the temple, becomes the tangible manifestation of God’s promise. Looking down upon the earth, He would see not the darkness of mankind given to evil, but would see light – His own people, worshipful and loving toward their Creator.

Unfortunately, we often fall short.

Day 3 – Dry Land and Plants

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

¹¹And God said: 'Let the earth put forth **grass, herb yielding seed, and fruit-tree bearing fruit after its kind**, wherein is the seed thereof, upon the earth' And it was so. ¹²And the earth brought forth grass, herb yielding seed after its kind, and tree bearing fruit, wherein is the seed thereof, after its kind; and God saw that it was good. ¹³And there was evening and there was morning, a third day. (Genesis 1:9-13)

Poetic interpretation:



Day 3 the waters drained to sea; to all a famine came.
 And down to Egypt Jacob went, now Israel his name.
 Then land appeared: his clan there reared, soon Israelites found fame.
 But barren field, dry earth revealed, as slaves they had no claim.
 Then 'cross the land spread plants with seed: a people pedigreed.
 To Canaan went twelve tribes, now freed, while God filled every need.
 And Moses wrote the testament, those fertile souls to feed:
 God's glory shines through word and deed, brings fruit to all that heed.

First, notice how clearly the structure of the days of creation reflects the events they portray. The stories of Jacob and Moses in the Bible are separated by over 400 years. And above, we see two separate events depicted on the third day, where the Lord “saw that it was good” for each event.

To say plants and trees are a symbol for Israel may seem curious, but notice how the Bible validates this idea in the Old Testament.

¹⁰I found Israel like **grapes** in the wilderness, I saw your fathers as the first-ripe in the **fig-tree** at her first time; (Hosea 9:10)

Jesus seemed to affirm the association of trees to Israel in a random healing of a blind man, who remarked afterwards, “I see men as trees, walking” (Mark 8:24). Jesus touched his eyes again, suggesting to many that His first

Nancy Smith

attempt failed. But a problematic literal interpretation yields to a bright new understanding when seen as His opportunity to validate Hosea's symbol of trees as Israelites.

And again, in another story, Jesus was hungry but found no fruit on a fig tree. So, He cursed it and it withered away (Mark 11:12-14). This story is recognized as a reflection of His rebuke of Israel,¹⁵ whose chief priests had rejected Him: *The kingdom of God shall be taken from you, and given to a nation bringing forth the fruits thereof* (Matthew 21:43).

However, Mark also points out that “the time of figs was not yet,” suggesting Jesus' curse wasn't justified. In response, some suggest the tree should nevertheless have had edible unripened figs.¹⁶ But again, a prophetic interpretation surpasses human conjecture. The fact that it was not “the time of figs” corresponds exactly to the sequence of events in the days of creation. See this below:

Day 3: the land and the plants represent Jacob and Moses (Israelites)

Day 4: the sun represents Jesus Christ

Day 5: the fish and birds represent Peter and Paul (Christianity)

Day 6: the land animals represent the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel

It wasn't time in Jesus' day for fruit on the fig tree that represents Israel because God's plan was to bring in the Gentiles first.

²⁵*For I would not, brethren, that you should be ignorant of this mystery, ... that blindness in part is happened to Israel, until the fullness of the Gentiles be come in.* (Romans 11:25)

We actually see this fig tree, now with young fruits, in the future sixth seal:

¹⁵ Fuller Seminary, *Jesus Curses the Fig Tree* <https://www.fuller.edu/next-faithful-step/resources/jesus-curses-the-fig-tree/>

¹⁶ James R. Edwards, *The Gospel According to Mark* (PNTC. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2002), p 339-340.

¹²And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, ... ¹³And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a **fig tree** casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind. (Revelation 6:12-13)

Day 4 – Sun and Moon and Stars

¹⁴And God said: 'Let there be **lights** in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days and years; ¹⁵and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth' And it was so. ¹⁶And God made the two great lights: the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; and the stars. ¹⁷And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, ¹⁸and to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness; and God saw that it was good. ¹⁹And there was evening and there was morning, a fourth day. (Genesis 1:14-19)

Poetic interpretation:



Day 4 God made the heaven's lights, to shine where there was none. God's prophets, stars, their dreams foretold: behold, comes Holy One. Though stars they glimmer, earth is dim, till lit by brilliant sun. "I Am," Christ said, "light of the world," then gave His life, said "Done." The risen Son now rules the day, makes plain the path below, While Mary, blest, in Son light dressed, at night sheds lesser glow. In death Christ bore our guilt and sin, to save us from the foe. Where hearts incline t'ward light, they shine, and love and peace do flow.

Here, we see Jesus Christ as the symbol of the sun. And in His words, "*I am the light of the world*" (John 8:12), we recognize His validation of that symbol. Further, the sun is to "divide the light from the darkness," which points to Jesus' role as our judge:

²²For the Father judgeth no man, but hath committed all judgment unto the Son: (John 5:22)

Now, notice how the prophetic interpretation of the days of creation resolve three disputes mentioned earlier:

Nancy Smith

1. On the third day, God created living plants, including fruit trees, and afterwards He created the sun to shine upon them. This seems to defy logic, in that plants must have sunlight to grow. The sequence of events is much more readily understood if it represents the day of Moses (fig trees) followed by Jesus. This answers the site promoting Islam.

2. On the first day, God said, “let there be light.” The sun, moon and stars, however, were not created until the fourth day. However, the light of the first day represents the heavenly light of the Father’s glory, which appears in the holy city, or in subtle halos surrounding His creatures in heaven – or around His Son, transfigured:

²³*And the city had **no need of the sun**, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the **glory of God did lighten it**, and the Lamb is the light thereof.* (Revelation 21:23)

²⁷*and it had **brightness** round about.* (Ezekiel 1:27)

²*And he was transfigured before them. ³And his raiment became **shining**, exceeding white ... ⁷And a voice came out of the cloud, saying, *This is my beloved Son, hear him.* (Matthew 17:2,7)*

The light of the fourth day instead represents Jesus, who is the “light of the world,” different from the light of heaven. And the light of the sun brightens the earth daily. This answers the American Humanistic Association.

3. Third, since the Bible affirms “light” is associated with both the Father and Son, we now have an inerrant witness to Jesus as the “only begotten Son of God, ... *light of light*, true God of true God”¹⁷ (to quote the Nicene Creed). This answers those who deny Jesus’ divine paternity and birth to the virgin Mary.

One more topic should be mentioned, where the poetic interpretation of this day associates the lesser of the “two great lights” to Jesus’ mother Mary.

¹⁷ Nicene and Niceno-Constantinopolitan Creed, *Catholic Encyclopedia* (1913) Wikisource, the free online library. [https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_\(1913\)/Nicene_and_Niceno-Constantinopolitan_Creed](https://en.wikisource.org/wiki/Catholic_Encyclopedia_(1913)/Nicene_and_Niceno-Constantinopolitan_Creed)

Notice how the Bible affirms her in this role. First, recall God's words in regard to Adam:

¹⁸*And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone.* (Genesis 2:18)

So, God created Eve for Adam. But what about God's own Son? We can know the Father took His Son into account in that we see *two* great lights on the fourth day, the greater being the sun and the lesser being the moon. While Jesus is depicted as the sun, the Bible associates the moon to Mary:

¹*And there appeared a great wonder in heaven: a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:*
²*And she being with child cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.* (Revelation 12:1-2).

In this story, she prefigures Zion in travail to bring forth a different auspicious birth, a land and a nation, during the darkness of the tribulation (consistent with the moon being active at night):

⁸*Is a land born in one day? Is a nation brought forth at once? For as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.* (Isaiah 66:8 JPS version)

As further testimony to her godly nature, notice the words of both Gabriel, the angel of the annunciation, and of her cousin Elizabeth:

²⁸*Hail, thou that art highly favoured, the Lord is with thee: blessed are thou among women.* (Luke 1:28)

⁴²*Blessed art thou among women, and blessed is the fruit of thy womb.* (Luke 1:42)

Finally, consider the nature of the sun and stars, in that they actively emit light. Thus, Jesus was active as the sun, or "light of the world," and the apostles and prophets had their own light, or message. But the moon is unique, in that it does not emit its own light but only reflects the light of the sun. And Mary, in humility, only deferred to her Son:

⁵*Whatsoever he saith unto you, do it.* (John 2:5)

Day 5 – Fish and Birds

²⁰And God said: 'Let the **waters swarm with swarms of living creatures**, and let **fowl** fly above the earth in the open firmament of **heaven**'. ²¹And God created the great sea-monsters, and every living creature that creepeth, wherewith the waters swarmed, after its kind, and every winged fowl after its kind; and God saw that it was good. ²²And God blessed them, saying: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth'. ²³And **there was evening and there was morning**, a fifth day. (Genesis 1:20-23)

Poetic interpretation:



Day 5 God filled the seas with fish, put birds in skies above. Each different kind by God designed, all creatures of His love. For fish are Peter's new saved souls: baptized, their sins washed of. Reborn in Spirit, they're the birds, Paul's symbol of the dove. Day wanes, grows old, its end foretold; comes evening on the wing. Before each bright new dawn may spring, the darkness God must wring. In rage the serpent's tail will flail, the beast the mark will bring. For their defeat, your vict'ry seat, say Jesus Christ is King.

Again, notice how the words of Genesis 1 conform to the events they represent:

1. Peter baptized in water for salvation as remission of sins, which correlates to fish in water. Also, being a fisherman, Peter responded to Jesus' invitation to leave their nets and become "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19). Paul instead baptized in the Holy Spirit, the symbol of the dove, signifying spiritual rebirth (Acts 19:6).

2. Also notice the fish and birds have different domains (the seas and heaven). And Peter ministered mostly to the Jews in Rome (Acts 12:17, Romans 15:20), while Paul ministered to the Gentiles in Antioch (Acts 14:26).

3. The fish were created first, followed by the birds. And Peter began his ministry first, followed soon afterward by Paul. Since they were active at the same time, there is only a single statement that “God saw that it was good.”

The poetic interpretation concludes by explaining the darkness that precedes each new dawn. The evening, for instance, suggests the flood, four hundred years of slavery, the crucifixion – and the tribulation that precedes the dawn of the sixth day. While many Christians assume, or they are taught, that they will be “raptured” before the tribulation, evidence instead suggests the “rapture” occurs at the beginning of the Millennial Reign. This topic must be deferred to a later study.

Day 6 – Land Animals and Man in the Image of God

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

²⁶*And God said: 'Let us make **man in our image**, after our likeness; and let them have **dominion** over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth'. ²⁷And God created man in His own image, in the image of God created He him; male and female created He them. ²⁸And God blessed them; and God said unto them: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it; and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that creepeth upon the earth'.*

²⁹*And God said: 'Behold, I have given you every herb yielding seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed--to you it shall be for food; ³⁰and to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is a living soul, I have given every green herb for food.' And it was so. ³¹And God saw every thing that He had made, and, **behold, it was very good.** And there was evening and there was morning, the sixth day. (Genesis 1:24-31)*

Poetic interpretation:



Day 6 brings creatures on the land, which last but plant life bore:
The tribes come forth in thousands of, one hundred forty-four.
Then perfect male and female rose, who God's own image wore,
And those who gave up life for Christ, like Him to life did soar.
A thousand years they reigned with Christ; His iron rod applied.
With serpent chained and beast restrained, as priests they now preside.
The earth subdued, all creatures ruled – they're symbols here implied.
Dominion's theirs, God's people heirs; His kingdom occupied.

Here, in the sixth day, we enter into prophecy of events that have not yet come to pass. Again, recall the words of Isaiah:

¹⁰*Declaring the end from the beginning, and **from ancient times the things that are not yet done**, (Isaiah 46:10)*

Nevertheless, the previous days of creation give us confidence to proceed. Notice, then, how the focus of God's creation is again upon the land, which was associated with Jacob on day 3. The land animals thus represent the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel (Revelation 7:1-8).

And then we learn about the man in the image of God. According to the historical interpretation, this represents Adam. Instead, in the prophetic interpretation, we arrive at the holy priests of the Millennial Reign. As evidence, their identity answers another mystery of the historical approach, wondering who God was speaking to, in saying “let *us* make man in *our* image.” Notice the dual affiliation below of these “blessed and holy” priests:

⁴*And I saw thrones, and they sat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and I saw the souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus, and for the word of God, ...* ⁵*This is the first resurrection.* ***Blessed and holy*** *is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be **priests of God and of Christ**, and shall reign with him a thousand years.* (Revelation 20:4-6)

Notice also that the man in the image of God is given dominion over the fish, the birds, and the land animals. While the historical interpretation

suggests the earth is therefore ours to plunder, instead, following the prophetic interpretation, we understand the holy priests are given dominion over those at lower levels of spiritual attainment – representing those identified earlier as fish, birds and land animals. And the purpose is not to be as an overlord, but to “be fruitful, and multiply,” helping them to grow or evolve further, joining the ranks of the holy priests.

Again, notice the structure of the sixth day, in that we see two separate statements that God saw it was good. This repeats the pattern of the third day, where Jacob and Moses were separated by over 400 years. Consequently, for these future events depicted as the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel and the holy priests, we want to understand that they will be separate events with a number of years between them.

Finally, returning to the anomalies in the story of creation, recall the seven days show man was created after the plants, but the historical story of Adam shows he was created before the plants. However, the sequence in the story of creation aligns perfectly as prophecy, showing the plants as Israel on the third day, and then the holy priests (not Adam) as the man in the image of God on the sixth day. As prophecy, Adam appears as the darkness on the first day, and the creation of plants in his day is not mentioned there. This answers the dispute in the *Skeptic’s Annotated Bible*.

Day 7 – Day of Rest

¹And the **heaven and the earth were finished, and all the host** of them. ²And on the seventh day God finished His work which He had made; and He **rested** on the seventh day from all His work which He had made. ³And God blessed the seventh day, and hallowed it; because that in it He rested from all His work which God in creating had made. (Genesis 2:1-3)

Poetic interpretation:



Day 7 nears, but first comes night; the day of rest must wait.
The serpent, freed through opened gate, goes forth all men to bait.
To God's own now a siege they laid, but fire was their fate.
Alas, they craved their former state, and spurned the path made straight.
Then dead arise and judgment's passed; those in God's book stand fast.
New heaven, earth and city vast; the old away is cast.
No death or pain, no tears but joy, and splendor unsurpassed.
With us God walks, as Eden past; the work is done at last.

Here we arrive at the finale, the day of rest. In the historical interpretation, it points to the completion of the work over the prior six days. But what does it mean in the prophetic interpretation?

Curiously, the presentation of events for this day follows a different pattern. The previous days all include God's intention statement, "Let there be ..." . And they all include His completion statement, "And God created ..,". But here, it only says the heaven and earth are finished. Let's look deeper to understand what's happening.

We first need to acknowledge that here, at the last day of creation, we are near the end of the Bible stories. The completion of the heaven and earth, then, points to the *new* heaven and *new* earth.

And second, note that completing the new heaven and earth involves three phases.

1. First, we first see the new heaven and earth, including the holy city, descend from God:

¹And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. ²And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. ³And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. ⁴And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. (Revelation 21:1-4)

2. Secondly, we see the work to populate the city and new heaven and earth:

⁶*And he said unto me, it is done. I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is athirst of the fountain of the **water of life** freely. ⁷He that overcometh shall inherit all things; and I will be his God, and he shall be my son. (Revelation 21:6-7)*

¹²*And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward is with me, to give every man according as his work shall be. ¹³I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last. ¹⁴Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the **tree of life**, and may enter in through the gates into the **city**. (Revelation 22:12-14)*

¹⁷*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the **water of life** freely. (Revelation 22:17)*

3. Finally, the point comes when “all the host of them” have come to occupy the new heaven and new earth. Paul explains what occurs at this point:

²⁴*Then cometh the end, when he shall have **delivered up the kingdom** to God, even the Father. ... ²⁸then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all. (1 Corinthians 15:24, 28)*

This completes the work, so that *now* God calls it a day of rest.

And now the reason becomes apparent that the events on this seventh day do not begin with God’s intention, saying “Let there be ...”. He Himself is not involved during this phase. Instead, it is the work of the Son (as Alpha and Omega) and His bride with the Spirit.

As a final topic, the above analysis explains one more perplexing statement, where Jesus says the temple will be raised up in three days:

¹⁹*Jesus answered and said unto them, Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up. ... ²¹But he spake of the temple of his body. (John 2:19,21)*

Nancy Smith

The apostles, John explains, understood Jesus' words referred to His death and resurrection. However, by tradition, Jesus died on a Friday afternoon and was resurrected on the following Sunday morning. Many struggle to accept this represents three days (although Cleopas referred to it as three days in Luke 24:21).

Nevertheless, going beyond the particular method used to count days, note that Jesus' words seem to have both a historical and prophetic meaning. Considering His words historically, we understand they gave hope to the apostles. Considering His words prophetically, we return to the seven days, noting Jesus was the symbol of the sun on the fourth day. If we add three days, we arrive at the seventh day – or the words saying the (new) heaven and earth are being finished. The raising up of the temple points to His “body,” now complete, being “delivered up” to the Father, as stated by Paul.

*²²And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are the **temple** of it. ²³And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon, to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof. (Revelation 21:22-23)*

*¹³For by one Spirit are we all baptized into **one body** ... ¹⁴For the body is not one member, but many. (1 Corinthians 12:13-14)*

Nevertheless, to avoid confusion, note that this event does not represent Jesus' second coming. It is certain that He will be involved earlier, judging and making war as the rider on the white horse (Revelation 19:11), and reigning over the earthly kingdom until He has placed all enemies under His feet (1 Corinthians 15:25). These activities begin on the sixth day and *culminate* in the day of rest.

Again, we find a satisfactory explanation for perplexing words by considering them as prophetic.

SUMMARY

This completes our study of the seven days of creation, presenting them as prophecy rather than historical narrative. In the process, we saw how the prophetic interpretation meets the Bible's own standard of truth. But many additional conclusions can be drawn. See below.

Validity of the Historical Interpretation

Again, the prophetic interpretation of the days of creation does not take away from those who say Genesis 1 reveals "God's sovereignty, the goodness of creation, and the honor placed upon us as His image bearers." Certainly, one may righteously be content to ignore controversies while insisting God is allowed His mysteries.

In fact, notice how precisely these two interpretations fit together without leaving a gap and without overlapping each other:

1. The historical interpretation depicts God's work over *six* days to create the *heaven* and the *earth*, culminating in the first man, Adam.
2. The prophetic interpretation begins with the fall of Adam and culminates on the *seventh* day in the *new* heaven and *new* earth.

Today, many refer to six days of creation and one day of rest. This seems appropriate for the historical narrative. However, it may be valid to refer to all seven days for the prophetic approach, which brings closure to both.

Perfection of Both Historical and Prophetic Interpretations

Now, having concluded that the story of creation has two valid interpretations, let's compare them. As pointed out by Cox and others, the historical interpretation gives rise to curious anomalies and problematic conclusions, and therefore seems deficient. Instead, the prophetic version seems fully dynamic and functional, meshing perfectly with the rest of the Bible.

Does the historical version then fail to conform to the perfection of the Bible? No. Its perfection is three-fold:

Nancy Smith

1. First, the perfection of the historical approach lies in its insistence upon God being allowed His mysteries.

²*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, ... (Proverbs 25:2)*

2. Second, its perfection can be seen in thwarting our efforts to explain these anomalies and problematic conclusions through human conjecture. Although these efforts may well be justified as a bridge over rough waters, the Lord intends that they never yield a perfect solution – lest it be said that we, mankind, needed to improve on His work:

⁹*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ... (1 Corinthians 13:9)*

Although many may nevertheless cross that bridge of conjecture, at some point, it must be abandoned, placing faith directly upon the Lord, absent any insistence upon understanding His ways:

³³*O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out! ³⁴For who hath known the mind of the Lord? Or who hath been his counsellor? (Romans 11:33-34)*

3. But now, as the third perfection of the historical approach, notice the above verses in a more complete form:

²*It is the glory of God to conceal a thing, but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. (Proverbs 25:2)*

⁹*For we know in part, and we prophesy in part. ¹⁰But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away. (1 Corinthians 13:9-10)*

Our restless search for a better answer, then, has the potential to ultimately lead us to the prophetic interpretation where the anomalies find closure.

It can be stated with certainty, then, that both the historical and prophetic interpretations of the story of creation meet the perfection of the Bible.

The Glorious Days of Creation as God’s Proof of the Bible

Having concluded that the prophetic interpretation of the story of creation meets the definition of a Biblical witness, conforming to the inerrancy of the Bible, consider how this discovery changes our perception of the Bible. We typically say the Bible proves God. Instead, here, we see God Himself proves the Bible. This refutes the claim of those who say the Bible cannot be inerrant because “human works” were involved.

And consider how this discovery can only be a glorious reflection upon our God and a sure testimony to the teachings of the Bible, placing it above every other sacred literature or spiritual teaching. Truly, “*who is like unto Thee, O Lord, among the gods?*” (Exodus 15:11).

Speculation on the Teaching Role of Remaining Witnesses

We have examined the first witness for the story of creation. As mentioned earlier, however, there must be – and there is – more than one witness within the Bible, more than one story that is assumed to be historical when it is also prophetic.

But reflect back to consider that the first witness proves God, Jesus and the Bible. Further, it portrays, as a preview, the high points of the stories from the fall of man to the day of rest. Essentially, it seems to represent an overview of God’s plan of salvation.

So now, if the first witness depicts the plan of salvation, what purpose would the other witnesses serve? And let’s put this question into the proper perspective. Consider the immense craftsmanship involved in these discoveries. God *worked* to provide models of His witnesses conforming to the inerrancy of the Bible. And He *worked* to design two different but equally perfect stories of creation. And He *worked* to ensure all correlating text was included, such as explaining the missing intention statement on the seventh day. And finally, we can know that God *worked* to establish in the Bible the other witnesses and their own correlating proofs.

So now, considering the extent of His *work* involved in these witnesses, let’s surmise that He has a significant end purpose or goal for them. So, what

might it be? It seems appropriate to suggest His goal must certainly culminate in our participation in the new heaven and the new earth, that which brings His work to a rest. As evidence, the remaining witnesses, for example, explain the difference between soul and spirit, the nature of sin, free will, faith, the reason for evil, and so on. Coming from a different perspective, these lessons are fresh, clear teachings. And reassuringly, they all conform to our moral traditions.

But now, what about the end times? The above studies certainly provide much insight into the tribulation, and admittedly there is a great deal of fascination on this topic. However, the above lessons must be pursued first, as a higher goal, because they in fact help us toward the level of faith held by the apostles. Notice, for instance, the words of Peter:

⁶So be truly glad. There is wonderful joy ahead, even though you have to endure many trials for a little while. ⁷These trials will show that your faith is genuine. It is being tested as fire tests and purifies gold – though your faith is far more precious than mere gold. (1 Peter 1:6-7)

The tribulation may be overwhelming for many without these lessons.

TOWARD REFINING HERMENEUTICS FOR PROPHECY

Having concluded our study of Genesis 1 as prophecy, let's examine what hermeneutic principles apply to this genre. According to Wikipedia, "Biblical hermeneutics is the study of the principles of interpretation concerning the books of the Bible."¹⁸ The purpose is to discern the meaning of the words as written, thereby ensuring teachings are correct.

⁹As we said before, so say I now again, If any man preach any other gospel unto you than that ye have received, let him be accursed. (Galatians 1:9)

The standard approach, as explained by Henry A. Virkler, is to focus first on the genre, or the type of writing. He explains, "each genre of Scripture has a different set of rules that applies to it. ... In these [genres, such as prophecy], there are differing levels of allegory, figurative language,

¹⁸ en.m.wikipedia.org/wiki/Biblical_hermeneutics

metaphors, similes and literal language. ... These must be addressed, and the genre recognized, to gain a full understanding of the intended meaning.”¹⁹

Hermeneutics is essential to prevent non-Biblical teaching, but the science appears to be somewhat imprecise. As evidence, William Yarchin²⁰ points to his “shelf full of religious books saying different things, but all claiming to be faithful interpretations of the Bible.”²¹

Nevertheless, let’s examine one analysis of the days of creation as prophecy. Clive Campbell, attending Ottawa Theological Hall, closely followed the hermeneutic principles of Grant R. Osborne, author of *The Hermeneutical Spiral*,²² and combined them with Peter’s words saying a day is a thousand-years:

⁸*One day is with the Lord as a thousand years, and a thousand years as one day.* (2 Peter 3:8)

Campbell’s approach seem to have much merit. He saw events across the span of time were neatly ordered into seven precise periods of a thousand years, with each “millennium” beginning in the year ‘30.²³ He did associate the events for each day to the patriarchs – to the extent that they aligned themselves with the thousand-year intervals, and proposed the seventh day of rest is the reign of Christ beginning in the year 2030.

Campbell’s conclusions, of course, differ somewhat from those based upon the inerrant witnesses. Although our analysis suggests Jesus’ reign occurs on the sixth day instead, the year 2030 may not be far off to begin it. However, it begins with the tribulation as the evening darkness, followed by

¹⁹ Henry A. Virkler, *Hermeneutics: Principles and Processes of Biblical Interpretation* (1998)

²⁰ <http://www.apu.edu/honors/faculty/byarchin>

²¹ William Yarchin, *History of Biblical Interpretation: A Reader* (Hendrickson, 2004), xi

²² Grant R. Osborne, *The Hermeneutical Spiral – A Comprehensive Introduction to Biblical Interpretation*, Intervarsity Press, 1991

²³ Clive Campbell, The Hermeneutical Key to the Book of Revelation. *Journal of Biblical Theology*, Volume 8(18), June 14, 2007

Nancy Smith

the land animals, or the 144,000 of the tribes of Israel. Then, afterwards, the reign of Christ begins as the man in the image of God, pointing to the holy priests.

Also, our analysis didn't follow thousand-year intervals. Actually, it may not be valid to assume they relate to the days of creation because Peter was writing about the "last days," culminating in the "*day* of the Lord."

So now, let's look back to consider what hermeneutic principles applied during our study of the days of creation.

1. First, in accordance with the Bible's standard of truth (Deuteronomy 17:6), all conclusions must be validated by "witnesses," which may be allegorical in nature. As explained earlier, these witnesses must be within the Bible, and they must speak from a different perspective, reinforce the topic, and add new insights. And of course, new conclusions must not conflict with other parts of the Bible.

2. Second, since the above process of validation is limited to the Bible, the Bible itself is therefore held to be self-sufficient, answering its own mysteries. Consequently, human conjecture must be considered secondary to prove (or disprove) assumptions on the meaning of Scripture.

The above are necessarily brief, being based upon a single inerrant witness. However, consider one final perspective on the topic of hermeneutics, as offered by Orthodox Catholic Archpriest Michael Dahulich: "Our purpose in attempting to understand the Bible must not be merely for academic inquiry but ... to become by grace what Christ is by nature."²⁴ Again, the words "let there be light" should give us pause to realize this is our role, out of gratitude, to be His light upon the earth.

²⁴ Archpriest Michael Dahulich, "OrthodoxWiki article on Hermeneutics"

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