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The Story of Creation

by Ernest L. Martin Ph.D., 1988

Edited and updated by David Sielaff, August 2017

Read the accompanying [Newsletter for December 2010](#)



For several centuries many people, especially critical scholars, have called attention to the obvious discrepancies between the first biblical account of creation found in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 and the second which commences in Genesis 2:4. True enough, but the narratives are fundamentally very different accounts of creation and in no way are they talking about the same event. The research revealed in this study shows that Moses was giving information from God about two different phases of the creation of the heavens and the earth. Genesis chapters 1 and 2 are not accounts of the same creation. The solution to the Story of Creation is provided in this research study.

Incompatible Accounts

The principal thing that must be understood in comprehending the biblical accounts of creation is the fact that God (through Moses) is endeavoring to provide us with the knowledge of all the essential factors that were involved in the creation processes. Moses was leaving out nothing that was necessary for humanity to know in regard to these matters.

This is why Moses gave us two accounts of creation and they are quite diverse from one another. The first narrative is recorded from Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 and the second is given from Genesis 2:4 to the conclusion of the chapter. A close comparison of the two historical episodes reveals that they are incompatible to one another in their sequence of creative events and in the time periods separating those events. Though the two narratives are complementary to one another they are in no way harmonious in their contents. This is because they are recording a different series of creative events.

In actual fact, the two accounts are revealing to mankind a marvelous revelation about the two stages of God's creative actions in bringing into existence the heavens and the earth. When we really understand what the Bible is relating to us, we discover that it is providing a most logical scenario of God's methods of creation. The real Story of Creation is sensible indeed.

The Stages of Creation

The fact that there are profound differences between the two accounts is an important factor in realizing

what God is trying to tell us concerning the methods by which He brought into being the things within our environment. God is showing us two steps (or two different stages) in the creation process. When He brought into existence our own galaxy, the solar system of which we are a part, the earth on which we live, and finally the development of His crowning achievement (the creation of humankind), He performed those physical actions by two creative stages.

Though God can create things in an instant, the creative processes that He has revealed to us in His Holy Scriptures show that He often takes different periods of time to accomplish His purpose. But let me say at the outset that God in no way uses the evolutionary process to perform His creative acts, as is prevalently taught in our institutions of higher learning. The Bible shows that God creates things separately and distinctly from one another. The Bible does not teach the “evolutionary” development of living things from the simple-celled to the infinitely complex creatures of higher animals and humans. But the Bible does show that God uses various “stages” to bring into existence the things of His choosing. God allots periods of time for His creative plans to be brought to fruition.

What we find in the Bible is that the creative processes of God are normally accomplished in stages — one step at a time. And if we look closely at the narratives of creation in Genesis this is what we discover Him doing. In actual fact, the creative acts of God are still very much going on.¹ The fact is, His creative endeavor is in operation at this very moment and it will continue to be in evidence for long periods of time in the future which He has mapped out for the accomplishment of His plan.

The apostle Paul called these epochs God’s **“own time periods”** which He has designed for the salvation of mankind (1 Timothy 2:6, Greek). God has apportioned various stages of spiritual development for humans so that He can create in us (through our attachment to His son Jesus Christ) the spiritual factors of life that will make us to be like God. We are destined to reach the full stature of the glory and majesty now enjoyed by Jesus Christ himself as shown in Ephesians 4:13–16.

This plan of God for man’s salvation and glorification is revealed quite clearly in the Holy Scriptures. The Bible is the instruction book which God gives to mankind to understand the reason for the creation of our universe and the purpose for our existence on earth. It also informs us that we all have awaiting us a glorious destiny and it is God (through His son Jesus Christ) who will create in us the factors of character and power that He himself now has. God has promised mankind (through Christ) to bring us into that glorious condition in the time periods that He has allotted to perform this task.

The Goal of Creation

But let us now get to our subject at hand: the real Story of Creation. The stages of creative development that God uses to bring mankind into the same spiritual stature as Jesus Christ are reflective of the plan that He used in creating our heavens and earth as revealed in the first two chapters of Genesis. What Moses was telling his readers is that the physical creation of our heavens and earth (and even of mankind) was performed in various stages. When one looks at the two accounts found in those first two chapters we can see God’s methods in full action. We will discover that the first stage of God’s creation is revealed in Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 (which actions were actually achieved in heaven) while the second stage was put into action by the events mentioned from Genesis 2:4 onward (with these later events being conducted and concluded on earth).

The fact that the first stage of God’s creation was in heaven and the second stage was on earth can be understood when we look closely at the two narratives. This matter becomes sensible by recognizing the differences in the two accounts. The two creative records are not speaking about the same events. Let us now see how different the two narrations really are. Those differences can give us a clue in comprehending

¹ See Dr. Martin’s presentation “[The Creation of Life in Contemporary Times](#)” where the Psalms talk about other creations of God that are continuing and are ongoing at the present time. God does not stop creating. This article also denotes an additional account of God’s creative process from Psalms 103–106. DWS

the two stages of God’s creative endeavors when He brought into existence the physical apparatus of the universe of which we are a part.

The Different Accounts of Creation

In the creation narrative starting with Genesis 1:1 we find that God created on the first day the heavens and the earth. We are then told that the earth was waste and empty and that water covered the whole surface of the globe: (“**without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep,**” Genesis 1:2, and verse 7). But the second account shows that “**in the day**” God created the heavens and the earth the land masses were already in evidence and a mist (or a stream or spring from the earth) watered the surface of the ground (Genesis 2:4–6):

“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, [verse 2:4a]

In the day that YHWH Elohim made [verse 2:4b]

- [1] **the earth and the heavens,**
- [2] **And every plant of the field before it was in the earth, and**
- [3] **every herb of the field before it grew:**

for YHWH Elohim had not caused it to rain upon the earth, and there was not a man to till the ground. But there went up a mist from the earth, and watered the whole face of the ground.”

• **Genesis 2:4–6**

This is different from the first account because in it the dry ground did not emerge from the water that covered the globe until the third day (Genesis 1:9–13). This is the first difference we encounter. There are even more profound variances.

In the second account the next thing that follows the creation of the heavens and the earth was the formation of Adam — a male human being (Genesis 2:7). We are told that Adam was created before there were any plants and herbs of the field (verse 5). The fact that plants were brought into existence after Adam is stated in the two verses following the account of Adams creation (verses 8 and 9). But in the earlier narrative, the plants were created on the third day (Genesis 1:11–13) a full three days before the creation of Adam.

The second narrative also shows every beast of the field and every bird of the air as being created after Adam (verses 18–20), but in Genesis One the living creatures (beasts, cattle, creeping things) were created on the sixth day and before Adam was made alive. And while the first chapter of Genesis shows that both Adam and Eve were created in the latter part of the sixth day (Genesis 1:26–31), in the second narrative Eve was created from Adam’s rib after the plants and the animals were brought into existence (Genesis 2:21–25).

Scholars have long ago noticed these differences and many of them have felt that they (among other problems) show two different and contradictory aspects of the same creation as viewed by different writers. The truth is, however, the differences can be accounted for in another way. Moses is actually giving information about two stages of creation, not two accounts about a single creation. It is important to note that the two chapters are speaking about two creations which are both very different from one another. Indeed, we will soon see that Moses in the first chapter is not even writing about the actual creation of our heavens and earth.

Look at this matter closely. Within the first narrative there are clues that Moses is not recording events associated with the physical creation of our earth. Note that He mentioned that three days (three evenings and mornings) had passed before the sun was made on the fourth day to bring us “night” and “day” (Genesis 1:14–19). In the first account Moses is recording certain creative acts that were accomplished within three consecutive “**evenings and mornings.**” Yes, but those “**evenings and mornings**” could not be those we

experience on earth simply because our sun (which gives us our **“evenings and mornings”**) was not made until the fourth day in Moses’ early account of God’s creative efforts.

Also note this! Nowhere does Moses indicate in the first account that the creation of light (which allowed “day” to exist) and darkness (which allowed “night” to exist) was because our sun already existed or that our earth was then rotating on its axis to bring “day” and “night.” The creation of our sun, that causes the division line between our day and night, was not in evidence until the fourth day (Genesis 1:14–19).

In spite of these contradictions (and there are others which can be detected in a subtle sense), it is absurd to think that Moses was unaware of them. Moses knew that there were major variances in the accounts. These differences did not deter him from placing them together, one after another, in the first two chapters of Genesis.

Making Sense of the Genesis Accounts

As long as one realizes that there are two different “creations” under discussion by Moses (not a single “creation”) then the narratives begin to make sense. The recording of these different accounts was Moses’ way of showing to mankind the two stages of creative development that God used to bring into existence our heavens and earth. Let us now see what Moses had in mind in recording his two episodes of creation.

The simple answer to the so-called problem of the creation accounts can be understood by evaluating the manner in which God revealed to Moses other things which He ordered Moses to create and to build. If we can realize how God created other things on earth (and we have the divine revelation to back up the teaching), then we may be able to comprehend how God created the heavens, the earth and all things in the earth. In other words, notice the manner in which God created things in Moses’ time in the eyes of all the Israelites and also His methods of creation revealed in other sections of the Bible. By doing so, we may discover a pattern that God uses to create things in heaven and on earth.

This pattern could reveal the customary manner in which God sets about creating things. The more examples of how God produces things (especially if we see a typical pattern being used), the more we can be assured that God performs His creative actions within ordained parameters that He establishes. Simply put, look in the Bible for the ways that God does things in His creative acts and apply those procedures to the narratives of Genesis chapters 1 and 2. By using this technique, we may logically explain the course of action that God followed in revealing to Moses His method of creating the heavens and the earth.

Let us start with the way that God showed His creative endeavors to Moses. It is important to start with Moses because he wrote Genesis chapters 1 and 2. This would rationally mean that the methods God utilized with Moses in showing His creative actions take a decided priority in interpreting the writings of Moses.

The Tabernacle as an Example

Look at the manner in which God told Moses how to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness. What was the first thing that God told Moses? He gave him a pattern (or a blueprint) of the Tabernacle design.

“Let them make me a sanctuary; that I may dwell among them. According to all that I show you, after the PATTERN of the tabernacle, and the PATTERN of all the instruments thereof, even so shall you make it.”

• ***Exodus 25:8–9***

The author of Hebrews (the apostle Paul) refers to this pattern of the Tabernacle. He tells us that it was a blueprint of what God’s palace in heaven looked like. He said it was:

“... the example and shadow of heavenly things [of the celestials], as Moses was admonished of God when he was about to make the Tabernacle: ‘for see,’ said he, ‘that you shall make all things according to the PATTERN showed to you in the mount.’”

• ***Hebrews 8:5***

In other words, God first gave Moses a glimpse of what His heavenly abode was like and then He presented Moses with a pattern or a blueprint of His divine residence, a model of that palace, to be among the Israelites. God provided Moses with all the dimensions and details of that heavenly replica and informed him to construct it as a sanctuary on earth so that the Israelites could properly worship Him.

What we need to realize in our present discussion is the fact that the pattern came first (with God bringing the details of that pattern from heaven), and then the replica of God's residence was built out of physical materials on this earth. Indeed, even when we create today any kind of structure or engineering project, it is always essential to first make a pattern (or a blueprint) before the actual creation of the structure or project can be put into action by the builders.

What we need to realize (and this point is important regarding our present subject) is the fact that those creators of the blueprint (that is, the architects and others associated with them) may create the blueprint in their graphics' studios in a step by step fashion, but the builders themselves may not use the same chronological steps that the architects used when they actually construct the project itself. Creating the architectural plans (the pattern) is a very different act of creation than actually creating and fabricating that project which was designed by the architects. The pattern must always be created first, and then the project can be created. Such procedures are the common ones that architects and construction firms have adopted today.²

This is the exact procedure that God used when He told Moses to build the Tabernacle in the wilderness. The first thing that God did was to bring with Him a pattern from heaven (Exodus 25:8–9; Hebrews 8:5), and then He told Moses to construct the Tabernacle and set it up according to that pattern. But note this important point. When God gave Moses the pattern He gave it in a different order of events than the actual manner in which Moses raised up the Tabernacle, consecrated the priesthood and ordained the rituals. Look at this point carefully.

The Tabernacle — God's Pattern Sequence

Consider the sequence of events in which God discussed the pattern of the Tabernacle and its furniture. God presented Moses with details on how to construct:

- A. first the furniture of the Tabernacle beginning with the holiest items that were to be located in the Holy of Holies (Exodus 25:10–22), and then He
- B. geographically proceeded eastward to the Table of Shewbread (Exodus 25:23–30), and then
- C. to the Lampstand (Exodus 25:31–40). After this, God told Moses
- D. how to construct the Holy Place itself which was located on the western side of the Tabernacle (Exodus 26:1–30), and then
- E. He mentioned the curtain and the entrance to that Holy Place (Exodus 26:31–37). It was then
- F. that God spoke about the Altar of Burnt Offering situated in the outer court (Exodus 27:1–8). God then
- G. mentioned the hangings in the court (Exodus 27:9–19), and
- H. the consecration of the priests (Exodus 28:1 to 29:46), and finally
- I. He proceeded back westward into the Holy Place to discuss the Altar of Incense (Exodus 30:1–10).

This was how the pattern of the Tabernacle and its furniture was presented to Moses.

² The act of construction or manufacturing is every bit an act of creation as is the planning. DWS

The Tabernacle — Moses' Construction Sequence

But when Moses actually constructed the Tabernacle and its compartments, he set up

- D.** first the construction of the tent structure itself, the Holy Place (Exodus 40:18–19), then he
- A.** put inside the Holy of Holies its furniture (Exodus 40:20–21), then after setting up
- B.** the Table of Shewbread (Exodus 40:22–23) and
- C.** the Lampstand (Exodus 40:24–25), he raised up
- I.** the Altar of Incense (Exodus 40:26–27), then he erected
- E.** the curtain and door (Exodus 40:28, cf., verse 26), then
- F.** the Altar of Burnt Offering (Exodus 40:29), then
- H.** Moses set up the laver and consecrated Aaron and his sons there (Exodus 40:30–32), and finally
- G.** he set up the outer hangings of the court that made the Tabernacle a complete and finished structure (Exodus 40:33).

Instead of the consecutive A-B-C-D-E-F-G-H-I sequence as in the pattern, the actual setting up of the Tabernacle was performed in a D-A-B-C-I-E-F-H-G sequence. This example of constructing a heavenly replica in a way different from the pattern itself was something quite common to Moses. Thus, it would not have been odd to Moses to be presented with a sequence pattern of the creation process that was devised in heaven (as shown from Genesis 1:1 to 2:3) and then presented with its physical creation by a different sequence on earth.

This is what occurred in the accounts of creation given in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. The first narrative is simply the manner in which God, in a consecutive fashion, designed the blueprint (the pattern) of His creation of our heavens and earth while the second account is the performing of that creation plan.

God's Suffering Servant — Prophecy and Fulfillment

These matters should not appear odd to people who study the prophecies recorded in the Holy Scriptures. Many of them were given to the prophets from God in heaven in one kind of sequence and the fulfillment of them was to occur in another. Take the prime prophecy about the coming of Christ called the Suffering Servant prophecy found in Isaiah 52:13 to 53:12.

- The first verse is an introduction (52:13).
- Then the prophecy speaks about the Messiah having His visage marred more than any man, which happened when Christ was stoned on the tree of crucifixion (Isaiah 52:14).
- Three verses later (Isaiah 53:2) the prophecy goes back to the time of His birth and speaks about His growing up to bear the sins of the world throughout His life (Isaiah 53:3–6).
- It then mentions His trial and crucifixion (Isaiah 53:7 to 10).

In fact it is common to read in some prophecies certain events that are revealed by God in one sequence of occurrence but the actual chronological happenings of those events (when they are fulfilled on earth) are in another sequence. And this is the way it was with the two accounts of creation mentioned in Genesis.

The truth is, all of the seven “days” within which God created His blueprint for the creation of our heavens and earth were actually heavenly “evenings and mornings,” not our twenty-four hour days on earth. Moses is telling us that it took God six of His “days” to produce His blueprint of creation in heaven. Again,

the first narrative of Genesis has nothing to do with the actual creation itself. With this proper understanding, it can be seen how the sun (which gives us our “day”) and the rotation of our earth (which gives us our “night”) were first created “on paper” (so to speak) on God’s fourth day of chronological time as measured in heaven. This means that the seventh day on which God rested was the seventh day “in heaven” by which time God had completed the creation of His blueprint (or pattern) for establishing the heavens and the earth and all the things in the earth.

Eve and Christ’s Ekklesia

This understanding also shows that God did indeed create on His blueprint both Adam and Eve (in His plans, not in actual fact) at the end of His sixth day. But when it came to actually creating them, He formed Adam of the dust of the ground first, then He made the plants in Eden, the animals and finally (after Adam had experienced a type of loneliness for not having **“an help meet for him,”** Genesis 2:18), God took a rib (or whatever it was) from Adam’s side and created Eve for him.

This creation of Eve could well have been many days (even months) after Adam was first formed. After all, the text shows that it took time for Adam to become lonely. He was able to notice that the animals were male and female and that the two sexes were able to produce offspring. Yet it became obvious to him that he had no female companion as did the animals. For Adam to be able to view these matters must have taken a period of time — perhaps several months. This could indicate that a few months passed before Eve was created for Adam.

As a matter of interest, we may have a parallel to this event in regard to the last Adam (Christ). Note that when Christ began His teaching in Palestine, He was for several months without a wife. It was only on Pentecost after His resurrection that the *ekklesia* [Christ’s wife] was brought into existence. Could Adam also have gone without Eve that long? No one can know for sure but there is nothing in the text of the second account in Genesis (about the actual creation of our heavens, earth, plants, animals, Adam and then Eve) to argue against the possibility.

The “Days” of Creation in Genesis

Another thing should be mentioned. Since the six days for creating the blueprint were heavenly “days,” and not earth “days,” we are no longer forced to view the actual creation of our heavens and earth as being accomplished in six twenty-four hour earth days. In the second account there is no indication of how long our heavens and earth were in existence before Adam. Though it is made clear that Adam himself was formed almost 6000 years ago, there is nothing in the actual account of creation to prohibit the earth from having been created by God some vast periods of time before Adam. The blueprint as recorded in Genesis One could have been produced billions of years ago.

One other thing should be noticed. In case someone might insist that the reading of the first account from Genesis 1:1 to 2:3 seems to speak of God creating (in an actual sense) the things mentioned (instead of meaning the creation of God’s blueprint), it ought to be noted that many prophecies that God has given about future events (which have never yet happened) are written in the Bible as though they already have occurred or are presently in existence! The apostle Paul referred to this prophetic principle of writing when he said that God **“calls those things that be not as though they were”** (Romans 4:17). The same thing applies to what we read in Genesis chapter 1. God was speaking about His planned creative acts as **“things that be not”** but He records them **“as though they were.”**

What we see from all this is the fact that there are no contradictions in the two accounts of creation. The first is simply speaking about the blueprint (or pattern) of God’s creative plans which He accomplished in six of His heavenly “days.” No one knows, of course, just how long those “days” in heaven really were, but what is interesting is the fact that “heaven” must be located on some kind of sphere that rotates because God experiences both “evenings and mornings” as we do on earth. This could mean that our earth is a replica of

the place where God and Christ are presently living in the heavenlies just as the Tabernacle (or Temple) was a replica of God's palace in heaven.

In closing, let me say that the Bible does indeed have the truth of God's creative actions in the past and that there are no contradictions in those two accounts of creation. Once we understand the manner in which God creates things (how He created things at the time of Moses and in the fulfillment of His prophecies), then we can gain proper knowledge about how the creation of our heavens and earth occurred. Thankfully, we can now know the real "Story of Creation."

Ernest L. Martin, 1988

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As Dr. Martin points out in the first paragraph of this article, the differences between Genesis 1:1–2:3 and 2:4–25 have been a problem for many who honor the truths of Scripture. While the perspective put forth in his article is unique,³ since Dr. Martin died in January 2002 a new perspective on the differences of the early chapters of Genesis has developed. New research has analyzed all major creation theories that strive to account for all Scriptures dealing with the Genesis creation.

In his 2007 book *Two Stage Biblical Creation: Uniting Biblical Insights Uncovered by Ten Notable Creation Theories*, author Thomas Patrick Arnold has carefully analyzed 10 major creation theories (and 19 minor theories which are variants of the 10 major theories). Arnold's own conclusive understanding is the eleventh major theory.⁴

Arnold's analysis acknowledges the outstanding biblical insights of the 10 major creation theories and his respect for each of them. He does so gratefully because each theory honestly attempts to deal with all of the biblical records regarding creation. His analysis also points out weaknesses of each theory and how the biblical data fails to adequately support some portion of each theory. I believe Arnold largely succeeds in his goal stated by his book's subtitle: **"to unite all biblical insights into one comprehensive theory."**

A Theory Similar to Dr. Martin's

Before considering Arnold's *Two Stage Biblical Creation* theory further, I want to consider one of the 10 theories that has points of similarity with Dr. Martin's analysis given in the first half of this article. It is "Theory 8, Creation Revealed in Six Days Theory" set forth in the 1930s by P.J. Wiseman:

"In a nutshell, the creation revealed theory says that God spoke to Adam in six days, communicating six brief creation narratives summarizing the long eras of creation. Adam passed down the creation narrative along with his own eyewitness narrative. These narratives were recorded on tablets, which Moses edited into the book of Genesis."

• **Thomas Arnold, *Two Stage Biblical Creation*, p. 261**

Obviously God must have communicated to Adam what transpired in Genesis chapter 1 (as well as the events of chapter 2), because only God was an eyewitness.

³ This includes Dr. Martin's presentation "[The Creation of Life in Contemporary Times](#)" (noted in footnote 1) above. This article has the most extensive discussion of various creation accounts throughout the Bible mentioned in the Bible. Other articles that deal with creation briefly are "[The Bible and Scientific Mysteries, Part 1](#)," "[The Bible and Scientific Mysteries, Part 2](#)," and "[Secret Number 99, The Earth Once Had Ice Rings](#)."

⁴ Thomas Patrick Arnold, *Two Stage Biblical Creation: Uniting Biblical Insights Uncovered by Ten Notable Creation Theories* (Arlington Heights, IL: Thomas Arnold Publishing, 2007), p. 261. If you are interested in the subject of creationism I highly recommend this book for its excellent and comprehensive review of the ten major creation theories that try to honor the biblical record. It is an excellent way to "catch up" on the various concepts of biblical creationism. DWS

Wiseman proposes that after Adam’s creation in Genesis chapter 2, God took 6 days to carefully explain to Adam about the physical creation of the heavens and the earth of Genesis chapter 1. God told Adam what actions He took, not just what He thought or planned.⁵

Dr. Martin proposes that Genesis chapter 1 is the account of God’s plan of creation, but the fulfillment of that creation did not occur until Genesis chapter 2 (in a different sequence order from the plan). The action of Genesis chapter 1 was only in God’s thoughts. That plan was told to Adam.

The Problem of “Six Days”

There are problems for both Wiseman’s and Dr. Martin’s “Story of Creation” theories. The first problem involves the simple word “in” for the translation of two verses. Both Dr. Martin and Wiseman deny that the creation took place in six days. In fact it did take place in six days. Note these Exodus verses:

“It is a sign between me and the children of Israel for ever: for in six days YHWH made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested, and was refreshed.”

• **Exodus 31:17**

The correct rendering should be **“for six days YHWH made heaven and earth,”** rather than **“for in six days.”** In the King James Version the preposition “in” is in italics, which means that the preposition is not found in the Hebrew text. Note another instance where **“six days”** are mentioned, Exodus 20:9, 11.

“Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days shall you labor, and do all your work: But the seventh day is the sabbath of YHWH your God: in it you shall not do any work, you, nor your son ... For in six days YHWH made heaven[s] and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: ...”

• **Exodus 20:8–11**

The Hebrew word *`asah* means simply “to do,” or “to make,” or “work” (almost 2,300 times), depending on the context. Exodus 20:8–11 and 31:17 actually show that the heavens and earth were “made” in six days. I indicated the word *`asah* where they occur in both passages. This verb “*`asah*” is distinct from the word used for creation, which is *bara*. God distinguishes between “creating” and “making.”

“And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made. And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made. These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created,”

[I]n the day that YHWH God made the earth and the heavens ...”

• **Genesis 2:2–4**

Again, note the interplay and distinction between the Hebrew words “create” [*bara*] and “made” [*`asah*].

Thomas Arnold’s “Two-Stage Creation”

Briefly stated, Arnold’s “Two-Stage Creation” affirms the following:

⁵ Wiseman’s short and readable book is out of print, but available complete for free on the internet at [Creation Revealed in Six Days: The evidence of Scripture confirmed by Archaeology](#) (London: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, Ltd., copyrights 1948, 1949, 1958). Another book by P.J. Wiseman is *Ancient Records and the Structure of Genesis: A Case for Literary Unity* (Nashville, Thomas Nelson, 1985). I recommend this book more than *Creation Revealed in Six Days*. It deals with how the book of Genesis was compiled and structured by Moses. Donald Wiseman died in February 2010. Both books *Creation Revealed* and *Ancient Records* were combined in one volume under the title *Clues to Creation in Genesis*. It is available for sale as an eBook (only) from various vendors. Search online the title *Clues to Creation in Genesis* to find eBook vendors that sell it. DWS

“Creation took place in two states: In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth (but Earth was still uninhabitable, uninhabited, and its sea surface dark); so God worked by eight commands and six normal day-night days making the Earth lighted, habitable, and inhabited.”

• *Arnold, Two Stage Biblical Creation, p. 509*

I will try to briefly explain Arnold’s theory. See his book for the complete evidence. Arnold writes:

“The two stage Biblical creation theory is a Biblically undated earth creation (UEC) theory. The two main alternatives are old earth creationism (OEC) and young earth creationism (YEC).

OEC — God created the heavens and earth about 13.7 billion years ago.

YEC — God created the heavens and earth about 6,000 years ago.

UEC — God does not tell us in the Bible how long ago He created the heavens and earth. Two stage Biblical creation claims UEC.”

• *Arnold, Two Stage Biblical Creation, p. 341*

Arnold’s theory seems to fit most (he claims all) biblical creation passages. The fact that it also fits with scientific observation, while useful, is not necessary to Arnold. What Scripture says is his primary focus. Look at how he explains the sequence of the first chapters of Genesis:

Arnold’s Stage One of Creation

Genesis	Action	Time
1:1	Heavens and earth created, heavens stretched out. Earth is present but uninhabitable, uninhabited, covered with water, the sea surface dark.	Unknown when this occurred, <u>before</u> the eons
1:2	Earth “was without form and void” (still present but uninhabitable, uninhabited, and the sea surface dark). Heavens continue to stretch out.	Duration unknown, eons created (Hebrews 1:2)

Notice that the earth **“was without form and void”** (Genesis 1:2) immediately after the heavens and earth were created in Genesis 1:1. This is the plainest expression of the text. This is indeed a correct translation. Some have incorrectly proposed that the verb be translated **“became without form and void.”**⁶

Arnold’s Stage Two of Creation

Genesis	Action	Duration
1:3–2:4a	Earth made for human habitation from God’s perspective: land appears, waters bound, life created, man created.	6 days, mornings and evenings
2:4b–5:1a	Eden “made” and set aside for Adam. Eve created from Adam. Eden the focus, earthly perspective.	Adam’s genealogy and human history begins

⁶ The “gap theory” of a destruction of the earth between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 is not true. See Arnold’s critique of the gap theory, while recognizing its useful insights, see Arnold, pp. 280–305. See my “Analysis of ‘The Time Periods for Salvation’” in [“The Time Periods for Salvation, Part 2”](#) where I critique the “Gap Theory”:

“First, note that there are no biblical verses given as evidence of a *pre-Adamic* world, the first age or *aion*, separate and distinct from the others. Nor is there any biblical evidence for a ‘gap’ of time existing between an initial creation and subsequent disruption (all occurring in Genesis 1:1) and an Adamic re-creation (beginning in Genesis 1:2). The deduction of a pre-Adamic age appears to be based on a prior supposition of a ‘Gap Theory.’ ... If that theory is unproven, then the existence of an ‘age’ before Adam cannot be upheld.”

There was no re-creation as a “gap theory” proposes. I agree with Arnold that the unformed earth laid dormant for a long but unknown period of time while the heavens were “stretched.” *DWS*

The making (the construction) of the earth in Genesis was sequential, occupying 6 days by God’s reckoning. Arnold is humble about his proposal and his debt to others in forming his theory:

“I am not saying that my version of two stage Biblical creation is perfect. The two reasons my theory may come closer to what God said that He did when He created the heavens and the earth are these: I studied the five major and over one hundred shorter Bible texts on creation in Hebrew and Greek. And I listened to the other theories’ authors — both their Biblically supported claims and their criticisms of problematic claims in other theories. Truly I stand on the shoulders of Biblical giants.”

• *Arnold, Two Stage Biblical Creation, p. 498*

Below is a quick comparison of the three theories: Martin’s, Wiseman’s, and Arnold’s. At this time I believe Thomas Arnold’s proposal best fits the evidence while being the most comprehensive:

	Genesis 1:1–2:4a	Genesis 2:4b–25
Ernest Martin	<i>Stage 1:</i> Account of God telling Adam how <u>for 6 days</u> He formulated or “created” the plan (the “pattern”) for the active creation of the heavens and the earth.	<i>Stage 2:</i> Account of how the creation of the heavens and earth was actually done, including Eden for man’s habitation.
P.J. Wisemen	Account of how <u>for 6 days</u> , God tells Adam about His creating the heavens and the earth at some unknown time in the past .	Account of how God created the heavens and the earth, including Eden.
Thomas Arnold	<i>Stage 1:</i> Heavens and earth created (Genesis 1:1–2). The earth <u>remained</u> unformed, uninhabitable, dark, and covered in water for a long unknown period. <i>Stage 2:</i> <u>For 6 days</u> Genesis 1:3–2:4a, God made [reformed] the earth, making it “lighted, habitable, and inhabited by eight commands,” creating life and Adam (Arnold, p. 341).	<i>After Stage 2:</i> Account of how God made Eden and the garden from previous creation for Adam. Creation of Eve. Eden uniquely suited for their habitation and their “dressing and keeping.”

The main deficiency of Dr. Martin’s theory is that the word “pattern” does not occur in the text of Genesis in Hebrew or in the Greek Septuagint.⁷ While Eden, the Tabernacle, and the Temple follow the heavenly pattern of God’s house as shown in Dr. Martin’s article [“The Temple Symbolism in Genesis,”](#) in my opinion the textual evidence does not support Dr. Martin’s theory, however attractive it may be. He does not sufficiently show Genesis chapter 1 as being a plan and not a literal description of an act of creation.

Job’s Account of Creation

Coming to Job’s creation account, it fits well into Arnold’s theory. After the creation of the heavens, then came the laying of the foundations of the earth (Job 38:4). The earth increased its size (Job 38:5), was covered with the sea (Job 38:8), and clothed in clouds which caused darkness (Job 38:9):

“Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth? declare, if you have understanding.

- **Who has laid the measures thereof** [of the earth], **if you know?** Or
- **Who has stretched the line upon it** [the stretching increased its size]?
- **Whereupon are the foundations** [of the earth] **thereof fastened?** Or
- **Who laid the corner stone thereof. When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?** Or

⁷ See my article [“The Pattern of the Temple”](#) where I discuss the usage of the important Hebrew word *tabniyth*, “pattern.” DWS

- Who shut up the sea with doors, when it brake forth, as if it had issued out of the womb?
- When I made the cloud the garment thereof, and thick darkness a swaddlingband⁸ for it,

• Job 38:4–9

When was the earth’s foundation laid, the measures laid, stretched, foundation fastened, and the earth’s cornerstone laid? This occurred: **“When the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?”** (Job 38:7), during the initial creation event of Genesis 1:1, just after the heavens were created.⁹

God goes on for the remainder of Job chapter 38 and all of chapter 39 to describe other creative acts that God performed. **“The morning stars”** and **“all the sons of God”** of Job 38:4–7:

- were created before the laying of the foundation of the earth,
- but after this initial creation of the heavens and the earth of Genesis 1:1–2.

These are not human beings, but they must have been part of that same event even though no mention of the **“morning stars”** or the **“sons of God”** is made in the first two chapters of Genesis.

The Account in Psalm 104

God’s creation of the angels is also stated in Psalm 104 as occurring before the foundation of the earth, just as Job says, before Genesis 1:1 when the heavens and the earth were created. Speaking about YHWH:

“Who covers yourself with light as with a garment:

Who stretches out the heavens like a curtain:

Who lays the beams of his chambers in the waters:

Who makes the clouds his chariot:

Who walks upon the wings of the wind:

Who makes his angels spirits; his ministers a flaming fire:

Who laid the foundations of the earth, that it should not be removed for ever [*olam va-ad*, “for the eon and beyond”].

You covered it [the earth] with the deep as with a garment: the waters stood above the mountains [covered all the earth].”

• Psalm 104:2–6

Dr. Martin correctly expands the account of creation beyond just Psalm 104 and shows that a larger account is intentionally contained in Psalms 103 through 106. Dr. Martin’s article **“[The Creation of Life in Contemporary Times](#)”** presents excellent biblical evidence that creation events were ongoing, during the times of David, Isaiah, and even to the present. Creation is ongoing now. Additional detailed study of those and other Scriptures will give us insight into earlier creation events. Indeed, Thomas Arnold does not seem aware of the importance of the extended creation account of King David in Psalms 103–106. He limits himself to analyzing Psalm 104 alone.

⁸ Dr. Martin’s research found that the “swaddlingband” was an ice ring that orbited the earth until the flood of Noah. See his **“[Biblical Meteorology](#)”** and **“[Bible Secret Number 99, The Earth Once Had Ice Rings](#)”** articles. This ice ring, much like that around Saturn today, was part of the initial reformation of Genesis 1:3–2:4a. It lasted until the flood. **“[The Bible and Scientific Mysteries, Part 2](#)”** provides additional data about creation that Arnold does not discuss and perhaps does not know about. DWS

⁹ Scripture makes clear that Christ was the first creation of God, even before Genesis 1:1. John 1:1 states: **“In the beginning was the Word.”** Jesus, the Word, was **“... the beginning of the creation of God”** (Revelation 3:14). **“[God] has in these last days spoken unto us by his Son, whom he has appointed heir of all things, by whom also he made the worlds [eons]”** (Hebrews 1:2). Christ was created first, and then everything else was created, including other Sons of God and the morning stars. The Son of God, as Colossians 1:15–17 states clearly, is:

“the firstborn of every creature. For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.”

The Accounts of Creation in Isaiah

Next consider two passages from Isaiah about creation. Isaiah 40:21–22 and verse 26 make it clear that mankind should know about creation because God has told mankind from earliest time:

“Have you not known? have you not heard? has it not been told you from the beginning? have you not understood from the foundations of the earth?”

It is he that sits upon the circle of the earth, and the inhabitants thereof are as grasshoppers; that stretches out the heavens as a curtain, and spreads them out as a tent to dwell in: ...

Lift up your eyes on high, and behold who has created these things, that brings out their host by number: he calls them all by names by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power; not one fails.

• *Isaiah 40:21–22, 26*

“For thus says YHWH that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he has established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am YHWH; and there is none else.”

• *Isaiah 45:18*

This verse seems to say that the initial creation was **“not in vain”** and **“formed ... to be inhabited.”** Arnold writes about this seemingly problematic passage:

“Isaiah 45:18 may be translated as in the NIV [New International Version], “He did not create it to be empty, but formed it to be inhabited,” which indicates future intent and solves the problem at the end of the creation of earth in Genesis 1:2, verse 2 describes Earth as uninhabitable and uninhabited. But God’s purpose was that by the sixth day of His work, Earth would be both habitable and inhabited.

Genesis 1:1 was the beginning *ex nihilo* creation time period. Genesis 1:1 was a description, not a middle time period. The six days of Genesis 1:3–31 were the time period of the completion of the Earth. There were only *two* time periods in creation, consisting of the beginning and the six days, *not three*. There was no gap.”

• *Arnold, Two Stage Biblical Creation, p. 294*

The Present Creation

Remember that this present creation **is not our home**. It is only temporary (Arnold, p. 408) and temporal, bound by eons that were created by God through Christ (Hebrews 1:2). Those eons shall end when the immortality of all mankind is achieved by God through Christ (1 Corinthians 10:11, 15:24–28). The present creation, the present heavens and earth shall pass away (Matthew 24:35; Mark 13:31; and Luke 21:33).

“Of old have you laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of your hands. They shall perish, but you shall endure: yea, all of them shall wax old like a garment; as a vesture shall you change them, and they shall be changed. But you are the same, and your years shall have no end.”

• *Psalms 102:25–27*

This verse is quoted by the apostle Paul in Hebrews, and its meaning is expanded:

“And, You, Lord, in the beginning has laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of your hands: They shall perish; but you remain; and they all shall wax old as does a garment; And as a vesture shall you fold them up, and they shall be changed: but you are the same, and your years shall not fail.

• *Hebrews 1:10–12*

When completed the present creation was designated by God to be **“very good”** (Genesis 1:31). God did not say that the creation back then was perfect, just **“very good.”** It was not, is not, and will not be good enough for the resurrected children of God.

“Remember the former things of old: for I am God, and there is none else; I am God, and there is none like me, Declaring the end from the beginning, and from ancient times the things that are not yet done, saying, My counsel shall stand, and I will do all my pleasure.”

• *Isaiah 46:9–10*

The best is yet to come for us, His sons and daughters. The present creation is our temporary home, though it seems substantial and permanent. God has made us a promise: **“Nevertheless we, according to his promise, look [are hoping for] for new heavens and a new earth, wherein dwells righteousness”** (2 Peter 3:13). There is coming soon a period:

“...when the times of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord; And he shall send Jesus Christ, which before was preached unto you: Whom the heaven must receive until the times of restitution of all things, which God has spoken by the mouth of all his holy prophets since the world began.”

• *Acts 3:19–21*

Part of the restitution of all things must include a proper understanding of the Scriptures relating to the process of the creation from God through Christ. At the present time Thomas Arnold’s book is the best current source for the most comprehensive biblical creation information. Dr. Martin’s theory is useful and contains much useful information, but it is too limited in scope.

Your Place and Role in Creation

Another important understanding for you (and me) personally is that God’s creation process through Christ is ongoing within you now. It is ongoing at this very moment, by the presence of God’s Holy Spirit within you, **“you were sealed with that holy Spirit of promise, Which is the earnest of our inheritance ... unto the praise of his glory”** (Ephesians 1:13–14). Therefore how should we live?

“... be renewed in the spirit of your mind; And that you put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.”

• *Ephesians 4:23–24*

Read the rest of Ephesians chapter 4. You have been born again — now, at this moment. If you have His Spirit resident within you, and God should choose to remove His moment-to-moment gift of one more breath or one more heartbeat, then your very next experience after death will be: **“When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall you also appear with him in glory”** (Colossians 3:4).

You are the object of all God’s creation in microcosm. Do not doubt that statement. Read all of Romans 8:18–30. Here is an especially excellent portion. I changed the unfortunate translation of “creature” to what modern translations unanimously say it should be, ***“creation”*** (in italics):

“The Spirit itself bears witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God: And if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be also glorified together. For I reckon that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. For the earnest expectation of the CREATION waits for the manifestation of the sons of God[!!!]

For the CREATION was made subject to vanity, not willingly, but by reason of him who has subjected the same in hope, Because the CREATION itself also shall be delivered from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

For we know that the whole CREATION groans and travails in pain together until now. And not only they, but ourselves also [groan], which have the firstfruits of the Spirit, even we ourselves groan within ourselves, waiting for the adoption, to wit, the redemption of our body.”

• *Romans 8:16–23*