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**“THE BIBLE WAS WRITTEN  
FOR US BUT NOT TO US”**

DR. JOHN WALTON

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**GREEK VS HEBREW**

TWO WAYS OF THINKING, A WORLD APART

## POSSIBLE QUESTIONS

- WHAT IS THE LEVEL AND NATURE OF GOD'S INVOLVEMENT IN THE WORLD?
- WHAT IS GOD'S RELATIONSHIP TO THE COSMOS? IS HE MANIFESTED WITHIN IT? IS HE CONTROLLING IT FROM THE OUTSIDE?
- IS THERE SUCH A THING AS THE "NATURAL" WORLD?
- IS THE ACCOUNT OF CREATION THE DESCRIPTION OF A MANUFACTURING PROCESS OR THE COMMUNICATION OF A CONCEPT?

- Little Jimmy asking about where he came from
- The Theater
- We are learning to ask better questions
- Better questions lead to better answers

## GENESIS 1:1 TLV

1 IN THE BEGINNING GOD CREATED THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH. 2 NOW THE EARTH WAS CHAOS AND WASTE, DARKNESS WAS ON THE SURFACE OF THE DEEP, AND THE RUACH ELOHIM WAS HOVERING UPON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER.

- Will get to "in the beginning" in a second.
- Now the earth...surface of the deep...
- Creation ex nihilo?
- "the beginning" refers to a period of time, not a point in time

## CREATED

WHAT DOES IT MEAN  
TO EXIST?

- Does material, physical make-up constitute existence? e.g. company & chair
- In ANE thought, existence is functional, not merely material
- E.g. saxophone

## GENESIS 1:1

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ

B'REISHEET BARA ELOHIM ET HASHAMAYIM  
V'HAARETZ

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD CREATED THE  
HEAVENS AND THE EARTH

## CREATED

בָּרָא

BARA: TO SHAPE, CREATE

TRANSLITERATION: BARA

DEFINITION: TO SHAPE, CREATE

- Occurs about 50 times in TNK
- Deity is always subject or implied subject (creation is a divine activity)
- No occurrence demands a material object, but every occurrence demands a functional object (purpose for which it is created is the focus)
- ANE concept of creation = function
- I DO BELIEVE that God created everything materially
- curriculum, company, committee

## GENESIS 1:1

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תוֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ וְחָשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם וְרוּחַ  
אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמַּיִם

NOW THE EARTH WAS CHAOS AND WASTE,  
DARKNESS WAS ON THE SURFACE OF THE  
DEEP, AND THE RUACH ELOHIM WAS  
HOVERING UPON THE SURFACE OF THE WATER

## FORMLESS & VOID

תֹהוּ וָבֹהוּ

TOHU: FORMLESSNESS, CONFUSION,  
UNREALITY, EMPTINESS

EMPTINESS :BOHU

- Occurs 20 times
- David Tsumura translates as “unproductive”
- Functionless, without purpose, unordered

## ORDER VS CHAOS

CHAOS/  
DISORDER

NON-  
ORDER

ORDER

- These status' do not have a moral quality, but are status' of functionality or non-functionality

## GENESIS 1:5 TLV

5 AND GOD CALLED THE LIGHT DAY, AND THE  
DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT. AND THE  
EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE FIRST  
DAY.

- Why didn't God call the light...”light”?
- It's not about light, but a *period* of light





## **POSSIBLE QUESTIONS**

**WHAT KIND OF CREATION  
ACCOUNT IS THIS?**

- If Genesis 1 is not telling a story of material creation, then what kind of creation is this?

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**WHAT IS GOD'S PURPOSE  
IN CREATING THE EARTH?**

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**SCIENCE OR  
NARRATIVE?**

- The creation story is a poem, not a lab report
- Remember that easterners communicate through images
- It is about creating (whatever that means) and resting (whatever that means)
- Chiasm
  - True learning doesn't happen through facts and supporting evidence, but through discovery of things buried in the story...it's engagement over regurgitation

## GENESIS 1 AS POETRY

PATTERNS

RHYTHMS, CADENCE, REFRAINS

NUMBERS

3 DAYS MIRROR 3 DAYS

“BARA” APPEARS IN 3 DIFFERENT PLACES

LAST TIME 3X’S

## GENESIS 1 AS POETRY

PATTERNS OF 7

FIRST VERSE IN HEBREW HAS 7 WORDS

SECOND VERSE HAS 14 WORDS

“EARTH” OCCURS 21 TIMES

35 WORDS IN THE 7TH VERSE

“GOD” IS MENTIONED 35 TIMES

## GENESIS 1 AS POETRY

THE PHRASE “IT WAS SO” APPEARS 7X

“AND GOD SAW” APPEARS 7X

PATTERNS OF 10

“TO MAKE”

“ACCORDING TO ITS KIND”

## GENESIS 1 AS POETRY

“AND GOD SAID”

3X REFERENCING PEOPLE

7X REFERENCING CREATURES

“LET THERE BE”

3X REFERENCING THE HEAVENS

7X REFERENCING THE EARTH

### - Chiasm

- If you count the Hebrew words, the center of the chiasm is the word “moedim”
- What is created on the center day? Heavenly lights...what’s there’d function?
- Why are the moedim so important?
  - Who heard this first? Where? When?
  - Egypt, slave, bricks
  - Worth is tied to how many bricks you can make
  - If you can’t perform, you get removed from the equation
    - What happens to your wife & children?
  - The very first lesson God teaches Israel is that their value does not come from what you produce, but who God says you are
  - What is the refrain over and over in Gen. 1?

## ANCIENT COSMOLOGY

THE SHAPE OF THE COSMOS

ROLE OF DEITY

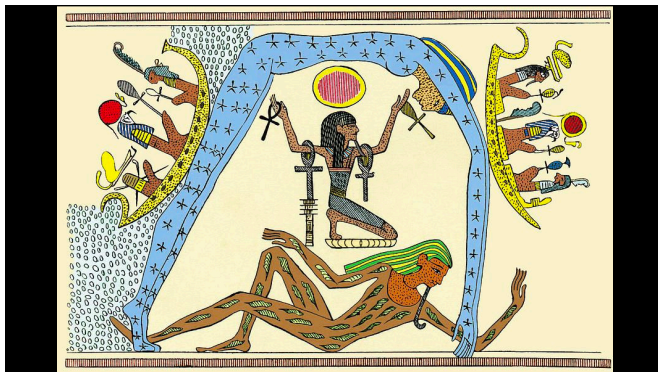
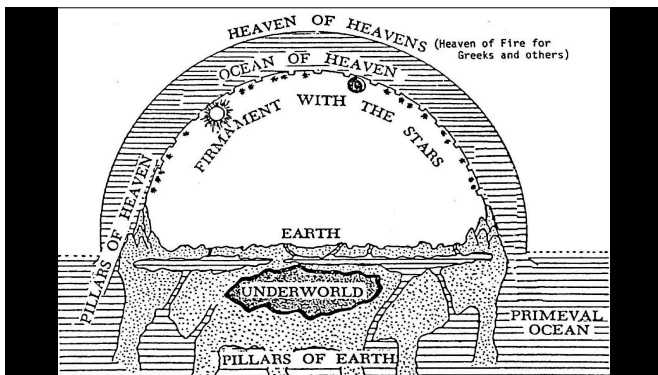
ORIGINS OF COSMOS & DEITY

DIVINE CONFLICT

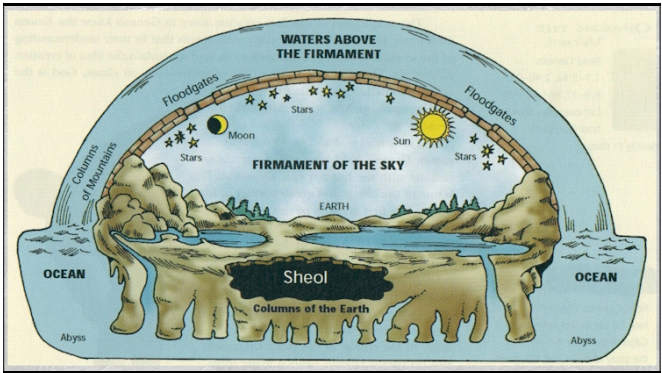
# ANCIENT COSMOLOGY

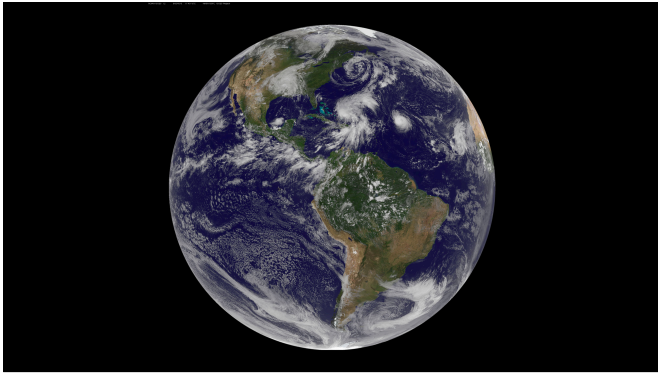
## FEATURES

- |                 |                |
|-----------------|----------------|
| NONFUNCTIONAL   | • SEPARATING   |
| PRIMEVAL WATERS | • CREATURES    |
| NAMING          | • HUMAN BEINGS |









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## DAYS 1-3

HASHEM ESTABLISHES FUNCTIONS

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## DAY 1

GENESIS 1:5 TLV

5 AND GOD CALLED THE LIGHT DAY, AND THE  
DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT. AND THE  
EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE FIRST  
DAY.

- Why didn't God call the light..."light"?
- It's not about light, but a *period* of light

## DAY 1

GENESIS 1:4 (TLV)

4 GOD SAW THAT THE (PERIOD OF) LIGHT WAS GOOD. SO GOD DISTINGUISHED THE (PERIOD OF) LIGHT FROM THE (PERIOD OF) DARKNESS.

- God separated/distinguished light from day...a creative act

## DAY 1

GENESIS 1:3 (TLV)

3 THEN GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE (A PERIOD OF) LIGHT!" AND THERE WAS (A PERIOD OF) LIGHT.

- Anyone see a problem here? There's light on day but when was the sun created? (Day 4)
- HaShem is being accredited with assigning function/order to what was in chaos/disorder

## DAY 1

GENESIS 1:5 TLV

5 AND GOD CALLED THE (PERIOD OF) LIGHT DAY, AND THE (PERIOD OF) DARKNESS HE CALLED NIGHT. AND THE EVENING AND THE MORNING WERE THE FIRST DAY.

- What is the function?
  - Time
- What is the lesson?
  - Before God began doing His ordering, there was a primordial darkness, but He is the God of Light!
  - Darkness (chaos/non-order/non-functional) may precede day, but it is overcome by a period of light (day)
- The message of Scripture is so much bigger than any time, era, culture, theological or scientific understanding

## DAY 2

GENESIS 1:6-8 (TLV)

6 THEN GOD SAID, "LET THERE BE AN EXPANSE IN THE MIDST OF THE WATER! LET IT BE FOR SEPARATING WATER FROM WATER." 7 SO GOD MADE THE EXPANSE AND IT SEPARATED THE WATER THAT WAS BELOW THE EXPANSE FROM THE WATER THAT WAS OVER THE EXPANSE. AND IT HAPPENED SO. 8 GOD CALLED THE EXPANSE "SKY." SO THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING—A SECOND DAY.

- Solid firmament for holding back cosmic waters
  - (windows of heaven)
- Function?
  - A place for humans to live
  - Weather/Rain/Water
    - Too much or too little
    - Right time vs. wrong time

## DAY 3

GENESIS 1:9-13 T (TLV)

9 THEN GOD SAID, "LET THE WATER BELOW THE SKY BE GATHERED TO ONE PLACE. LET THE DRY GROUND APPEAR." AND IT HAPPENED SO. 10 GOD CALLED THE DRY GROUND "LAND," AND THE COLLECTION OF THE WATER HE CALLED "SEAS." AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

## DAY 3

11 THEN GOD SAID, "LET THE LAND SPROUT GRASS, GREEN PLANTS YIELDING SEED, FRUIT TREES MAKING FRUIT, EACH ACCORDING TO ITS SPECIES WITH SEED IN IT, UPON THE LAND." AND IT HAPPENED SO. 12 THE LAND BROUGHT FORTH GRASS, GREEN PLANTS YIELDING SEED, EACH ACCORDING TO ITS SPECIES, AND TREES MAKING FRUIT WITH THE SEED IN IT, EACH ACCORDING TO ITS SPECIES. AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. 13 SO THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING—A THIRD DAY.

- What is the function?
  - Food
- If this is a creation account in the way we've traditionally thought about it...what's the one thing missing from days 1-3?
  - In the first three days He separates & names (giving function)
  - In days 4-6 He fills, in the same order, what He previously separated (installing functionaries)



## DAYS 4-6

HASHEM INSTALLS FUNCTIONARIES

### DAY 4

GENESIS 1:14-19 (TLV)

14 THEN GOD SAID, "LET LIGHTS IN THE EXPANSE OF THE SKY BE FOR SEPARATING THE DAY FROM THE NIGHT. THEY WILL BE FOR SIGNS AND FOR SEASONS AND FOR DAYS AND YEARS. 15 THEY WILL BE FOR LIGHTS IN THE EXPANSE OF THE SKY TO SHINE UPON THE LAND." AND IT HAPPENED SO.

### DAY 4

16 THEN GOD MADE THE TWO GREAT LIGHTS—THE GREATER LIGHT FOR DOMINION OVER THE DAY, AND THE LESSER LIGHT AS WELL AS THE STARS FOR DOMINION OVER THE NIGHT. 17 GOD SET THEM IN THE EXPANSE OF THE SKY TO SHINE ON THE LAND 18 AND TO HAVE DOMINION OVER THE DAY AND OVER THE NIGHT AND TO SEPARATE THE LIGHT FROM THE DARKNESS. AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD. 19 SO THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING—A FOURTH DAY.

- Does the text tell us about the material make-up of these heavenly lights?
- It links their functions to Day 1
- Who do they function for?

## DAY 5

GENESIS 1:20–23 (TLV)

20 THEN GOD SAID, “LET THE WATERS SWARM WITH SWARMS OF LIVING CREATURES! LET FLYING CREATURES FLY ABOVE THE LAND ACROSS THE EXPANSE OF THE SKY.” 21 THEN GOD CREATED THE LARGE SEA CREATURES AND EVERY LIVING CREATURE THAT CRAWLS, WITH WHICH THE WATER SWARMS, ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIES, AS WELL AS EVERY WINGED FLYING CREATURE, ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIES. AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

## DAY 5

22 THEN GOD BLESSED THEM BY SAYING, “BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY AND FILL THE WATER IN THE SEAS. LET THE FLYING CREATURES MULTIPLY ON THE LAND.” 23 SO THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING—A FIFTH DAY.

- the word “bara” used here the first time since v. 1
  - The large sea creatures
  - Deep, still water is chaos/non-order; a threat to order
  - Unlike other ANE creation stories, our creation story does not involve a cosmic warfare. ALL creatures are under God’s control, even those that are in a system of non-order

## DAY 6

GENESIS 1:24–25 (TLV)

24 THEN GOD SAID, “LET THE LAND BRING FORTH LIVING CREATURES ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIES— LIVESTOCK, CRAWLING CREATURES AND WILD ANIMALS, ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIES.” AND IT HAPPENED SO. 25 GOD MADE THE WILD ANIMALS ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIES, THE LIVESTOCK ACCORDING TO THEIR SPECIES, AND EVERYTHING THAT CRAWLS ON THE GROUND, EACH ACCORDING TO ITS SPECIES. AND GOD SAW THAT IT WAS GOOD.

- How does the land “bring forth” animals?
  - Not very scientific
  - “come from”
    - Little Jimmy

## DAY 6

GENESIS 1:26–31 (TLV)

26 THEN GOD SAID, “LET US MAKE MAN IN OUR IMAGE, AFTER OUR LIKENESS! LET THEM RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, OVER THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE SKY, OVER THE LIVESTOCK, OVER THE WHOLE EARTH, AND OVER EVERY CRAWLING CREATURE THAT CRAWLS ON THE LAND.” 27 GOD CREATED HUMANKIND IN HIS IMAGE, IN THE IMAGE OF GOD HE CREATED HIM, MALE AND FEMALE HE CREATED THEM.

## DAY 6

28 GOD BLESSED THEM AND GOD SAID TO THEM, “BE FRUITFUL AND MULTIPLY, FILL THE LAND, AND CONQUER IT. RULE OVER THE FISH OF THE SEA, THE FLYING CREATURES OF THE SKY, AND OVER EVERY ANIMAL THAT CRAWLS ON THE LAND.”

29 THEN GOD SAID, “I HAVE JUST GIVEN YOU EVERY GREEN PLANT YIELDING SEED THAT IS ON THE SURFACE OF THE WHOLE LAND, AND EVERY TREE, WHICH HAS THE FRUIT OF A TREE YIELDING SEED. THEY ARE TO BE FOOD FOR YOU.

- Man/humanity (adam)
- Image (tselem)
- Similar to the earth & sky creatures, humanity has the function of being fruitful & multiplying but we also have a function in relation to the creatures (dominion)
- We also have a function as it relates to God as they are made in His image
- Thus, all of creation functions in relationship to humanity and humanity serves creation as God’s vice-regent (ambassador)
- In other ANE accounts, creation is set up to serve the gods, but here, creation is not for God, but for humans
  - In other ANE accts, people bring creation to deity
  - Here, humankind is the image of God, representing God to creation
  - Manufacturers in a plant vs sales staff

## DAY 6

30 ALSO FOR EVERY WILD ANIMAL, EVERY FLYING CREATURE OF THE SKY AND EVERY CREATURE THAT CRAWLS ON THE LAND WHICH HAS LIFE, EVERY GREEN PLANT IS TO BE FOOD.” AND IT HAPPENED SO. 31 SO GOD SAW EVERYTHING THAT HE MADE, AND BEHOLD IT WAS VERY GOOD.

SO THERE WAS EVENING AND THERE WAS MORNING—THE SIXTH DAY.

- Tov meod (very good)

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## DAY 7

GENESIS 2:1-3 (TLV)

1 SO THE HEAVENS AND THE EARTH WERE COMPLETED ALONG WITH THEIR ENTIRE ARRAY. 2 GOD COMPLETED —ON THE SEVENTH DAY—HIS WORK THAT HE MADE, AND HE CEASED—ON THE SEVENTH DAY—FROM ALL HIS WORK THAT HE MADE. 3 THEN GOD BLESSED THE SEVENTH DAY AND SANCTIFIED IT, FOR ON IT HE CEASED FROM ALL HIS WORK THAT GOD CREATED FOR THE PURPOSE OF PREPARING.

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