

**OUTLINE: Act 3: Genesis: A New Creation/Beginning and the Fall of Man**

Fourth Mystery: A new beginning, 5,000 BC (Recreation in Gen. 1:1)

Fifth Mystery: Human life, 10, 000 BC; The intended soldier who became a survivor

??? 5. Civilizations, 8,000 BC; The sudden appearance of the advanced “archaic civilizations”

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**EXCERPTS:**

Chapter 53, p. 289

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Note that in the case of virtually all asteroidal collisions of any great magnitude, a familiar sequence would have unfolded as mentioned earlier: thick darkness, later, dim light half of the day, then, finally, rays of light from the directly observed sun, moon and stars, the very sequence described in Genesis.

Paleontologists have observed, interestingly, that the aftermath of such explosive “extinction events” has often been the occasion for the fairly abrupt emergence of quite different forms of plant and animal life. For example, the huge impact that extinguished the entire spectrum of thousands of different forms of dinosaur life was followed by the era of mammals, when their size zoomed from two pounds or less, to a ton or more.

The 45 largest asteroidal collisions mentioned are pegged at dates prior to the human period, that is, before there were humans in existence to witness their effects and create oral tradition about them. Thus, all we can go by are the evidences in the rims of their craters of certain things like crystallized iodine.

**Record of a recent collision?**

However, suppose there was a smaller collision relatively recently - after humans appeared on the scene - that is, in the last 11,000 years. In that case would we not expect surviving humans living at a distance to include a recollection of such an event in their oral traditions?

Let’s look into this. In the last few years following the Moon landing it certainly has begun to seem possible that the collision of a fairly recent asteroid might have wiped out a large, regional sector of human life - such as the area of the Fertile Crescent, or just the Dead Sea - and that surviving humans outside that area could have noticed the characteristic sequence of events without understanding exactly what had happened. They might have only observed the thick darkness, the dim but increasing light, the final appearance of the Sun, Moon, and then the stars. Could such recollections have passed down, say, in oral tradition, down through Egyptian archives to Moses? *And, does the sequence*

*of events described in the first chapter of Genesis describe this sort of sequence?*

If Genesis 1 describes such a train of events, then we would not expect the humans who created the Genesis narrative to be speaking of cosmological events that were only understood much later in the human story. Rather, logically, we would expect Genesis 1:1 to describe not the *initial creation* of the entire universe, but a much more recent *new beginning*, in merely a region of the earth (the “known world” of the people of that time). If there were such a collision, would not the next thing be the replenishment of animal and human life in that region?

To accept such a supposition would instantly require certain radical adjustments of popular exegesis, because it would mean the first few chapters of Genesis were entirely local events.

What adjustments? First, the Gen. 1:1 phrase, “In the beginning God” would have to be trans-

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latable as, “At the time God began.” Second, the Hebrew word “bara” would have to be able to mean “recreate” not just “create” (it does not mean “create out of nothing”). Thirdly, the familiar phrase, “formless and void” from the Hebrew phrase *toho wabohu* would have to mean something like “destroyed and desolate.” The single sentence in Hebrew running through Gen. 1:1, and 1:2, would then come out something like, “Things (in a regional area) were quite destroyed and desolate when God began to recreate ...”

Even more obvious would be the need to understand the whole of early Genesis as talking about events that were universally significant, yet geographically local. This would include the idea of a local flood, which has been a tolerated view in the Wheaton College faculty as far back as the 1950s. Even the “table of nations” in Genesis 11 would have to refer to predominantly Middle Eastern peoples, not Chinese, East Indians, or Eskimos.

Furthermore, it would be helpful if we were aware of at least some biblical scholars who have recognized all of these possibilities, even as it would be helpful to discover that these ideas (all but the asteroids) were more widely held some years ago.

Finally, speaking of nice things, today the most avid supporters of a world only six thousand years old are an outspoken group of so-called “Young Earth” Evangelicals. Can we listen to Merrill F. Unger? He was a conservative and respected Dallas Theological Seminary professor, head of the Department of OT studies. He expressed pre-Genesis 1 views in the *Bibliotheca Sacra* (the official journal of the seminary) in 1958, as well as later in his very widely used *Unger’s*

*Bible Handbook* (500,000 in print, in 24 editions), published by the press at the Moody Bible Institute. In his *Handbook* he says,

“In the beginning.” These opening words of Genesis have been commonly assumed to refer to the original creation of the earth and the universe, and well they might. But the question is asked, May they not envision a relative beginning as to God’s creative activity of the earth in a much later period in preparation for earth’s late-comer man? ... If “In the beginning” is a relative beginning with regard to the late-comer man, then “created” does not refer to God’s activity in bringing the earth into being *ex nihilo* (out of nothing), but His refashioning the earth and its sidereal heavens at a much later period in geological history. (*Italics his*)

Unger goes on to state that it is not grammatically possible to put the old earth between verses 1 and 2.

In view of these comments from Dallas Seminary’s Unger, I feel emboldened to suggest that there is apparently no insurmountable exegetical obstacle to the suppositions I have mentioned for the understanding of the text. In fact, we should perhaps feel ashamed that many of us have tried for so long anachronistically to read into the literary record of Genesis modern cosmological information about the origin of a universe and a planet, information totally unknown at the time of the writing or oral formulation of Genesis.

In summary, in case Genesis 1 does happen to be an accurate eye-witness account of conditions of the earth following a massive but regional asteroidal collision, the oral history of those events would have had to have been preserved by unaffected humans outside the area.

Remember that the new creation of animal and human life as described in Genesis is a significantly different type of life. Adam, we are told, is the type of human being distinctively created “in the image of God.” That could at least mean “as God intended,” that is, for example, non-carnivorous. It is not until later in Genesis that Adam’s lineage is described as reverting to carnivorous behavior and a gradually shorter life span, following his fall and the breakdown of the Edenic New Beginning, the reversion logically being hastened by interbreeding with the previously distorted and depraved forms of vicious carnivorous human life elsewhere on the planet.

One question may come up. If loyal angelic beings took millions of years to develop life (all along under God’s guidance) how then could the various forms of life mentioned in Genesis 1 be re-created in six days, even if those periods of time were longer than 24 hours?

I don’t see this as a serious problem. To me this is like assuming that although swarms of highly intelligent automotive engineers took an entire century to go from a Model T to a Lincoln Continental, that with that backlog of experience they could not readily put out new models each year. But they do. Thus,

obviously, if loyal intermediate beings (angels) had been steadily learning about genetics, developing a variety of life forms over a very long period, they would cer-

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tainly have had no problem in re-creating noncarnivorous life forms in a very short period.

In other words there does not seem to be any stubborn obstacle to understanding Genesis to harmonize with current scientific knowledge of the earth, and to accepting a version of both the so-called "Old Earth" scenario as well as the "Young Earth" concept.

Planetary Events and the Mission of the Church

## **Part 2. Planetary Events: the New Beginning**

Donald McClure Lectureship, Pittsburgh Theological Seminary Ralph D. Winter, Monday, October 3-4, 2005

As we have already seen in the previous presentation, the origin of modern humans would seem to have been only 11 thousand years ago. That is, if we go by the first appearance of high intelligence - the first appearance of the intelligence it takes to genetically alter plants and animals by selective breeding. In any case, as I earlier explained, 11,000 years is an exceedingly short time in the light of a universe which is said to be about 13.7 billion years old, a planet 4.5 billion years old, the conjectured 4-billion-year earliest appearance of life, or even the last half billion years (the last 500 million years since the Cambrian Explosion).

You also will recall that, if we compare the human period to just the last 500 million years, the human period represents only the last two seconds in a 24-hour day.

However, our knowledge about the last 11 thousand years is perfectly enormous compared to what we know about earlier events. These last two seconds are the period of human existence. This is the period of human consciousness. This is the period we must try to understand. This is the period dealt with in the Bible.

I continue, as before, with the conjectural scenario which has the entire "old earth" falling before Genesis 1:1. That perspective makes relatively recent all of the events of Genesis. According to this scenario Genesis 1:1 in effect announces not "the beginning" but a very significant New Beginning.

It would be possible to suggest that Genesis 1:1 describes only one of many new beginnings, since each of the many major, previous asteroidal collisions occasioned new beginnings of life, often quite different forms of life. It is not necessary to understand those many extinction events as divine punishments to

understand them at least as partial or almost complete new beginnings of life on earth.

Thus, we gain from Gen 1:29-30 the idea that the Edenic New Beginning in its initial stage consisted of the emergence, in a single region, of animals and humans which were strikingly different from the past, being explicitly non-carnivorous. This kind of non-predatory life, then, would seem to be what had been intended earlier (even though consistently distorted) during the 500 million year period following the Cambrian Explosion.

This particular, Genesis "New Beginning," according to the text, did not last long. The story tells us that during Adam's lifetime it went down due to his yielding to the intervention of a counterforce to the intent of God, and both the new animals and these new human beings were created in the image of God, but after the breakdown of Eden reverted, interbreeding with the animals and humans living outside of the destroyed area spoken of in Genesis 1:1-2, beings already-distorted.

At this point, what some call the Evangelistic Mandate became necessary, a mandate to reconcile estranged man to God. In addition, what some call the "Cultural Mandate" - in its original simplicity a mandate to care for life on earth - would now have had to be augmented in the face of the very hostile environment external to the area of Eden. We might think of the "Cultural Mandate" as being now necessarily incorporated into a new and distinctly larger "Wartime" or "Military" Mandate, which would include both the Cultural and the Evangelistic Mandate. The latter, would be a recruiting program, and have as its overall purpose that of redeeming human beings and not only putting them to work in caring for life on earth, but also, now, warring against the powers of evil and darkness.

From *Frontiers in Mission*, 197-99

A Larger Worldview?

Ralph D. Winter Missiology Hour USCWM, Tuesday, October 20, 2001

Coming closer to the present, hominids appear in the record as long as several million years ago, and manlike creatures such as the Neanderthals very much more recently like 60 thousand years ago, but DNA studies now indicate that the Neanderthals were neither human nor an antecedent of homo sapiens.

What seems quite possible is that a smaller asteroid collided with the earth about 10 thousand years ago, and that the events of Genesis record the immediate results as well as what followed as various forms of life appeared and, specifically, homo sapiens.

The immediate result of such a collision would have been formlessness and darkness (due to the immense dust clouds hurled into the air from the impact). Gradually the dust would settle and it would eventually be possible to tell the day from the night but not to see the sun itself. Finally the dust canopy would thin to the point that the sun and the moon

would appear as visible bodies (and actual rays of light would enable rainbows).  
Meanwhile various kinds of animals would be redeveloped.

This could have been when a brand new and radically different form of life appeared, homo sapiens, but only in a unique garden spot intended to enable a new counterthrust to the previous 500 million years of rampant evil and destruction.

Genesis 1:1-2 actually permits this interpretation, namely “When God began His work of rehabilitation He had to deal with a battered, formless and darkened earth ...” Note the text in the NRSV for Genesis 1:1, which is in the margins of other translations.

As C. S. Lewis puts it:

It seems to me ... a reasonable supposition, that some mighty created power had already been at work for ill on ...planet Earth, before ever man came on the scene ... If there is such a power, as I myself believe, it may well have corrupted the animal creation before man appeared (Lewis 1962: 135).

#### **From FND Lecture 4**

If Genesis 12 is interpreted to be merely the beginning of a global campaign to get people out of this planet and into heaven, then the earlier part of Genesis does not easily fit in.

However, if, as we saw in the previous lesson, the blessing of God through Abraham actually inducts those who respond into a kingdom at war, then we can easily note that that war began with Genesis 1:1, the first defeat coming when Satan seduced Adam and Eve; God struck back with the choice of Noah and the elimination of an evil generation. Then God’s choice of Abraham is seen as another “selectivity” which enables another new beginning to be played out in the text of the rest of the Bible and the subsequent centuries of the expansion of the Kingdom of God.

Thus, what unifies the Bible is not simply the redemption of humans but their redemption to fight a war against evil.

FROM BASIC CONCEPTS; from *Frontiers in Mission*, 26, 27

- The Garden of Eden is portrayed in Genesis as a locality which differed from the disorder of the surrounding world and that the evil outside the Garden existed prior to the creation of man.
- The Genesis mandate to man to care for life would thus seem to include serious human efforts in collaboration with God to work with Him to restore (to redeem) all perversions of disease or violence in the various forms of life. In this activity we can “Let our light so shine among men that they may see our good works and glorify our Father which is in heaven.” (Matt 5:16). This is part of “Thy kingdom come, thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. (Matt 6:

BASIC CONCEPTS

*Frontiers in Mission*, pages 26, 27

•Promoting God’s glory is inextricably related to destroying the works of the devil—  
 “The Son of God appeared for this purpose that He might destroy the works of the devil.”  
 I Jn 3:8.

FROM FIRST CHAPTER OF THE BIBLE; Winter, Ralph D. et al, eds. (2006) *Foundations of the World Christian Movement: A Reader*, WCIU Press. Pages 63-66.

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In my estimation, Genesis 1-11 is the introduction to the whole Bible, not just to the book of Genesis. The reason this section of scripture is an “Introduction,” not just to Genesis but to the whole Bible, is that it portrays a problem so serious that the whole Bible is centered around it. In some ways Genesis 1-11 introduces all of subsequent history. These passages start out by presenting the beauty of God’s creation. The entrance of evil is introduced. It talks about the hopeless result. And what better back-drop for the whole Bible could you present?

In fact, the opening chapters of Genesis confront the reader with an almost insoluble problem. All the efforts of humanity up to this point are hopeless. Humanity is set on committing evil continually. The stage is set, then, for a Plan (The Plan) that has yet to be announced. The Plan is announced in the “first chapter” of the Bible, Genesis 12-50.

If I was to print a Bible I would pull Genesis 1-11 out and use it as the divinely inspired Introduction to the whole Bible. That is because Genesis 1-11 presents the stage on which all the biblical events are played out. Then Chapter One would start with Genesis 12-50. Chapter Two would be Exodus and so on.