

## 2. Creation (1:1–2:3)

### Structure

1. Stage setting (1:1-2)
2. Six days of creation (1:3-31)
3. Summary statement (2:1)
4. Epilogue (2:2-3)

### I. Creating the Cosmos

#### A. Stage-setting (1:1-2)

The narrative action begins in v. 3. Vv. 1-2 summarize and/or set the stage. The temporal relationship between vv. 1-3 is much debated.

#### 1. The beginning (1:1)

בְּרֵאשִׁית בָּרָא אֱלֹהִים אֶת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְאֶת הָאָרֶץ “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.”

“The heavens and the earth” is a merism, expressing totality.

When was this beginning:

- Summary statement: inclusio with 2:1 (וַיִּכְלֹוּ הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ וְכָל-צְבָאָם) “Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them”). The beginning = the six days (Walton). Functions like the *toledot* headings elsewhere in Genesis.
- Prior to the six days:
  - discourse grammar favors this view (Collins).
  - creation of the universe (“the heavens and the earth”) 13.8 billion years ago (Lennox).  
Creation *ex nihilo* (out of nothing).
- First act of day one: (Beall).

#### 2. The Initial State (1:2)

Three clauses describe the initial state of the earth prior to the first narrative action of v. 3 (NIV, HCSB clarify by beginning “Now the earth...”).

וְהָאָרֶץ הָיְתָה תְהוֹ וְבוֹהוּ The earth was without form and void,  
וְחֹשֶׁךְ עַל-פְּנֵי תְהוֹם and darkness was over the face of the deep.  
וְרוּחַ אֱלֹהִים מְרַחֶפֶת עַל-פְּנֵי הַמָּיִם: And the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. (ESV)

1. The earth was formless and empty (NIV, HCSB; תְהוֹ וְבוֹהוּ *tohu wa-bohu*; Gen 1:2; Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23); chaos (in the classical Greek sense of blank, unstructured); uninhabitable and uninhabited; a blank slate. But the material of the earth was there. The actions of days 1-6 were not creation *ex nihilo*.
2. Darkness was over the face of the deep: the only things present were darkness (חֹשֶׁךְ *hoshek*) and the deep (תְהוֹם *tehom*), both representative of a lack of formation and function, i.e. an absence as much as a presence.
3. The רוּחַ (Spirit, breath, wind) of God was hovering, as a bird over its nest (cf. Deut 32:11), ready to act.

The relationship of v. 2 to v. 1:

- The Gap Theory: popularized by the Scofield Bible (1909, 1917). After a perfect creation (v. 1), the cosmos became fallen: the earth *became* formless and void. In the gap between v. 1 and v. 2 Scofield placed the fall of Lucifer. But the translation “*became*” is without merit.
- Universe → earth: v. 1 = creation of the universe (13.8 billion years ago); v. 2 = formation of the earth (4.5 billion years ago) (Lennox, whose commitment to accepted scientific opinion drives his reading).
- Universe → Land (Israel): Goldingay reads הָאָרֶץ (*ha-arets*) as the Land, Israel.

**B. The Six Days of Creation (1:3-31)**

1:3-31 is highly structured. It is narrative not poetry, but it is rhythmic: each day follows a pattern.

Table 2-1: Linguistic formulae of the six days of creation

	Phrase	Day						Σ
		1	2	3	4	5	6	
Word:	וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים “then God said”	1	1	2	1	1	4	10
Creative act:		1	1	2	1	1	2	8
Fulfillment:	וַיְהִי־כֵן “and it was so”	1	1	2	1	—	2	7
Naming:	וַיִּקְרָא אֱלֹהִים “then God called”	1	1	1	—	—	—	3
Evaluation:	וַיִּרְא אֱלֹהִים כִּי־טוֹב “then God saw that it was good”	1	—	2	1	1	2	7
Conclusion	...וַיְהִי־עֶרֶב וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם... “and there was evening and there was morning, day n”	1	1	1	1	1	1	6

God’s speech: “then God said” (וַיֹּאמֶר אֱלֹהִים) 10×. Things happened by divine fiat: God commanded: יְהִי אור “let there be light” (Lat. *fiat lux*), and it was וַיְהִי־אור “and there was light”; thereafter וַיְהִי־כֵן “and it was so” 6×.

God’s actions:

- Direct actions:
  - *create* (בָּרָא *bara*): the heavens+earth (1:1), first living creatures (1:21), humans (3× in 1:27).
  - *do/make* (עָשָׂה *asah*): the expanse (הִרְקִיעַ 1:7), the two great lights (1:16), the 3 types of land animals (1:25), mankind (1:26); summary (1:31; 2:2,2,3).
  - note parallelism in 2:4 אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת הַשָּׁמַיִם וְהָאָרֶץ בְּהַבְרָאָם בְּיוֹם עֲשׂוֹת יְהוָה אֱלֹהִים אֶרֶץ וּשְׁמַיִם These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were *created*, in the day that the LORD God *made* the earth and the heavens.
  - Walton: functional cosmic ontology not a material cosmic ontology. Gen 1 is not about creating a cosmos but about making pre-existent matter functional. *bara* “to bring something into (functional) existence”; *asah* is performative (do), not constructive (make). Therefore the six days are not about making anything.
- Indirect actions: God commands the cosmos to participate:
  - “Let the waters...be gathered together...let the dry land appear” (1:9).
  - “Let the earth sprout vegetation...” The earth brought forth vegetation (1:11-12).
  - “Let the waters swarm” (1:20) → God created (*bara*).
  - “Let the earth bring forth living creatures → God made (*asah*).

Naming: God named the elements of

- days 1-3: God names light = Day, darkness = Night; expanse = heaven/sky; dry land = Earth; gathered waters = Seas. Naming is often interpreted as a sign of ownership. Others argue it assigns function (Walton, Provan).
- days 4-6: God does not name the heavenly bodies, lest they be equated with the Sun (שֶׁמֶשׁ *shemesh*) god and Moon (יָרֵחַ *yareah*) goddess. They are merely the greater light and the lesser light. God does not name his creatures; Adam will do so (2:19-20).

Evaluation: וַיֵּרָא אֱלֹהִים כִּי טוֹב “then God saw that it was good”; climactic 7th time טוֹב מְאֹד “very good” evaluating the totality. “Good” (טוֹב) is a recognition that something is what it is supposed to be, it is functional.

Six days: ... וַיְהִי־עֶרְבַּ וַיְהִי־בֹקֶר יוֹם... “and there was evening and there was morning, day *n*.” It became evening and it became morning; i.e. the activity happened during the daytime (established on Day 1). The Jewish custom of beginning the day at nightfall arose from a misunderstanding: the day doesn’t begin with evening; it ends with the arrival of (the next) morning.

How long are the days (יוֹם *yom*)?

- 24 hours, the “natural” reading:
  - 6 consecutive days: young earth creationists.
  - not consecutive: a long period of time after each divine fiat (divine intervention) to allow natural processes to fulfill (Lennox).
  - analogical days: God’s workdays were analogical to Israel’s workdays (Collins).
  - cosmological: (Walton)
  - symbolic: temple built in six days, consecrated on the seventh (Watts).
- day-age: each day could be millions of years.

### 1. Two Triads of Days

Many recognize that the six days are arranged in two parallel sets of three, one of forming, one of filling. This is the Framework Hypothesis. Walton: God adds function (days 1-3) and functionaries (4-6).

a) **Forming**: the first set rectifies the *tohu* formless, uninhabitable condition.

Day	# words	# acts	Realm	Formation	Differentiation	Function
1	1	1	heavens	light	light from darkness	time
2	1	1	waters	firmament	water above from below	weather
3	2	2	land	dry ground vegetation	sea from land	food

- day 1: light. Partially restrains the darkness; establishes the function of time, the rhythmic cycle of daylight and darkness. God calls the “light” not “light” but “day” and the “darkness” “night.”
- day 2: the expanse (NASB, ESV, HCSB), vault (NIV), dome (NRSV), הַרְקִיעַ. Not necessarily to be pictured as something material that was made, but as functional separation, enabling rain from above, hence weather.
- day 3a: waters gather themselves together and God calls them Seas. This enables the previously unseen dry ground to become visible; God calls it Land.
- day 3b: the dry land now sprouts vegetation of two sorts, each according to its kind, providing the

function of food.

There is now a functional cosmos with time, weather and food.

By dividing (בָּדַל *badal* 5×), God imposes order on an undifferentiated world: between light and darkness (1:4, 18), day and night (18), and between waters above and waters below (6, 7).

b) **Filling:** the second set rectifies the *bohu* empty, uninhabited condition.

Day	# words	# acts	Realm	Filling	Contents/Functionaries
4	1	1	heavens	the heavens	sun, moon, stars
5	1	1	waters	the sky + sea	sea creatures, birds
6	4	2	land	land	animals mankind

- day 4: two great lights in the expanse to serve as lights and time-keepers. Though they are located in the expanse, they are the functionaries for the function enabled on day 1.
- day 5: living creatures: fish in waters below, flying creatures above (realms of day 2); each according to its kind.
- day 6a: land animals of 3 types: wild animals, domesticated animals, creepy-crawlies, each according to its kind. A total of 7 categories (2× vegetation, fish, birds, 3× land animals), each according to its kind 10×.

### C. Mankind

Then God said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them have dominion over...”

So God created man in his own image,  
in the image of God he created him;  
male and female he created them.

#### 1. The Pattern Broken

The creation of mankind is the climax of the six days, as indicated by the breaking of the pattern:

- Divine deliberation not divine fiat: “Let us make...” (נִשְׂאָה *cohortative*) not “Let there be...” (יְהִי *jussive*).
- Divine creative act: God made (עָשָׂה *asah*) the animals, but he created (בָּרָא *bara*) mankind.
- Divine image: “in our image, in our likeness” (בְּצַלְמֵנוּ בְּדְמוּתֵנוּ) not “according to its kind” (לְמִינֵוֹ) etc, 10× in 1:11-12, 21, 24-25).
- Divine-like unity in diversity: male and female.
- God speaks to man.

This breaking of the pattern emphasizes that mankind is the pinnacle, the climax of God’s creation (cf. Psalm 8).

#### 2. The Image of God

- Image (צֶלֶם *tselem*): a 3D statue or replica; God’s representative on earth.
- Likeness (דְּמוּת *demut*): man is actually like God, i.e. representational.

“man is an adequate and faithful representative of God on earth” (D. J. A. Clines, quoted by V. P. Hamilton, “דָּמָאִהּ (dāmâ)” TWOT, 192).

“the visible representative in the created world of the invisible God” (Dumbrell 1985, 34).

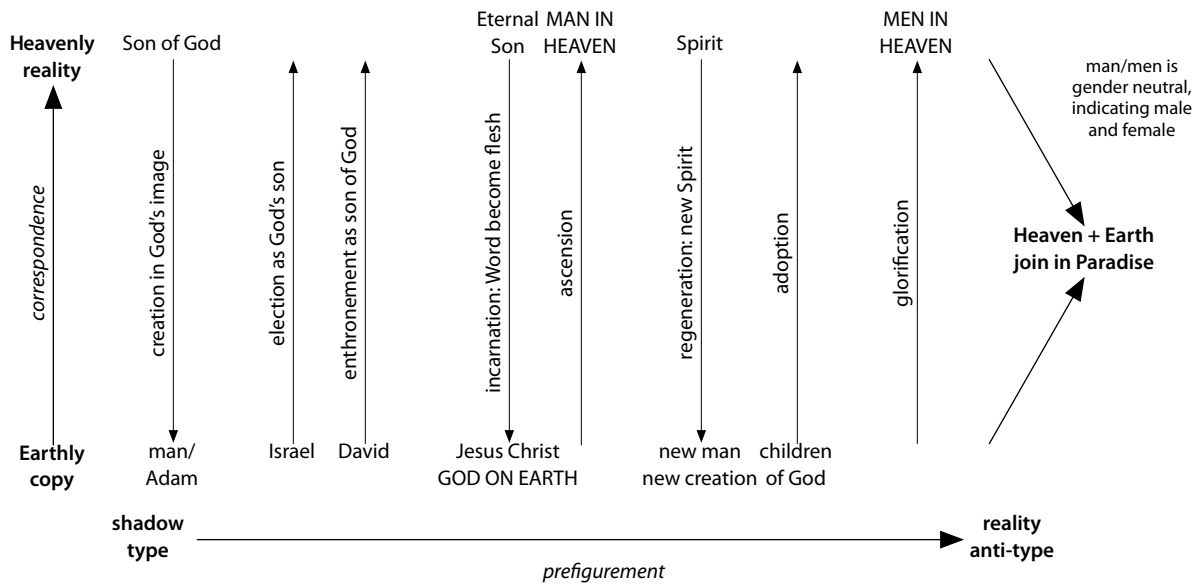


Fig. 2-1: The typology of man in the image of God

### 3. God’s commission

And God blessed them. And God said to them, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it, and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth.” (1:28)

Populate the earth with people; it takes male + female to do this. People are a blessing from God. Rule over the earth as God’s steward. As a king, but as a shepherd-king, “protecting the relationship for which one is responsible” (Dumbrell 1988, 20).

### 4. God’s Blessing

To enable man to fulfil this mandate, God blessed them. To bless (ברך *barak*) is “to confer abundant and effective life” (J. N. Oswalt, TWOT, 132), to ensure success.

### D. The Seventh Day

And on the seventh day God finished his work that he had done, and he rested on the seventh day from all his work that he had done. So God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on it God rested from all his work that he had done in creation. (2:2-3)

On the seventh day, God did four acts:

1. **Completed:** to complete (כָּלָה *kalah*) is “to bring a process to completion” (TWOT, 439). It was on the seventh day, not the sixth day, that completion was reached.
2. **Rested:** to rest (שָׁבַת *shabat*) is “to put an end to, ...to come to an end” (TWOT, 902).

3. **Blessed:** (בָּרַךְ *barak*) “endows it with the potential to be the day which God had intended for human experience” (Dumbrell 1988, 19).
4. **Sanctified:** to sanctify (קִדְּשׁ *qiddash*) is to declare something holy (קָדוֹשׁ *qadosh*), to transfer it from the secular, ordinary, profane, common to the sacred, extraordinary, holy. Otto (1923) defines holy as that which is Other. God designates the seventh day as “other,” as specially his, as a “sanctuary in time” (Heschel 1951, 29). The first thing sanctified is not space but time. Beyond the very good (טוֹב קָאֵר *1:31*) lies the realm of the Other. The seventh day is the goal, the *telos*, of creation. Does God intend to pull all his creation in this teleological state of the other?

### 1. The Cosmos as Temple

ANE literature connects its god’s temple and the cosmos. Once order was established, the god took up his divine rest in the temple, atop the cosmic mountain, the *axis mundi* (world axis), linking heaven and earth. Gen 2 will describe Eden as the sanctuary, the Holy of Holies. Israel’s tabernacle and temple will echo the cosmic and Edenic sanctuary imagery. The erection of the tabernacle by Moses (Exod 40) echoes creation.

In ANE the king alone was in God’s image; a statue of the god in the temple represented the god. In Gen 1, all humans are in God’s image and represent God on earth.

ANE temple inaugurations lasted 7 days; the temple wasn’t built in this period but made functional.

## II. The Creation Theme

In Creation God imposed order on chaos and shone light into darkness. Two other events are of sufficient magnitude as to merit description in the language of creation: two New Creations.

### 1. Salvation

The salvation of a sinner and his transformation is so radical that it is a new creation (2 Cor 5:17; Eph 2:10; 4:23-24; cf. John 3; Col 2:13). God has shone light into darkness (2 Cor 4:6; Eph 5:8; Col 1:12-13; 1 Pet 2:9) and brought order out of chaos.

### 2. The new cosmos

The Creation theme will reach its climax in the new heavens and the new earth (Isa 65:17; 66:22; 2 Pet 3:13; Rev 21:1). This will be not merely a recovery of the conditions pertaining at the original Creation, but will be far better: darkness will be completely eliminated, God himself will be the light (Rev 21:23; 22:5) and all space and time will be sanctified.

In the first creation, God pushed chaos (sea and darkness) to the periphery. In the new creation, chaos will be eliminated.

Pre-existing	First Creation	New Cosmos
sea darkness chaos	land + sea light + darkness order + chaos	no sea no darkness no chaos

## III. Creation & Evolution

### A. Young Earth Creationism (YEC)

6 literal days, no evolution, young earth.

Calculations of the date of creation:

1. James Ussher (1581-1656), Archbishop of Armagh, Primate of All Ireland (1625-56): nightfall 22 Oct 4004 BC.
2. Jewish calendar: *Anno Mundi* (AM “in the year of the world”), Heb. לבריאת העול, “from the creation of the world”; based on 12th cent. rabbinic estimates: creation began 6 Oct 3761 BC. AM 5776 = sunset 2015.09.13–sunset 2016.10.02.

#### 1. Institute for Creation Research

ICR, icr.org, Dallas (moved from Santee CA 2007). Founded 1972 by Henry Morris (co-author of Henry Morris & John Whitcomb, *The Genesis Flood* (P&R, 1961), popularizing flood geology). Duane Gish (1921-2013) was a frequent speaker for ICR.

#### 2. Creation Ministries International

creation.com. Began in Australia 1977 as Creation Science Association; now has independent branches in 6 other countries.

#### 3. Answers in Genesis

AiG, answersingenesis.org, Petersburg KY, nr Cincinnati. Founder (1994) and President: Ken Ham. Operates the Creation Museum (creationmuseum.org), Ark Encounter (arkencounter.com; theme park with a full-scale ark, construction began 2014).

### B. Old Earth Creationism (OEC)

- evolutionary creationism (aka theistic evolution)
- progressive creationism: God periodically intervened to insert new information into the system, e.g. to progress from inorganic matter to organic life, from animals to humans.

#### 1. American Scientific Affiliation

ASA, asa3.org; founded 1941. Moved from young earth creationism to progressive and evolutionary creationism.

#### 2. Old Earth Ministries

oldearth.org; formerly Answers in Creation. Progressive creationism.

#### 3. Reasons to Believe

RTB, reasons.org, Glendora CA. Founder (1986) & president: Hugh Ross (astrophysicist).

Progressive Creationism: rejects unguided evolution.  
Accepts scientific age of earth (4.5b yrs), universe (12.8b yrs).

#### **4. BioLogos Foundation**

biologos.org, Grand Rapids. Founded 2007 by Francis Collins, former director of Human Genome Project; current director NIH (2009-). Director: Deborah Haarsma.

Advisory Council: incl. Ross Hastings, Tremper Longman, John Ortberg, John Walton.  
argues for compatibility of science and faith; accepts evolution.

## **IV. Three Big Subjects/Questions**

### **A. Theology/Theogony**

### **B. Cosmology/Cosmogony**

### **C. Anthropology/Anthropogony**