

Genesis Chapter 1

Rediscovered

By R.T. Roper, Sr.

INTRODUCTION

For the past hundred years, most Hebrew scholars have assumed that ancient or biblical Hebrew—classical Hebrew as scholars refer to it—did not have a way of expressing prior past action, especially since the Hebrew verbs lacked tense. In other words, they believed ancient Hebrew writers could say Bill did this, then he did that, but could not say he *had done* some other thing earlier. In our English language we call the latter action the past perfect tense, and it is essential in relating the sequence of events in telling a story.

However, it has recently come to light that 19th century Hebrew scholars knew a way ancient Hebrew could express the past perfect by reversing the normal order of the verb and subject in a sentence. Hebrew is read right to left and nearly always begins with the verb. By changing the normal verb-subject order to subject-verb, the writers of ancient Hebrew were expressing the past perfect tense. This rediscovery of the verb-subject reversal, and its importance in clarifying the order of events in a narrative, is now causing interest among modern Hebrew scholars due to the fact that the first two verses of Genesis chapter 1 contain this unusual verb-subject reversal. In addition, ancient inscriptions written in languages related to ancient Hebrew have been discovered that also contain verb-subject reversal in which the past perfect tense is clearly being expressed in telling a story.

This recovered grammatical cue used in ancient Hebrew storytelling is certain to influence the current on-going debate among the general public over whether the earth and universe are old or young as related in the Genesis creation week, which, in turn, would determine whether the Genesis account agrees or conflicts with science. As the reader will see in the following dialogue, the rediscovered Hebrew syntax of verb-subject reversal to express the past perfect tense has a direct bearing on the debate.

CAST OF CHARACTERS

James Galilei—high school science teacher and committed Christian

Dakota—James' wife who recently became a believer

David Goldman—Jewish believer in Christ (Messianic Jew) who has a PhD in biblical Hebrew

Tim—high school student in James' church, who, as a Christian, is being ridiculed by friends

Dakota had just tucked the kids into bed after a long day. She then joined the men in the den who were enjoying coffee and the brownies she had made for them.

“Now that we're stuffed with brownies and fully alert with coffee,” James said, “I propose that we ask David to show us some gems of wisdom he has gained from years of studying biblical Hebrew as it pertains to the creation week of Genesis. Tim, David has a PhD in biblical Hebrew, and prior to obtaining his doctorate, he obtained a masters in Koine Greek. He also has expertise in other ancient Near Eastern languages such as Akkadian—that is, Babylonian and Assyrian—as well as Aramaic, Syriac, and Phoenician.”

“My goodness, how do you keep them all straight?” Dakota asked in astonishment. “I studied Spanish very hard and barely passed. How could anyone learn all those languages?”

“The Lord has gifted us all in different ways,” David said humbly. “My gift happens to be languages. Of course, I am amazed at people like William Tyndale, who was the first to translate the New Testament directly from the Greek into English in the early 1500's. He could speak numerous languages fluently. And when he decided to begin translating the Old Testament, he taught himself Hebrew by using the Hebrew Scriptures and the Septuagint, which is the Greek version of the Old Testament from 250 BC. That's a whole different level of gifting, and, thankfully, he used his gift for the Lord. Unfortunately, the Catholics burned him at the stake for it because they believed the common people could not understand the scriptures; although this contradicted the word of God in 1st Peter 2:2 which says, *As newborn babes, desire the pure milk of the word that you may grow thereby...*, meaning, of course, to grow spiritually. The devil will always fight against what God is doing to save souls and help them grow up in their salvation.”

“So true,” James agreed. “David, before we begin our discussion about Genesis 1, would you please share with the others what you were telling me recently about ancient or biblical Hebrew?”

“You mean how biblical Hebrew could well have been the language spoken by Adam?”

“Yes,” James said, “and how it was used by God to speak to ancient man on one level and to modern man on a higher level—scientifically that is.”

“Oh yes...well, I do agree with some Jewish and Messianic Jewish scholars who disagree with the conventional scholarship that Sumerian was probably the first written language; and I am now about 95% sure that ancient Hebrew was Adam's language. I am only saying I think this is a strong possibility, but at any rate, I feel that the ancient Hebrew language is uniquely suited to communicate science-related passages on two levels, primitive and advanced, and was used by God accordingly. I will expand on this a little later.”

“James was telling me a little about your views on this today,” Dakota said. “Is it your view that the first chapter of Genesis actually agrees with modern science...that the earth and universe are very ancient—perhaps even billions of years old?”

“I do believe that,” David replied. “When Genesis 1 is read in the original Hebrew, I have become convinced that the primordial earth is very ancient and the universe far more ancient; especially in light of rediscovered knowledge of the way ancient Hebrew could express what we refer to as the past perfect tense. But to continue, Genesis does not say 'billions of years' of age for each, but the ancient Hebrew clearly shows, in my opinion, that it could easily accommodate billions of years. However, the Hebrew also strongly indicates that the earth and portions of the solar system were re-made, re-worked, or it might be better to say re-created in their more recent history.”

“Re-created?” Dakota sounded astonished and interested at the same time.

“Yes indeed. And when we look closely at the nouns and verbs as well as the grammar of ancient

Hebrew, it is obvious to me that God is emphatically telling us not to treat His word in Genesis 1 as simply beautiful literature or poetry and examine it more closely. I am tired of evangelical pastors and teachers simply assuming that since the Bible is primarily a theological book, and not a science book, that God was giving Moses unscientific information about the origins of the earth and universe.”

“But what about the clear unscientific statements in the Bible?” Tim asked. “I mean, like when Joshua told the sun to stand still and the Bible says it did. Doesn't that show that the Bible is not credible when it comes to science?”

“Good question,” David said. “But remember, to ancient man, the sun did move and the earth did not, so this statement was from man's perspective. Also, Solomon says, 'The sun also rises and the sun goes down, and hastens to the place where it arose.' And this unscientific perception is what we would expect from people living in 1000 BC.”

“Well, doesn't that hurt the Christians' assertion that the Bible is inspired by God?” Dakota asked.

“Not at all. First off, God was accommodating Himself to man's primitive views of the earth and solar system. If He had told Moses the truth about the solar system and the cosmos, it would have blown Moses' mind. The people of his day were as smart as we are, but with respect to science they were babes. Secondly, such inaccuracies only occur in scripture where the writers are narrating biblical events, such as chronicling the reigns of the kings, the battles they fought, whether or not they served the Lord, the heroes of the faith, etc., or in the book of Ecclesiastes written by Solomon. But no scientific inaccuracies occur in the writings of the prophets—not even one unscientific statement! And this is amazing since the writing prophets wrote over half of the Old Testament, and were constantly teaching or instructing the people; exhorting them to stop sinning; or speaking prophetically with a 'Thus says the Lord'. Incidentally, Solomon was not a prophet. Third, God gave man the responsibility of obtaining scientific knowledge, so He purposely does not correct the writers of the Bible when they make unscientific statements, even though such statements are very few in number.”

“Where does it say that in the Bible?” they all asked at once.

“It says that in Genesis 1:28 where God gives man a commission or charge: *Be fruitful and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it*. This is known as the dominion verse in the Bible, and it continues saying that God gave man dominion over the fish, the birds, and all the creatures that move on the earth. But to focus on the verb *subdue*, the Hebrew word for it is *kabash*, which means *to bring into subjection*. One of the ways man could bring the earth into subjection would be to gain scientific knowledge. The idea is that man would use science and technology to develop earth's resources for his own benefit. The definition of science is 'the systematic knowledge of the physical and material world.' Therefore, since the gaining of scientific knowledge is the responsibility of man, God leaves it to man.”

The others expressed surprise that they never saw that before in the Bible. Then David continued, “Moreover, you will never see anywhere in the Bible where God Himself makes an unscientific statement. For example, you will not read where God says to His prophets something like, 'Son of man, tell my people, just as the sun never fails to go around the earth, in the same way, I will never fail to watch over you and protect you as long as you obey Me.' You won't find anything like that in the scriptures. But you will find plenty of places where God drops scientific knowledge supernaturally into the minds of His prophets several thousand years before man made the discovery. This is one way in which God has placed His signature on the Bible for our generation, so that modern man will understand that the Bible came from God. In fact, there is a paper entitled *Scientific Facts in the Bible* which shows numerous examples of this on the website alightshiningindarkness.com; and I encourage you to go there as you will be amazed at the science which God supernaturally revealed to His prophets.”

“In that case, since God is speaking to Moses in Genesis 1, we should expect that He is giving accurate scientific information,” Dakota observed.

“Exactly,” David agreed. “But it is not revealed to the superficial reader, or the Christian who has a preconceived notion that God was giving us a scientifically ridiculous but poetically beautiful story about the creation days, knowing that in the latter days, popular atheist/evolutionists like Richard Dawkins would rip Genesis 1 to shreds so that tens of millions of our youth would laugh at the Bible and call it a myth. And this while our pastors and teachers generally hide the youth exodus from our churches after leaving high school, while at the same time preaching that Genesis is not to be viewed as a factual creation account, but rather a poem or song which tells us that God is the creator; that the sun and moon are not gods but rather His creations which should not be worshiped; and don't worry about the fact that God comes across as scientifically ignorant.”

“But the Bible says that God cannot lie,” James said, “and in fact, in Paul's letter to Titus, speaking by the Spirit, he says that it is impossible for God to lie.”

“That is right,” David replied, “and that is why I feel that the study of Genesis chapter 1 falls under Jesus' admonition to ask, seek, and knock for the answer. That is what I have been doing while studying Genesis 1, and I can assure you that the Lord is opening a door that is exciting to say the least. More importantly, He has been revealing insights that could keep our youth from falling prey to Richard Dawkins and other atheists. Nevertheless, it is amazing that by a simple preaching of the Gospel, people are still saved as the Holy Spirit draws their hearts. We still overcome Satan by the blood of the Lamb and the word of our testimony.”

“That is true,” Tim spoke up after listening intently to the discussion, “but many of my friends turn off before I can even present the Gospel. It's like walls have been erected by the enemy of our souls to block them from even hearing the truth.”

“In that case,” David said, “we try to knock down some of those walls in partnership with the Spirit. Often it is not several walls but only one that is standing in their way. Then, when we have demolished that wall or stronghold, the Spirit can more effectively do His work on their heart. It is amazing how God has made us partners with Him in evangelizing the lost, and of course, it is the greatest career in the world because our work has eternal effects and thus eternal rewards. Remember what the word says, 'He who wins souls is wise.' ”

“Tim,” Dakota said, “tell us what you are hearing from your friends in high school about criticisms of the Bible and in particular the creation days of Genesis.”

“Well, for example, they say the Bible goes against science by saying the earth and the universe are young—only 6000 to 10,000 years old. They have gotten this, as David said, from Richard Dawkins and others like him, who in turn quote young-earth/universe Christians who believe this, and from a number of Christian websites which espouse this viewpoint. In refuting it, they point to the radioisotope decay rates of the rocks showing that the earth is 4.5 billion years old. They also use the scientific facts that show the light from distant stars and galaxies took millions and even billions of years to reach our planet—that when we look into the night sky, we are looking into the ancient past. The young-earth/universe Christians counter that God could make the light reach us instantly so the stars are only 6000 years old. I see their point, although it seems unlikely to me.”

“What about the thousands of craters on the moon?” James asked. “Those craters were obviously made by the impact of asteroids over a long period of time, certainly longer than 6000 years.”

“Oh...yes...the young-earth/universe websites say those craters were made probably during two events—the Fall of man, and the Flood. God's judgments at those times somehow caused a stream of asteroids to collide with the moon...also causing those craters on Venus, and Mars.”

“That is absurd!” Dakota said. “How are those events connected in any way? And is it mentioned in the Bible?”

“I can answer that,” David said, “it is not in the Bible, which is why those websites don't have scriptures for it. It sounds to me like...their paradigm of a young universe...is forcing them to distort science and torture scripture to justify it.”

“That's what I think also,” Tim replied. “And I think they do that also in the matter of dating the earth's rocks. They maintain that Noah's flood could have somehow greatly accelerated the radiation decay rates—although there is no science supporting how such a thing could happen—giving the appearance of age. But the evolutionists say all this is ridiculous. And regarding the hypothesis of the accelerated decay rates of the rocks, they say that so much heat would have been generated during that supposed radiation that all the oceans would have boiled off the earth, and that the mantle of the earth would have melted. So they maintain that since the Bible contains such scientific error in its first book, why read the rest of it since it is just a myth. I don't know how to answer my skeptical friends, and I'm confused myself about the age of the earth.”

“As a science teacher,” James replied, “I agree that *supposed* accelerated nuclear decay caused by the flood would involve millions or billions of years' worth of decay occurring in just days or months; and would have produced an enormous amount of heat with catastrophic results for the earth. It would also have prohibited life as we know it from surviving, but the young-earth/universe Christians have another problem with their theory. When we perform radioisotope dating of meteorites and moon rocks, they also show billions of years of age; and since they come from space, they have not been subjected to the flood or other cataclysmic events on earth that might—*might* according to young earth creationists—have accelerated the decay rates.”

“That reminds me of another question regarding the dating of the rocks with radioisotopes.”

“OK, shoot,” James said.

“Well, one young-earth video mentions the error in dating the igneous rocks created during the Mount St. Helens volcanic eruption in 1980. In the early 1990's, several labs dated the rocks without knowing where the samples came from—some young-earth scientists sent them in with no information about where they were found—as being approximately a million years old. Of course, they were actually only about twelve years old. They use this to discredit all radioisotope dating that shows ancient ages for the earth's rocks.”

“The reason that the Mount St. Helens dating error is not a valid argument for the young-earthers,” James replied, “is the fact that radioisotope dating is very accurate if the half-life of the radiation element is fairly close to the age of the material being dated. In other words, if you use a radioisotope with a half-life of 5000 years to date material that is a million or billion years old, or vice-versa, you get very wide dating deviations which show up in the *error bars* on bar graphs in scientific reports. But when meteorites and moon rocks are dated using radioisotopes with half-lives of approximately one billion years, they consistently date billions of years old. Moreover, carbon 14, with a half-life of 5730 years, consistently dates ancient artifacts with known ages accurately to within plus or minus 50 years. For example, it consistently dates the Dead Sea Scrolls accurately using radiocarbon dating of the linen scroll covers.

“In the Mount St. Helens dating incident, the young-earth scientists tricked the dating labs, because they knew the labs, assuming the igneous rock samples were ancient, would use Uranium to Lead or Potassium to Argon radioisotopes, whose half-lives are .7 billion and 1.26 billion years respectively; and the result would be huge errors, which is precisely what occurred.”

“I see,” Tim said. “But are there any scientific evidences for a young earth and universe?”

“There are numerous ones showing portions of a young earth and solar system,” James said, “but as David will show us presently when he shares some fascinating insights into the ancient Hebrew in Genesis 1, the so-called 'creation days' are actually describing the re-creation of the earth and portions of our solar system, not their original, primordial creation in the dateless past, which could easily have been billions of years ago. But to continue with some scientific examples of the earth and portions of earth's neighborhood in the solar system showing evidence of recent re-creation, I will name a couple. The magnetic field of the earth is weakening at a constant rate. If we rewind earth's clock millions of years, or even less than that, the field would be so strong that the heat generated would have melted the earth, thus making a 4.5 billion year age for the earth impossible. Therefore, this indicates that the rotating molten-iron core of the earth which gives earth its magnetic field is a fairly recent addition. Regarding the solar system, Jupiter and Saturn are losing more heat than is being absorbed from the Sun. They must be very young. If they were old, equilibrium would have been reached long ago. Now, as to the young-earthers claim that the *total* age of the earth must be very young, they cite science that the rotation of the earth is slowing down at a constant rate. If we go back millions of years, the rotation would have been so fast that no life could have been possible because of the centrifugal force. Moreover, the winds would have been 5000 mph. Another is that the moon is slowly moving away from the earth at a constant rate. We are losing the moon. Obviously, it was much closer in the past. If we go back in time millions of years, the moon would have been so close that the huge tides would have made life on earth impossible.”

“What do you say to that?”

“I agree with that science. But that only shows that life could not have been possible on the earth millions of years ago. It does not, however, refute the existence of a primordial earth during that time. It is, however, a good counter to the evolutionists claim that life began on earth 500 million years ago, and that early man began living about 1.5 million years ago.”

“So...you're saying...” Tim said slowly, as he formulated his thoughts, “that there is scientific evidence for a partially young earth and solar system due to re-creation...and...the young-earth/universe Christians are extrapolating from this the idea that the entire universe is young.”

“That's right,” James said. “Let me give you an analogy. Let's say a man in 1980 re-models portions of a house built in Europe in the middle ages. In that case, you would have evidence of materials that dated both old and young.”

Tim thought for a while. “My young-earth Christian friends would counter this view by saying it argues for a gap of time between the first two verses of Genesis—that verse 1 is the original creation of the earth in the primordial past, and that verse 2 is taking place millions or billions of years later. They call this the gap theory and say it amounts to heresy.”

“David,” James said, motioning to his friend, “this is where we need to turn to you.”

David nodded and smiled. “Tim, I think I can help. God uses numerous time gaps throughout the Bible in order to keep the Bible from being overly long and cumbersome; to not reveal certain information for various reasons, for example, Jesus told His disciples that He had much more to tell them but they could not bear it then; and to eliminate superfluous information, or as we say, TMI, for too much information. Here is an example in prophecy in Zechariah chapter 9 verses 9-10. Do you see a time gap between verses 9 and 10? I will read these verses:

Verse 9: 'Rejoice greatly, O daughter of Zion! Shout, O daughter of Jerusalem! Behold, your King is coming to you; He is just and having salvation, lowly and riding on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey. Verse 10: I will cut off the chariot from Ephraim and the horse from Jerusalem; the battle bow shall be cut off. He shall speak peace to the nations; His dominion

shall be from sea to sea, and from the River to the ends of the earth.'

“Well, Tim...do you see a time gap?”

“Yes, verse 9 is prophesying the Messiah's first coming, and verse 10 is prophesying His second coming.”

“That is correct. Because the Jews did not envision a time gap between these verses, and other similar verses, they assumed that when the Messiah appeared, He would immediately establish His kingdom. But as we now know in hindsight, the gap between these verses is the Church Age which has lasted nearly 2000 years so far.”

“Wow! I never noticed that before.”

“Here is another one. Do you recall that when Jesus came to His hometown of Nazareth, He was in the synagogue, and He quoted from the book of Isaiah?”

“Yes, that is a famous scripture.”

“Right...it's in Luke 4:18, but notice that He did not quote the entire passage. Here, I'll read it:

'The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, to proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.' Then He closed the book, and gave it back to the attendant and sat down. And the eyes of all who were in the synagogue were fixed on Him.

“Now, why did Jesus stop at that point?”

“Because the next line is in the future at His Second Coming.”

“Right you are. And after Jesus finishes reading, He sits down and says, *'Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.'* In other words, the portion of the Isaiah prophecy He has just finished reading is fulfilled by Him, but He stopped because the next portion is future, and as yet unfulfilled. Go ahead and read that next line, Tim.”

“OK. It says, *'And the day of vengeance of our God.'*”

“Now, that line is describing His Second Coming, in which Jesus takes vengeance on all sinners who survive Armageddon and on the Jews' enemies—remember, the Bible says, *'Vengeance is mine,' saith the Lord.* And the remaining verses, verses 3 through 9, are giving us a glimpse of the kingdom Age in which Jesus is ruling the earth. You can see Isaiah's prophecy in Isaiah 61:1-2; and more about the Lord's vengeance in Isaiah 63:1-6. Therefore this is another time gap of at least 2000 years thus far.”

Tim and the others all expressed amazement that they had never focused on time gaps in the Bible before.

“Are there other gaps of time besides these in the Bible?” Dakota asked.

“Oh yes, for example, there is a 400 year gap of time between the last book of the Old Testament, Malachi, and the beginning of the New Testament with Jesus' birth. There is a gap of time between Jesus amazing the scribes in the temple when He was 12 years old, and His next appearance approximately 18 years later just prior to the beginning of His ministry. There is a long gap of time between Joseph's death in the last verse of Genesis, and Exodus 1:8, in which the scripture says, *Now there arose a new king over Egypt, who did not know Joseph.* And there are many other such gaps of time in the Bible. It might interest you to know that the following Christian leaders and/or evangelical scholars are known to believe in an ancient earth and universe: Billy Graham, John Ankerberg, Pat Robertson, Jack Hayford, John Hagee, Lee Strobel; and in the past, C.S. Lewis and C.I. Scofield.”

“David,” James said, “this is a good time to explain how the ancient Hebrew, in which the Old Testament was written, shows how the universe and earth are very ancient.”

“I'll be glad to. Now, there are several things we need to understand about biblical or ancient

Hebrew before we begin reading Genesis 1. First, unlike English and even modern Hebrew, ancient Hebrew had no way of expressing the tense of verbs in writing. If you remember from grade school, the tense of a verb shows us the *when* of an action, the *sequence* of an action, and sometimes the *duration* of an action. But in ancient Hebrew, in place of tense, verbs have *aspects* or *states* (of being)—either perfect or imperfect, meaning they express completed action or incomplete action respectively. Let me give you an example of how this can be a problem during translation. Here is a sentence in English and then in ancient Hebrew:

Last week, Mary planted the flowers. She had planted the bushes.

“In reading this sentence in English, we know the when of the action—Mary planted the flowers last week. We also know the sequence of the action—Mary planted the bushes before she planted the flowers. Now let's see the sentence in ancient Hebrew:

Last week, Mary planted the flowers. She planted the bushes.

“Now we see a problem with ancient Hebrew in that the past-perfect tense, or pluperfect as we call it, could not be expressed in the verb, so we do not know the sequence of the action. We don't know if Mary planted the flowers before planting the bushes or after-wards. The pluperfect case in English, as you know, is formed by inserting *had* before the verb. Ancient Hebrew had no way of showing this in the verb forms.”

“I see how this could affect the translation of biblical Hebrew into English,” James observed. “But could the ancient Hebrews express the pluperfect in other ways than using the verb?”

“Yes they could. For my doctoral dissertation, I researched the work of a brilliant PhD physicist by the name of Rodney Whitefield, who also became a scholar of ancient Hebrew. His booklet, entitled *Genesis One and the Age of the Earth*, can be read online and I highly recommend it (creationingenesis.com). Whitefield has done an excellent job of reviving and bringing to light the teachings of 19th century Hebrew scholars, who knew two methods in which the ancient Hebrews expressed the pluperfect. The first way was not verb form but verb order. Hebrew, as you may know, is read from right to left and nearly always begins with the verb. These 19th century scholars knew that by placing the verb second instead of first, the ancient writers were expressing prior past action, or what we refer to as the pluperfect tense.”

“Are you saying that to convey the pluperfect they would switch to subject followed by verb format as in our English language?”

“Yes, that is it exactly. Whitefield points out that ‘a more comprehensive understanding’ of this has come about since the latter half of the twentieth century. In consulting some of the recognized ancient and modern grammarians mentioned by Whitefield, I was especially intrigued by Ziony Zevit’s research into biblical Hebrew’s method of conveying the pluperfect understanding in storytelling. Zevit is professor of biblical literature and northwest Semitic languages at American Jewish University. In searching for the verb-subject reversal in other ancient languages that are related to biblical Hebrew, Zevit found examples of it in Moabite and Phoenician inscriptions. But the big breakthrough for Zevit came in 1993 and 1995, when two fragments of Aramaic inscriptions were found in northern Israel which very clearly showed the pluperfect expressed with verb second order. This evidence made a big impression on me since Aramaic is so closely related to biblical Hebrew.”

“What was the second way?” Dakota asked.

“The second way was by the context of the narrative. For example, since the pluperfect tense could not be expressed in the written form of the Hebrew verb, and therefore is not usually translated as pluperfect in our English versions, the modern reader will sometimes see a contradiction in a narrative where the ancient reader would not. Let me give you an example of that first, and then I'll give an

example of the verb-second order method, and show how the lack of the pluperfect in English translation can cause confusion regarding sequence of events, apparent contradictions in the text, and even seeming inaccuracies regarding modern science.”

“So you're saying that understanding how the ancient Hebrews expressed the pluperfect can clear up some seemingly unscientific statements in Genesis?” James asked.

“Absolutely, and also understanding the definitions of some of the Hebrew nouns and verbs which I'll explain presently. First, I want to draw your attention to the second chapter of Genesis KJV, verses 18 and 19, where it states that God made the animals out of the dust of the ground and brought them to Adam so he could find a suitable companion/helper, and also give names to them. Do you see an apparent conflict between this verse and Genesis chapter 1?”

“Yes,” Tim said. “In the first chapter, the animals are created on the sixth day before man but in Genesis 2:19, as you just said, it states the animals are created after Adam. In fact, this is a contradiction that my skeptical friends point to in discrediting Genesis and therefore the entire Bible.”

“You can understand their point. But this is where we run into a seeming contradiction in the English translation that the ancient Hebrew reader would not have seen at all,” David continued. “The ancient reader would have known by the context of the narrative that the animals had already been created before Adam in chapter 1, and he would *mentally* supply the pluperfect understanding while reading the verse. Therefore, he would read Genesis 2:19 as, 'Out of the ground the Lord God *had formed*, or *formed already*, every beast of the field and every bird of the air, and brought them to Adam, etc.’”

“Wow! Now I see!” Tim said. “Since ancient Hebrew could not express the pluperfect tense in the written form of the verb, we see a contradiction where the ancient reader would not.”

“Now, hold on a minute”, James said. “My NIV Bible does use the pluperfect tense in Genesis 2:19, so we do not see a contradiction in that Bible.”

“Hey, you're right,” Tim said. “That raises another question. Why was the KJV Bible changed? It looks as if the NIV translators changed the Bible to prevent modern readers from seeing the contradiction.”

“Good observation,” David replied, “however, the NIV translators were correct in supplying the pluperfect tense because, as I just mentioned, the verb can be translated in the pluperfect tense if by context the modern reader, just as the ancient reader, knows the event has already taken place. And, of course, we know from Genesis 1 that the animals were already created before man.”

“Regarding the other way ancient Hebrew expressed the pluperfect, in the verb-second order, where do we see an example of that?” James asked.

“Ah,” David said, as he leaned back in his chair and crossed his arms, “we see that, thanks to the work of Rodney Whitefield, Ziony Zevit, and the eminent 19th Century Hebrews scholars, in a most surprising place—the very first verse in the Bible, and the second verse as well.”

“You mean the first verse has the verb-second order and should be understood as pluperfect tense?” Tim asked. “You mean it should be read, 'In the beginning God *had created* the heavens and the earth'?”

“Surprising isn't it—a fact commonly known by the 19th century Hebrew scholars. It is ancient Hebrew knowledge that has been lost, or deliberately ignored, by modern scholars, but now, fortunately, is beginning to be recognized again.”

There was a brief silence in the room as David's words sank in. Then Dakota spoke up. “David, are you saying that it was common knowledge among Christians living in the 19th Century that the earth was ancient?”

“Oh, yes indeed,” David replied. “In fact, Robert Young's 1862 literal translation of the Old

Testament, known as the YLT, recognized the verb-second order and rendered Genesis 1 verses 1-2 as follows:

Verse 1: 'In the beginning, God *hath created* the heavens and the earth.'

Verse 2: 'The earth *hath existed* waste and void, and darkness *is* on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God fluttering on the face of the waters.'

“But I want you to be aware that if you pull up the YLT on your Bible Apps, you will see YLT98, meaning it is a newer translation completed in 1998, and not exactly the same as the original. But to continue, as Whitefield points out, the last two clauses of verse 2 are verb-less clauses. In the last clause, the word, *fluttering*, is actually a participle. Moreover, the verb '*is*' in the preceding clause is italicized because it is not in the Hebrew, but was inserted by the translator for clarity. You will notice this in the KJV and most of the more modern bibles as well. For example, they read: '...and darkness *was* on the face of the deep, and the Spirit of God *was* moving or *was* hovering over the face of the waters.' The verbs *was* in the first clause and *was* moving/hovering are in italics in most bibles because they are not in the Hebrew but were added by the translator. My main point, however, is that the YLT is strictly literal in its translation, even showing that the verb form *was moving/hovering* is actually a participle that literally should be translated simply as *moving*, or as the YLT translated it, *fluttering*.”

“That begs the question,” James said, “when and why did some Christian Bible scholars begin espousing a young earth/universe model?”

“It may surprise you,” David replied, “that as a defense against evolution in the 1960's, Christians began to argue that the earth was too young for evolution to have time to take place. It began in 1961 with Henry Morris' book, *The Genesis Flood*, and caught on. But using the young-earth age argument is not the way to refute evolution. The proper way to refute evolution is using intelligent design. By using the young-earth argument we have handed the evolutionists a gift as Whitefield explains. They no longer need to defend evolution; all they need do is attack the book of Genesis as being silly and fantasy, leaving evolution as the only logical alternative.”

“You're right about that,” Tim observed. “My unbelieving friends watch Richard Dawkins on YouTube ridicule the Bible in order to make the case for evolution at college and university lectures. They're also reading his best-selling books like *The Blind watchmaker*, *The God Delusion*, etc.”

“Yes, his young-earth/universe attacks on Genesis are blocking perhaps millions of young people from coming to faith in Christ,” David agreed, “and the young earth/universe Christians are unintentionally giving him and other atheists all the ammunition they need. It's the silliness factor of 6000 year old stars that has created a tougher obstacle for our youth to scale than even the evolution wall. I realize that God may have created the universe on day 4 in a split second. But I feel it is wrong to be so dogmatic about a young earth/universe when there is much evidence in biblical Hebrew pointing to an ancient earth and universe.

“Now, just a little more about the Hebrew verbs,” David continued, “without going into much detail. I'll keep it very simple. When a Hebrew verb is in what is called the qal perfect form, it can be translated into English in what we call the past tense, the present perfect tense, or the past perfect (pluperfect) tense. For example, the verb *created* in qal perfect could be translated He *created*, He *has created*, or He *had created*. However, the translators usually translate the qal perfect form of the Hebrew verb in simple past tense. My point is that, when an active verb is in the qal perfect form, the translator should be alerted to using the pluperfect tense in English if (1) the verb is in the verb-second order, and (2) if the verb is referring back to an already completed action in a previous portion of the narrative. In the first verse of the Bible, there is obviously no previous context to signal using the pluperfect tense, so the verb-second order is the method used to accomplish this.”

“I see, so in cases where the writer wants to convey the pluperfect and he can't do it by context, ancient Hebrew did have a way of doing it with a grammatical cue—verb-second order in the qal perfect form—and that is what we see in Genesis 1:1. In that case, it may not be a summary statement with the details to follow, but rather a stand-alone statement of fact,” James said excitedly.

“Precisely,” David agreed. “And in that case, the first creative act is not 'Let there be light' in verse 3 as the young-earth/universe supporters claim, but rather the creating of space, time, matter, and energy of the universe and the primordial earth in the dateless past. Instead of being a summary statement, the first verse of the Bible is a statement of fact giving background information to the reader before the main narrative begins. After all, how could light be the first creative act, as the young earth advocates say, when God's Spirit is moving over a water-world when He spoke it? It begs the question, 'how did that water-world get there?' ”

“Then that would be a good argument that the Bible agrees with modern science that the universe and earth could be very ancient, even billions of years old,” Tim added.

“Yes, it would be,” David said. “And in that case, the universe was present when the creation days of Genesis were taking place. Therefore, the sun, moon, and stars were not created on day 4 of creation week, but had been there from distant ages past. This is also seen when we look at the Hebrew verbs used on day 4 as I'll explain in a moment. Moreover, the Bible agrees with this view in Job 38, verses 4-7, in which God said to Job:

'Where were you when I laid the foundations of the earth...when the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy?'

“The morning stars are Mercury and Venus. Since they were present when God made the earth, then the solar system was obviously there, and by logical extension the universe also. Of course, they are really planets, not stars—*planet* is a Greek word meaning *wandering star*—but again, God is accommodating Himself to man's unscientific ideas, and describing them from man's perspective. In verses 31-33, we see that Job is familiar with the *Pleiades cluster*; the constellation of Orion also known as *The Hunter*; and even the giant red star Arcturus with smaller stars following, known as *the Bear and his Cubs* even today, so he obviously was familiar with the morning stars. The sons of God are the angels, as also mentioned in Job 1:6—men are obviously not being referenced here as they were not present during the creation of the earth. Moreover, astronomers have shown that planets and stars emit vibrations that we can now pick up with modern, very sensitive equipment. In fact, you can go online and listen to the amazing symphonic music of the spheres. I am convinced that this verse is a hint to our scientifically advanced generation to help us realize that Genesis, when read in the original Hebrew, is scientifically accurate.”

“Are there any other hints to modern man in the Bible?” James asked.

“Oh yes, I believe there are. Well, look at the second verse of the Bible. It says that darkness was on the face of the deep, and that the Spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters. There's a hint right there.”

“A hint there?” asked James, as the others all agreed they did not see any hint to modern man and modern science in the verse at all.”

“It's right there in front of you,” David said smiling broadly. “Look closely at what the verse is saying.”

They each could be heard reading the verse and portions of the verse over and over, sometimes thinking they saw what David meant, and then in the same breath retracting their guess and beginning again, interrupting, backtracking, etc., until at last they looked up, laughing, and insisting there was nothing there and that David was simply pulling their leg. “We give up,” they all said nearly at once.

“We give up because there is no hint there.”

“Are you quite sure?” David asked, his smile evolving into a chuckle.

“We are absolutely sure there is no hint to modern, scientifically advanced man,” James replied as they all agreed.

“OK, here it is. Notice that the Spirit of God is moving over water.”

“Yeah...OK...what's the big deal,” James said, speaking for the others.

“The big deal is that it's water. It shows that the sun was already there giving heat to the earth, otherwise it would be a frozen world, an ice world, that God was hovering over. So the sun was already in existence when God began the creation days, or rather, the re-creation days.”

The little group stared at David in stunned silence. Then, suddenly, they all burst into statements of shock and awe at how they could have read that verse so many times and never seen the implication about the existence of the sun.

Finally, Tim said, “Of course, God could have provided the heat without a sun being in existence.”

“That is true...very good,” David replied. “But I think it is fairly certain that the sun was there. After all, the existence of water shows that the laws of chemistry were in place...water as you know is H₂O; and also, the laws of physics were in play since gravity was obviously present holding the earth together, and keeping the water from floating off the earth into space. The strong and weak nuclear forces within atoms were in effect since the earth and water are made of atoms. The electromagnetic force was present which keeps the atoms together. Therefore, I feel it is logical that since the laws of chemistry and physics were in operation, as well as the four fundamental forces of nature, it is logical to me that the electromagnetic spectrum of the sun was present giving warmth to the earth.”

“Wow!” James said. “And I thought I was the science teacher. David, that is an amazing insight the Lord has given you and backed up by solid science to boot.”

“Coming from you I am truly humbled,” David replied. “You are very kind.”

“It is from the heart as well as from the mind,” James said.

“This is all so interesting,” Dakota said, “But suddenly I have another question if I may shift gears for a moment. If the sun was already in existence on day 1, why did God say, 'Let there be light'? If the sun was already there...I mean...it doesn't make any sense.”

“Ah, you have asked a great question,” David said. “In fact, James and I were discussing this a couple of days ago, and I'm sure he can answer your question better than I can.”

“Yes, that is an excellent question honey,” James began. “Yes, the sun was already there, but it was putting out the whole range of electromagnetic radiation. You may recall from science class in high school that the electromagnetic spectrum includes gamma rays, x-rays, ultraviolet rays, infrared, microwaves, and radio waves. When God said 'Let there be light,' He spoke into existence radiation we call *visible light*, which has a wavelength of approximately 380 to 740 nanometers (nm)—a very narrow wavelength between ultraviolet and infrared radiation. In fact, it is only one trillionth of one trillionth of the spectrum. God decided to use that narrow band of radiation for his earth creatures, including us humans, to use for sight with our eyes and also for the plants to use for feeding themselves via photosynthesis. Some insects such as bees can see UV light, which helps them collect nectar from the flowers, and snakes can see infrared light, but those are rare exceptions. But the main point is that when God spoke that particular radiation into existence, He could have made the sun produce more of it, or He could have produced it independently of the sun, while planning to fine-tune the sun to produce more of it on day 4.”

“So what we call visible light is simply radiation?” Dakota asked.

“That is correct,” James replied. “Such a narrow sliver of the electromagnetic spectrum. And at the

same time, God could have also been thinning the atmosphere to allow the sunlight to reach the earth. So that could have also been some of the meaning in God's words, 'Let there be light.'

"Well, it seems one answer always raises another question," Tim said, "and I hate to interrupt, but if I don't ask it now I may forget it."

"Oh, go ahead and ask it," David said. "Getting answers to questions is what this evening is all about."

"OK, thanks. Here is my question. At the beginning of day 4, God said...hold on...I have it right here. I'll read it:

'Let there be lights in the firmament of the heavens to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years; and let them be for lights in the firmament of the heavens to give light on the earth'; and it was so.'

"Why does God use the phrase 'Let there be' in this verse when referring to making the stars, but use the word create (*bara*) in the first verse for creating the heavens?"

"Wow! These are such great questions you all are throwing at me, and that is another excellent one Tim," David replied. "I like the tough questions because they make for such an interesting discussion. OK, here's the way I see it. I believe God gave us this verse with a different perspective—that of viewing the sky from the earth as we do. He does not use the word for stars here, which is *kowhab*, but rather lights, which is *meorah*. In this case, God could have been adjusting the atmosphere—as I was just saying a moment ago—from translucent, in which light from the sun was being diffused onto the earth through the clouds, to transparent, so the sun, moon, and stars could be seen from the earth. The diffused light would have been adequate for the grass, herbs, and trees, which were made on day 3, to have grown and received food via photosynthesis, but now the sun could be seen clearly in an unclouded sky. Now, notice also that the visible heavenly bodies are not only for seasons, days, and years, but also for signs. I believe that on this day, when God *made* the two great lights and also the stars—and I must again emphasize that this verb is *asah*, meaning *to prepare, fashion, bring forth*—that He set or arranged or brought forth the stars to be signs to man, along with the sun and moon also, by setting them in just the right position while also setting their course and speed. This could have been when He arranged the heavenly bodies, for example, so that the star of Bethlehem would arrive at just the right time for the wise men to follow; and for the red (blood) moon to rise on the night of the crucifixion; and other such spiritual signs that have been observed over the centuries, which are also prophesied to occur in the future. It could also be the time when God moved the stars and galaxies into position to form the constellations for navigational purposes."

This last answer from David immediately brought forth expressions of great surprise and wonder from the little audience of intent listeners, and they continued for some minutes communicating their excitement about how, for the first time, many things about the first chapter of Genesis that had always puzzled them were being cleared up. This led to further discussions as they recalled what David had told them about God hinting to modern man that the creation days agree with modern science. At this point, they also let David know that from now on they would make more use of the Concordance when reading the Bible.

David picked up on this. "My experience in reading and studying the Bible is that, whenever I have gone to the original Hebrew and Greek words, they have always confirmed and enhanced the plain reading of the English translation; and this of course includes the passages dealing with the major theological doctrines of the Bible. The only exception to this is when I have gone to the original Hebrew in passages dealing with science and felt God urging me to dig deeper. Incidentally, even if I did believe that the Bible says the earth and universe are 6000 years old, I still would not use that

initially in witnessing to the lost because it is a mind closer, especially to the Millennials. They believe the stars are billions of years old just as much as they believe the chemical composition of water is H₂O. Not everything I believe do I use in witnessing to the lost. For example, I believe there was a talking snake in the Garden of Eden—in the sense that Satan possessed the serpent and spoke to Eve, but I don't bring up the talking snake in my witnessing to the lost because it sounds foolish to them. It sounds like mythology. Of course, the Gospel sounds foolish to the lost also, but when it is presented to them, the Holy Spirit pierces and draws their hearts. But a talking snake and a 6000 year old universe is not the Gospel.”

“The thought just occurred to me,” Tim said, “how ironic it is that the Millennial skeptics feel that belief in 6000 year-old stars repudiates the validity of the Bible, but the Millennial believers feel that belief in 6000 year-old stars affirms the validity of the Bible. In fact, the latter group says that such belief shows God's awesome power—that it only took Him six days to create the entire universe. You hear them saying that their God did not need billions of years for creation.”

“Interesting,” James observed.

“But consider this,” David replied. “God does not need to perform the miracles of creation in the time or manner in which we think they should be performed due to His omnipotence. They're saying that God is so powerful that He did not need more than 6 days to create everything. But if God's purpose was to show off His power by creating rapidly, why did He take six days? Why not create everything in one day or one hour or one nanosecond? Why not create at warp speed? Jesus did not need to use the 5 loaves and 2 fish to provide the food for 5000 people. He could have just said 'Let there be fish and bread' and everyone would have suddenly found the lunch in their lap. But instead, Jesus used the natural to perform the supernatural because that was how He chose to do the miracle. Sure, God could have created the entire universe in a split second, or He could have aged the universe until the right time, and aged the earth like fine wine. After thorough study, I believe the biblical Hebrew supports the latter.”

“What a great rebuttal which I can't wait to use,” said Tim, as the others all expressed their amazement at the logic with which David's mind seemed to work so effortlessly. They sat quietly for a while just thinking.

James broke the silence. “You mentioned something about the meaning of the ancient Hebrew verbs and nouns. How do they help make the case for an old earth?”

“Oh, I'm glad you reminded me,” David said. “They play a very important part. For example, in the first verse, where it says that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the Hebrew verb is *bara*, which means to create something totally new which never existed previously. But on day 4, where it says that God *made* the sun and the moon, a different verb, *asah*, is used. This verb has a very broad meaning. It is not used for creating a new thing, but rather for *preparing* and *fashioning* things that already exist. So on day 4, God is not creating the sun and the moon, but rather preparing and fine-tuning them.”

“I have heard young-earth creationists counter this by saying that these verbs, *bara* and *asah*, both mean to create and are used interchangeably,” James said.

“That argument fails, as Whitefield shows,” David explained, “when you consider Genesis 2:3, where it states that on the seventh day God 'rested from all His work which He had created (*bara*) and made (*asah*).' The YLT translates this literally as '...God rested from all the work *He had created for making*.' This is correct, as Whitefield explains, because the verb *asah* is in the infinitive form, and means *for making* or *to make*. The KJV translators realized this and put *to make* in the margin notes.”

“Which verb does Genesis use when God created man?” Dakota asked. “Oh, and also, which verb

is used for making woman? I am especially interested in that,” she laughed.

“For making man, a totally new creation, the verb *bara* is used,” David said. “But for making woman, a different verb is used. It is the verb, *banah*, which means *to build*. The reason is that Eve was not a totally new creation because she was taken out of man—made from his rib. Now, when God makes small sea creatures, He is *making* in the sense of manufacturing them out of existing materials, so the verb *asah* is used. But when He makes the higher, more intelligent sea creatures, like whales and dolphins, which have a soul so they can feel emotions, reason, and relate to man, He uses *bara* because he is creating a new thing. And this is true also when He made Adam, because Adam has several new features, since He is made in the image of God and also has an eternal human spirit as well. But Adam's body is also made out of the dust of the ground, so the scriptures do sometimes use these verbs interchangeably in referring to him and later men and women because they are made *asah*, from the already existing elements (dust), but also *bara*, since they are created with a totally new soul and spirit—different from the animals. And in general, *asah* is used when both types of *making* are used in the same sentence to avoid cumbersome grammar.”

“That is amazing,” Tim said. “The Hebrew verbs are so accurate and provide much insight into the details of God's work. But so much of their insightful meanings are obscured in the translation process by using our English verbs *created* and *made* for all of them.”

“That is so true,” agreed David, “and that is why it is such a helpful aid to go to the original Hebrew.”

“But do we have to become expert in ancient Hebrew to understand the Bible?” Dakota asked.

“Not at all for understanding the major doctrines and the theology of the Bible,” David replied. “But I do believe it is necessary in our advanced scientific age to have some basic knowledge of ancient Hebrew when the Bible occasionally veers into the area of science and/or the cosmos, and especially when we read Genesis 1. Otherwise, we cannot effectively answer the critic who is using scientific arguments against us. Remember, Jesus said to ask, seek and knock for answers, and I believe as we do that regarding reconciling Genesis with science, Jesus is leading us to the original Hebrew. Now, let me expand on this for a moment. Dakota, would you please hand me my Bible on that table? Thank you.”

David began leafing through his Bible until he found the desired passage. “I believe that Christians need to know when to believe scientific findings and when to disbelieve them, by seeking God's wisdom of course. We should be bold when we should be bold and cautious when we need be cautious. For example, in Copernicus' day, the Catholics as well as the Protestants disbelieved the scientific truth of the heliocentric solar system primarily because of a single verse in the Bible. Do any of you know to which verse I'm referring?”

There was silence as they thought for a moment. Then James said chuckling, “I don't know the verse, but they obviously misinterpreted that verse, because we now know that Copernicus was right and the theologians were wrong.”

“You are correct, of course,” David replied. “The verse they used, and as you observed misinterpreted, is verse 5 of Psalm 104. This verse says, in speaking of God, that He laid the foundations of the earth '*so that it should not be moved forever.*' Now remember, Copernicus was proposing a revolutionary concept—that the earth moves. He said that it not only moves in an orbit around a stationary sun, but that it also rotates every 24 hours, giving the appearance that the sun is orbiting the earth. But Catholic and Protestant theologians pointed to this verse which they believed said the earth does not move. Did you know that even the great Martin Luther ridiculed Copernicus? Not only did the theologians believe that this verse meant the earth does not move, but also, the conventional wisdom of that day was that if the earth moved, things would fall off, the birds would be

left behind, etc. So it seemed logical that the earth could not move. But, knowing what we know now, if we had been living then, we could have gone to the Jews and found that the Hebrew for *moved* meant that the earth would not be shaken and that it would endure. Moreover, we could have pointed to Psalm 16, verse 8, where David says, 'I have set the Lord always before me; because He is at my right hand, I shall not be moved.' It is the exact same Hebrew word. We could have asked them, 'Is David saying that he will never move again—that he will be frozen like a statue?' No, it means he will not be shaken. I realize that this Psalm is also Messianic, so, in that case, is the Messiah saying He will be frozen?"

"But if someone did make that point," Tim said, "do you think they'd have changed their minds?"

"I don't think so," David said. "I think they had such a preconceived viewpoint that they could not consider they might be wrong."

"And so, in the same way, we might be wrong also, if we have a strong predetermined mind-set about the creation days," Dakota said. "We might overlook these points you are making about biblical Hebrew grammar. Is that what you are saying, David?"

"Yes, that is it. Again, I am not dogmatically claiming that I am right, only that we cannot be certain about the age of the earth and universe from the biblical account. I feel that the young-earth Christians are correct in maintaining that since the creation days of Genesis, Noah's flood has given the appearance of age—at least to the evolutionists—by the rapid deposition of sediment which the evolutionists believe occurred over millions of years. So, I applaud how their theory answers questions from the creation days to the present, which very well might be just 6000 to 10,000 years or so, but I feel they are wrong to include the original, or primordial, creation of the earth and universe in that time frame."

"You also mentioned the Hebrew nouns as aiding the interpretation of Genesis," James said.

"Yes," David answered, "let's look again at the very first verse. The Hebrew word for *heavens* is the masculine noun *shamayim*, which is plural. However, it is similar to some English collective nouns which have a singular form but a singular or plural meaning, such as the words team, committee, audience. For example, 'The *audience* [singular] loved the performance'; or 'Most of the *audience* [plural] are teenagers'. Therefore, *shamayim* can be translated either singular or plural—either way it is the same word in Hebrew. The Hebrew for *earth* is *erets*, which is defined in Strong's Concordance of biblical Hebrew, as *dry land, fields, ground*. So, in the beginning, God created a dry-land planet. This is confirmed by the Genesis account on day three, when God commands the seas to be gathered into one place and commands the *dry land* to appear. That word for dry land is again *erets*. Also, it is interesting that the first verse states that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth, not the earth and then the heavens, as the young-earth advocates assert when they claim that the stars were created after the earth on day four."

"That agrees with science," James said. "Cosmologists believe that planets were flung off from stars as burning bits of matter which then underwent a cooling process. Not that the Bible always has to agree with science—I'm just pointing out that it does here."

"Yes," David continued. "And we now have an indeterminate interval of time while the earth is cooling down. Then we see in verse 2 that the dry planet has become a water-world. God does not tell us how much time elapsed during this transition from dry planet to water-world. It could have been millions or billions of years for all we know. Moreover, we do not know how long our planet remained as a water-world prior to God stepping in to finish the creation of the earth into the form we now see. That also could have been millions or billions of years."

"So you're saying that the creation days of Genesis are actually the finishing of the creation, or a re-creation, by which God changed the formless and void or empty earth into the earth we now see—

generally speaking of course, since the flood changed things quite a bit also,” James said.

“That is a good way of putting it,” David admitted, and paused thoughtfully before he continued. “If the Bible were on trial in a court of law, the young-earth Christians would not be able to make the case that the earth is young according to Genesis, because no one knows how long those time intervals were in which the earth was a dry planet and then a water-world. Of course, they would argue that the first verse of Genesis is a summary verse setting up the details to follow, and in so doing dismiss our interpretation, but I feel we are showing much evidence to counter that hypothesis.”

“I see what you're saying” James said. “And with my science background it has bothered me that the young-earth creationists are so dogmatic about their interpretation. I admit, God could have created the stars on day 4 and caused the light to reach us instantly, but as you have been pointing out, there is much evidence to the contrary in the ancient Hebrew words and grammar. But wait...let me see if I have this right. I can see that on day 4 God prepared or fashioned the sun—after all, it's just a huge hydrogen fusion plant and I can see Him adjusting the burn process...so it would be a G-type main-sequence yellow dwarf star which earth needed...OK...and preparing the moon or moving it into place...I've got that since the verb *asah* is used. But now the last sentence says, 'He made the stars also.' That seems pretty conclusive that the stars were made on day 4, doesn't it?”

“Well, first of all, the verb *made* in that sentence is in the qal perfect form,” David replied. “Now remember, in addition to the verb-second order for showing the pluperfect, there is another way, as we saw in the apparent contradiction about sequence involving the creation of Adam and the animals in Genesis chapters 1 and 2...do you recall...?”

“I see it! I see it!” Tim jumped up excitedly. “At last, I see it! The ancient Hebrew reader would have known that the stars were created previously in the very first verse of Genesis, and, since it is in the qal perfect form, he would have mentally understood it in the pluperfect and read it like, 'God *had made* the stars also,' and he would have understood it to mean that now the sun, moon, and stars were all giving light to the earth.”

“Yes, that is right,” David said. “I think you do have it indeed. But, in addition, the ancient reader would have also known that God was *preparing* and *fashioning* the stars that were already in existence since the verb *asah* is used and not *bara*.”

“I see it too now,” James said. “In other words, where we see apparent problems and contradictions in the text, the ancient Hebrew reader saw none at all.”

“I see that now also,” Dakota said. “In other words, even though ancient Hebrew could not express the pluperfect in the verb form, it could express it by syntax and context.”

“The differences in interpretation, to a large extent, come down to how one interprets the first and second verses of the Bible,” David said. “Many modern Bible scholars, as we have discussed, believe that the first verse is a summary verse with the details of the entire creation to follow. But I think this is a weak position especially in light of Rodney Whitefield's work. Now, speaking of Whitefield, he points out some other very interesting things about the first two verses of Genesis. Regarding the first verse, it has the same grammatical structure as the first verse of Job which also has the verb-second arrangement. Young's 1862 literal translation of the Bible, translates the first verse of Job as follows:

'A man there hath been in the land of Uz—Job his name—and that man hath been perfect and upright—both fearing God, and turning aside from evil.'”

“Wow,” Tim said excitedly, “the YLT translates this in the pluperfect just as it does Genesis verses one and two.”

“Yes,” David said, “and that is because the verb is in the second position. As in Genesis 1:1, the verb-second placement indicates the pluperfect, which in turn gives the reader background information

about Job. Moreover, there are other examples of this in the Bible, supplemented with a grammatical cue known as the *waw* prefix, which is used to emphasize that background information is being given. We see it at the beginning of chapter 3 in Genesis, but also, and this may surprise you, in verse 2 of Genesis 1.”

“You mean where it says, 'And the earth was without form and void, and darkness was on the face of the deep...' etc.”

“Yes, if you notice in the newer bibles such as the NIV, the translators recognized the *waw* prefix and translated the verse, 'Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.' The *waw* prefix, which can be translated *and* or *now*, has a disjunctive effect, which indicates to the reader that a change of scene is taking place from the previous narrative information—i.e., that given in verse 1 of the creation of the heavens and earth—which has ended. In English, this disjunctive effect is lost when the conjunction *and* is used, since a conjunction, as you may recall from English grammar, is used to *join* parts of a sentence. Therefore, the newer bibles, recognizing the *waw* prefix, correctly used the disjunctive term *now*, which indicates a *separating* of the parts of a narrative rather than a joining of them. But the main point I am making is that in Genesis 1:1, background information is given about the *bara* creation of the universe and the earth in the dateless past; and in Genesis 1:2, additional background information is given prior to the *asah* creation days—i.e., re-creation days—in which God now steps into the narrative and begins to transform the original formless earth into the earth as we now know it, and begins filling the void (empty) earth with living plants and animals.”

“You mentioned that Genesis 3:1 also has verb second order with the *waw* prefix,” James said. “Could you elaborate more on that?”

“Oh yes, thank you for reminding me. Genesis 3:1 introduces the narrative of the serpent tempting Eve, and since it is the same grammatical structure as Genesis 1:2, it provides much support for my interpretation, or exegesis, of Genesis chapter 1. Again, it is the verb-second order indicating the pluperfect tense in translation. The first word of the sentence is the word for serpent, not the verb. The noun for serpent is prefixed by *waw* meaning *and* or *now*, in order to give background information prior to the narrative which begins *...and he said to the woman*. But I want to point out that not only the newer bibles, but also the KJV of 1611, recognized the disjunctive *waw* prefix should be translated *now* instead of *and* in combination with the pluperfect tense. Here, I'll read it:

*Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made.
And he said to the woman...* (KJV)

“The translators used the pluperfect tense because the *qal* perfect verb is second in order, and *by context* they knew that that the serpent had already been created. Therefore, this is the same disjunctive effect with background information seen in Genesis 1:2, in which there is a change of scene from Genesis 1:1. The latter gives background information about the *bara* creation of the universe and the earth in the dateless past, and Genesis 1:2 gives additional background information to set the stage for the *asah* creation days which are about to take place—i.e., the re-creation—in which God now steps into the narrative and begins to transform the original formless and empty earth into the earth as we now know it.”

“So the Bible can translate itself in some cases,” James said. “That is probably one of the best arguments for an old earth view.”

“But...” asked Dakota, thinking for a while before she continued with her question...“if the translators of the KJV... knew that Genesis 3:1 should be translated into English...in the pluperfect tense ...and realized by the *waw* prefix that it was background information...why didn't they recognize the

same for genesis 1:2?"

"That is an excellent question, and one that I have given a great deal of thought to," replied David. "Consider for a moment, that we do not know whether they used the pluperfect in Genesis 3:1 because of obvious context of previous creation of the serpent; or due to the verb second order; or both, with the waw prefix giving added weight for background information to the pluperfect translation. I admit, I was perplexed by this for some time," David said, sitting back with a smile.

"Your answer indicates that you arrived at a conclusion," James said.

"Well, I think I have it figured out," replied David, "at least to my satisfaction."

"OK, out with it," Dakota laughingly challenged.

"I struggled with this for several nights, and then the thought came to me to consider the context of the times in which the translators were living. They were working on the translation from 1604 to 1611—a time in which nearly everyone thought that Copernicus' heliocentric theory was heresy. His book with the mathematical analysis of his theory had been published shortly before his death in 1543, and only a relatively few professors of mathematics understood it. Moreover, Galileo had just improved his newly invented telescope to a power of 30 in 1610, thus proving Copernicus' theory, at least to himself, only one year before the King James Version was published in 1611. Therefore, it suddenly occurred to me that the KJV translators' view of a geocentric system caused them to overlook the pluperfect grammatical cues of verb-second order in the first two verses of the Bible, and to instead use simple past tense. This in turn caused them to discount the waw prefix in verse 2, translating it *and* instead of *now*, and thus not depicting the first and second verses as background information."

"Oh, I see what you are saying," James said. "You actually believe the translators knew about the grammatical cues, because they employed them in Genesis chapter 3 verse one."

"That is my opinion. And in letting their geocentric views influence their translation of the first two verses of the Bible, later scholars saw these verses as introductory summary clauses instead of stand-alone statements giving background information."

"But how could the translators' geocentric views have caused them to overlook using the pluperfect tenses in verses 1 and 2?" Tim asked.

"Well, because if they used the pluperfect tense in verses 1 and 2, along with correctly translating the waw prefix in verse 2, that would mean that the stars and the earth were created in the past, and now God was doing something new to the earth. There was no way they could have envisioned such a thing. However, if they had believed Galileo's initial telescopic reports that the earth was just one of several other planets revolving around the sun, then they might have been able to believe an earlier creation of a formless earth, and now God was finishing the creation. But obviously, such a belief would have necessitated a huge paradigm shift in their world-view so to speak. Such a sea change in their thinking was way beyond them."

"I see," James said. "And in viewing the verses as summary clauses, our modern Bible scholars have assumed that also—that the first two verses are an introduction summary of the original creation verses which follow."

"That is my studied opinion and one of the main points in my PhD dissertation. Just consider, in the late summer of 1608, the spyglass was invented and quickly became the rage all across Europe. Even though its magnification was only to power of 3, people were enthralled that it could make distant objects appear much closer. Galileo heard about it, and immediately began improving the spyglass by grinding his own lenses. Soon he had increased the spyglass to the eighth power, then to the tenth power using two lenses, the eye lens being concave and the object lens convex. After a couple of years, in 1610, he had a 30 power telescope which he aimed at the moon. To his surprise, the moon was not

smooth like a polished gem, but 'uneven, rough, full of cavities and prominences.' A few months later, he turned his telescope to look at Jupiter, and saw the moons circling it like a miniature solar system; and later that year, he could tell that all the planets, including the earth, were circling the sun. But remember, this was just one year before the KJV was published. And you know the rest of the story. Galileo's papers and books on the heliocentric nature of the solar system over the subsequent years eventually got him in trouble with the Catholic Church, and he was accused of heresy in 1633. Only by recanting, did he save himself from being burned at the stake, and he was kept under house arrest until his death in 1642."

"It has been said," observed James, "that after he recanted at his trial, confessing that the earth does not move, as he returned to his seat, he muttered under his breath, 'and yet it moves'. But I see your point, only a relatively small number of scholars believed Galileo's views, and even Martin Luther and other leading Protestants had mocked Copernicus' theory."

"That is true," David agreed. "And most people are not aware that it took nearly one hundred more years for Protestants to accept a heliocentric solar system, and still longer before the Catholic Church accepted it. Moreover, the Catholic Church did not get around to officially exonerating Galileo until October 31, 1992, when Pope John Paul II acknowledged that the Church had erred in condemning Galileo, thus formerly rectifying the wrong after 359 years."

"And how," added James, "could the KJV translators not have been influenced by the conventional wisdom of their day—that the earth was the center of the cosmos; the heavens were a semi-spherical dome with a metallic ceiling to which the stars were stuck; and that this firmament rotated every 24 hours? They had no concept at all of the immense size and age of the universe, with so many points of light in the night sky not being individual stars, but whole galaxies with billions of stars."

"Exactly," David said. "So the point I made in my dissertation is that the KJV translators could not envision the earth as we know it having come about in a two-phase process: first, the original creation of space, time, matter, and energy when God created the universe which included primordial planets like earth; and secondly, the re-creation of the earth after eons of time into its present form. You see, the translators, like the people of their day, considered the earth to be the center-piece of God's creation of the heavenly spheres. They simply could not envision that anything would have been created before the earth. The earth had to be first and foremost, and everything else—be it the sun, stars, planets—had to have been created afterwards solely for the benefit of the earth and its inhabitants. Therefore, since the earth was the center-piece, everything revolved around the earth. It was, so to speak, their theological view, which was firmly married to their world-view."

"I see how a similar theological view hindered Copernicus," James said. "Even with all of his mathematical brilliance, he was frustrated that his equations could not predict the exact position of the planets a few months into the future. The reason is that he strongly felt the circle was God's perfect figure, and therefore, the planetary orbits around the sun must be circles. This stemmed from his theological conviction about the connection between the physical and the spiritual. But approximately fifty years after his death, Johannes Kepler correctly ascertained that the orbits of the planets around the sun were ellipses rather than circles, and this solved the problem of the planetary orbits. Kepler also believed in the physical/spiritual connection, which is why he was attracted to Copernicus' heliocentric theory; but he was not so constrained by Copernicus' views of the circle, and therefore he was able to modernize Copernicus' theory with his first and second laws of planetary motion."

"That is an excellent analogy," David said.

"Going back to an earlier subject," James said, "do you have any more examples where the Bible helps us in the translation?"

“Oh yes, indeed,” David warmed to the opportunity, “the very first clause—in *the beginning*. As Whitefield points out, in the original Hebrew, this clause does not mean that an event has taken place instantly as the young-earth proponents argue regarding Genesis 1:1. Rather, it can refer to events taking place over a long period of time. For example, in Jeremiah 28:1, the exact same phrase, *in the beginning*, is used when discussing the beginning of the reign of king Zedekiah as follows: *And it came to pass the same year, in the beginning of the reign of Zedekiah king of Judah, in the fourth year and in the fifth month...* Also, in Genesis 10:10, the word beginning is used when referring to the beginning of the kingdom of Nimrod as follows: *and the beginning of his kingdom was Babel, and Erech, and Accad, and Calneh, in the land of Shinar.* Obviously, the cities of Nimrod's kingdom did not appear instantly, but over a long period of time.”

“Interesting,” James said. “But as you were explaining this, I thought of another verse the young-earth advocates use, and I'd like to hear your counter to it.”

“Well, I don't claim to have all the answers by a long shot, but I'll do my best.”

“OK, the verse they use is Exodus 20:11 as follows: *For in six days the Lord made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.* Doesn't that make the case for everything being made, including the entire universe, in the six creative days?”

“Well, perhaps, but the verb used in that verse is *asah* and not *bara*. Therefore, it could refer solely to the six creative days of Genesis in which, as we have been showing, God is re-creating, preparing, and fashioning the earth into its present form, or at least, as you have said, the present form in general, prior to the flood. Therefore, I would say that Moses is referring to the forming and filling of the formless and empty original earth.”

“But what about the *heavens*? Doesn't that refer to the universe?” Dakota asked.

“Ah, now you have opened up one of my pet subjects, and one which I explored in my doctoral dissertation. James, would you take your Bible and read Genesis 1 verses 6-8 out loud to us if you please?”

“Glad to,” James said. He picked up his Bible, the New King James Version, and turned to the first chapter of Genesis, found the verses David had mentioned, and began reading:

Then God said, 'Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.' Thus God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament; and it was so. And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.'”

James finished reading and then looked up expectantly at David, as did Dakota and Tim.

“Now,” David asked, “what does your Bible note say about the word *firmament*?”

“It says that it can also be translated *expanse*,” James answered.

“That is correct, and most of our modern Bibles, such as the NIV and the NASB, have changed the translation from *firmament* to *expanse*. But the main point is that this verse is telling us that God created the atmosphere or the sky. Now James, please read verse 8.”

As James picked up the Bible, there was a palpable feeling of anticipation among the listeners that a great truth was about to be revealed. James read the following:

“And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and the morning were the second day.”

“Wow,” Tim said. “I never noticed that before. God is not only referring to the universe as heaven, as He did in verse 1, but also the sky.”

“That is correct,” David agreed. “As I mentioned earlier, in God's divine wisdom, He used the Hebrew language to accommodate Himself to Moses' unscientific ideas of the cosmos, and at the same time was able to speak to our advanced scientific generation since we can distinguish more accurately

between the sky and the universe. He did this by creating the Hebrew language which uses the same word for heaven (universe) and sky—the word *shamayim*. In this way, He could speak to His ancient prophets on a simple level regarding the cosmos, and to modern man on a higher scientific level simultaneously. God never lies. Therefore, God saw to it that the Hebrew words for *universe* and *sky* were the same word. In this way, He could speak to His ancient prophets without lying to them, but also without blowing their minds with information about the heliocentric solar system, the Milky Way galaxy, billions of other galaxies, etc., which they could never begin to comprehend. Moreover, what if God had revealed to Moses that the sun does not go around the earth, but just appears to do so since the earth is rotating? Can you see Moses telling this to the children of Israel when he came down from Mt. Sinai? They would have cried out, 'Moses, you're nuts! We can see the sun going around the earth. We're not going to listen to you and your crazy god anymore. We're going to worship this golden calf god and you're not going to stop us!' God does not lie, but He does not tell them too much too soon, before they are ready for it, just as we deal also with our children. Ancient people were as smart as we are, but in matters of science they were children. Remember also, that Jesus told His disciples just prior to His arrest in John 16, verse 12: *I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear them now.*”

“I can see that God did not want to give them too much information or TMI as we call it,” Dakota said. “But I'm afraid you lost me at one point. How could ancient man have thought that the stars or universe were the same thing as the sky. That doesn't make sense to me.”

“Good question. James, do you have a Strong's Concordance?”

“Yes, I'll get it for you.”

“What is a Strong's Concordance?” Tim asked.

“Strong's Concordance is a dictionary of the biblical Hebrew used in the Old Testament, and the Koine Greek used in the New Testament. It is indispensable for exegesis, or the drawing out of the meaning of the biblical text. Incidentally, it is online also, but the actual book has certain advantages...such as, you can very quickly count the number of times a certain word is used throughout the Old or New Testament, or quickly skim down and see synonyms being used in different verses, etc.

James appeared carrying the large concordance and took his seat with the book in his lap. “OK, I'm ready,” he said to David.

“Good. Now, look up the word *firmament* please.”

David began leafing through the pages, found the word, and began reading: “*Firmament* is Strong's #7549,” he said. He then began turning to the Hebrew dictionary in the back of the book where he found the number. “*Raqiya*,” James continued, “here it is—pronounced *raw-kee-ah*. An expanse, i.e., the firmament or visible arch of the sky. It comes from the root word *raqa*, which means to pound and by analogy, to expand by hammering; and by implication, to overlay with sheets of metal by hammering or pounding them into thin sheets.”

“Good,” David said. “Now look up the word *heaven*.”

James repeated the process, turned to Strong's #8064, and began reading: “*Shamayim*, pronounced, *shaw-mah-yim*, from an unused root, *shameh*, meaning to be lofty; the sky (as aloft); alluding to the visible arch where the clouds move, as well as to the higher ether where the celestial bodies revolve.”

“OK, now we're getting to the crux of the matter,” David said. “Ancient man, including of course Moses and the Israelites, believed that heaven was the visible arch of the sky where the clouds moved, the birds flew, etc., and, in addition, an upper semi-spherical vault or dome to which the stars were attached. This dome consisted of a hard metallic substance, also thought of as a hard mirror, and it rotated around the earth once every 24 hours as James previously mentioned. Therefore, when the word

heaven was used, it could refer to the lower heaven, or sky—atmosphere we would say—or to the upper ether where the stars were attached to the metallic vault, or to both at the same time. Now, notice that in Genesis 1, verse 8, *Heaven* is capitalized in the King James Version, and the New King James Version.”

“Hey, I never noticed that before,” Tim said.

“That was to let the reader know that this was a different heaven being referred to than the heaven in the first verse.”

“Oh, I see now,” Dakota said. “The translators realized that the *heavens* being referred to in verse 1 was obviously the universe and the *Heaven* with capital *H* referred to in verse 8 was obviously the sky. Amazing!”

“Exactly. And if you look over in verse 20 on day 5 of the creation days, we see that birds were created and that they fly *across the face of the firmament of the heavens*. Birds can't fly in outer space, so again, *heaven* here refers to the sky or atmosphere.”

“Hey,” Tim said. “Now it makes sense why they called the sky the *firmament*. I take Latin and that word comes from the root word *firma*, which means *firm* in Latin. They were referring to the hard or firm metallic ceiling of the dome to which the stars were stuck.”

“Very good,” David said. “That is exactly right. Now when you read Job 37 verse 18, where Elihu, one of Job's comforters speaks of God *spreading out the skies strong as a cast metal mirror*, you see where he's coming from. And this understanding of the cosmos was still prevalent 1000 years after Moses during the lifetimes of Plato and Aristotle in the 4th century BC, and even 800 years after them, in the 5th century AD, when Jerome translated the Bible into Latin. He chose the word *firmament* instead of the word *expanse* because the hard metal dome was still the conventional wisdom in his day.”

“That is indeed amazing,” James added. “I see now why God created the Hebrew language with the word *shamayim*, meaning 1, the heaven(s) or higher ether where the heavenly bodies rotated as well as 2, the sky where the birds flew and clouds floated—or atmosphere as we now know; and the word *raqiya*, meaning both firmament or the higher ether as well as the sky. For thousands of years, He had to accommodate Himself and His language to their primitive understanding of the sky and the cosmos.”

“Yes,” David continued, “and incidentally, it was not until the 20th century that Bible translators, yielding to Bible scholars, changed the word *firmament* in Gen. 1:6 to *expanse* to reflect the reality that the sky does not have a hard metal ceiling. They did not actually change the word of God. As you know, in a dictionary, there are usually several meanings of each word, and this is true for the Hebrew word *raqiya*. The meaning in ancient Hebrew is compatible with Jerome's Latin translation *firmament*, because, as we just discussed, *raqiya* means metal sheets being hammered together as well as the word *expanse*. So the Bible scholars advised choosing the word *expanse* instead of *firmament*. I want to emphasize that only the English translation of the word of God was changed, and that change was only from one biblical Hebrew definition of *raqiya* to another biblical Hebrew definition of *raqiya*. The original Hebrew was not changed. And this is the same way I have dealt with other science related passages in the Bible.”

“I see what you are saying,” James said. “If even as late as the time of Copernicus, in the 16th century, academia was not ready to accept the accurate view of the heliocentric solar system, what chance did the people have 3000 years earlier in Moses' time?”

“Good point,” David said, “I totally agree. And remember, the word *shamayim* can be translated either singular or plural. It is up to the translator to choose. Notice that Genesis verse 1 is usually translated, 'In the beginning, God created the *heavens* and the earth.' It is usually translated plural here, and notice also the order, as I mentioned earlier—the heavens and the earth, and not the earth and the

heavens. This is another hint to modern man, I believe, that God created the universe prior to the creation of the earth, and not after the earth was created as some Christians believe to be the case during day 4 of the creation week.”

“So,” Dakota said, “getting back to that Exodus 20:11 verse...I think I understand how the words in that verse have different meanings...like the verse about the firmament, but how would you...”, she paused, “I mean...”

“How would I translate that verse?” David asked.

“Yes,” Dakota replied laughingly, “that is what I was thinking.”

“OK, I will tell you. But first I want to point out that the Hebrew word for day, *yom*, has several different meanings also. It is defined in Strong's Concordance as well as Bible usage as 12 hours (God called the light *day* and the darkness *night*); 24 hours; a period of time; and an age. In Genesis 2:4, the word *day* is used for all six days (a period of time), and the prophets used the term “that day” for the end times. We also use *day* for a period of time, as, 'In my grandfather's day...' It is unlikely, in my opinion, that Adam could have become lonely in the first 12 daylight hours of his life—he probably needed to sleep at night like us—when he must certainly have been enthralled by the wonders of nature, the animals, walking with God in the Garden of Eden, etc. I believe the narrative implies a period of time for Adam to become lonely by God's statement: 'It is not good that man should be alone'. Thus, the days of Genesis were probably longer periods of time than our solar days. They do not have to be ages.

“Moreover, the word *in* does not exist in the original Hebrew, as Rodney Whitefield correctly points out. That word was inserted with italics by the translators of the King James Version in 1611 with a marginal note to explain its insertion, and appears the same way in most of our modern versions as well. So the verse in Exodus 20:11 could be translated: 'For six time periods the Lord made [*asah*, prepared or fashioned] the sky and the earth [dry land], the sea, and all that is in them...' Notice again that the verb *asah* is used, meaning to make things out of existing substances, and not the verb *bara*, which is used for original creation.”

“I see now how that could apply to the sky, the earth, and the sea—but the fish, birds, animals and man were new creations included in the phrase 'and all that is in them.' Wouldn't the verb *bara* be required?” Dakota asked.

“Very astute observation!” David said, nodding his head and smiling. “But remember, as we discussed earlier, in sentences where both types of *making* are referenced, to avoid being cumbersome, the Bible uses the general verb *asah*, and it also uses the latter in statements referencing making or creating in general. For example, in Gen.1:26, on day 6, God says, 'Let us make [*asah*] man in Our image, according to Our likeness...' This is a general statement, but later, in the next verse, the text gets more specific and says, 'So God created [*bara*] man in His own image; in the image of God He created [*bara*] him; male and female He created [*bara*] them.' Moreover, you might find it fascinating, as I did, that in Genesis 2:7, God uses another verb for creating, *yatsar*, meaning to form: 'And the Lord God formed [*yatsar*] man of the dust of the ground...' This verb carries the connotation of molding with great care, and is used in the sense of a potter carefully molding a piece of clay. Incidentally, the young earth/universe teachers completely ignore all these verbs in Genesis 1 and 2 which have very specific meanings: *bara*, *asah*, *banah*, and *yatsar*.”

“Of course,” Tim observed, “the fact that *yom* could mean a long period of time does not add up to billions of years to most people.”

“I agree,” David replied. “The millions and billions of years would most likely have occurred in the intervals of time between the first two verses of Genesis. As we have discussed, we don't know how long the earth was a dry-land planet before it became a water world in verse 2. And furthermore, we

don't know how long it remained a water world until God stepped in and began re-making it. Therefore, the long periods of time for each day during the creation days are in addition to the possible eons of time during the time gaps between the first two verses of Genesis. But even if some don't believe the time gaps being billions of years, the fact that *yom* can mean long periods of time, in and of itself, negates the dogmatic belief that the earth and universe are just 6000 years old. Another thing to consider regarding the length of the creation days is that God told Adam that in the *day* that he ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil he would die. Now, how long after he ate the fruit of the tree did Adam die?"

"He died spiritually that very day," James answered, "but he also began dying physically."

"That is correct," David agreed. "And after 930 years, he died physically. Now, notice in Psalm 90, a psalm written by Moses himself, he says in verse 4 that a thousand years is as a day to God. Therefore, we see two definitions of the Hebrew word for *day* actually realized in the life of Adam—the 12 hour day for his spiritual death, and the thousand year day for his physical death. Since Moses realized that the word *day* stood for different periods of time, and since he wrote Genesis 1 as directed by God, how can the young-earth/universe advocates know for certain which day-length Moses had in mind for the creation days? They could be 1000 years each for all we know."

"That is a great point," Tim said. "I never thought of that. But I just recalled another argument made by the young-earthers. They say that since there was no death until Adam sinned, the days must have been 24 hour days or else the whales and other sea creatures would have starved to death since they have to eat small fish to survive. Therefore, Adam must have sinned the same day they were created, the 6th day, so they could begin eating and so the small fish could begin dying."

"A good point," David said, "but if you examine the verses carefully which the young-earthers are using to justify their position that there was no death until Adam sinned, you will see that these verses are referring to human death only."

"Whoa...hold on now David. I'm afraid I'll have to disagree with you on that one," James said. "Throughout my Christian life I've always believed there was no death until Adam sinned, and this is what Christian pastors and scholars teach. Let's take a look at those verses."

"Here, I'll read them to you," David said, as he opened his Bible. "It is very important to examine the scriptures closely and not to assume meanings which are not stated. Romans 5 verses 12 through 14 says:

Therefore, just as through one man sin entered the world, and death through sin, and thus death spread to all men, because all sinned—(for until the law sin was in the world, but sin is not imputed when there is no law). Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over those who had not sinned according to the likeness of the transgression of Adam, who is a type of Him who was to come.

"And the other verse they use is 1 Corinthians 15 verses 21 through 22:

For since by man came death, by Man also came the resurrection of the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ all shall be made alive."

"Actually, to me," Dakota said smiling, "these verses seem to be saying there was no death until Adam sinned. But I have learned to wait and hear what David has to say about them before I decide."

"Well," David said, "when you carefully examine these verses, aren't they referring to human death? Is animal death mentioned?"

"No, but is it not strongly inferred?" James replied.

"Is it?" David answered. "Not only are animals never mentioned, but consider the last sentence of verse 22," he said, as he repeated the sentence. "If animals are being referred to, then this verse is

saying they will be resurrected also—focus on the word *all*. But we know from the Bible that the animals will not be resurrected. Therefore the word *all* refers to people only and not animals.”

“Oh wow!” Tim exclaimed, “I never saw that.” The others also expressed astonishment as the full impact of David's words sank in.

“I'm glad I waited and deferred judgment,” Dakota said laughingly.

“Now, consider something else,” David continued. “When Adam gave names to all the animals—and bear in mind this was before Eve was made and thus before sin entered the world—he gave names that described their identity, character, nature, essence, etc. The Hebrew word *Lion* is Strong's #738, with the root of the word coming from Strong's #717 meaning '*in the sense of violence.*' Did Adam give this name to the lion because the lion was violently tearing up the grass and the herbs, or did Adam give that name because the Lion was a carnivore, violently attacking and killing his victims?”

This brought on more awe and amazement from the others, as they expressed their surprise and consternation at the things David was sharing with them from the ancient Hebrew.

“OK, I'm willing to consider this,” James conceded, “but are there other examples? And also, aren't you assuming too much by concluding that Adam spoke Hebrew—that Hebrew was the first language? It is certainly possible that Adam named the animals in a language other than Hebrew.”

“I'll address the last part of your answer first. Yes, it is possible that Hebrew was not the first language, but the meanings of the animals' names would certainly have been carried over to subsequent languages, including Hebrew, don't you think?”

They all gave general assent to this. “OK, that is logical,” James said. “but can you give any other examples of animal names indicating carnivores?”

“All right,” David replied, as he began looking for some papers in the back of his Bible. “I have a few here which I have written down...if I can find them in my notes...ah, here they are. OK, consider the word *Eagle*. It is Strong's #5404 from an unused root meaning '*to lacerate.*' Did Adam see the Eagle lacerating grass and herbal roots with his talons? I think not. How about the word *Cobra*, Strong's #6620, which means '*to twist*' in reference to killing its pray. The word *Hawk*, is strong's # 5322, is defined as '*unclean bird of prey.*' Grass and herbs are not prey. And there are many others.”

“Wow...of course!” Tim said. The Bible makes a big deal out of Adam's naming all the animals. I never thought about looking into those names to see their meanings. And I agree that Adam must have seen these animals in action to properly name them.”

“I agree,” James said. “And this also lends more weight to the theory that the creation days were much longer than 12 hours or 24 hours, since it seems probable that Adam needed far more time than that to observe the animals in action.”

“David,” Dakota asked, “aren't we forgetting something? Where do the dinosaurs fit into all this? Evolutionists say they died out 65 million years ago. But if the creation days of Genesis were only 6000 years ago, or perhaps a few thousand years longer if the Genesis 'days' were longer periods of time than our 24 hour days, then how could the dinosaurs have roamed the earth 65 million years ago?”

“I was wondering when the dinosaurs would come up in our discussion,” David laughed. “And this is a good place to examine them. I'm going to ask James to give us the scientific answer, and then I'll finish up with the answer from scripture. James...”

“All right,” James said. “This is another subject that David and I have been discussing recently. I will give you some scientific evidence that actually supports the view that the dinosaurs died out thousands, not millions of years ago, and then David will show support for same from the Hebrew Scriptures.”

“Before James begins,” David said, “I want to make clear that from the end of the Genesis creation

days—the forming and filling days—until now, I believe the scriptures support much of what the young-earth advocates are saying. The main difference is that I support the scriptural interpretation of a very ancient primordial earth and universe which they do not. OK, James, please continue.”

“And I agree with David on that. Now, to continue, back in 2005, soft tissue was discovered in fossilized dinosaur bones that should have turned to dust in 65 million years, which is when paleontologists believe the dinosaurs died out. This was met with much resistance by mainstream scientists who dismissed the find as bacteria slime, but tests showed the presence of collagen—a protein that bacteria do not produce. But the soft tissue began turning up again and again in new dinosaur finds in the ensuing years. The paleontologists were amazed that they could see through their microscopes pliable blood vessels and tissue that they could squeeze and stretch with their tweezers, as well as red blood cells and proteins inside the bone.”

“I have heard of that,” Tim said. “But some of my friends use that for proof of a young earth. They believe that dinosaurs walked the earth with man until Noah's flood when they were mostly destroyed. They claim that Noah saved some baby ones on the ark, and their descendants spawned the dragon legends which have come down to us.”

“I believe that could be the case,” James replied, “because of the soft tissue found in the dinosaur fossilized bones. Red blood cells simply cannot last very long, even in fossilized bones, without turning to dust. It would be amazing to find them after several thousand years—but after millions of years, no way.”

“Is that the main evidence?” Tim asked.

“Well, that along with carbon-14 tests.”

“Carbon-14 tests? That doesn't date things that old.”

“That's right, Tim. It has a half-life of only 5730 years, and is only used for dating organic material younger than 50,000 years. And since scientists believe that dinosaurs died out 65 million years ago, they never even considered using carbon-14 to date the bones. That's why the young-earth scientists had to resort once again to sending some dinosaur bones to a testing facility without divulging the source.”

“You mean, they used trickery again?” Tim asked in much surprise.

“Yes, because they knew no testing lab would consider doing carbon-14 tests on dinosaur bones because they *know* those bones are at least 65 million years old. And, of course, there is nothing dishonest about not divulging the source. The lab never asked them.”

“Are you telling me that for some 180 years since dinosaur bones were discovered, that no one ever even thought to try dating them with carbon-14? What's wrong with at least trying it to see?” Dakota asked, bewildered and indignant. “That seems to me a no-brainer.”

“Well, not for 180 years—since Willard Libby won the Nobel Prize for his discovery of carbon-14 dating in 1960; but yes, honey, it seems a no-brainer to most people. But when it comes to life-origins science, the scientists all walk lock-step with each other. No so much in other scientific disciplines—primarily with life-origins science. And that is because they fervently believe that to even contemplate young dinosaur ages would be tantamount to undermining their entire theory of evolution, which is based on a time frame of millions of years. It would also give great impetus to creationism, and they hate the thought of that with a passion.”

“But aren't we supposed to be seeking the truth?” Dakota asked. “I don't get it.”

“Yes, that's the way I look at science,” James replied. “But as Stephen J. Gould once said, 'Orthodoxy is as stubborn in science as it is in religion'. But getting back to the testing of the dino bones, starting in 2007 and for the next four years, some Christians from a paleochronology group, having seen the evidence of soft tissue in dinosaur fossils, began sending bones from different dinosaur

types from different locations covering several states, to a testing lab which used Accelerator Mass Spectrometry to measure carbon-14. And, as you now know, the bones came to the testing facility with no identification. These accelerator spectrometers have been so improved over the decades since their discovery in 1939, that they can actually count the number of carbon-14 atoms in a test sample. The results showed that the dinosaur bones dated from 22,000 years to 39,000 years before present or BP. These results were posted on a website.”

“Wow! Did the lab ever find out?” Tim asked.

“Yes, someone tipped them off that their carbon-14 tests were of dinosaur bones, and that the ages were posted on a website. From then on, the lab refused any further samples from the group, but the lab never questioned the accuracy of the test results. Let me give you this website documenting the testing and ages of the dino bones. It also has a video I think you will find fascinating. Here it is:

<http://www.newgeology.us/presentation48.html>.

“But prior to that, members of the Paleochronology group were blocked from presenting their evidence at a number of scientific conferences from 2009 through 2012, and also by the editors of various scientific journals.”

“But why?” Tim asked incredulously.

“Because of scientific orthodoxy,” James said. “But fortunately there is the internet and the Paleochronology group have put the information there for the world to see.”

“But this brings up another problem,” Dakota said. “If the dinosaurs are between 20,000 and 40,000 years old, how do they fit into the forming and filling days of Genesis 1? Granted, the Genesis days could have been long periods of time, but 20,000 years plus for day 6? That seems rather far-fetched to me.”

“They may have roamed the earth prior to the events of Genesis chapter 1,” David said. “In other words, Noah’s flood may not have been the only world-wide flood. There could have been a previous one that wiped out the dinosaurs.”

“You mean that flood could have been the cause of the water world we see in Genesis 1:2, where God is moving over the face of the waters?” Tim said.

“I’m only saying it is something to consider,” David replied. “The great Bible scholar, C.I. Scofield, said that while such a theory cannot be proven, it is not scripturally objectionable.”

“I agree,” James said. “But the dino bones may not be nearly that old.”

“Why not?” Tim asked. “Carbon-14 is so accurate in dating many artifacts with known ages. Why would it not be accurate with the dino bones?”

“Well, because when dating organic samples older than 5000 years, scientists admit they do not know the amount of carbon or the ratio of carbon-14 atoms to carbon-12 atoms in such an ancient atmosphere. If the amount of carbon in the ancient atmosphere was less than now, then the amount of carbon-14 would also be less, and that would make the samples appear much older than they actually are.”

“Is there any way to know if atmospheric carbon is increasing or decreasing?” Dakota asked.

“Good question, honey,” James said. “In fact, scientists are fairly certain that atmospheric carbon 12 has been increasing since the industrial revolution. An increase in carbon-12 would reduce the carbon-14 to carbon-12 ratio, and that in turn would make organic samples appear older than they actually are. From scientific estimates I’ve seen on increasing atmospheric carbon, I think the dinosaur bones are more likely around 4000 to 5000 years old. But there is no way to prove it. However, the carbon-14 dating of the dinosaur bones, together with the soft tissue and blood components discovered in them, makes my young dating very plausible. And, at any rate, after 50,000 years there should be no

carbon-14 at all because in that time all the carbon-14 would have decayed to the stable nitrogen-14 isotope.”

“I see what you're saying,” Tim said. “If the carbon-14 would all be gone by 50,000 years, how could it be showing up in 65 million year old dinosaur bones? That must be a huge embarrassment to evolutionists.”

“Well, their counter to that is the samples were contaminated by carbon-14 in the soil over all that time. But the labs which test carbon-14 with accelerator mass spectrometry have preparatory steps which completely rule out contamination, and which procedures are not questioned in carbon-14 tests of samples with known ages. That link I just gave you shows the rigid procedures used to rule out contamination.”

“That website and video will be first on my TTD list,” Tim said, with the others all excitedly agreeing.

“Well, when you do that, be sure to scroll down to the bottom of the page where they are discussing the 30,000 plus ceramic and stone figurines of dinosaurs found in Acambaro, Mexico. These are believed to be the work of the Chupicuaro community living at the foot of El Toro Mountain from 800 BC to 200 AD. ”

“Wow!” Tim said. “If authentic, that could be evidence that dinosaurs lived when man lived, or how could they have known what the dinosaurs looked like?”

“That is what I think, too,” James said. “But the skeptics say that early man found dinosaur bones in the ground and were able to draw them from their skeletons. However, Sir Richard Owen, the British paleontologist who coined the term *dinosaur* in 1842, meaning 'terrible lizard,' for the giant bones being discovered in southern England, was not very successful at drawing the creatures. His drawings were far different than modern depictions having been drawn from the fully erected skeletons and aided by comparative anatomy experts. Owen's drawings pictured dinosaurs as large reptiles with scaly green or gray skin, and with their legs coming out from their sides like lizards or crocodiles. In 1854, the artist Benjamin Waterhouse Hawkins created life-size sculptures of the animals as directed by Owen. You can still view the sculptures on display in Crystal Palace Park in South London, and see how different they are from how the same species of dinosaurs are depicted today.

“And to further support the Acambaro dino figurines, they look like our modern-day dinosaur depictions. There is an excellent online video about the Acambaro figurines which is very compelling.”

“David,” Dakota said, “I understand you have some evidence from scripture of man coexisting with dinosaurs. I would love to hear that.” The others also nodded and vocalized their eagerness to hear, at which point David reached for his Bible.

“Alright,” he said, settling back in his chair and beginning to thumb through his Bible. I will quote from the book of Job chapter 40, beginning at verse 15:

'Look now at the behemoth, which I made along with you; he eats grass like an ox. See now, his strength is in his hips, and his power is in his stomach muscles. He moves his tail like a cedar; the sinews of his thighs are tightly knit. His bones are like beams of bronze, his ribs like bars of iron. He is the first of the ways of God; only He who made him can bring near His sword. Surely the mountains yield food for him, and all the beasts of the field play there. He lies under the lotus trees, in a covert of reeds and marsh. The lotus trees cover him with their shade; the willows by the brook surround him. Indeed the river may rage, yet he is not disturbed; he is confident, though the Jordan gushes into his mouth, though he takes it in his eyes, or one pierces his nose with a snare.'

“Now, some Bible notes describe this animal to be a hippopotamus or an elephant. Although these

animals eat grass, neither of them has a 'tail like a cedar', which describes a large tapered tree trunk. Moreover, the phrase 'He is the first of the ways of God', in the original Hebrew, implies that this animal was the largest animal which God created.”

“That's amazing,” Tim said. “The tail like a tree seems to be describing a dinosaur. I can't really think of any other animal with a tail like a cedar tree except a dinosaur.”

“Let's go through this verse and see if there are any other descriptions that depict a dinosaur,” David said.

“Well, for one,” James said, “if he is the biggest animal God made, it would have to be a dinosaur. An elephant or a hippo is less than one-tenth the size of the larger dinosaurs.”

“That's right,” Tim agreed. “The largest dinosaur yet discovered is a Brachiosaurus. So he could be the biggest animal God made. Some paleontologists have discovered some dinosaur bones that indicate an even bigger dinosaur, so a larger one might turn up. But these bones may just belong to a larger Brachiosaurus than as yet discovered.”

“I see a dinosaur when I read this,” Dakota said. “The part about his strength is in his hips and his power in his stomach muscles. His bones are like beams of bronze, and his ribs are like bars of iron. Moreover, most dinosaurs are herbivores like the animal described here.”

“To sum up then,” David said, “Behemoth had a tail like a dinosaur; he was a herbivore; the description of his skeleton and muscles indicate a dinosaur; and his being the largest animal that God made leave us no other choice but a dinosaur. Now, let's look at Job chapter 41 where another large creature, Leviathan, is described. As it is very lengthy, I'll skip the first part and begin at verse 12:

I will not conceal his limbs, his mighty power, or his graceful proportions. Who can remove his outer coat? Who can approach him with a double bridle? Who can open the doors of his face, with his terrible teeth all around? His rows of scales are his pride, shut up tightly as with a seal; one is so near another that no air can come between them; they are joined one to another, they stick together and cannot be parted. His sneezings flash forth light, and his eyes are like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lights; sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, as from a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, and a flame goes out of his mouth. Strength dwells in his neck, and sorrow dances before him. The folds of his flesh are joined together; they are firm on him and cannot be moved. His heart is as hard as stone, even as hard as the lower millstone. When he raises himself up, the mighty are afraid; because of his crashings they are beside[d] themselves. Though the sword reaches him, it cannot avail; nor does spear, dart, or javelin. He regards iron as straw, and bronze as rotten wood. The arrow cannot make him flee; slingstones become like stubble to him. Darts are regarded as straw; he laughs at the threat of javelins. His undersides are like sharp potsherds; he spreads pointed marks in the mire. He makes the deep boil like a pot; he makes the sea like a pot of ointment. He leaves a shining wake behind him; one would think the deep had white hair. On earth there is nothing like him, which is made without fear. He beholds every high thing; he is king over all the children of pride.'

“Now, what animal do you think this is?” David asked.

“Wow, this is certainly no modern animal,” Tim said.

“I agree,” David replied. “But many Bible notes and study Bibles say this is an alligator or crocodile, but although these animals spend time in the water, neither of them are sea creatures as Leviathan is.”

“And also,” James added, “this animal breathes fire. Nearly every culture on earth has legends of fire-breathing dragons. It could be that these stories are based on dinosaurs that breathed fire.”

“Oh, come on now,” Dakota said, laughing. “That's too fanciful for me. Perhaps these images of fire-breathing in the text are simply conveying how fearful this animal is, not that he really breathes fire.”

“Well, the text is pretty specific about that,” David replied. “I'll read those lines again: 'His sneezings flash forth light, And his eyes *are* like the eyelids of the morning. Out of his mouth go burning lights; Sparks of fire shoot out. Smoke goes out of his nostrils, As *from* a boiling pot and burning rushes. His breath kindles coals, And a flame goes out of his mouth.'”

“I admit, the scripture is very specific about that,” Dakota said.

“And consider this,” James said, “the text says that arrows and spears don't harm him. An alligator or a crocodile would certainly be harmed by them.”

“That's true,” Dakota agreed. “But it just seems so much like a fairy tale to me.”

“Me too,” Tim said. “My friends would really mock me if they thought I believed in fire-breathing dragons from the pages of the Bible.”

“Well, let me ask you a question,” James replied. “What would you think if I told you there is a small beetle that defends itself by shooting hot, gaseous chemicals out of a nozzle in his hind quarters? Have you ever heard of the Bombardier Beetle?”

“You've got to be kidding!” Dakota said.

“Is that true?” Tim asked.

“Yes it is. This beetle has been amazing scientists for decades. The beetle has two chemical compounds, hydroquinone and hydrogen peroxide, which are stored in different reservoirs in his abdomen. When this aqueous solution is secreted into a combustion chamber in times of danger from predators, a catalyst facilitates the decomposition of the hydrogen peroxide and the oxidation of the hydroquinone. Heat from the reaction brings the mixture to near the boiling point of water causing an explosion of noxious gas out of the beetle's rear nozzle which can be fatal to attacking insects. Some of these beetles can aim the blast in nearly every direction. The explosion chamber refills in a fraction of a second, enabling him to spray up to 70 rapid bursts.”

“That's incredible,” Tim said. “It's like he's a little flame-thrower! But how does he do this without blowing himself up?”

“Well,” James continued, “the combustion chamber is heavily lined with a substance that prevents the beetle from being blown up or even burned in the process. Even his legs are protected by a special coating from being burned, since he fires many blasts between his legs. In fact, the bombardier beetle is such good evidence of intelligent design that some evolutionists have converted to creationism after studying him. In other words, natural selection only works to improve functions that already work, not functions that keep blowing the organism to smithereens. And incidentally, creationists agree that natural selection is fact, but only in horizontal evolution, not vertical. I know that a beetle is a far cry from a dinosaur, but my point is that, if God can give a small beetle this hot, noxious chemical cannon for defense, why could He not do something similar with some species of dinosaurs?”

“That reminds me,” Tim said. “In my study of dinosaurs, the paleontologists are baffled why some of the dinosaur skull fossils have large cavities with no apparent function. Perhaps these cavities were used to mix combustible gases to eject as flames. I mean, it's a possibility don't you think?”

They all voiced their approval of Tim's idea. Then David said, “Come to think of it, the legends that come down to us are all based on fire-breathing dragons. We don't have any legends of other fire-breathing animals. That in itself could mean there is some truth to the legends, and many dinosaurs would fit the definition of dragons. The word in Hebrew is *Tannyin*, which the King James version translators translated as dragon. But newer Bibles translated *Tannyin* as monster, sea serpent, sea beast,

reptile, etc. However, in the book of Revelation, chapter 12, which of course is in Greek, Satan is described as a great red dragon. The Greek word for dragon is *drakon*, which again makes me wonder why that word is used if people never had any way of picturing a dragon. However, if dinosaurs and people coexisted, then those ancient societies would have passed down the idea of a dragon to successive generations.”

“Of course,” James said, “skeptics would argue that people would have an understanding about dragons from myths.”

“That is true,” David agreed. “But just between us Christians, would God use a myth as a reference point for a creature mentioned in the Bible?”

“I see what you are saying,” James replied.

“I don't think there is any reference to myth in the Bible to represent truth,” David continued. “Of course, the dragon in Revelation 12 is symbolic of Satan, but he is also referred to as 'that serpent of old' in Revelation 12:9, and, after all, he appeared as a serpent to Eve.”

“That is very interesting,” Dakota said. “And as you said, David, the Hebrew word for dragon is *tannin*, but it is also translated occasionally as serpent.”

“That is correct. It is translated serpent in the Old Testament by the King James Version translators when Moses' rod became a serpent. That word for serpent is *tannin*.”

“David,” Dakota asked, “if I may switch gears for a moment, does any scripture give you doubts about your ancient earth and universe theory?”

“Well, there is one that gave me pause during the work on my doctoral dissertation, but, after some research, it no longer bothered me.”

“Wow! A verse that puzzled you. This I gotta see,” Tim said, as they all laughed but turned to look at David with expectant looks.

“Oh yes. I readily admit that I am not absolutely certain about my views—in fact, only about 99.8%,” David replied chuckling with a broad smile. “OK, since you asked, the verse is Mark 10:6, where Jesus says, '*But from the beginning of the creation, God made them male and female.*' He said this also in Matthew 19:4.”

“Oh wow, oh wow!” Tim said. “Is that a verse for the young-earth/universe guys or what? That indeed does make me wonder.”

“Me too,” Dakota agreed. “I am really curious as to how you reconciled that verse with your theory, David. On the service, it seems like a deal breaker.”

“Yes, I agree...it did challenge me a bit. But then I recalled what the Lord had shown me about the phrase 'in the beginning.' Do you remember a similar phrase appeared in Genesis 10:10, where it mentions the four cities built by Nimrod, and how they were the beginning of his kingdom? And in Jeremiah 28:1, the identical phrase—in *the beginning*—was used to represent the first four years and five months of King Zedekiah's reign?”

“Oh yes,” James said. “It showed that in ancient Hebrew, the word *beginning* does not mean an event that occurs instantly, but that it is over a period of time.”

“That is correct. Now, even if you believe that Genesis 1 was relating the universe being created on day four, it still shows that Jesus was speaking in general terms, because Adam was not created until the afternoon of day six. That shows me that he was not created at the *very* beginning, but after a period of time. Moreover, that period of time could have been nearly six thousand years, as we have discussed previously, since the days could have been a thousand years each. Now, in addition to that, God may have meant by the phrase, *the beginning of the creation*, to be the forming and filling of the earth, or the creation of life on the earth, or the creation of human life on the earth. We really cannot be sure.

However, the beginning of the creation might have been over the eons since the creation of space, time, matter, and energy in verse one, which could easily accommodate billions of years. It only means that the phrases using the word beginning or beginnings, is not an instant event, but a period of time. And remember, God lives outside of time in the eternity dimension, so billions of years are not even a period of time for Him, since He lives in the past, present, and future all at the same time.”

“Now you are blowing my mind,” Tim said, getting up and walking around as he did when in deep thought.

“Well, remember,” David continued, “God is referred to as the *Ancient of Days* in Daniel 7 verses 9, 13, and 22. I don't think a mere 6000 years for earth's age adds up to the description Ancient of Days. Therefore, if the primordial earth was in existence for 4.6 billion years or so, and if it was circling the sun all that time, and revolving once every 24 hours...that would mean...”

David's words were cut off by the emotional outbursts coming from the little group, as each reacted to the pieces of scripture that were now fitting together as in a huge jigsaw puzzle. Tim plopped down onto the sofa saying “wow” several times in a row with his head back, staring at the ceiling. Dakota was slumped forward, her hands on her temples, repeating the word “incredible.”

Finally James spoke. “David, we are blown away. The revelations God has given you are amazing. But while we were discussing the dinosaurs, I had another thought about the Millennial Kingdom and the animals.”

“Ok, let's hear it.”

“The Bible says that in the Millennium, the wolf will dwell with the lamb, the leopard will lie down with the young goat, the lion will eat straw like the ox, etc. And many pastors and Bible scholars teach that this means the earth will be renovated to be like the Garden of Eden. In that case, there is strong implication that the animals were herbivores—not carnivores—before Adam sinned.”

“Does it really say that?” David asked. “Are you sure the animals will all be friendly in the Millennium?”

“Oh wow! Here we go again,” Dakota laughed.

“This is one time I am...pretty sure I'm right,” James said tentatively and Tim agreed, but was quick to add that he was not as sure about being sure anymore.

“I'm reserving judgment again,” Dakota said, with a chuckle.

“OK,” David said, “look at Isaiah 11 verse 9, which immediately follows the passage of scripture about the animals being friendly during Messiah's reign on earth.”

“I have it here,” James said as he quickly flipped through his Bible and found the verse. “It says that the animals 'shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain, for the earth shall be full of the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea.' That pretty much says it all right there.”

“Now,” said David, “what is God's holy mountain?”

“Oh, come on David...you're not going to try to limit the friendly animals just to Mount Zion are you?”

“Well, look at Isaiah 66 verse 20 where God refers to His holy mountain Jerusalem, and Jerusalem is located on Mount Zion. However, Old Testament prophets speak of tremendous topographical and geographical changes to the earth when Jesus comes and reigns. In fact, even prior to His coming, during the Great Tribulation, the scripture says there will be huge earthquakes that cause mountains and islands to disappear. But when He comes there will also be great changes to the land area around Mount Zion and Jerusalem. I will read from Zechariah chapter 14:

Then the Lord will go forth and fight against those nations, as He fights in the day of battle. And in that day His feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, which faces Jerusalem on the east.

And the Mount of Olives shall be split in two, from east to west, making a very large valley; half of the mountain shall move toward the north and half of it toward the south. Then you shall flee through My mountain valley, for the mountain valley shall reach to Azal. Yes, you shall flee as you fled from the earthquake in the days of Uzziah king of Judah. Thus the Lord my God will come, and all the saints with You...and in that day it shall be that living waters shall flow from Jerusalem, half of them toward the eastern sea and half of them toward the western sea; in both summer and winter it shall occur. And the Lord shall be King over all the earth. In that day it shall be—'The Lord is one,' and His name one.

“And look at verse 10—I'll read it:

All the land shall be turned into a plain from Geba to Rimmon south of Jerusalem. Jerusalem shall be raised up and inhabited in her place from Benjamin's Gate to the place of the First Gate and the Corner Gate, and from the Tower of Hananel to the king's vineyards.

“So, perhaps there will be a huge area all around Mount Zion that will be declared Holy by the Lord in the Kingdom age. Moreover, the scriptures indicate that when the Messiah comes, there will be love and peace all over the earth, but only for a while. And then, when men once again begin to fall back into sin, Jesus will have to rule them with a 'rod of iron.' Remember, these are the survivors of Armageddon, and in Christ's judgment of all the survivors when He comes at the Second Coming, they are the gentile sheep which He placed on His right who helped His Jewish brethren during the Tribulation, along with the Jews who believed when He revealed Himself to them. They are in bodies of flesh and blood, will marry and have children in order to repopulate the earth, and can live for a thousand years by eating the fruit of the trees and using the leaves for healing. But there will still be death. Notice in Isaiah 65 verse 20, the scripture says that, during the Millennium, when a man dies at 100 years, he will be considered a child. The next line of that verse says that there will still be sinners who will be accursed. So sin will bring on death, but many will live a thousand years. Since there is still death in the Millennium, if the Millennium is a restoration of the Garden of Eden, then there must have been death in the Garden before Adam fell. In fact, death will not be completely eliminated until Jesus creates a new heaven and new earth at the end of the Millennium, and the heavenly Jerusalem, the New Jerusalem, descends to earth. This is described in Revelation 21. Look at Revelation 21 verse 4: *'And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there will be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying.'* Since these things will be done away with in the new heaven and earth, then they must have existed during the Millennium.”

“Dakota, you're right,” James said, “from now on, I am going to reserve judgment until I hear David out.” Tim and Dakota laughed and nodded their agreement.

“There is more proof of animals dying in the Millennium when you read Ezekiel chapters 40 through 48,” David continued. “These are 8 chapters describing life in the Millennium. The Millennium Temple will be built by Jesus Himself and I highly recommend your researching this temple online. It is very different from all the previous earthly temples built by men. But back to my point about animals dying during the Millennium, in chapter 44 verse 31, the scripture says that the priests of the temple 'shall not eat anything, bird or beast, that died naturally or was torn by wild beasts.' In Genesis 1 verse 31, God says that His creation is 'very good', but He does not say that it was perfect. It will be perfect only when He makes all things new at the end of the Millennium.”

“Now I'm confused,” Dakota said. “Where will we Christians be during the Millennium?”

“Oh, yes...let me clarify. The Christians will be in glorified bodies like Jesus' body and, of course, will never die. We will be living and reigning with Christ over the humans who entered the Millennium in flesh and blood bodies as it says in Rev. 20: 4- 6. Remember what Jesus said, that some followers He

will make rulers over 10 cities, some over 5 cities, etc. It may also be that many of us live in heaven but can go back and forth to earth.”

“Oh, I see. Thank you for clearing that up. So, getting back to the creation days, the young-earth argument that the days have to be 24 hour days so the animals, including whales, could survive by killing and eating other animals due to Adam's sin seems to be very weak now,” Dakota said.

“That is how I feel,” David said, “in light of these scriptures we have examined more closely. But the length of the creation or re-creation days is peripheral to the total age of the earth and universe. Let me emphasize again, we may find out when we reach heaven, that God did create the primordial earth 6000 or 10,000 years ago, and that He created all the galaxies with trillions of stars in the twinkling of an eye on day 4, and made the light reach us instantly. However, I do not believe that Christians should be so dogmatic about that, especially in light of what I believe are reasonable arguments to the contrary as we have discussed tonight.”

“If I may, I'd like to ask David a final couple of questions about something my unbelieving friends hit me with the other day,” Tim said. “They're reading Genesis in order to find more ammunition to ridicule the Bible and justify their position.”

“I'll be glad to help if I can.”

“Well, it's another seeming contradiction and they're positive it's very damaging to the veracity of Genesis and the Bible. I feel certain there is a good answer for it, but so far I have not been able to come up with one. It's in Genesis chapter 2 verses 4 - 6. Here, let me read it to you.” Tim opened his Bible and began reading:

This is the history of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens, before any plant of the field was in the earth and before any herb of the field had grown. For the Lord God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to till the ground; but a mist went up from the earth and watered the whole face of the ground. And the Lord God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living being.

“These verses seem to be saying that God created man *before* He created the vegetation. But we know from the creation week account in Genesis 1 that He created the vegetation on the 3rd day, long before He created man on the 6th day. Can you solve this dilemma by going to the original Hebrew?”

“Going to the original Hebrew is not necessary in this case. Notice that the scripture is referring to plants and herbs *of the field*. God is simply telling us that there was no farming at that time. In other words, there were no cultivated crops because there was no man to till the ground.”

“Fantastic! Of course! That is so logical!” Tim exclaimed as he again jumped up from his chair and began pacing the room. “I don't know why I did not see that right away. Skeptics are so quick to criticize the Bible because they assume Moses was an idiot and could not keep from contradicting himself even within two short chapters. And, of course, they just laugh when I tell them that God was actually the author and Moses was simply taking dictation. Then they blaspheme by calling God an idiot. I can't wait to get to school Monday and give them this answer. At this point, I just want to get them to slow down and think.”

“I'm so glad I could help you. I hope I can do as well on your second question as that one.”

“You know,” James said, “I am ashamed to admit it, but I was not even aware of that seeming contradiction because I have not read Genesis that closely. Tim, you're showing me my faults tonight, but I'm so grateful, David, that God has given you so much insight and revelation.”

“Well now, that's going a bit too far because most study Bibles explain that in the notes.”

“But,” said Dakota laughingly, “we must apply ourselves and r-e-a-d the Word and the study Bible

notes. I am really inspired to do that now.”

“Well said,” David agreed, “but remember that bible notes are not inspired and I believe many are in error, so you must always go to the Word and ask God for revelation and wisdom for understanding the scriptures. But I will say that study notes have helped me quite a bit so I still refer to them, but cautiously.”

There was silence for a moment, and then James said, “There are so many things you've shared tonight David, that prove to me there are innumerable nuggets in the Word of God to be discovered. But so often we just read over verses again and again without seeing the gold beneath,” to which they all voiced assent.

“Now I'm ready to give you my second question,” Tim said. “My skeptical friends also ridicule the Genesis account about God taking a rib from Adam to make Eve. They say it sounds so much like a fairy tale, and they have a great time making fun of me for believing it. Can you give me an answer to give them about this?”

“Now I know that the Lord ordained this get together and discussion,” David said. “Yes, I think I can help you with this because I got the very same criticism from one of my Jewish friends. As you probably know, many Jewish people of the Reform persuasion are secular and don't actually believe their own Hebrew scriptures. To them, Judaism is secular and cultural more than it is religious. The Jewish faith to them is defined as faith in family, hospitality, community, social justice, etc., but not faith toward God. But back to your question about the Adam rib story, in attempting to answer my friend's criticism, God urged me to do some research on the rib. Therefore, I began searching the Web and reading different links, and was about ready to give up, when I came across some information about bones that make blood in adults. As I read through this medical website, I discovered that in children, nearly all the bones have red marrow and it's the red marrow that makes the blood and the red blood cells which carry the oxygen. But as a child grows older, the red marrow in most of the bones is converted to yellow marrow which makes only fat cells. By the time the child is an adult, only certain flat bones still contain the red marrow for making the blood. Guess what bone is one of the primary blood-producing bones in adults?”

“You're not going to say it's the rib bone?” they all said at once.

“Yes, I am. The medical article said that, in the adult, it's the flat bones that make the blood, such as the ribs, the sternum, the shoulder blades, and the pelvis. This peaked my interest, and so I turned to the Genesis account to study it more closely. I read again what Adam said when God presented Eve to him. He said, *'This is now bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh'*. That really jumped out at me. I could see Adam calling Eve 'bone of my bone,' but what about 'flesh of my flesh'? I sensed something deeper going on here. Suddenly an idea occurred to me that made the hair on the back of my neck stand up—did God clone Adam to make Eve but with some important tweaking of course? But if this did happen, then the marrow in Adam's rib would necessarily have to produce blood with DNA in it. I had been reading that the red blood cells have no nucleus so that the entire cell can be filled up with the oxygen molecule. With no nucleus, I knew there could be no DNA for cloning. So I began researching some more, and I discovered something else that quickened my pulse. Although the red blood cells have no DNA, the other blood components do, such as the white blood cells and the platelets. And all these blood cells are produced by the red marrow in the rib bone. Then God reminded me of the account in Acts 17 where the Apostle Paul is in Athens preaching that famous sermon about the 'unknown God', and he mentions that God had made all the people on earth from one blood. I nearly fell out. Suddenly, I realized that God had indeed cloned Adam because it was His intent all along to make all people from one blood. If He had not taken the rib from Adam to make Eve—if He had not made Eve out of man—

then she would have different blood than Adam. And then I realized that God must have let Adam in on the cloning procedure to a certain extent, or how would Adam have known that Eve was 'flesh of my flesh'?

“Amazing!” James said as they all in one accord voiced the same affirmation. “Oh the depths of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God,” James quoted from Romans 11, “how unsearchable are His judgments and how inscrutable His ways!”

“I only have one question about this amazing revelation God gave you,” Tim said. “What do you say to some Christian scholars who say that God took some flesh from Adam's side and not his rib?”

“See, they too are trying to avoid what they feel is the similarity of the story to mythology. Instead of giving God the benefit of the doubt and doing research under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, they attempt to change the account because the flesh would have DNA and would justify Adam saying 'flesh of my flesh'. They did not bother to research the rib bone. The Hebrew word used here is *tsalah*, Strong's #6763, and means *rib (as curved) of the body*. It is from the root word *tsala*, Strong's #6760, which is a primitive verb meaning *to curve*. Now in all fairness, by implication, Strong's says it can imply *the side* as a lesser meaning, but the text is clear. God didn't take the flesh; rather, He took the rib and closed up the flesh.”

“David,” Dakota asked, “do you think Moses knew that the earth was very ancient and the stars far more ancient? After all, he was the one who wrote Genesis chapter one with those grammatical cues included in the first two verses to indicate they were background information.”

“That is a very good question, Dakota. Yes, I believe Moses knew they were very ancient by including the grammatical cues—he would have had to in my opinion. He could have known that without knowing any deeper knowledge about the cosmos. In fact, since he is the only man who ever spoke with God face to face as a man talks with his friend, he may have been given much information which God told him not to share. An example of this is Paul, when he was taken up into Paradise, and shown things '*not lawful for a man to utter*'. Moreover, If you recall in the Revelation, the Apostle John is told some secrets when the seven thunders spoke, and he was about to write it down when he was told not to. When you realize that Moses had to consciously use verb-second order in the first two verses—the first two verses of the Pentateuch—and, in addition, used the waw prefix to begin the second verse, I cannot come to any conclusion but that he must have been setting the stage for the main event with background information.”

“And the main event was the re-creation of the earth—the forming and filling of the formless and empty earth—and portions of the solar system,” James said.

“That is it exactly,” David said. “Well, this has been so much fun, and so inspiring, I hate to call it a night, but I don't want to keep you folks up any later.”

They all began standing up and stretching. Then, without anyone saying anything, as a holy quietness settled over them, they all began to join hands, and with heads bowed, they began worshiping and glorifying God, and thanking Him for all He had revealed to them that night.