

Biblical Framework Part 1

Creator-Creature Distinction vs. Continuity of Being **&** **Strategies for Interpreting Genesis**

Review:

PRESUPPOSITIONS

The claim of neutrality is a pagan claim. You can claim neutrality but neutrality doesn't exist. No one is neutral. Everyone has religious baggage. That's what is meant by presupposition. Everyone, everywhere, on every continent, in every century has religious baggage. Everyone has presuppositions. And if you start with the pagan presupposition that man is the ultimate authority and proceed to build a case for Christianity, it won't work. Paganism will win.

BIBLICAL PRESUPPOSITION vs PAGAN PRESUPPOSITION
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God is the ultimate authority

Man is the ultimate authority

We've failed miserably in two basic areas. First, we have not taken seriously enough the authority of the Word of God. Remember, that was one of the battle cries of the Reformation – Sola Scriptura – Scripture alone! Let Scripture be the final authority!

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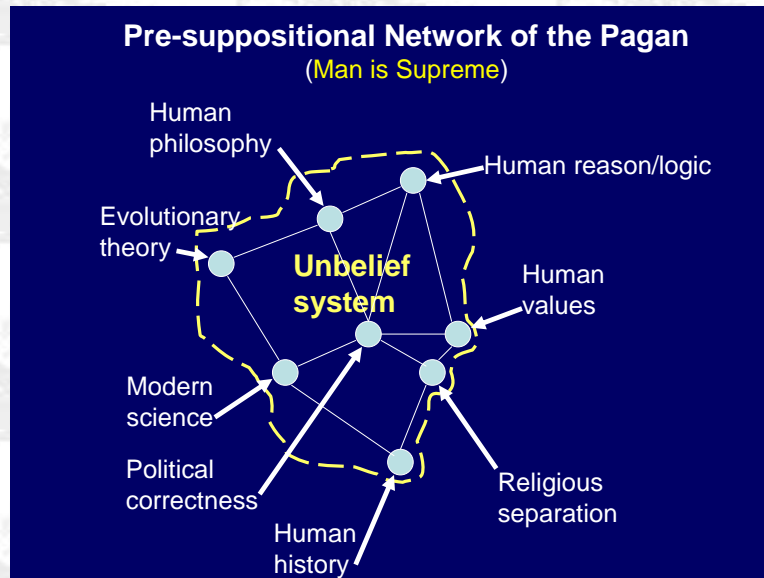
The Importance of the Bible

The Bible is not just a place to start; it's the only place to start.

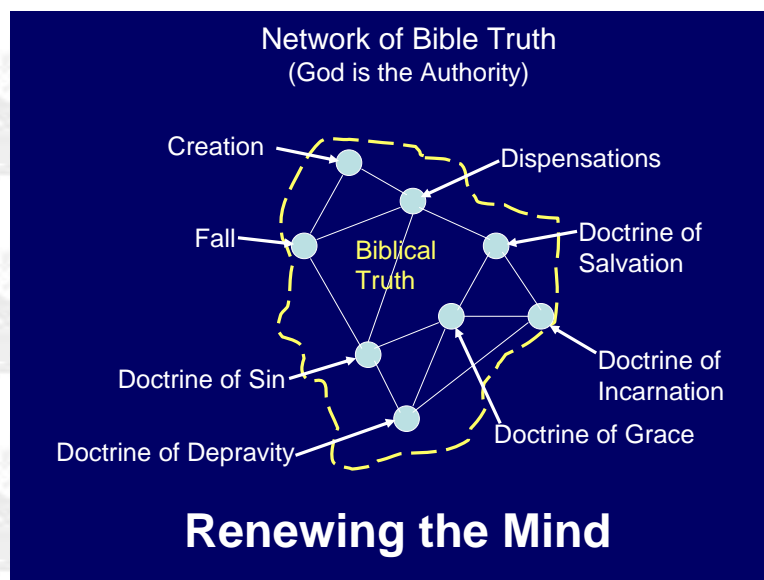
If we grant that we can start anywhere other than the Bible then we've already undermined the Christian position.

The Bible is not just *a* place to start; it's the *only* place to start. The Bible is the only book in the world that tells us ultimate truth. If we grant that we can start anywhere other than the Bible, then we have already undermined the Christian position. We're making the same mistake Eve made over and over. And we should stop making that mistake. The Word of God is the final authority. Second, we have not taken seriously enough the Bible's teaching concerning the pagan mind. The pagan mind is not neutral. It's at enmity with God. The dictionary defines enmity as "deep-seated, often mutual hatred". So, let's look at this pagan mind again:

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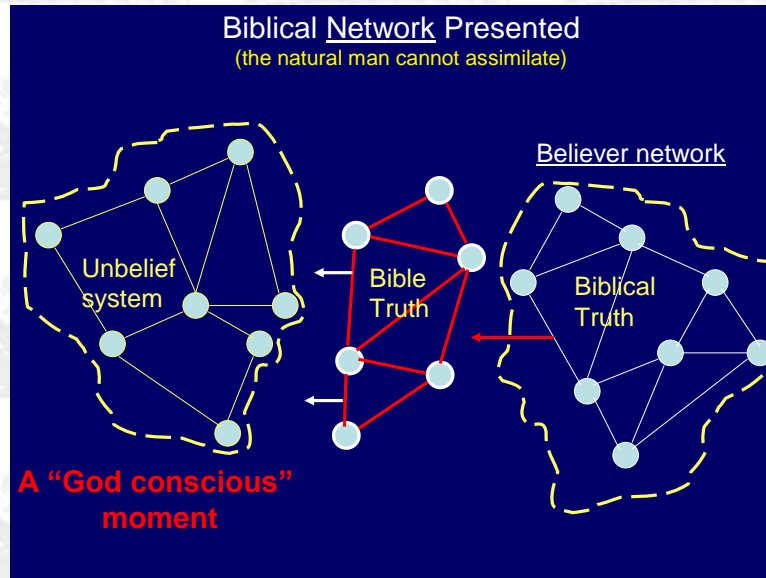
The pagan mind has an agenda. It's actively engaged in suppressing the truth in unrighteousness. And don't forget, we have been deceived by our educational system for generations, so we, too, tend to think in this way.



This is why we have to constantly "renew our minds" – remembering what God has told us in Scriptures, so we can replace evolution with

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the creation event, man's autonomy with the doctrine of the depravity through the sinful event of the Fall, and begin to look to the Bible for historical answers, instead the History Channel. With one doctrine at a time we displace the deceptions we've grown up with.



Until, finally, we are in a position to “put the Biblical pieces together” so we are more prepared to counter the unbelieving mind with a network of doctrines that will cause them to have a “God conscious moment”, and make them to think seriously about what they believe.

Class 4 begins:

Creator-Creature Distinction Vs Continuity of Being

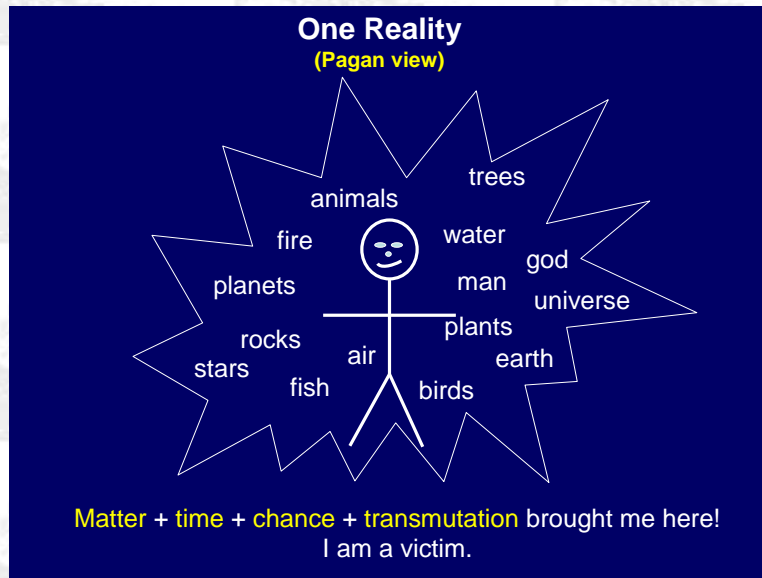
Now, let's turn back to the Creator-creature distinction vs. the Continuity of Being that was introduced last week. Right now, in several states, people are trying to get Intelligent Design taught in Public School classrooms. And one of the arguments against this is that there are hundreds and hundreds of different creation stories. And if we let the Christians teach Intelligent Design we would have the Hindus, the Bahais, the Buddhists, the Shintoists and everyone else

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wanting to teach their story and we haven't got time for that so we solve the problem by eliminating all of them, except "our" story - evolution. There's a sneaky claim to neutrality there and also a positive claim; that their story is the right story. Well, the answer to that is that there aren't 101 varieties of creation stories, when you look at the basic *core principles*, the basic beliefs underlying these stories, there are only two kinds. Yes, there may be 101 "stories", but as far as basic principles there are only two kinds, ONLY two kinds, the pagan kind and the Biblical kind. We will see that this has tremendous impact. This colors your whole view of language and logic, which in turn controls how you set up paths for truthfulness and falseness. You can't even define truth unless you define it in terms of one or the other. This is why we're going to get into some very radical things that Genesis calls us to as Christians, where the church has become very sloppy. We're just now figuring this out and we're 200 years behind. In 1934, Lois Whitney said that across the sands of time the hypothesis of evolution was disguised and protected under the cloak of the Chain of Being, "a period in which to germinate and take root, before the orthodox world scented the danger."¹ We should have seen it coming but we didn't and now this idea of the Creator-creature distinction is almost non-existent. Today the only place you find it is in fundamentalist circles. Fundamentalists are the only people left in society today that seriously believe this, no one else believes this. We are a tiny minority.

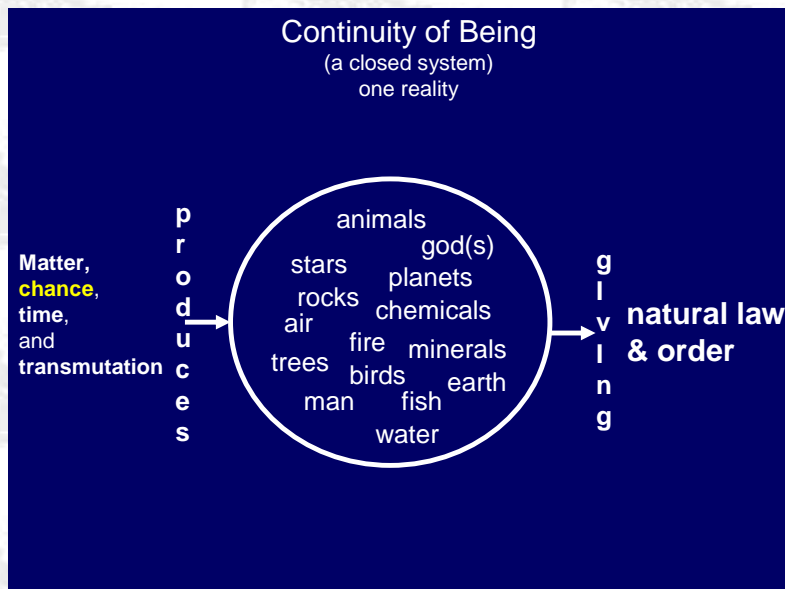
First thing about the pagan mind is that at the most fundamental level there is belief in the Continuity of Being, that all reality is one level. This is a fundamental difference we want to come back to over and over again. One level of reality - god, man, animals, rocks all differ only by degree.

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We're all on a scale, a gradation, like a spectrum, and we only differ in degree. The Egyptians believed this, the Mesopotamians believed this, the Persians believed this, Plato believed this, the Gnostics believed this, Modern liberal theologians believe this, and I think you can very easily show that Satan believed this, he wanted to become as God, that is, he thought it was possible to evolve from one thing to another, and it's this same ancient idea that we find in modern cosmic evolution. You can dress it up in slick equations and scientific terminology but when all is said and done it's still the same old Continuity of Being. If you grasp this, you may not see it now, but if you grab on to this and go over it and over it and over it you will be very thankful later because this thing has penetrated everything. You will find this doctrine lurking behind virtually everything you hear, read and see in our world today. And it is spiritual poison.

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From nothing, comes something (matter), which, when mixed with chance, time and transmutation; gives us the order we see and depend on for the sciences (?)

Inherent in this idea is the concept of spontaneous generation, that life comes from non-life. Despite the fact that spontaneous generation has been disproved time and again in the laboratory most of the world's renowned professors still believe it. For example, George Wald, once professor of Biology at Harvard said, "One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this task to concede that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible. Yet here we are—as a result, I believe, of spontaneous generation." If you wonder how it is possible that Wald could come to believe in something "impossible" he answers in another statement, "What I have learned is that many educated persons now tend to equate their idea of God with their concept of the order of nature." What's that? The Continuity of Being. Here's a brilliant scientist, a brilliant mind, albeit a pagan mind, and what's at the very core of his pagan beliefs? The Continuity of Being. It's inescapable. There are no other alternatives. Either you submit and believe in the Creator-creature distinction or you reject and believe in the Continuity

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of Being. There are no other positions. He goes on to say, “the only alternative to some form of spontaneous generation is belief in supernatural creation.”

Well, we don’t want that so let’s just commit intellectual and spiritual suicide.

Second, at the core of the Continuity of Being is Impersonal Chance. What do we mean by Chance? The dictionary defines chance as: **a.** the unknown and unpredictable element in happenings that seems to have no assignable cause. **b.** A force assumed to cause events that cannot be foreseen or controlled. The dictionary uses LUCK as an example:
Chance will determine the outcome.

We saw this in the ancient document of *Enuma Elish*, how the gods and goddesses war with each other to bring the universe into existence, and how the gods and goddesses war with each to see who’s going to be the top dog. And when one does becomes “top dog”, you never know when another “god” will come along to kill this one! It can never stabilize because it never knows what’s going to happen tomorrow, there’s no one who is in total control. That’s chaos, that’s chance, and that’s the pagan idea of how the universe is run. Las Vegas makes millions of dollars a month on this.

Now, because the pagan mind wants stability he has to bring in some kind of determinism, some kind of mysterious all-controlling force and that’s what we mean by “Impersonal Force”, “May the force be with you., or “see what the Fates have in store” or a “tablet of destinies”. These are the mysterious forces that run the universe. Not a person, but an impersonal force. And this force isn’t good or evil, it’s good and evil. Horoscope people believe in this sort of thing, it’s sort of a Fate and the horoscope becomes a means for ascertaining this mysterious *Fate* that’s behind the universe. So you can see that from the things you read in the paper it’s all mythological, it’s all part of this Continuity of Being, and it’s all just defiance against the Triune, sovereign personal authoritative speaking God. It’s all an act of rebellion against Him,

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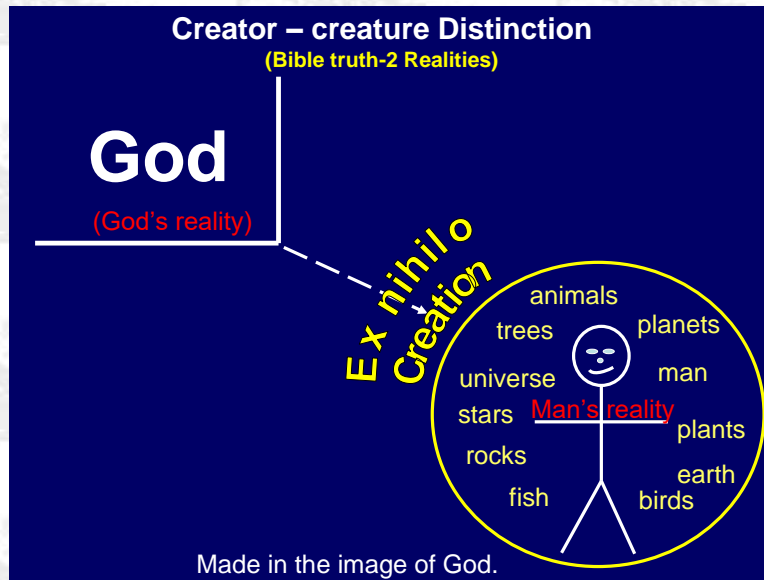
because we don't want to we have to face a Creator to whom we are all held responsible. We want to escape that and so we just drag god, if he even exists, down here into the creation so ultimately we're not responsible to him. He's not totally other, He's not totally distinct from this creation we live in. We don't want that. That is offensive to the pagan mind.

The pagan mind operates from a closed system of thought. Everything evolves from something, based on time, chance, and transmutation.

BIBLICAL WORLDVIEW vs PAGAN WORLDVIEW	
CREATOR-CREATURE DISTINCTION <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 2 levels of realityGod man nature<i>ex nihilo</i> creation	CONTINUITY OF BEING <ul style="list-style-type: none">- 1 level of realitygod(s) > man > animals > rocksspontaneous generation
PERSONAL SOVEREIGNTY <ul style="list-style-type: none">- God in controlMan responsible	IMPERSONAL CHANCE <ul style="list-style-type: none">- No one in controlMan a victim

Now, let's turn to the biblical kind of creation story. Remember there are only two kinds and what we're doing is pointing out the most fundamental differences between these two kinds. Here's an exercise you can do. Take a creation story, say the Hindu creation story and read it, then ask yourself two questions. First, how many levels of reality are there - one or two? Second, who or what is ultimately in control - a person or chance?

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The biblical kind of creation story always starts with the Creator-creature distinction. In other words, if we could go back before Gen 1:1 what would we find? God. God existed without any universe, without any physics, without any mass, without any space. There was nothing except God and God alone. He wasn't lonely. The God of the Bible is completely self-contained. He needs nothing outside of Himself. He was the only reality. Then, God spoke the universe into existence so that now there are two existences, the Creator and the creation. We call that *ex nihilo* creation. God created the universe out of nothing. He merely spoke and it appeared. His language is more than descriptive, it's also creative. His language imputes meaning to the object created but it also creates it out of nothing. So, now we have two levels of reality, two levels of existence. ALL other views, ALL other views believe that there's only one level of existence, call it "the mysterious cosmos, the universe, the continuity of being, the ladder of perfection, the scale of nature, the chain of being", call it whatever you like, it's all the same thing. The Bible is in total opposition to this idea. There are two levels of reality. There is the Creator and His reality and there is the creation. This is a profound difference, don't miss this difference. We are going to go over it again and again, because it is so important for

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you to keep in mind. Christians believe in the Creator-creature distinction, that the world is not the same as God; God is not the same as the world. Those are two distinct entities and it's the most *profound* difference that exists.

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Second, in the biblical kinds of creation stories God is Personally Sovereign. This is a core idea, this is not just abstract and philosophical, this is going to impact you spiritually right where you are at, because what this says is that the furthest back you go, down to the most basic and fundamental levels you find a Person, not a force, not a tablet of destinies, not a monolith, but a Person. A Person is your ultimate environment and this Person is truth. Truth ultimately is not a naked or abstract principle that we conjure up in our mind. **Truth is a Person**, and the dramatic thing we will learn in coming weeks is that the idea of logic is a derivative of the attributes of God. It's not the other way around, you don't have your logic principles and think about God, you first have God who defines what logic is, and then after that we use logic to discuss things. It's not the case that we have language and we use language to talk about everything including God. No, no, it's the other way around. First we have the Creator, and the Word,

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who is the second personality of the Trinity. What we call language is a creature version of Jesus Christ. He is the Word of God. Language originates out of the second person of the Trinity. So all these things are derivative of the character, nature, being, and attributes of our God. He is fundamental; logic, language and everything else is derivative. This Personal God is also Sovereign. What does this mean? This means God and God alone is in control of the universe. He is in total control. There's no squabbling committee. There's no one who can compete with God.

The teachings of evolution did not start with Charles Darwin even though you've been told that evolution is a product of 19th century science. However, the far eastern philosophers thought of creation in evolutionary terms, several French scientists of the 1600s and 1700s wrote about evolution and believed in the Chain of Being. In fact the idea of Chain of Being comes from the Greek notion of the "Great Chain of Being" which goes back to Aristotle.

Darwinian Theory: Not New

"When I began the search for anticipation of the evolutionary theory I was astonished to find how many of the pronounced and basic features of the Darwinian theory were anticipated as far back as the 7th century B.C."

Henry Fairfield Osborn, former curator of the American Museum of Natural History

Then there is a quote by Henry Fairfield Osborn, who was a curator of the American Museum of Natural History at the beginning of the 20th

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century. He says: “When I began the search for anticipation of the evolutionary theory I was astonished to find how many of the pronounced and basic features of the Darwinian theory were anticipated as far back as the 7th century B.C.” So we find that Modern Cosmic Evolutionism is nothing but the old pagan thought regurgitated and being used to interpret modern data.

Strategies for Interpreting Genesis

Now, we want to look at the three strategies that Christians have used over the years to try to deal with the problems brought on by the conflict between Genesis and Modern Cosmic Evolution.

Three Strategies For Interpreting Genesis

THE CAPITULATION STRATEGY

THE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

THE COUNTER-ATTACK STRATEGY

They are: The Capitulation Strategy, The Accommodation Strategy, and The Counter-Attack Strategy.

THE CAPITULATION STRATEGY

I think by going through these differences you can see the tension that Christians faced, particularly in the 19th century. Obviously, the more

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they began to look at this, the more they began to see the problem and ask themselves “what are we going to do about this?” So the first strategy that was invented was what is called The Capitulation Strategy. What is meant by that is “they surrendered” to the evolutionists, and we’re speaking here primarily of the liberal church who had already drifted away theologically from orthodox doctrine, so they had no problem buying into evolution in every way. Once they’d done that did they all of a sudden become neutral? No, they put on evolutionary goggles and when they went to Genesis how do you think they read it? As if it evolved over time. The liberal scholars began to apply what is technically called “higher criticism.” That is, they came to the Bible and tried to explain it in terms of unbelief. They didn’t believe in *ex nihilo* creation, they believed in cosmic evolution so what are we going to do with Genesis? They could say, “Well, it’s not God’s word, there’s no such thing as inspiration of the Bible. So, we can interpret the Bible in a framework of paganism.” Let’s see how they did this in Genesis 2 because this is still taught in public schools, High School and College, and they do this to undermine your faith. We want to be sure that all Christians are forewarned and forearmed about Gen. 2. One of the classic cases of a higher critical assault on the text, the validity of the text, is found here in Gen. 2. You can feel it coming when you hear your instructor saying, “Well, in the Bible there are multiple accounts of creation, and particularly there are two accounts of creation, there’s one account in Gen. 1 and there’s a completely different account in Gen. 2.” And usually a lot of naïve Christian students sit there in the class and say, “What? There are contradictions in the Bible?” and because they’re sensitive enough they think rationally, “Wait a minute, if the Bible has contradictions it can’t be true.”

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Biblical Contradiction?

Animals-----then Man

Gen 1:25 "And God made the **beasts** of the earth after their kind, and the cattle after their kind,....."

Gen 1:26 "Then God said, 'Let Us make **man** in Our image',....."

Gen 2:9 "And out of the ground the LORD God caused to grow every tree that is pleasing to the sight and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil."

Man-----then animals

Gen 2:15 "Then the LORD God took the **man** and put him into the garden of Eden to cultivate it and keep it."

Gen 2:19 "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every **beast** of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them;....."

Here's what they do. Turn to Genesis 2:9 and simultaneously look at verse 19. What they do is they say, "In Gen 1 which came first? Animals or man? Animals. Then man came. But now look in Gen 2:15, man is mentioned, "Then the LORD God took the man and put him into the Garden to cultivate it and keep it." Then verse 19, the supposed contradiction, "And out of the ground the LORD God formed every beast of the field and every bird of the sky, and brought them to the man to see what he would call them," and the instructor joyously, proudly and confidently pronounces, "See, I told you, here's the contradiction—in Gen. 1 animals then man, and Gen 2 man then animals, a contradiction, two contradictory accounts here. Well, there's a problem with that. Let's back up and examine it.

When you interpret literature, any kind of literature, you do it all the time, when you get a letter, when you read a piece of literature, what is your first thought when you come to any text? You interpret it this way, that if this person took this time to write, presumably the person meant to communicate something to me, it's not just nonsense. So if somebody wrote the text, give him the benefit of the doubt that he probably intended to mean something coherent. You don't start your interpretation of a piece of literature trying to rip it to shreds; you start

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your interpretation presuming that the author probably meant to communicate something coherent. That's why we write, that's why we talk.

In this case we have a style of writing, which we are all acquainted with if we've ever gone out to the front lawn and picked up our morning newspaper. We call it journalistic style. Now when you write a news story, it records events in time. Does a journalistic style start with a headline and give you strictly chronological events? Think about it when you read a news story. Or, does the journalist summarize in the first paragraph what is going on, goes back to details, summarizes, maybe picks another theme, summarizes that, hops over here and does another theme? Ever see that style done? Does that mean that the AP news writers have contradictions in their stories? Or is it stylistic?

Writing Styles

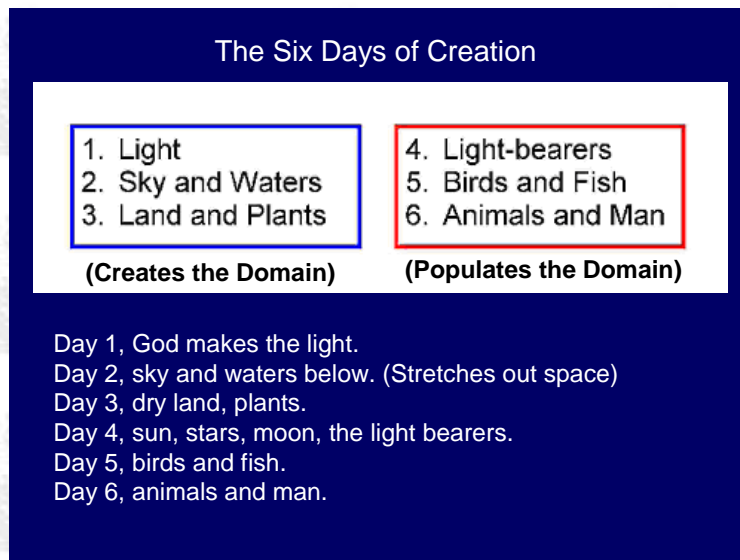
Archaeological discoveries of ancient Near Eastern works showed that “**doublets**” like Genesis 1-2 were common stylistic features in the ancient world. The author would give a chronological account and then he would go back and pull out some of the themes and talk about them.

Archaeological discoveries of ancient Near Eastern works showed that “doublets” like Genesis 1-2 were common stylistic features in the ancient world. The author would give a chronological account and then he would go back and pull out some of the themes and talk about them.

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That's exactly what Genesis does. In Genesis 1 we have the chronology and in Gen 2, the elaboration on specific themes.

Let's look at the structure of Genesis 1. Scholars have noted a neat structure in Genesis 1.



On day 1, God makes the light. On day 2, sky and waters below. On day 3, dry land, plants. On day 4, sun, stars, moon, the light bearers. On day 5, what two groups? Birds and fish. Isn't that an interesting pattern? And what did he make on the sixth day? Animals, man. Do you observe what's happening? What is the pattern taking place here? On one side He creates, as it were, the room, and on the other side He populates the room, the space. Here He creates the domain, here He populates the domain. God's work in that creation week was very structured; it's the work of an engineer. He creates domains and He populates domains (e.g. He creates the vast universe with energy (1), He localizes the energy in light-bearers (4)).

THE ACCOMMODATION STRATEGY

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Next, we come to the Accommodation Strategy. It's been called "Theistic Evolution", the idea that "God used evolution." This is where we use some tactic to get Genesis and Evolution together. Most Christians are in this camp. They don't see the implications of this. They haven't thought this thing through clearly. They have bought into a presupposition and that is coloring how they interpret the Bible. So, I want to read you a quote from the professor of Church History at Dallas Theological Seminary, Dr Hannah. Dr Hannah did an interesting research project where he went back into the 19th century and took America's most famous theological quarterly, called *Bibliotheca Sacra* and dug out old articles dealing with the issue of science and Genesis. What strategy were they using in the 1850's to deal with the claims of science? And it's clear they were using The Accommodation Strategy. In 1846 here's what one outstanding Christian scholar wrote, "Natural revelation is the basis on which written revelation rests." Do you know what they're saying in that statement? They're saying that we began with the scientific study of the world and then after doing that we interpret Scripture accordingly. This was endemic to the whole Christian church. That was the presupposition they operated from. So, every time science changed and added more time or changed the mechanism guess what theologians had to do? Go back to Genesis and re-interpret, re-interpret, re-interpret. So, ultimately what happened is that they bought into the infallibility of the scientific speculations of their day. That was the presupposition. In the 19th century virtually everyone from Charles Hodge to C. I. Scofield bought into this. It was universally accepted even in fundamentalist circles. Quite frankly, about the only people to hold the line were some Seventh Day Adventists. So, this is what led to the various ways of getting more time in Genesis. As one clergyman said, "Moses seems to assign a comparatively brief period to the creation; astronomy and geology assert a vast period, how shall they be reconciled?"

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Accommodation Strategies

1. The Gap Theory

Place an indefinite period of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 followed by divine creation in six 24 hour days.

2. The Day-Age-Day Theory

Places indefinite periods of time between the six 24 hour days.

3. The Day Age theory

Where each of the six days is an indefinite period of time.

Three basic theories have been used. First, a Gap Theory where we place an indefinite period of time between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 followed by divine creation in six 24 hour days. Second, the Day-Age-Day theory which places indefinite periods of time between the six 24 hour days. Third, a Day Age theory where each of the six days is an indefinite period of time. Other theories have been used but they are all Accommodation Strategies. As Mayers said in the 1850's, "If the Mosaic record is...reliable, we must admit an interpretation which will give the period the facts demanded." See, the assumed conclusions of science were "fact". This is what was going on 150 years ago. This is nothing new and unfortunately it's still going on in evangelical circles. Dr. Hugh Ross, born in 1945, described as a Progressive Creationist and popular author, teaches the universe is billions of years old, and is thus perpetuating this same old Accommodation Strategy.

Well, what's the answer to this thing? Just think about this for a minute. We've just compared Genesis and Evolution side by side and what did we find? Do they fit? What was wrong? The sequence. Is adding more time between the days going to change the sequence? No. Is making the days longer going to change the sequence? No. You can

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add all the time you want to but the sequence is still wrong. Think about it. Does any evolutionist in his right mind agree that the stars didn't come into existence until after planet earth? I never read an evolutionist that believes that. It is impossible to cram the Genesis text into an evolutionary mold, even if you make each day a billion years. And besides, there's one fundamental mistake with the days becoming long ages and that is, at the end of each day the text says, "there was evening and morning the xth day" and that formula does not allow for anything except a 24-hour day. No Hebrew scholar, even the liberal Hebrew scholars who believe in billions of evolutionary years, admit that this formula means 24-hour days, they just don't believe it. And all this strategy has done is cast a shadow of doubt on the infallibility and authority of Scripture. If we have to keep waiting for the infallible assertions of modern science then we just have to keep on re-interpreting and re-interpreting.

COUNTER-ATTACK STRATEGY

The Counter-attack Strategy

Begun by Christian men trained in the sciences.
The father of the movement was Dr. Henry Morris.

The reasoning: if the Bible could not be "adjusted" to fit evolution and if the Bible was the Word of God, then the problem must, somehow, be with the scientific interpretation of data.

In the early 1960's, the argument was basically this, that 200 years has shown us we can't make the two fit, so now we have to come back to the drawing boards and ask, "What went wrong?"

What they decided went wrong was that **the scientific interpretation had been contaminated by pagan belief systems** (pagan presuppositions).

The last strategy is called the Counterattack Strategy. It was begun, oddly enough, by men who were trained in the secular world. It didn't come out of Christian seminaries. These men were

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Christians, but they were men trained in the sciences, and as Christians they knew that was a big conflict between Genesis and Science. The father of the movement was a man named Dr. Henry Morris. Dr Morris was the head of the Civil Engineering Department at Virginia Polytechnic Institute. He concluded that if the Bible could not be 'adjusted' to fit evolution, and if it was the Word of God, then the problem, somehow, must be with the scientific interpretation of data. Somewhere in its development largely from within the Protestant reformation, science had taken a wrong turn. What had begun as fruit of a Christian view of nature, had strangely boomeranged back against the Bible. The new strategy was a stunning turn-around. Four hundred years before, the Reformation had firmly established the Bible as the authority in 'heavenly' things'. Now the Bible was becoming the authority in 'earthly' things too. To prevent the data of the book of nature from being misinterpreted, the new strategy established controls from a comprehensive universal history built from the Bible.

In other words, what these scientists did, in the early 1960's, was to basically argue this, that 200 years has shown us we can't make the two fit, so now we have to come back to the drawing boards and ask, "What went wrong?" And what they decided went wrong was that the scientific interpretation had been contaminated by pagan belief systems, pagan presuppositions, and that's ultimately what it's all about. So, you can Capitulate to modern science, you can try to Accommodate with endlessly reinterpreting the text, or you interpret the text as it always has been interpreted by Jesus Christ and the apostles and say "Okay, this is where I start, I don't understand how it fits together, but somehow over here there's a systematic mistake being made." It's a titanic claim, and it's extremely offensive in the intellectual world. This is why today creationists are thrown in with the Flat-earth Society, the radical right and "screwball set".

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So, today we've seen that the church has thought deeply about these things, for many, many years. And you have a choice to make, either I'm going to go ultimately presuppose the infallibility of modern science and its uniformitarianism, its claim that the past has always operated like the present or the infallibility of the word of God.

Or, said in a different way:

Either

you will let the Word of God
interpret the world around you,

or

you will let the world around you
interpret the Word of God.

Next time, we will look at ways we can know God.

¹ Loren Eisely, *Darwin's Century*, 10.