***The Divine Viewpoint World View of Origins

RV91-02***

We want to continue studying Revelation 4:6-11 by looking at verse 11 – worship in the throne room of God. This is segment number 24. We have seen that John has observed that, in heaven, God the Father is proclaimed as the Creator of all things – the Creator of the universe. This claim is dismissed by the human viewpoint world view of unregenerate man. The unregenerate mind does not want to be subject to the authority and to the rules of a personal, omnipotent Creator. So, the concept of God as the source of everything, as the One who put it all together, and as the One who made it – that is rejected. Man instead prefers to attribute the universe and its life forms to the natural processes of nature, working over vast periods of time, and guided by blind chance.

**Creationism vs. Evolution**

We have pointed out that both the creationist and the evolutionist have to deal with the same sources of information to answer this question of: where did it all come from? These are factors beyond human observation. So, whether you have a human viewpoint world view or a divine viewpoint world view, you have only so much, in the way of limited resources, from which you may draw the information to answer the question of origins.

**Historical Records**

We pointed out that, first of all, you have some historical records about the past. These are in the form of verbal records of eyewitnesses, but they are also in the form of cultural myths that certain groups of people have put together. Furthermore, you have nonverbal records on the past. That's in the form of the fossil remains and of various archeological artifacts from the cultures that existed in the past.

**Natural Processes**

Then there are the natural processes of the present which we may observe. Here we find certain basic scientific laws. Science establishes that certain things are true – certain scientific principles. These include such principles as the first and second laws of thermodynamics. Then we have information from what are called secondary systems that we observe that are based upon the basic scientific laws. These are systems of chemical reactions and mechanical interactions, and we observe these in the present.

All of these evidences have to be evaluated for their trustworthiness and their applicability to the distant past. That's an important question. Are the non-verbal factors applicable to the past, and how are they applicable? What do the fossil remains actually tell us about the past? What about the application of the basic scientific laws projected into the distant past? How do they work? What do they tell us about how they would function back there?

**The Human Viewpoint World View**

The human viewpoint world view is based on the belief in evolution. So, it evaluates the evidence on the assumptions that there is upward development in everything, and that everything is guided by chance. If you begin with that human viewpoint concept of evolution, that everything is improving in upward development guided by chance, then you will look at these evidences, and you will make certain conclusions.

**Verbal Records**

You will reject the Genesis verbal record as a myth, because it teaches instant creation by a personal, omnipotent God who just spoke these things into existence. Immediately, you may say, "No, that violates my belief in evolution." Therefore, Genesis must be rejected as an invention of a religious people, but something that really isn't historical fact. The Genesis account contradicts evolutionary assumptions. So, Genesis is seen as unreliable. The Genesis account is said to have been made up by the Hebrew people simply to exalt their tribal God, "YHWH," and it is simply a stage of their religious evolution.

**Nonverbal Records**

The non-verbal fossil record is assumed to show evolutionary development from simple to complex life forms. That's one way to look at the fossil record. You might say, "Sure enough, down here are these kinds of little forms, and up here a little bigger forms, and up here are a little bigger forms of life." And you may make an assumption that because evolution is true, that this is telling you that life forms progressed one from the other; one species to another; and, one kind into another kind.

**The Fossil Record**

However, there are other equally scientifically valid hypotheses relative to the whole fossil world. I don't want to get into that extensively. For example, bigger animals are found in higher strata up in geologic structures. Well naturally, the bigger animals were the ones that could fight the hardest; that could survive the most in the flood; that were able to hold out on the high ground; and, that were able to have the strength to pursue the high ground. Other animals didn't have the capacity to stand that intense movement of water currents that forced them to the lower levels. There are many scientific explanations. The whole science of hydraulics, when brought into the examination of fossil remains, illuminates why the progression is from smaller to larger as you go up higher, as the sediment was laid down by the Noahic flood, one layer upon another layer, as those currents moved back and forth, and overlap one another, and buried these life forms one by one.

So, if you look at the fossil record from the viewpoint of the book of Genesis, you won't come to the same conclusion that you would if you look at it from the evolutionary point of view. But both are equally scientific viewpoints. Let's get it straight. There isn't anybody here that caught a ride on the ark. There isn't anybody that was there to see it except a few people who have given us the report. There were none of us there to scientifically analyze what was going on at the time. So, those who believe in creation are equally qualified to make a valid estimate of the explanation of the fossil remains, as those who believe in evolution.

Furthermore, it is important to observe that no transitional forms between species or kinds has ever been found, and we have been digging for a long time. And they never will be found because there is no such thing. So, the evolutionist looks at the non-verbal fossil record, and he assumes that there was no unnatural intervention in the earth system, such as the Noahic flood, which could affect and produce the geological structures in the fossil records. When you reject the Noahic flood, then you put yourself at a great disadvantage in finding the truth.

**Natural Processes**

Then there are certain present natural processes. These basic scientific laws, when they are applied to the past on the assumption that they've always worked the same as they do today (that concept of the law of uniformity), bring you out with a certain point of view. You look at secondary systems, and you assume that they have operated in the past just as they do today. That's the concept of the law of uniformitarianism. However, there is no way that you can prove that the laws operating today operated that way several thousands of years ago. There's no way that you can prove that these secondary systems (chemical, physical, and mechanical reactions) operated the same in the past as they do today. You have to assume that that's the case. Uniformitarianism says that nothing ever interrupted the past. Nothing that is taking place in the present was ever interrupted in the past.

Again, you have the rejection of the enormous interruption of the catastrophe of the Noahic flood. That changed everything. The Bible tells us that it changed the whole face of the earth. It just took the earth's crust; it crunched it; shoved it up; it wrinkled it over; it formed mountains; and, it formed whole new structures that hadn't been there before. That was a tremendous amount of water. The highest mountain was covered. You and I can't begin to comprehend the weight of water that was upon the crust of the earth: warping; twisting; the power of those moving currents; and, all the changes that it made. These laws have not operated without interruption. They have been affected.

**Scientific Laws**

We have these two most basic scientific laws of thermodynamics. We see that evolution, by scientific laws, is absolutely impossible. In a brief review, the first law of thermodynamics declares that energy cannot be created or destroyed. The total amount of energy in the world remains the same. It is constant. Therefore, the world had to be created, at some point, with its level of energy already present. The total amount of energy had to be put in at some point. Energy can't evolve. That's the point of this law. Energy cannot evolve and develop itself. Energy has to be put in there. It has to be inserted into the system at the beginning at some point.

The evolution of the universe would demand an increasing level of energy being developed. Evolution says that from nothing, except that material universe that existed, gradually, there was energy to start creating life, and that energy created itself, and constantly improved itself, until it developed the whole system. It is not only that the earth developed itself, and it is not only that life forms developed themselves, but evolution means that the sun developed itself; the moon developed itself; the galaxies developed themselves; and, the whole universe evolved – the whole shebang. You want to remember that it took energy to put that whole schmear together. Where did it come from? Evolution says that it involved itself. Well, that violates a basic scientific law. Energy cannot create itself. The amount of energy in the universe has to be inserted in toto. That's what you start with. Then you cannot increase it or decrease it.

The second law of thermodynamics declares that the available energy is being transformed into unusable form. So, the material universe is gradually breaking down from complex to simple forms. Energy is decreasing. Energy is being lost in heat and in other ways so that it dissipates out into space, and it's no longer available for use. It is still there, but it is not usable. The result is that, gradually, the supply of energy is getting less and less. You have to interject a total supply of energy at some point. Then from that point on, as you use it, it transfers itself into unusable form, and therefore, the total amount of usable energy becomes less and less. This is confirmed by the fact that the universe is everywhere decaying. It is going into disorder at all stages. It is not improving from one stage to the other.

Evolution says that something that was simple moved along, and became complex, and that violates the second law of thermodynamics, which says that nothing goes from a simple to a more complex form, except under special conditions where excessive energy is brought in from the outside. That's the concept of a baby who is born, and he develops from two cells into a complex creature. But that is because there is an infusion of energy from the mother. Once that child is on his own, as years go by, his capacity to handle energy; the capacity of his body to function; to be able to use the energy of food; and, to be able to operate on it, becomes less and less, until that body dies. And that decay is everywhere. That's what the second law of thermodynamics is saying.

In the human body, it is very sad. I had the experience again this week of visiting a man who is on his deathbed. It's a sad sight to see someone who was once a very virile and active person lying there as a broken shell. The clock is just ticking. You can see the second law of thermodynamics being played out before your very eyes, as that body is suffering the consequences of this inevitable law. He's moving out to where that body is going to die, and the decay will be complete.

Evolution demands that simple forms develop into complex structures. The second law of thermodynamics says that that is impossible. So, I want you to know those laws so that you're not intimidated by the scientists of the world, and the arrogant people of the world, who come up with their smug sophistication about evolution. You also need to be aware of those who are Christians who want to interject God and say, "Well, it's theistic evolution, and God is the one who uses the evolutionary process. We'll study more about that later. That's the human viewpoint world view.

**The Divine Viewpoint World View**

Let's switch over to the divine viewpoint world view that you and I are committed to. Under the divine viewpoint world view, we do not try to erect a cosmogony (an explanation of origins) without using the Word of God; without using God's revelation, the Bible; and, without being willing to accept what it reveals. We do not resist what the Bible tells us as to where it all came from. That's the first step. That's the difference between a human viewpoint world view and a divine viewpoint world view. This one begins with the acceptance of the revelation of creation by a personal, omnipotent God.

So, the divine viewpoint man consequently, does not try to be autonomous. He doesn't try to be independent of God, nor does he try to create an idol of his own – some God to replace the real God, to explain the origins of things. Please remember that the world view that comes down through evolution (the human viewpoint world view) always descends into autonomy for man, and idolatry. Those two go together.

Since the divine viewpoint man welcomes all the reliable information which is beyond the reach of his physical, spiritual, and mental limitations, he comes up with the right answers. However, since God's revelation comes through history, man still has to use his reason and his experience to interpret what God reveals. You and I do have to use our minds to interpret what the Bible reveals. We do have to look at those opening verses of the book of Genesis, and we do have to determine what those verses are telling us. We do have to take our experience and match it up to what Genesis reveals. But we're not operating just on our reason and on our experience, as a human viewpoint man does. That's all he's got to go from. A divine viewpoint mind can only be secured, however, through the spiritual regeneration that changes us from hating God to people who love Him and have faith in Him.

1 Corinthians 2:9-16 put the securing of a divine viewpoint mentality this way: "But as it is written, eye has not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God has prepared for them that love Him (God's divine viewpoint information). But God has revealed them to us by His Spirit, for the Spirit searches all things; yea, the deep things of God. For what man knows the things of a man except the spirit of man which is in him? Even so, no man knows the things of God but the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world, but the Spirit who is of God" (or the Spirit who is from God). That is probably referring to our human spirit: "That we might know the things that are freely given to us of God." It is with our human spirit that we have a communication point of contact with God. Without the human spirit, you will know zero about spiritual things. It is the human spirit that enables God to communicate divine viewpoint truth to us.

Verse 13: "We also speak such things, not in the words which man's wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches, comparing spiritual things with spiritual. But the natural man (the unregenerate unsaved man) does not receive the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him. Neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." The human viewpoint evolutionary frame of reference laughs at the Bible. That's foolishness to him because he does not have the spiritual capacity to understand it. It isn't because the Bible is wrong – it's because he can't grasp it.

Verse 15 says, "But he that is spiritual judges all things, yet he himself is judged of no man. For who has known the mind of the Lord that we may instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ." So, it is the born-again person who can develop a divine viewpoint mentality. The divine viewpoint man does not want to be independent of God, but to be subject to God's rules and information. Therefore, he welcomes what the Bible has to tell him. The divine viewpoint person does not need to create his own idol god by elevating some part of creation into deity to explain the source (the origin) of the universe. He is happy to accept God as that origin. The divine viewpoint person can only know part of the explanation of all things. That's true. We don't know it all. But one thing we do know is that God does know it all. What we don't know, God knows. He's got the complete explanation. There's no need for us to have to do like the evolutionist does when he's got pieces that he can't explain with his idol God that he's created, so he throws it into the category of chance. He makes the god of chance responsible for what he cannot explain. With our viewpoint, we're quite happy to recognize that there are some things that God knows and understands that we don't. But He's got the whole picture on all of these matters relative to cosmogony.

Submission to God's Bible results in the divine viewpoint foundation of creation as the explanation of origins. Creation as our frame of reference then determines our world view. That, in turn, affects all areas of our thoughts and our values. Divine viewpoint presuppositions then interpret the same evidence for origins, but we come up with different conclusions. We take exactly these same areas of evidence. That's all we've got. The evolutionist has nothing more than that, and we have nothing more than that. But because we approach it from a divine viewpoint frame of reference, and we accept the biblical record, the results are totally different. The born-again man is cleansed from all moral guilt. He freely accepts the revelation that God has about the universe.

**Verbal Records**

So, let's take a look at how divine viewpoint handles these same evidences. We look at the verbal record. We evaluate the stories of origins which we get from ancient cultures. They parallel the biblical record. I wouldn't say that these stories came because these people read the Genesis account. Some of these stories are probably older than the Genesis account. Where they got them from was the fact that it was handed down from Adam, and the information which was transferred originally from the teaching that God had given Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. But as people dissipated; separated; followed the Cain human viewpoint; wanted to be autonomous; wanted to create their own gods; and, rebelled against the true gods, that information that they had about origins became distorted. It became corrupted. I won't take time here to relate to you all the different myths that we have about creation, but they are fascinating in this respect – that they followed, in general, indeed the pattern of the biblical account of how things came into being. But they are interjected with corruptions. However, they do all begin with a universe in existence. They do not begin where the Bible begins, with nothing in existence, except the living personal, omnipotent God.

So, we look at those records, and we evaluate them. We recognize, as we compare them to the inspired Scriptures, that those are corrupted records, and we see them as only a general confirmation that the original is in the Bible. Therefore, the counterfeits do confirm that there was a true original, and that the Genesis record is that true original. So, the divine viewpoint man sees the ancient pagan cosmogonies as beginning with a universe which is in place, and then corrupting the real picture. The very gods themselves, that these ancient myths have (that these ancient cosmogonies have) are simply nature gods. They are forces of nature that have been turned into deities. Therefore, as forces of nature, they're part of the universe. So, you're back to Eastern mysticism with an impersonal God who is part of creation itself.

Satan has the same story all the time. From the earliest days, he has pushed the concept of Eastern mysticism as a counterfeit to what God thinks. That's why it's important for you to understand some of the basic concepts (some of the basic beliefs) of Eastern mysticism. It is the substitute for the real thing. Once you know that, you're going to be in a position of enormous strength to be able to distinguish what you hear from the reality of Scripture, even when it comes to you in subtle forms.

So, the gods of those ancient records were part of the universe. The Christian looks at that, and he rejects that. He knows, from the written record of Genesis, that God was there first before anything else. He evaluates the Genesis account. He sees that it reports a creation by a previously existing personal God who is not part of that creation, and who exists apart from that creation. The God of Genesis brings all things into existence by His omnipotent Word. That's another important thing. This God brings it all together. The divine viewpoint man has to decide whether the Bible, with its eyewitness report of origins, is accurate. So, the divine viewpoint man has to decide if he's going to believe the Bible, and whether it is accurate.

We have many reasons to do that, not the least of which is that Exodus 20:16, by this same Creator God, demands that we should not bear false witness. We should not lie when we give a report. When we are presenting the facts, we should not lie about a situation. If this God demands that we should not lie, we may expect that that is part of His character, and that He will not lie in the record which He has given us. He will not lie by telling us things that are not true, like those pagan myths. Neither will He lie by giving us a myth that we can't interpret.

That's another lie. To give you a myth that people can interpret in various ways and come out with different answers – that's a lie. That leads you to deceit. Therefore, whatever Genesis says (whatever those important first three verses of the book of Genesis say), that is the truth. Our job is to accurately determine what they are telling us. So, this God demands true witness, and He will indeed be true Himself.

**Biblical Confirmation of Genesis**

Furthermore, it is important for us to realize that men of God throughout the Bible accept the details of the early chapters of Genesis as being historically accurate. For example (and I'll just run through these quickly): Moses made it clear that the early chapters of Genesis were history (Exodus 20:11, Deuteronomy 32:8). Job indicated that they were history (Job 12:15). Isaiah 54:9 indicates that Isaiah declared that those chapters were real history. The Lord Jesus Christ, of course, referred to the early chapters of Genesis as being historically true (Matthew 19:4-6, Matthew 23:35, Matthew 24:37-39). The gospel of Luke, in Luke 3:38, indicates that they are true.

Paul, in many places indicated that the early chapters of Genesis were historically true (Acts 17:26, Romans 5:12-14, Romans 8:20-22, Romans 16:20, 1 Corinthians 6:16, 1 Corinthians 11:8-9, 1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 1 Corinthians 15:39-47, 2 Corinthians 4:6, 2 Corinthians 11:3, 1 Timothy 2:13-14). The author of Hebrews (whoever wrote Hebrews) also made it clear that the early chapters of Genesis were historically true (Hebrews 1:10, Hebrews 2:7-8, Hebrews 4:3-10, Hebrews 11:4-7, Hebrews 12:24). James indicates the same thing in James 3:9. Peter indicates this in 1 Peter 3:20, 2 Peter 2:4-5, and 2 Peter 3:4-7. The apostle John indicates that the early chapters of Genesis are historically true (1 John 3:12, Revelation 2:7, Revelation 22:2-3). Jude indicates the same thing in Jude 11-15. Every one of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, somewhere in the New Testament, is referred to as historically true; and, every New Testament writer refers to Genesis 1-11.

So, would these people be lying to us again? The attitude of the critics is that, indeed, Jesus and these other men did refer to those chapters as if those things actually happened; as if Adam and Eve really did live; as if there was a God who stood out there and spoke everything into existence; and, as if all these things actually did happen. However, they say Jesus was accommodating Himself to the general mistaken notion to the myths to which they held, and that He was simply going along with it. Most of them don't want to say that He was mistaken, but some of them even do that – that He simply was mistaken.

**Fulfilled Prophecy**

As you know, the Bible has been frequently verified through fulfilled prophecy as well as through archaeology. So, the divine viewpoint mentality concludes that the witnesses are reliable; and that these witnesses are accurate; and, that Moses (in reporting to us what the opening chapters and the opening verses of Genesis tell us about creation) was accurately reporting what God had revealed to him. If Jesus and the apostles are wrong about Genesis, they cannot be viewed as being reliable on any other truth. The Lord Jesus Himself pointed out that particular fact. If Jesus is wrong about that, and if He is going along and lying to us about that, then we cannot trust Him about any other truth – certainly, not about salvation truths. John 3:12 says, "If I have told you earthly things, and you don't believe, how shall you believe if I tell you heavenly things?" If I don't tell you the truth about earthly things, like the origin of the universe, how are you going to believe Me when I tell you the truth about how to go to heaven?

So, the divine viewpoint mind considers the Bible absolutely reliable on the record of origins, and it views that accordingly.

**Nonverbal Records**

Then we look at these non-verbal records with a divine viewpoint mentality. We are faced with that. The divine viewpoint man assumes that there is stability in nature, but he does not grant infallibility to the laws of uniformity and uniformitarianism. There is stability in nature. There are natural laws that operate. But the divine viewpoint man says God, who created it, can override the laws that He made, and He does. Miracles are one example of His overriding the laws He made. These laws are subject to correction by Genesis eyewitness records of God intervening with miracles, or with great natural catastrophes like the flood. These laws do operate, but they are not inevitably operating. That's the difference. So, the divine viewpoint mind, indeed, can account for all the data without violating confirmed scientific laws.

Those who believe in creationism are not some ignoramuses who don't have it together in the matter of science. It is the creationists who, alone, can bring together all these evidences and make proper sense out of them. Only the creationist can take the nonverbal, as well as the verbal, and put it together in a way that it all fits, and that is scientifically sound. What the divine viewpoint man does is that he does not make some enormous assumption, like the human viewpoint mind does, which cannot be checked out, but which is still treated as if it were true. That's what human viewpoint does. It makes these assumptions that nobody can check out. Whereas the divine viewpoint mind goes from the records of the Bible, and from the actual confirmed scientific laws, and puts it together, and you can check it out.

So, the creationist divine viewpoint approach actually copes better with the human limitations than does the human viewpoint mind. The human viewpoint mind is arrogant, and it does not recognize that it has physical, spiritual, and mental limitations. The divine viewpoint man says, "Yes, I've got those, and I get that taken care of by what God has revealed."

**Present Natural Processes**

On the factor of these present natural processes, basic scientific laws applied to the past as governed by the Genesis record, and is modified by uniformity. The basic laws are there; they are applied; and, they are treated again as something that God can readjust.

**The Secondary Systems**

The secondary systems, made up of these basic laws, are applied to the past, and the evidence of Genesis, again, guides to the fact that uniformitarianism is modified.

So, the divine viewpoint creationist world view is a product of the interpretation of the evidence, and it is no less scientific, and it is no more religious than the human viewpoint evolutionary world view. Remember that the human viewpoint mind comes with religious preconceptions (with religious presuppositions), and it applies that to making its decision on how it all came together. So, we don't make any more religious assumptions than does the human viewpoint. We just have a better basis. We make them on the basis of the revealed Scripture.

**The Bible**

That is why you do have to talk about the Bible. That's a problem. You do have to, someplace along the line, say, "Now is the Bible a true book?" That's where the battle has to be fought first, because on any talk program that you ever watch, that is assumed to be not true – that the Bible is immediately dismissed as a book that you cannot count on as being reliable. It's not trustworthy, and so it is dismissed. The Bible, therefore, does not speak to our generation with overwhelming authority. Of course, until that happens, then none of the rest of this evidence is meaningful, because it is the revelation of Scripture that puts all the sources of information we have into proper perspective. The human viewpoint world view begins with a hatred of God, and a proud rebellion against His authority. However, the divine viewpoint world view begins with a humble submission to God's word, the Bible. Both views deal with the same evidence, but we come up with different conclusions.

So, you must choose the world view that you're going to hold. You're going to have to decide whether what John sees in heaven, and hears these elders saying, that God is the Creator of all things, is true, and that you're going to accept that divine viewpoint; or, you're going to have to decide whether Satan's claim of evolution is true, and you're going to have to act accordingly.

**Genesis 1**

Let's go back to the beginning and we'll get introduced to this now. The beginning is the first of Genesis, and the first verse is Genesis 1:1. These three verses open the account of Genesis, and they are the basic guideline to where it all came from. Our question is: What are they telling us? How do they relate? Verse one is a famous verse: "In the beginning, God created the heaven and the earth." The first thing to remember is that Genesis 1:1 is a broad general declaration of the fact that God is the origin of the universe. This is a broad, general introductory statement. The first verse of the Bible is just a broad statement that says, "God made it. God is the origin." The rest of Genesis 1 explains this verse. All the rest of the first of Genesis is explaining the first verse. This is the general precept – that in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

This is normal Semitic literary form. This is the way Jewish literature was written. First you state a general proposition, and then you spell out the details. There is something else to remember. I don't want to get too technical about this, and we'll tie this up a little more as we go along. The thing we want to observe, first of all, is that Genesis 1 is what grammatically is called an independent clause. That's why we state it as a general statement of truth. It is an independent clause. It just stands out there by itself. Don't try to connect it down to what comes after, in a grammatical fashion. It stands there as a statement on its own. It's in an absolute state. It's an independent clause.

It begins with the Hebrew word "in beginning." The word "beginning" looks like this in the Hebrew: "Reshith." The word "reshith" (beginning) is an important word. It is the word that tells us, because of the grammatical construction it has, that verse one is an independent general statement. So, right off the bat, the Hebrew word "reshith" gives us that information. Moses could have used another grammatical construction which would have totally changed what verse one is. He does use that in other places, but he did not use it here. Therefore, it is telling us specifically that this is an independent clause.

Then he identifies the one who is doing all this. His name here is "Elohim." "Elohim" is the name for God, and it's a plural name. That's very interesting. The Trinity is suggested right there in that word, because it is not singular. This word "Elohim" is the name of God which is used in the Bible in connection with the creative work of God.

**Literary Criticism**

When the literary critics have tried to argue that there are two Genesis stories written by two different authors that somebody pasted together, they do it on the basis of this idea – that you have Jehovah ("YHWH"), and you have "Elohim." In Genesis one, it's "Elohim." In Genesis 2, it is Jehovah. Jehovah ("YHWH") is the most sacred name of God. They say, "You see, there are two different writers. They had a different name for God." However, this name, "Elohim," is connected with God's creative work. So, when God is doing all of His creative work here in the universe, that is tied with "Elohim." That is the Creator God. But what does Jehovah mean? Jehovah comes when you have the lawgiver, and you have God giving the laws. In the second chapter, you have man's specific creation that is dealt with, and God giving man the rules. So, now it is God as "Jehovah." The concept of Jehovah is the lawgiver.

So, when God starts telling Adam and Eve, "Here's what you can do in this garden, and here's what you can't do in this garden), He is acting under His name of Jehovah, the most sacred name of God. When He is doing creative work, then He is operating under His name "Elohim." So, there is a difference. That's why we have this name here in Genesis 1:1.

So, "In the beginning," indicating an independent statement, this Elohim did something: "He created." This is the Hebrew word "bara." The Hebrew word "bara" means that "God brought into existence from nothing." This is the concept of creation from nothing. The Latin puts it as "ex nihilo." It does not come from that word alone. You cannot structure it on just this word "bara." There are other words that are equally used, as we shall see, in terms of God's creative work. There are other Hebrew words which also mean "God bringing out of nothing." We get the fact of His bringing out of nothing from other revelations of Scripture.

For example, Psalm 33:6 says, "By the word of the LORD." There you have the word "LORD" in all capital letters. There you have God as lawgiver (His Word of authority), so it uses the word Jehovah: "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth." So, there you have declared that God spoke into existence what had not existed before. That's how we get that "bara" tells us that that creation was out of nothing.

You also have this in Psalm 33:9: "For He spoke, and it was done. He commanded, and it stood fast." You can't put it any clearer than that. It was God speaking it into existence. His word brought it out of nothing.

Hebrews 11:3 says, "Through faith, we understand that the ages were framed by the Word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." You can't make it clearer than that. The things that we see of the material world are not the result of God making it out of something that we have seen. It came out of nothing. It came as the result of His speaking.

So, the word "bara" tells us that God has spoken, and He has brought it into existence. And that which He brought into existence is described as "the heaven." Really, it should be plural: "the heavens and the earth." Here is a combination of two words. One is "shamayin," and that is really "heavens." It is added to another word, and that is the word for "earth:" the word "erets." These two words in Hebrew form a compound unit, and therefore, they mean something together that they do not mean by themselves. "The heavens" means one thing by itself. "Earth" means another thing by itself: the planet. But when you put these two together, it comes out in a compound form to mean something totally different. What it means here is "everything." That's important to understand – that "heavens and earth" is telling us that what God called into existence out of nothing with His spoken word was "everything." It refers here to the universe.

We use expressions like that in English. What do we mean when we say, "They came, great and small, to this event?" You mean that everyone came. When you say, "They came, great and small, to the party," it means that everyone came to the party. What about the title of the song: "Day and Night, You are the One?" What do you mean by "Day and Night, You are the One?" "Day and night" means "You are the one all the time." All the time, you are the one. "Day" means something, and "night" mean something, but when you put them together in these combinations, it means something totally different.

That's what you have here in the Hebrew. "Heaven and earth" is a designation for the universe as a whole, but there is one more thing. You must have the word "organized." That's very important. God created an organized universe. The compound does not refer to chaotic material from which the universe was formed as per the description of the rest of Genesis 1. So, in Genesis 1:1, we have it made clear to us that Elohim, the Creator God, did not create a disorganized world. He created an organized world. That's what "shamayin erets" means: "the heavens and the earth." It means an organized world. It means the total universe. Logic does not allow us to make the contradictory assumption that God created the organized world (the organized universe), as this compound tells us, and that at the same time we look in verse 2, and lo and behold, we have an unorganized universe. And that's what verse 2 is going to tell you – that you've got an unorganized creation. Genesis 1:1 does not say that God called into existence the unformed, dark, watery state that is described in Genesis 1:2. This very expression makes it clear to us that God did not call into existence what you see in verse two.

Interestingly enough, in the New Jerusalem, Revelation 21:1 tells us that God is going to remove seas and darkness from His new earth. This suggests that God, in His perfect creation, does not consider the presence of seas and darkness as desirable features. So, they're going to be removed. Genesis 1:2 should be viewed, then (just to get a little ahead here) as a clause that tells us about the circumstances that begin with verse 3. Verse 2 is connected with the circumstances that begin the creative work described in verse 3. We say that Genesis 1:2 is grammatically subordinate to Genesis 1:3. Verse 1 says, "In the beginning." That Hebrew word tells us that this is an independent general statement about God's creative work: "In the beginning, Elohim (the Creator, God – God in His creative role, therefore calling Himself Elohim), called into existence, by His spoken word, out of nothing, the organized universe," which is described here under the term "the heavens and the earth."

Let's just start with that. Get that verse clear in mind, and then we can come to verse 2, and put it into proper perspective, and a proper connection with the rest of the chapter, so that we don't put ourselves in the bad position of assuming that certain things are implied here, which are not.

Dr. John E. Danish, 1982

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