

GENESIS

The Creation of the World

1 In the beginning^A God^B created^C the heavens and the earth.^D

²Now^E the earth^F was without shape and empty,^G and darkness^H was over the surface of the watery deep,^I but the Spirit of God^J

A TN The translation assumes that the form translated “beginning” is in the absolute state rather than the construct (“in the beginning of,” or “when God created”). In other words, the clause in v. 1 is a main clause, v. 2 has three clauses that are descriptive and supply background information, and v. 3 begins the narrative sequence proper. The referent of the word “beginning” has to be defined from the context since there is no beginning or ending with God.

SN *In the beginning.* The verse refers to the beginning of the world as we know it; it affirms that it is entirely the product of the creation of God. But there are two ways that this verse can be interpreted: (1) It may be taken to refer to the original act of creation with the rest of the events on the days of creation completing it. This would mean that the disjunctive clauses of v. 2 break the sequence of the creative work of the first day. (2) It may be taken as a summary statement of what the chapter will record, that is, vv. 3–31 are about God’s creating the world as we know it. If the first view is adopted, then we have a reference here to original creation; if the second view is taken, then Genesis itself does not account for the original creation of matter. To follow this view does not deny that the Bible teaches that God created everything out of nothing (cf. John 1:3)—it simply says that Genesis is not making that affirmation. This second view presupposes the existence of pre-existent matter, when God said, “Let there be light.” The first view includes the description of the primordial state as part of the events of day one. The following narrative strongly favors the second view, for the “heavens/sky” did not exist prior to the second day of creation (see v. 8) and “earth/dry land” did not exist, at least as we know it, prior to the third day of creation (see v. 10).

B SN *God.* The ending of the Hebrew term **אֱלֹהִים** (*‘elohim*) is commonly used to indicate plural nouns, but also has other functions such as indicating abstract concepts, or the concrete expression of an abstract concept. For example, Saul is referred to as “lord” with the morpheme that often marks plural, but meaning that he, as king, is the concrete expression of being a “lord.” When referring to the one true God, **אֱלֹהִים** (*‘elohim*) marks God as the actual expression of deity. And the verb that is used with it is singular. In contrast, when the same form is used as a plural reference to the false gods of

the nations, the associated verb is plural. Likely the term was a title for the true God but is used so frequently that it becomes viewed as a name.

C TN The English verb “create” captures well the meaning of the Hebrew term in this context. The verb **בָּרָא** (*bará*) always describes the divine activity of fashioning something new, fresh, and perfect. The verb does not necessarily describe creation out of nothing (see, for example, v. 27, where it refers to the creation of man); it often stresses forming anew, reforming, renewing (see Ps 51:10; Isa 43:15, 65:17).

D TN Or “the entire universe”; or “the sky and the dry land.” This phrase is often interpreted as a merism, referring to the entire ordered universe, including the heavens and the earth and everything in them. The “heavens and the earth” were completed in seven days (see Gen 2:1) and are characterized by fixed laws (see Jer 33:25). “Heavens” refers specifically to the sky, created on the second day (see v. 8), while “earth” refers specifically to the dry land, created on the third day (see v. 10). Both are distinct from the sea/seas (see v. 10 and Exod 20:11).

E TN The disjunctive clause (conjunction plus subject plus verb) at the beginning of v. 2 gives background information for the following narrative, explaining the state of things when “God said...” (v. 3). Verse one is a title to the chapter, v. 2 provides information about the state of things when God spoke, and v. 3 begins the narrative *per se* with the typical narrative construction (*vav* [י]) consecutive followed by the prefixed verbal form). (This literary structure is paralleled in the second portion of the book: Gen 2:4 provides the title or summary of what follows, 2:5–6 use disjunctive clause structures to give background information for the following narrative, and 2:7 begins the narrative with the *vav* consecutive attached to a prefixed verbal form.) Some translate 1:2a “and the earth became,” arguing that v. 1 describes the original creation of the earth, while v. 2 refers to a judgment that reduced it to a chaotic condition. Verses 3ff. then describe the re-creation of the earth. However, the disjunctive clause at the beginning of v. 2 cannot be translated as if it were relating the next event in a sequence. If v. 2 were sequential to v. 1, the author would have

used the *vav* consecutive followed by a prefixed verbal form and the subject.

F TN That is, what we now call “the earth.” The creation of the earth as we know it is described in vv. 9–10.

Prior to this the substance which became the earth (= dry land) lay dormant under the water.

G TN Traditional translations have followed a more literal rendering of “waste and void.” The words describe a condition that is without form and empty. What we now know as “the earth” was actually an unfilled mass covered by water and darkness. Later **תוהו** (*tohu*) and **בוהו** (*bohu*), when used in proximity, describe a situation resulting from judgment (Isa 34:11; Jer 4:23). Both prophets may be picturing judgment as the reversal of creation in which God’s judgment causes the world to revert to its primordial condition. This later use of the terms has led some to conclude that Gen 1:2 presupposes the judgment of a prior world, but it is unsound method to read the later application of the imagery (in a context of judgment) back into Gen 1:2.

H SN *Darkness.* The Hebrew word simply means “darkness,” but in the Bible it has come to symbolize what opposes God, such as judgment (Exod 10:21), death (Ps 88:13), oppression (Isa 9:1), the wicked (1 Sam 2:9) and in general, sin. In Isa 45:7 it parallels “evil.” It is a fitting cover for the primeval waste, but it prepares the reader for the fact that God is about to reveal himself through his works.

I TN The Hebrew term **תְּהוֹמוֹת** (*tehom*, “deep”) refers to the watery deep, the salty ocean—especially the primeval ocean that surrounds and underlies the earth (see Gen 7:11).

SN *The watery deep.* In the Babylonian account of creation Marduk killed the goddess Tiamat (the salty sea) and used her carcass to create heaven and earth. The form of the Hebrew word for “deep” is distinct enough from the name “Tiamat” to deny direct borrowing; however, it is possible that there is a polemical stress here. Ancient Israel does not see the ocean as a powerful deity to be destroyed in creation, only a force of nature that can be controlled by God.

J TN The traditional rendering “Spirit of God” is preserved here, as opposed to a translation like “wind from/breath of God” (cf. NRSV) or “mighty wind” (cf. NEB), taking the word “God” to represent the superlative. Elsewhere in the OT the

phrase refers consistently to the divine spirit that empowers and energizes individuals (see Gen 41:38; Exod 31:3; 35:31; Num 24:2; 1 Sam 10:10; 11:6; 19:20, 23; Ezek 11:24; 2 Chr 15:1; 24:20).

A TN The Hebrew verb has been translated “hovering” or “moving” (as a bird over her young, see Deut 32:11). The Syriac cognate term means “to brood over; to incubate.” How much of that sense might be attached here is hard to say, but the verb does depict the presence of the Spirit of God moving about mysteriously over the waters, presumably preparing for the acts of creation to follow. If one reads “mighty wind” (cf. NEB) then the verse describes how the powerful wind begins to blow in preparation for the creative act described in vv. 9–10. (God also used a wind to drive back the flood waters in Noah’s day. See Gen 8:1.)

B TN Heb “face.”

C SN *The water.* The text deliberately changes now from the term for the water deep to the general word for water. The arena is now the life-giving water and not the chaotic abyss-like deep. The change may be merely stylistic, but it may also carry some significance. The deep carries with it the sense of the abyss, chaos, darkness—in short, that which is not good for life.

D TN The prefixed verb form with the *vav* (ו) consecutive introduces the narrative sequence. Ten times in the chapter the decree of God in creation will be so expressed. For the power of the divine word in creation, see Ps 33:9; John 1:1–3; 1 Cor 8:6; Col 1:16.

SN *God said.* By speaking, God brings the world into existence. The efficacious nature of the word of the LORD is a prominent theme in this chapter. It introduces the Law, the words and commandments from the LORD that must be obeyed. The ten decrees of God in this chapter anticipate the ten words in the Decalogue (Exod 20:2–17).

E TN “Let there be” is the short jussive form of the verb “to be”; the following expression “and there was” is the short preterite form of the same verb. As such, *yehi* (יְהִי) and *vayehi* (וַיְהִי) form a profound wordplay to express both the calling into existence and the complete fulfillment of the divine word.

F SN *Light.* The Hebrew word simply means “light,” but it is used often in scripture to convey the ideas of salvation, joy, knowledge, righteousness, and life. In this context one cannot ignore those connotations, for it is the antithesis of the darkness. The first thing God does is correct the darkness; without the light there is only chaos.

G TN Heb “And God saw the light, that it was good.” The verb “saw” in this passage

was moving^A over the surface^B of the water.^C ³ God said,^D “Let there be^E light.”^F And there was light! ⁴ God saw^G that the light was good,^H so God separated^I the light from the darkness. ⁵ God called^J the light “day” and the darkness^K “night.” There was evening, and there was morning, marking the first day.^L

⁶ God said, “Let there be an expanse^M in the midst of the waters and let it separate water^N from water.” ⁷ So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it.^O It was so.^P ⁸ God called the expanse “sky.”^Q There was evening, and there was morning, a second day.

⁹ God said, “Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place^R and let dry ground appear.”^S It was so.^T ¹⁰ God called the dry ground “land”^U and the gathered waters he called “seas.” God saw that it was good.

carries the meaning “reflected on,” “surveyed,” “concluded,” “noted.” It is a description of reflection of the mind—it is God’s opinion.

H TN The Hebrew word טוב (*tov*) in this context signifies whatever enhances, promotes, produces, or is conducive for life. It is the light that God considers “good,” not the darkness. Whatever is conducive to life in God’s creation is good, for God himself is good, and that goodness is reflected in all of his works.

I TN The verb “separate, divide” here explains how God used the light to dispel the darkness. It did not do away with the darkness completely, but made a separation. The light came alongside the darkness, but they are mutually exclusive—a theme that will be developed in the Gospel of John (cf. John 1:5).

SN The idea of separation is critical to this chapter. *God separated* light from darkness, upper water from lower water, day from night, etc. The verb is important to the Law in general. In Leviticus God separates between clean and unclean, holy and profane (Lev 10:10, 11:47 and 20:24); in Exodus God separates the Holy Place from the Most Holy Place (Exod 26:33). There is a preference for the light over the darkness, just as there will be a preference for the upper waters, the rain water which is conducive to life, over the sea water.

J TN Heb “he called to,” meaning “he named.”

SN *God called.* Seven times in this chapter naming or blessing follows some act of creation. There is clearly a point being made beyond the obvious idea of naming. In the Babylonian creation story *Enuma Elish*, naming is equal to creating. In the Bible the act of naming, like creating, can be an indication of sovereignty (see 2 Kgs 23:34). In this verse God is sovereign even over the darkness.

K TN Heb “and the darkness he called night.” The words “he called” have not been repeated in the translation for stylistic reasons.

L TN Another option is to translate, “Evening came, and then morning came.” This formula closes the six days of creation. It seems to follow the Jewish order of reckoning time: from evening to morning. Day one started with the dark, continued through the

creation of light, and ended with nightfall. Another alternative would be to translate, “There was night and then there was day, one day.”

SN *The first day.* The exegetical evidence suggests the word “day” in this chapter refers to a literal twenty-four hour day. It is true that the word can refer to a longer period of time (see Isa 61:2, or the idiom in 2:4, “in the day,” that is, “when”). But this chapter uses “day,”

“night,” “morning,” “evening,” “years,” and “seasons.” Consistency would require sorting out how all these terms could be used to express ages. Also, when the Hebrew word יום (*yom*) is used with a numerical adjective, it refers to a literal day. Furthermore, the commandment to keep the sabbath clearly favors this interpretation. One is to work for six days and then rest on the seventh, just as God did when he worked at creation.

M TN The Hebrew word refers to an expanse of air pressure between the surface of the sea and the clouds, separating water below from water above. In v. 8 it is called “sky.”

SN *An expanse.* In the poetic texts the writers envision, among other things, something rather strong and shiny, no doubt influencing the traditional translation “firmament” (cf. NRSV “dome”). Job 37:18 refers to the skies poured out like a molten mirror. Dan 12:3 and Ezek 1:22 portray it as shiny. The sky or atmosphere may have seemed like a glass dome. For a detailed study of the Hebrew conception of the heavens and sky, see L. I. J. Stadelmann, *The Hebrew Conception of the World* (AnBib), 37–60.

N TN Heb “the waters from the waters.”

O TN Heb “the expanse.”

P TN This statement indicates that it happened the way God designed it, underscoring the connection between word and event.

Q TN Though the Hebrew word can mean “heaven,” it refers in this context to “the sky.”

R SN *Let the water...be gathered to one place.* In the beginning the water covered the whole earth; now the water was to be restricted to an area to form the ocean. The picture is one of the dry land as an island with the sea surrounding it. Again the sovereignty of God is revealed. Whereas the pagans saw the sea as a force to be reckoned with, God controls the boundaries of the sea. And in the judgment at the flood he will blur the boundaries so that chaos returns.

S TN When the waters are collected to one place, dry land emerges above the surface of the receding water.

T TN Heb “earth,” but here the term refers to the dry ground as opposed to the sea.

A TN The Hebrew construction employs a cognate accusative, where the nominal object (“vegetation”) derives from the verbal root employed. It stresses the abundant productivity that God created.

SN *Vegetation.* The Hebrew word translated “vegetation” (אֶשְׂבָּת, *deshe*) normally means “grass,” but here it probably refers more generally to vegetation that includes many of the plants and trees. In the verse the plants and the trees are qualified as self-perpetuating with seeds, but not the word “vegetation,” indicating it is the general term and the other two terms are sub-categories of it. Moreover, in vv. 29 and 30 the word vegetation/grass does not appear. Smr adds an “and” before the fruit trees, indicating it saw the arrangement as bipartite (Smr tends to eliminate asyndetic constructions).

B TN The conjunction “and” is not in the Hebrew text, but has been supplied in the translation to clarify the relationship of the clauses.

C SN *After their kinds.* The Hebrew word translated “kind” (מִיָּד, *min*) indicates again that God was concerned with defining and dividing time, space, and species. The point is that creation was with order, as opposed to chaos. And what God created and distinguished with boundaries was not to be confused (see Lev 19:19 and Deut 22:9–11).

D SN *Let there be lights.* Light itself was created before the light-bearers. The order would not seem strange to the ancient Hebrew mind that did not automatically link daylight with the sun (note that dawn and dusk appear to have light without the sun).

E TN The language describing the cosmos, which reflects a prescientific view of the world, must be interpreted as phenomenal, describing what appears to be the case. The sun and the moon are not *in* the sky (below the clouds), but from the viewpoint of a person standing on the earth, they appear that way. Even today we use similar phenomenological expressions, such as “the sun is rising” or “the stars in the sky.”

F TN The text has “for signs and for seasons and for days and years.” It seems likely from the meanings of the words involved that “signs” is the main idea, followed by two categories, “seasons” and “days and years.” This is the simplest explanation, and one that matches vv. 11–13. It could even be rendered “signs for the

¹¹ God said, “Let the land produce vegetation:^A plants yielding seeds and^B trees on the land bearing fruit with seed in it, according to their kinds.”^C It was so. ¹² The land produced vegetation—plants yielding seeds according to their kinds, and trees bearing fruit with seed in it according to their kinds. God saw that it was good. ¹³ There was evening, and there was morning, a third day.

¹⁴ God said, “Let there be lights^D in the expanse^E of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them be signs^F to indicate seasons and days and years, ¹⁵ and let them serve as lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” It was so. ¹⁶ God made two great lights^G—the greater light to rule over the day and the lesser light to rule over the night. He made the stars also.^H ¹⁷ God placed the lights^I in the expanse of the sky to shine on the earth, ¹⁸ to preside over the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness.^J God saw that it was good. ¹⁹ There was evening, and there was morning, a fourth day.

²⁰ God said, “Let the water swarm with swarms^K of living creatures and let birds fly^L above the earth across the expanse of the sky.” ²¹ God created the great sea creatures^M and every living and moving thing with which the water swarmed, according to their kinds, and every winged bird according to its kind. God saw that it was good. ²² God blessed them^N and said, “Be fruitful and multiply and fill the water in the seas, and let the birds multiply on the earth.”^O ²³ There was evening, and there was morning, a fifth day.

²⁴ God said, “Let the land produce living creatures according to their kinds: cattle, creeping things, and wild animals,

fixed seasons, that is [explicative *vav* (ו)] days and years.”

SN *Let them be for signs.* The point is that the sun and the moon were important to fix the days for the seasonal celebrations for the worshipping community.

G SN *Two great lights.* The text goes to great length to discuss the creation of these lights, suggesting that the subject was very important to the ancients. Since these “lights” were considered deities in the ancient world, the section serves as a strong polemic (see G. Hasel, “The Polemical Nature of the Genesis Cosmology,” *EVQ* 46 [1974]: 81–102). The Book of Genesis is affirming they are created entities, not deities. To underscore this the text does not even give them names. If used here, the usual names for the sun and moon [*Shemesh* and *Yaridh*, respectively] might have carried pagan connotations, so they are simply described as greater and lesser lights. Moreover, they serve in the capacity that God gives them, which would not be the normal function the pagans ascribed to them. They merely divide, govern, and give light in God’s creation. H TN *Heb* “and the stars.” Now the term “stars” is added as a third object of the verb “made.” Perhaps the language is phenomenological, meaning that the stars appeared in the sky from this time forward.

I TN *Heb* “them”; the referent (the lights mentioned in the preceding verses) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

J SN In days one to three there is a naming by God; in days five and six there is a blessing by God. But on day four there is neither. It could be a mere stylistic

variation. But it could also be a deliberate design to avoid naming “sun” and “moon” or promoting them beyond what they are, things that God made to serve in his creation.

K TN The Hebrew text again uses a cognate construction (“swarm with swarms”) to emphasize the abundant fertility. The idea of the verb is one of swift movement back and forth, literally swarming. This verb is used in Exod 1:7 to describe the rapid growth of the Israelite population in bondage.

L TN The Hebrew text uses the *Polel* form of the verb instead of the simple *Qal*; it stresses a swarming flight again to underscore the abundant fruitfulness.

M TN For the first time in the narrative proper the verb “create” (בָּרָא, *bará*) appears. (It is used

in the summary statement of v. 1.) The author wishes to underscore that these creatures—even the great ones—are part of God’s perfect creation. The Hebrew term *tanninim* is used for snakes (Exod 7:9), crocodiles (Ezek 29:3), or other powerful animals (Jer 51:34). In Isa 27:1 the word is used to describe a mythological sea creature that symbolizes God’s enemies.

N TN While the translation “blessed” has been retained here for the sake of simplicity, it would be most helpful to paraphrase it as “God endowed them with fruitfulness” or something similar, for here it refers to God’s giving the animals the capacity to reproduce. The expression “blessed” needs clarification in its different contexts, for it is one of the unifying themes of the Book of Genesis. The divine blessing occurs after works of creation and is intended to continue that work—the word of blessing guarantees success. The word means “to enrich; to endow,” and the most visible evidence of that enrichment is productivity or fruitfulness. See C. Westermann, *Blessing in the Bible and the Life of the Church* (OBT).

O SN The instruction God gives to creation is properly a fuller expression of the statement just made (“God blessed them”), that he enriched them with the ability to reproduce. It is not saying that these were rational creatures who heard and obeyed the word; rather, it stresses that fruitfulness in the animal world is a result of the divine decree and not of some pagan cultic ritual for fruitfulness. The repeated emphasis of “be fruitful—multiply—fill” adds to this abundance God has given to life. The meaning is

underscored by the similar sounds: בָּרָךְ (*barakh*) with בָּרָה (*bará*), and פָּרָה (*pa-rah*) with רָבָה (*ravah*).
A TN There are three groups of land animals here: the cattle or livestock (mostly domesticated), things that creep or move close to the ground (such as reptiles or rodents), and the wild animals (all animals of the field). The three terms are general classifications without specific details.

B SN The plural form of the verb has been the subject of much discussion through the years, and not surprisingly several suggestions have been put forward. Many Christian theologians interpret it as an early hint of plurality within the Godhead, but this view imposes later trinitarian concepts on the ancient text. Some have suggested the plural verb indicates majesty, but the plural of majesty is not used with verbs. C. Westermann (*Genesis*, 1:145) argues for a plural of “deliberation” here, but his proposed examples of this use (2 Sam 24:14; Isa 6:8) do not actually support his theory. In 2 Sam 24:14 David uses the plural as representative of all Israel, and in Isa 6:8 the LORD speaks on behalf of his heavenly court. In its ancient Israelite context the plural is most naturally understood as referring to God and his heavenly court (see 1 Kgs 22:19–22; Job 1:6–12; 2:1–6; Isa 6:1–8). (The most well-known members of this court are God’s messengers, or angels. In Gen 3:5 the serpent may refer to this group as “gods/divine beings.” See the note on the word “evil” in 3:5.) If this is the case, God invites the heavenly court to participate at the creation of humankind (perhaps in the role of offering praise, see Job 38:7), but he himself is the one who does the actual creative work (v. 27). Of course, this view does assume that the members of the heavenly court possess the divine “image” in some way. Since the image is closely associated with rulership, perhaps they share the divine image in that they, together with God and under his royal authority, are the executive authority over the world.

C TN The Hebrew word is אָדָם (*‘adam*), which can sometimes refer to man, as opposed to woman. The term refers here to humankind, comprised of male and female. The singular is clearly collective (see the plural verb, “[that] they may rule” in v. 26b) and the referent is defined specifically as “male and female” in v. 27. Usage elsewhere in Gen 1–11 supports this as well. In 5:2 we read: “Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and called their name ‘humankind’ (אָדָם).” The noun also refers to humankind in 6:1, 5–7 and in 9:5–6.

D TN The two prepositions translated “in” and “after” (or “according to”) have overlapping fields of meaning and in this context seem to be virtually equivalent. In

each according to its kind.”^A It was so. ²⁵God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the cattle according to their kinds, and all the creatures that creep along the ground according to their kinds. God saw that it was good.

²⁶Then God said, “Let us make^B humankind^C in our image, after our likeness,^D so they may rule^E over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air, over the cattle, and over all the earth,^F and over all the creatures that move^G on the earth.”

²⁷ God created humankind^I in his own image, in the image of God he created them,^J male and female he created them.^K

²⁸God blessed^L them and said^M to them, “Be fruitful and multiply! Fill the earth and subdue it!^M Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and every creature that moves on the ground.”^N ²⁹Then God said, “I now^O give you

5:3 they are reversed with the two words. The word צֶלֶם (*tselem*, “image”) is used frequently of statues, models, and images—replicas (see D. J. A. Clines, “The Etymology of Hebrew *selem*,” *JNSL* 3 [1974]: 19–25). The word דְּמוּת (*demut*, “likeness”) is an abstract noun; its verbal root means “to be like; to resemble.” In the Book of Genesis the two terms describe human beings who in some way reflect the form and the function of the creator. The form is more likely stressing the spiritual rather than the physical. The “image of God” would be the God-given mental and spiritual capacities that enable people to relate to God and to serve him by ruling over the created order as his earthly vice-regents.
SN In our image, after our likeness.

Similar language is used in the instructions for building the tabernacle. Moses was told to make it “according to the pattern” he was shown on the mount (Exod 25:9, 10). Was he shown a form, a replica, of the spiritual sanctuary in the heavenly places? In any case, what was produced on earth functioned as the heavenly sanctuary does, but with limitations.
E TN Following the cohortative (“-let us make”), the prefixed verb form with *vav* (ו) conjunctive indicates purpose/result (see Gen 19:20; 34:23; 2 Sam 3:21). God’s purpose in giving humankind his image is that they might rule the created order on behalf of the heavenly king and his royal court. So the divine image, however it is defined, gives humankind the capacity and/or authority to rule over creation.

F TC The MT reads “earth”; the Syriac reads “wild animals” (cf. NRSV).
G TN *Heb* “creep” (also in v. 28).

H TN The Hebrew text has the article prefixed to the noun (אָדָם, *hāadam*). The article does not distinguish man from woman here (“the man” as opposed to “the woman”), but rather indicates previous reference (see v. 26, where the noun appears without the article). It has the same function as English “the aforementioned.”
I TN The third person suffix on the participle אָם (*‘et*) is singular here, but collective.

J SN The distinction of “humankind” as “male” and “female” is another point of separation in God’s creation. There is no possibility that the verse is teaching that humans were first androgynous

(having both male and female physical characteristics) and afterward were separated. The mention of male and female prepares for the blessing to follow.

K TN As in v. 22 the verb “bless” here means “to endow with the capacity to reproduce and be fruitful,” as the following context indicates. As in v. 22, the statement directly precedes the command “be fruitful and

multiply.” The verb carries this same nuance in Gen 17:16 (where God’s blessing of Sarai imparts to her the capacity to bear a child); Gen 48:16 (where God’s blessing of Joseph’s sons is closely associated with their having numerous descendants); and Deut 7:13 (where God’s blessing is associated with fertility in general, including numerous descendants). See also Gen 49:25 (where Jacob uses the noun derivative in referring to “blessings of the breast and womb,” an obvious reference to fertility) and Gen 27:27 (where the verb is used of a field to which God has given the capacity to produce vegetation).
L TN *Heb* “and God said.” For stylistic reasons “God” has not been repeated here in the translation.

M TN Elsewhere the Hebrew verb translated “subdue” means “to enslave” (2 Chr 28:10; Neh 5:5; Jer 34:11, 16), “to conquer,” (Num 32:22, 29; Josh 18:1; 2 Sam 8:1; 1 Chr 22:18; Zech 9:13; and probably Mic 7:19), and “to assault sexually” (Esth 7:8). None of these nuances adequately meets the demands of this context, for humankind is not viewed as having an adversarial relationship with the world. The general meaning of the verb appears to be “to bring under one’s control for one’s advantage.” In Gen 1:28 one might paraphrase it as follows: “harness its potential and use its resources for your benefit.” In an ancient Israelite context this would suggest cultivating its fields, mining its mineral riches, using its trees for construction, and domesticating its animals.

N SN The several imperatives addressed to both males and females together (plural imperative forms) actually form two commands: reproduce and rule. God’s word is not merely a form of blessing, but is now addressed to them personally; this is a distinct emphasis with the creation of human beings. But with the blessing comes the ability to be fruitful and to rule. In procreation they will share in the divine work of creating human life and passing on the divine image (see 5:1–3); in ruling they will serve as God’s vice-regents on earth. They together, the human race collectively, have the responsibility of seeing to the welfare of that which is put under them and the privilege of using it for their benefit.

O TN The text uses הִנֵּה (*hinneh*), often archaically translated “behold.” It is often used to express the dramatic present, the immediacy of an event—“Look, this is what I am doing!”

A SN G. J. Wenham (*Genesis* [WBC], 1:34) points out that there is nothing in the passage that prohibits the man and the woman from eating meat. He suggests that eating meat came after the fall. Gen 9:3 may then ratify the postfall practice of eating meat rather than inaugurate the practice, as is often understood.

B TN The phrase “I give” is not in the Hebrew text but has been supplied in the translation for clarification.

C TN The Hebrew text again uses הִנֵּה (*hinneh*) for the sake of vividness. It is a particle that goes with the gesture of pointing, calling attention to something.

D TN See the note on the phrase “the heavens and the earth” in 1:1.

E TN *Heb* “and all the host of them.” Here the “host” refers to all the entities and creatures that God created to populate the world.

F TN *Heb* “on/in the seventh day.”

G TN *Heb* “his work which he did [or “made”].”

H TN The Hebrew term שָׁבַת (*shabat*) can be translated “to rest” (“and he rested”) but it basically means “to cease.” This is not a rest from exhaustion; it is the cessation of the work of creation.

I TN The verb is usually translated “and sanctified it.” The Piel verb קָדַשׁ (*qiddesh*) means “to make something holy; to set something apart; to distinguish it.” On the literal level the phrase means essentially that God made this day different. But within the context of the Law, it means that the day belonged to God; it was for rest from ordinary labor, worship, and spiritual service. The day belonged to God.

J TN *Heb* “God.” The pronoun (“he”) has been employed in the translation for stylistic reasons.

K TN *Heb* “for on it he ceased from all his work which God created to make.” The last infinitive construct and the verb before it form a verbal hendiadys, the infinitive becoming the modifier—“which God creatively made,” or “which God made in his creating.”

L TN The Hebrew phrase אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת (*elleh toledot*) is traditionally translated as “these are the generations of” because the noun was derived from the verb “beget.” Its usage, however, shows that it introduces more than genealogies; it begins a narrative that traces what became of the entity or individual mentioned in

every seed-bearing plant on the face of the entire earth and every tree that has fruit with seed in it. They will be yours for food.^A ³⁰And to all the animals of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to all the creatures that move on the ground—everything that has the breath of life in it—I give^B every green plant for food.” It was so.

³¹God saw all that he had made—and it was very good!^C There was evening, and there was morning, the sixth day.

2 The heavens and the earth^D were completed with everything that was in them.^E ²By^F the seventh day God finished the work that he had been doing,^G and he ceased^H on the seventh day all the work that he had been doing. ³God blessed the seventh day and made it holy^I because on it he ceased all the work that he^J had been doing in creation.^K

The Creation of Man and Woman

⁴This is the account^L of the heavens and the earth^M when they were created—when^N the LORD God^O made the earth and heavens.^P

⁵Now^Q no shrub of the field had yet grown on the earth, and no plant of the field^R had yet sprouted, for the LORD

the heading. In fact, a good paraphrase of this heading would be: “This is what became of the heavens and the earth,” for what follows is not another account of creation but a tracing of events from creation through the fall and judgment (the section extends from 2:4 through 4:26). See M. H. Woudstra, “The *Toledot* of the Book of Genesis and Their Redemptive-Historical Significance,” *CTJ* 5 (1970): 184–89.

SN The expression *this is the account of* is an important title used throughout the Book of Genesis, serving as the organizing principle of the work. It is always a heading, introducing the subject matter that is to come. From the starting point of the title, the narrative traces the genealogy or the records or the particulars involved. Although some would make the heading in 2:4 a summary of creation (1:1–2:3), that goes against the usage in the book. As a heading it introduces the theme of the next section, the particulars about this creation that God made. Genesis 2 is not a simple parallel account of creation; rather, beginning with the account of the creation of man and women, the narrative tells what became of that creation. As a beginning, the construction of 2:4–7 forms a fine parallel to the construction of 1:1–3. The subject matter of each תּוֹלְדוֹת (*toledot*, “this is the account of”) section of the book traces a decline or a deterioration through to the next beginning point, and each is thereby a microcosm of the book which begins with divine blessing in the garden, and ends with a coffin in Egypt. So, what became of the creation? Gen 2:4–4:26 will explain that sin entered the world and all but destroyed God’s perfect creation.

M TN See the note on the phrase “the heavens and the earth” in 1:1.

SN This is the only use of the Hebrew noun תּוֹלְדוֹת (*toledot*) in the book that is not followed by a personal name (e.g., “this is the account of Isaac”). The poetic parallelism reveals that even though the account may be about the creation, it is the creation the LORD God made.

N TN *Heb* “on the day.” In contrast to the numbered days in ch. 1 (see note on “day” at 1:5), “day” appears here in a phrase which means “at the time when.” It may but does not need to refer to a particular day. It can refer to a broader period of time (cp. Obad 11), though typically a short period of time pertaining to a particular event. Here it summarizes the seven days of creation as “when” the Lord created.

O SN Advocates of the so-called documentary hypothesis of pentateuchal authorship argue that the introduction of the name

Yahweh (LORD) here indicates that a new source (designated J), a parallel account of creation, begins here. In this scheme Gen 1:1–2:3 is understood as the priestly source (designated P) of creation. Critics of this approach often respond that the names, rather than indicating separate sources, were chosen to reflect the subject matter (see U. Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis*). Gen 1:1–2:3 is the grand prologue of the book, showing the sovereign God creating by decree. The narrative beginning in 2:4 is the account of what this God invested in his creation. Since it deals with the close, personal involvement of the covenant God, the narrative uses the covenantal name Yahweh (LORD) in combination with the name God. For a recent discussion of the documentary hypothesis from a theologically conservative perspective, see D. A. Garrett, *Rethinking Genesis*. For an attempt by source critics to demonstrate the legitimacy of the source critical method on the basis of ancient Near Eastern parallels, see J. H. Tigay, ed., *Empirical Models for Biblical Criticism*. For reaction to the source critical method by literary critics, see I. M. Kikawada and A. Quinn, *Before Abraham Was*; R. Alter, *The Art of Biblical Narrative*, 131–54; and Adele Berlin, *Poetics and Interpretation of Biblical Narrative*, 111–34.

P TN See the note on the phrase “the heavens and the earth” in 1:1; the order here is reversed, but the meaning is the same.

Q TN *Heb* “Now every sprig of the field before it was.” The verb forms, although appearing to be imperfects, are technically preterites coming after the adverb כִּי (*terem*). The word order (conjunction + subject + predicate) indicates a disjunctive clause, which provides background information for the following narrative (as in 1:2). Two negative clauses are given (“before any sprig...,” and “before any cultivated grain” existed), followed by two causal clauses explaining them, and then a positive circumstantial clause is given—again dealing with water as in 1:2 (water would well up).

R TN The first term, שִׁיחַ (*siakh*), probably

refers to the wild, uncultivated plants (see Gen 21:15; Job 30:4, 7); whereas the second, עֵשֶׂב (*‘esev*), refers to cultivated grains. It is a way of saying: “back before anything was growing.”

A T The two causal clauses explain the first two disjunctive clauses: There was no uncultivated, general growth because there was no rain, and there were no grains because there was no man to cultivate the soil.

SN The last clause in v. 5, “and there was no man to cultivate the ground,” anticipates the curse and the expulsion from the garden (Gen 3:23).

B T The conjunction *vav* (ו) introduces a third disjunctive clause. The Hebrew word תַּיִל (*‘ed*) was traditionally translated “mist” because of its use in Job 36:27. However, an Akkadian cognate *edu* in Babylonian texts refers to subterranean springs or waterways. Such a spring would fit the description in this context, since this water “goes up” and waters the ground.

C T *Heb* “was going up.” The verb is an imperfect form, which in this narrative context carries a customary nuance, indicating continual action in past time.

D T The perfect with *vav* (ו) consecutive carries the same nuance as the preceding verb. Whenever it would well up, it would water the ground.

E T The Hebrew word אֲדָמָה (*‘adamah*) actually means “ground; fertile soil.”

SN Here is an indication of fertility. The water would well up from the *earth* (אֶרֶץ, *‘erets*) and water all the surface of the *fertile soil* (אֲדָמָה). It is from that soil that the man (אָדָם, *‘adam*) was made (Gen 2:7).

F T Or “fashioned.” The prefixed verb form with *vav* (ו) consecutive initiates narrative sequence. The Hebrew word יָצַר (*yatsar*) means “to form” or “to fashion,” usually by plan or design (see the related noun יָצָר [*yetser*] in Gen 6:5). It is the term for an artist’s work (the Hebrew term יוֹצֵר [*yotser*] refers to a potter; see Jer 18:2–4.)

SN Various traditions in the ancient Near East reflect this idea of creation. Egyptian drawings show a deity turning little people off of the potter’s wheel with another deity giving them life. In the Bible humans are related to the soil and return to it (see 3:19; see also Job 4:19, 20:9; and Isa 29:16).

G T The line literally reads “And Yahweh God formed the man, soil, from the ground.” “Soil” is an adverbial accusative, identifying the material from which the man was made.

H T The Hebrew word נְשָׁמָה (*neshamah*, “breath”) is used for God and for the life imparted to humans, not animals (see T. C. Mitchell, “The Old Testament Usage of *Neshama*,” VT 11 [1961]: 177–87). Its usage in the Bible conveys more than a breathing living organism (הַנְּשָׁמָה, *nefesh khayyah*). Whatever is given this breath of life becomes animated with the

God had not caused it to rain on the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground.^A ⁶ Springs^B would well up^C from the earth and water^D the whole surface of the ground.^E ⁷ The LORD God formed^F the man from the soil of the ground^G and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life,^H and the man became a living being.^I

⁸ The LORD God planted an orchard^J in the east,^K in Eden,^L and there he placed the man he had formed.^M ⁹ The LORD God made all kinds of trees grow from the soil,^N every tree that was pleasing to look at^O and good for food. (Now^P the tree of life^Q and the tree of the knowledge of good and evil^R were in the middle of the orchard.)

¹⁰ Now^S a river flows^T

life from God, has spiritual understanding (Job 32:8), and has a functioning conscience (Prov 20:27).

SN Human life is described here as consisting of a body (made from soil from the ground) and breath (given by God). Both animals and humans are called “a living being” (נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה) but human-kind became that in a different and more significant way.

I T The Hebrew term נֶפֶשׁ (*nefesh*, “being”) is often translated “soul,” but the word usually refers to the whole person. The phrase נֶפֶשׁ חַיָּה (*nefesh khayyah*, “living being”) is used of both animals and human beings (see 1:20, 24, 30; 2:19).

J T Traditionally “garden,” but the subsequent description of this “garden” makes it clear that it is an orchard of fruit trees.

SN The LORD God planted an orchard. Nothing is said of how the creation of this orchard took place. A harmonization with chap. 1 might lead to the conclusion that it was by decree, prior to the creation of human life. But the narrative sequence here in chap. 2 suggests the creation of the garden followed the creation of the man. Note also the past perfect use of the perfect in the relative clause in the following verse.

K T *Heb* “from the east” or “off east.”

SN One would assume this is east from the perspective of the land of Israel, particularly since the rivers in the area are identified as the rivers in those eastern regions.

L SN The name *Eden* (עֵדֵן, *eden*) means “pleasure” in Hebrew.

M T The perfect verbal form here requires the past perfect translation since it describes an event that preceded the event described in the main clause.

N T *Heb* “ground,” referring to the fertile soil.

O T *Heb* “desirable of sight [or “appearance-ness].” The phrase describes the kinds of trees that are visually pleasing and yield fruit that is desirable to the appetite.

P T The verse ends with a disjunctive clause providing a parenthetical bit of information about the existence of two special trees in the garden.

Q T In light of Gen 3:22, the construction “tree of life” should be interpreted to mean a tree that produces life-giving fruit (objective genitive) rather than a living tree (attributive genitive). See E. O. James, *The Tree of Life* (SHR); and R. Marcus, “The Tree of Life in Proverbs,” *JBL* 62 (1943): 117–20.

R T The expression “tree of the knowledge of good and evil” must be interpreted to mean that the tree would produce

fruit which, when eaten, gives special knowledge of “good and evil.” Scholars debate what this phrase means here. For a survey of opinions, see G. J. Wenham, *Genesis* (WBC), 1:62–64. One view is that “good” refers to that which enhances, promotes, and produces life, while “evil” refers to anything that hinders, interrupts or destroys life. So eating from

this tree would change human nature—people would be able to alter life for better (in their thinking) or for worse. See D. J. A. Clines, “The Tree of Knowledge and the Law of Yahweh,” VT 24 (1974): 8–14; and I. Engnell, “‘Knowledge’ and ‘Life’ in the Creation Story,” *Wisdom in Israel and in the Ancient Near East* [VTSup], 103–19. Another view understands the “knowledge of good and evil” as the capacity to discern between moral good and evil. The following context suggests the tree’s fruit gives one wisdom (see the phrase “capable of making one wise” in 3:6, as well as the note there on the word “wise”), which certainly includes the capacity to discern between good and evil. Such wisdom is characteristic of divine beings, as the serpent’s promise implies (3:5) and as 3:22 makes clear. (Note, however, that this capacity does not include the ability to do what is right.) God prohibits man from eating of the tree. The prohibition becomes a test to see if man will be satisfied with his role and place, or if he will try to ascend to the divine level. There will be a time for man to possess moral discernment/wisdom, as God reveals and imparts it to him, but it is not something to be grasped at in an effort to become “a god.” In fact, the command to be obedient was the first lesson in moral discernment/wisdom. God was essentially saying: “Here is lesson one—respect my authority and commands. Disobey me and you will die.” When man disobeys, he decides he does not want to acquire moral wisdom God’s way, but instead tries to rise immediately to the divine level. Once man has acquired such divine wisdom by eating the tree’s fruit (3:22), he must be banned from the garden so that he will not be able to achieve his goal of being godlike and thus live forever, a divine characteristic (3:24). Ironically, man now has the capacity to discern good from evil (3:22), but he is morally corrupted and rebellious and will not consistently choose what is right.

S T The disjunctive clause (note the construction conjunction + subject + predicate) introduces an entire paragraph about the richness of the region in the east.

T T The Hebrew active participle may be translated here as indicating past durative action, “was flowing,” or as a present durative, “flows.” Since this river was the source of the rivers mentioned in vv. 11–14, which appear to describe a situation contemporary with the narrator, it is preferable to translate the participle in v. 10 with the

present tense. This suggests that Eden and its orchard still existed in the narrator's time. According to ancient Jewish tradition, Enoch was taken to the Garden of Eden, where his presence insulated the garden from the destructive waters of Noah's flood. See *Job*. 4:23-24.

A SN Eden is portrayed here as a source of life-giving rivers (that is, perennial streams). This is no surprise because its orchard is where the tree of life is located. Eden is a source of life, but tragically its orchard is no longer accessible to humankind.

The river flowing out of Eden is a tantalizing reminder of this. God continues to provide life-giving water to sustain physical existence on the earth, but immortality has been lost.

B TN The imperfect verb form has the same nuance as the preceding participle. (If the participle is taken as past durative, then the imperfect would be translated "was dividing.")

C TN Or "branches"; Heb "heads." Cf. NEB "streams"; NASB "rivers."

D TN Heb "it is that which goes around." E TN Heb "good."

F TN The Hebrew term translated "pearls" may be a reference to resin (cf. NIV "aromatic resin") or another precious stone (cf. NEB, NASB, NRSV "bdellium").

G TN Or "onyx."

H TN Heb "it is that which goes around." I SN Cush. In the Bible the Hebrew word כּוּשׁ (*kush*, "Kush") often refers to Ethiopia (so KJV, CEV), but here it must refer to a region in Mesopotamia, the area of the later Cassite dynasty of Babylon. See Gen 10:8 as well as E. A. Speiser, *Genesis* (AB), 20.

J TN Heb "Asshur" (so NEB, NIV).

K TN The Hebrew verb נָחַד (*nuakh*, translated here as "placed") is a different verb than the one used in 2:8.

L TN Traditionally translated "the Garden of Eden," the context makes it clear that the garden (or orchard) was in Eden (making "Eden" a genitive of location).

M TN Heb "to work it and to keep it."

N SN Note that man's task is to *care for and maintain* the trees of the orchard. Not until after the fall, when he is condemned to cultivate the soil, does this task change.

O SN This is the first time in the Bible that the verb *tsavah* (צָוָה, "to command") appears. Whatever the man had to do in the garden, the main focus of the narrative is on keeping God's commandments. God created humans with the capacity to obey him and then tested them with commands.

P TN The imperfect verb form probably carries the nuance of permission ("you may eat") since the man is not being

from Eden^A to water the orchard, and from there it divides^B into four headstreams.^C ¹¹The name of the first is Pishon; it runs through^D the entire land of Havilah, where there is gold. ¹²(The gold of that land is pure;^E pearls^F and lapis lazuli^G are also there). ¹³The name of the second river is Gihon; it runs through^H the entire land of Cush.^I ¹⁴The name of the third river is Tigris; it runs along the east side of Assyria.^J The fourth river is the Euphrates.

¹⁵The LORD God took the man and placed^K him in the orchard in^L Eden to care for it and to maintain it.^{M,N} ¹⁶Then the LORD God commanded^O the man, "You may freely eat^P fruit^Q from every tree of the orchard, ¹⁷but^R you must not eat^S from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when^T you eat from it you will surely die."^U

¹⁸The LORD God said, "It is not good for the man to be alone.^V I will make a companion^W for him who corresponds to him."^X ¹⁹The LORD God formed^Y out of the ground every living animal of the field and every bird of the air. He brought them to the man to see what he would^Z name them, and whatever the man called each living creature, that was its name. ²⁰So the man named all the animals, the birds of the

commanded to eat from every tree. The accompanying infinitive absolute adds emphasis: "you may freely eat," or "you may eat to your heart's content."

Q TN The word "fruit" is not in the Hebrew text, but is implied as the direct object of the verb "eat." Presumably the only part of the tree the man would eat would be its fruit (cf. 3:2).

R TN The disjunctive clause here indicates contrast: "but from the tree of the knowledge...."

S TN The negated imperfect verb form indicates prohibition, "you must not eat."

T TN Or "in the very day, as soon as." If one understands the expression to have this more precise meaning, then the following narrative presents a problem, for the man does not die physically as soon as he eats from the tree. In this case one may argue that spiritual death is in view. If physical death is in view here, there are two options to explain the following narrative: (1) The following phrase "You will surely die" concerns mortality which ultimately results in death (a natural paraphrase would be, "You will become mortal"), or (2) God mercifully gave man a reprieve, allowing him to live longer than he deserved.

U TN Heb "dying you will die." The imperfect verb form here has the nuance of the specific future because it is introduced with the temporal clause, "when you eat...you will die." That certainty is underscored with the infinitive absolute, "you will surely die."

SN The Hebrew text ("dying you will die") does not refer to two aspects of death ("dying spiritually, you will then die physically"). The construction simply emphasizes the certainty of death, however it is defined. Death is essentially separation. To die physically means separation from the land of the living, but not extinction. To die spiritually means to be separated from God. Both occur with sin, although the physical alienation is more gradual than instant, and the spiritual is immediate, although the effects of it continue the separation.

V TN Heb "The being of man by himself is not good." The meaning of "good" must be defined contextually. Within the context of creation, in which God instructs humankind to be fruitful and multiply, the man alone cannot comply. Being alone prevents the man from fulfilling the design of creation and therefore is not good. W TN Traditionally "helper." The English word "helper," because it can connote so many different ideas, does not accurately convey the connotation of the Hebrew word עֲזָרָה (*'ezer*). Usage of the Hebrew term does not suggest a subor-

dinate role, a connotation which English "helper" can have. In the Bible God is frequently described as the "helper," the one who does for us what we cannot do for ourselves, the one who meets our needs. In this context the word seems to express the idea of an "indispensable companion." The woman would supply what the man was lacking in the design of creation and logically it would follow that the man would supply what she was lacking, although that is not stated here. See further M. L. Rosenzweig, "A Helper Equal to Him," *Jud* 139 (1986): 277-80.

X TN The Hebrew expression כִּנְעָדָה (*kenegdo*) literally means "according to the opposite of him." Translations such as "suitable [for]" (NASB, NIV), "matching," "corresponding to" all capture the idea. (Translations that render the phrase simply "partner" [cf. NEB, NRSV], while not totally inaccurate, do not reflect the nuance of correspondence and/or suitability.) The man's form and nature are matched by the woman's as she reflects him and complements him. Together they correspond. In short, this prepositional phrase indicates that she has everything that God had invested in him. Y TN Or "fashioned." To harmonize the order of events with the chronology of chapter one, some translate the prefixed verb form with *vav* (ו) consecutive as a past perfect ("had formed," cf. NIV) here. (In chapter one the creation of the animals preceded the creation of man; here the animals are created after the man.) However, it is unlikely that the Hebrew construction can be translated in this way in the middle of this pericope, for the criteria for unmarked temporal overlay are not present here. See S. R. Driver, *A Treatise on the Use of the Tenses in Hebrew*, 84-88, and especially R. Buth, "Methodological Collision between Source Criticism and Discourse Analysis," *Biblical Hebrew and Discourse Linguistics*, 138-54. For a contrary viewpoint see *IBHS* 552-53 33.2.3 and C. J. Collins, "The Wayyiqtol as 'Pluperfect': When and Why," *TynBul* 46 (1995): 117-40. Z TN The imperfect verb form is future

from the perspective of the past time narrative.

A **TN** Here for the first time the Hebrew word אָדָם (*adam*) appears without the article, suggesting that it might now be the name “Adam” rather than “[the] man.” Translations of the Bible differ as to where they make the change from “man” to “Adam” (e.g., NASB and NIV translate “Adam” here, while NEB and NRSV continue to use “the man”; the KJV uses “Adam” twice in v. 19).

B **TN** *Heb* “there was not found a companion who corresponded to him.” The subject of the third masculine singular verb form is indefinite. Without a formally expressed subject the verb may be translated as passive: “one did not find = there was not found.”

C **TN** *Heb* “And the LORD God caused a deep sleep to fall on the man.”

D **TN** *Heb* “and he slept.” In the sequence the verb may be subordinated to the following verb to indicate a temporal clause (“while...”).

E **TN** Traditionally translated “rib,” the Hebrew word actually means “side.” The Hebrew text reads, “and he took one from his sides,” which could be rendered “part of his sides.” That idea may fit better the explanation by the man that the woman is his flesh and bone.

F **TN** *Heb* “closed up the flesh under it.”

G **TD** The Hebrew verb is בָּנָה (*banah*, “to make, to build, to construct”). The text states that the LORD God built the rib into a woman. Again, the passage gives no indication of precisely how this was done.

H **TD** The Hebrew term הַפְעַם (*happam*) means “the [this] time, this place,” or “now, finally, at last.” The expression conveys the futility of the man while naming the animals and finding no one who corresponded to him.

I **TD** The Hebrew text is very precise, stating: “of this one it will be said, ‘woman.’” The text is not necessarily saying that the man named his wife—that comes after the fall (Gen 3:20).

SN Some argue that naming implies the man’s authority or ownership over the woman here. Naming can indicate ownership or authority if one is calling someone or something by one’s name and/or calling a name over someone or something (see 2 Sam 12:28; 2 Chr 7:14; Isa 4:1; Jer 7:14; 15:16), especially if one is conquering and renaming a site. But the idiomatic construction used here (the Niphal of קָרָא [*qarā*] with the preposition ל [lamed]) does not suggest such an idea. In each case where it is used, the one naming discerns something about the object being named and gives it an appropriate name (see 1 Sam 9:9; 2 Sam 18:18; Prov 16:21; Isa 1:26; 32:5; 35:8; 62:4, 12; Jer 19:6). Adam is not so much naming the woman as he is discerning her close

air, and the living creatures of the field, but for Adam^A no companion who corresponded to him was found.^B ²¹So the LORD God caused the man to fall into a deep sleep,^C and while he was asleep,^D he took part of the man’s side^E and closed up the place with flesh.^F ²²Then the LORD God made^G a woman from the part he had taken out of the man, and he brought her to the man.²³ Then the man said,

“This one at last^H is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh; this one will be called^I ‘woman,’ for she was taken out of^J man.”^K

²⁴That is why^L a man leaves^M his father and mother and unites with^N his wife, and they become a new family.^O ²⁵The man and his wife were both naked,^P but they were not ashamed.^Q

relationship to him and referring to her accordingly. He may simply be anticipating that she will be given an appropriate name based on the discernible similarity. **J** **TN** Or “from” (but see v. 22).

K **SN** This poetic section expresses the correspondence between the man and the woman. She is bone of his bones, flesh of his flesh. Note the wordplay (paronomasia) between “woman” (אִשָּׁה, *ishah*) and “man” (אִישׁ, *ish*). On the surface it appears that the word for woman is the feminine form of the word for man. But the two words are not etymologically related. The sound and the sense give that impression, however, and make for a more effective wordplay.

L **TD** This statement, introduced by the Hebrew phrase עַל־כֵּן (*al ken*, “therefore” or “that is why”), is an editorial comment, not an extension of the quotation. The statement is describing what typically happens, not what will or should happen. It is saying, “This is why we do things the way we do.” It links a contemporary (with the narrator) practice with the historical event being narrated. The historical event narrated in v. 23 provides the basis for the contemporary practice described in v. 24. That is why the imperfect verb forms are translated with the present tense rather than future.

M **TD** The imperfect verb form has a habitual or characteristic nuance. For other examples of עַל־כֵּן (*al ken*, “therefore, that is why”) with the imperfect in a narrative framework, see Gen 10:9; 32:32 (the phrase “to this day” indicates characteristic behavior is in view); Num 21:14, 27; 1 Sam 5:5 (note “to this day”); 19:24 (perhaps the imperfect is customary here, “were saying”); 2 Sam 5:8. The verb translated “leave” (אַזַּב, *azav*) normally means “to abandon, to forsake, to leave behind, to discard,” when used with human subject and object (see Josh 22:3; 1 Sam 30:13; Ps 27:10; Prov 2:17; Isa 54:6; 60:15; 62:4; Jer 49:11). Within the context of the ancient Israelite extended family structure, this cannot refer to emotional or geographical separation. The narrator is using hyperbole to emphasize the change in perspective that typically overtakes a young man when his thoughts turn to love and marriage.

N **TD** The perfect with *vav* (ו) consecutive carries the same habitual or characteristic nuance as the preceding

imperfect. The verb is traditionally translated “cleaves [to]”; it has the basic idea of “stick with/to” (e.g., it is used of Ruth resolutely staying with her mother-in-law in Ruth 1:14). In this passage it describes the inseparable relationship between the man and the woman in marriage as God intended it.

O **TD** *Heb* “and they become one flesh.” The perfect with *vav* consecutive carries the same habitual

or characteristic nuance as the preceding verbs in the verse. The retention of the word “flesh” (בָּשָׂר, *basar*) in the translation often leads to improper or incomplete interpretations. The Hebrew word refers to more than just a sexual union. When they unite in marriage, the man and woman bring into being a new family unit (הָיָה plus preposition ל [hayah plus lamed] means “become”). The phrase “one flesh” occurs only here and must be interpreted in light of v. 23. There the man declares that the woman is bone of his bone and flesh of his flesh. To be one’s “bone and flesh” is to be related by blood to someone. For example, the phrase describes the relationship between Laban and Jacob (Gen 29:14); Abimelech and the Shechemites (Judg 9:2; his mother was a Shechemite); David and the Israelites (2 Sam 5:1); David and the elders of Judah (2 Sam 19:12); and David and his nephew Amasa (2 Sam 19:13; see 2 Sam 17:25; 1 Chr 2:16–17). The expression “one flesh” seems to indicate that they become, as it were, “kin,” at least legally (a new family unit is created) or metaphorically. In this first marriage in human history, the woman was literally formed from the man’s bone and flesh. Even though later marriages do not involve such a divine surgical operation, the first marriage sets the pattern for how later marriages are understood and explains why marriage supersedes the parent-child relationship.

P **TD** *Heb* “And the two of them were naked, the man and his wife.”

SN *Naked*. The motif of nakedness is introduced here and plays an important role in the next chapter. In the Bible nakedness conveys different things. In this context it signifies either innocence or integrity, depending on how those terms are defined. There is no fear of exploitation, no sense of vulnerability. But after the entrance of sin into the race, nakedness takes on a negative sense. It is then usually connected with the sense of vulnerability, shame, exploitation, and exposure (such as the idea of “uncovering nakedness” either in sexual exploitation or in captivity in war).

Q **TD** The imperfect verb form here has a customary nuance, indicating a continuing condition in past time. The meaning of the Hebrew term בּוֹשָׁם (*bosh*) is “to be

ashamed, to put to shame,” but its meaning is stronger than “to be embarrassed.” The word conveys the fear of exploitation or evil—enemies are put to shame through military victory. It indicates the feeling of shame that approximates a fear of evil.

A TN The chapter begins with a conjunctive clause (conjunction + subject + predicate) that introduces a new character and a new scene in the story.

B SN Many theologians identify or associate the *serpent* with Satan. In this view Satan comes in the disguise of a serpent or speaks through a serpent. This explains the serpent’s capacity to speak. While later passages in the Bible may indicate there was a satanic presence behind the serpent (see, for example, Rev 12:9), the immediate context pictures the serpent as simply one of the animals of the field created by God (see vv. 1, 14). An ancient Jewish interpretation explains the reference to the serpent in a literal manner, attributing the capacity to speak to all the animals in the orchard. This text (*Jub.* 3:28) states, “On that day [the day the man and woman were expelled from the orchard] the mouth of all the beasts and cattle and birds and whatever walked or moved was stopped from speaking because all of them used to speak to one another with one speech and one language [presumed to be Hebrew, see 12:26].” Josephus, *Ant.* 11.4 (1.41) attributes the serpent’s actions to jealousy. He writes that “the serpent, living in the company of Adam and his wife, grew jealous of the blessings which he supposed were destined for them if they obeyed God’s behests, and, believing that disobedience would bring trouble on them, he maliciously persuaded the woman to taste of the tree of wisdom.”

C TD The Hebrew word עָרוּם (*‘arum*) basically means “clever.” This idea then polarizes into the nuances “cunning” (in a negative sense, see Job 5:12; 15:5), and “prudent” in a positive sense (Prov 12:16, 23; 13:16; 14:8, 15, 18; 22:3; 27:12). This same polarization of meaning can be detected in related words derived from the same root (see Exod 21:14; Josh 9:4; 1 Sam 23:22; Job 5:13; Ps 83:3). The negative nuance obviously applies in Gen 3, where the snake attempts to talk the woman into disobeying God by using half-truths and lies.

SN There is a wordplay in Hebrew between the words “naked” (עָרוּםִים, *‘arumim*) in 2:25 and “shrewd” (עָרוּם, *‘arum*) in 3:1. The point seems to be that the integrity of the man and the woman is the focus of the serpent’s craftiness. At the beginning they are naked and he is shrewd; afterward, they will be covered and he will be cursed.

D TN Heb “animals of the field.”

E TD Heb “Indeed that God said.” The beginning of the quotation is elliptical and

The Temptation and the Fall

3 Now^A the serpent^B was more shrewd^C than any of the wild animals^D that the LORD God had made. He said to the woman, “Is it really true that^E God^F said, ‘You must not eat from any tree of the orchard?’”^G **2** The woman said to the serpent, “We may eat^H of the fruit from the trees of the orchard;³ but concerning the fruit of the tree that is in the middle of the orchard God said, ‘You must not eat from it, and you must not touch it,^I or else you will die.’”^J **4** The serpent said to the woman, “Surely you will not die,^K ⁵ for God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will open^L and you will be like God, knowing^M good and evil.”^N

⁶When^O the woman saw that the tree

therefore difficult to translate. One must supply a phrase like “is it true”: “Indeed, [is it true] that God said.”

F SN God. The serpent does not use the expression “Yahweh God” [LORD God] because there is no covenant relationship involved between God and the serpent. He only speaks of “God.” In the process the serpent draws the woman into his manner of speech so that she too only speaks of “God.”

G TD Heb “you must not eat from all the tree[s] of the orchard.” After the negated prohibitive verb, מִכֹּל (*mikkol*, “from all”) has the meaning “from any.” Note the construction in Lev 18:26, where the statement “you must not do from all these abominable things” means “you must not do any of these abominable things.” See Lev 22:25 and Deut 28:14 as well.

H TN There is a notable change between what the LORD God had said and what the woman says. God said “you may freely eat” (the imperfect with the infinitive absolute, see 2:16), but the woman omits the emphatic infinitive, saying simply “we may eat.” Her words do not reflect the sense of eating to her heart’s content.

I SN And you must not touch it. The woman adds to God’s prohibition, making it say more than God expressed. G. von Rad observes that it is as though she wanted to set a law for herself by means of this exaggeration (*Genesis* [OTL], 86).

J TD The Hebrew construction is פֶּן (*pen*) with the imperfect tense, which conveys a negative purpose: “lest you die” = “in order that you not die.” By stating the warning in this way, the woman omits the emphatic infinitive used by God (“you shall surely die,” see 2:17).

K TD The response of the serpent includes the infinitive absolute with a blatant negation equal to saying: “Not—you will surely die” (לֹא מוֹת תָּמוּתוּ, *lo’ mot temutun*). The construction makes this emphatic because normally the negative particle precedes the finite verb. The serpent is a liar, denying that there is a penalty for sin (see John 8:44).

SN Surely you will not die. Here the serpent is more aware of what the LORD God said than the woman was; he simply adds a blatant negation to what God said. In the account of Jesus’ temptation Jesus is victorious because he knows the scripture better than Satan (Matt 4:1–11).

L TD Or “you will have understanding.” This obviously refers to the acquisition

of the “knowledge of good and evil,” as the next statement makes clear.

M TN Or “like divine beings who know.” It is unclear how the plural participle translated “knowing” is functioning. On the one hand, יָדָעִי (*yode’ei*) could be taken as a substantival participle functioning as a predicative adjective in the sentence. In this case one might trans-

late: “You will be, like God himself, knowers of good and evil.” On the other hand, it could be taken as an attributive adjective modifying אֱלֹהִים (*‘elohim*). In this case אֱלֹהִים has to be taken as a numerical plural referring to “gods,” “divine or heavenly beings,” for if the one true God were the intended referent, a singular form of the participle would appear as a modifier. Following this line of interpretation, one could translate, “You will be like divine/heavenly beings who know good and evil.” The following context may support this translation, for in 3:22 God says to an unidentified group, “Look, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil.” It is possible that God is addressing his heavenly court (see the note on the word “make” in 1:26), the members of which can be called “gods” or “divine/heavenly beings” from the ancient Israelite perspective (cf. KJV, NAB, JPS). (We know some of these beings as messengers or “angels.”) An examination of parallel constructions shows that a predicative understanding (“you will be, like God himself, knowers of good and evil,”) is possible (see Gen 27:23, where “hairy” is predicative, complementing the verb “to be”). Other evidence suggests that the participle is attributive, modifying “divine/heavenly beings” (see Ps 31:12; Isa 1:30; 13:14; 16:2; 29:5; 58:11; Jer 14:9; 20:9; 23:9; 31:12; 48:4; 49:22; Hos 7:11; Amos 4:11). In all of these texts, where a comparative clause and accompanying adjective/participle follow a copulative (“to be”) verb, the adjective/participle is attributive after the noun in the comparative clause. The translation of “God” though is supported by how אֱלֹהִים (*‘elohim*) is used in the surrounding context where it always refers to the true God and many translations take it this way (cf. NIV, TNIV, RSV, NRSV, ESV, HCSB, NLT, NASB, REB, and NKJV). In this interpretation the plural participle refers to Adam and Eve.

N SN You will be like God, knowing good and evil. The serpent raises doubts about the integrity of God. He implies that the only reason for the prohibition was that God was protecting the divine domain. If the man and woman were to eat, they would enter into that domain. The temptation is to overstep divinely established boundaries. (See D. E. Gowan, *When Man Becomes God* [PTMS], 25.)

O TD Heb “And the woman saw.” The clause can be rendered as a temporal clause subordinate to the following verb in the sequence.

A **TN** *Heb* “that the tree was good for food.” The words “produced fruit that was” are not in the Hebrew text, but are implied.

B **TN** The Hebrew word תָּאָוָה (*tā’āvah*, translated “attractive” here) actually means “desirable.” This term and the later term נֶחְמַד (*nekhmad*, “desirable”) are synonyms.

SN *Attractive (Heb “desirable”)...desirable.* These are different words in Hebrew. The verbal roots for both of these forms appear in Deut 5:21 in the prohibition against coveting. Strong desires usually lead to taking.

C **TN** *Heb* “that good was the tree for food, and that desirable it was to the eyes, and desirable was the tree to make one wise.” On the connection between moral wisdom and the “knowledge of good and evil,” see the note on the word “evil” in 2:9.

SN *Desirable for making one wise.* The quest for wisdom can follow the wrong course, as indeed it does here. No one can become like God by disobeying God. It is that simple. The Book of Proverbs stresses that obtaining wisdom begins with the fear of God that is evidenced through obedience to his word. Here, in seeking wisdom, Eve disobeys God and ends up afraid of God.

D **TN** The pronoun “it” is not in the Hebrew text, but is supplied (here and also after “ate” at the end of this verse) for stylistic reasons.

SN *She took...and ate it.* The critical word now discloses the disobedience: “[she] ate.” Since the LORD God had said, “You shall not eat,” the main point of the divine inquisition will be, “Did you eat,” meaning, “did you disobey the command?” The woman ate, being deceived by the serpent (1 Tim 2:14), but then the man ate, apparently willingly when the woman gave him the fruit (see Rom 5:12, 17-19).

E **SN** This pericope (3:1-7) is a fine example of Hebrew narrative structure. After an introductory disjunctive clause that introduces a new character and sets the stage (3:1), the narrative tension develops through dialogue, culminating in the action of the story. Once the dialogue is over, the action is told in a rapid sequence of verbs—she took, she ate, she gave, and he ate.

F **TN** The Hitpaël participle of הָלַךְ (*halakh*, “to walk, to go”) here has an iterative sense, “moving” or “going about.” While a translation of “walking about” is possible, it assumes a theophany, the presence of the LORD God in a human form. This is more than the text asserts.

G **TN** The expression is traditionally rendered “cool of the day,” because the

produced fruit that was good for food,^A was attractive^B to the eye, and was desirable for making one wise,^C she took some of its fruit and ate it.^D She also gave some of it to her husband who was with her, and he ate it.^E ⁷ Then the eyes of both of them opened, and they knew they were naked; so they sewed fig leaves together and made coverings for themselves.

The Judgment Oracles of God at the Fall

⁸ Then the man and his wife heard the sound of the LORD God moving about^F in the orchard at the breezy time^G of the day, and they hid^H from the LORD God among the trees of the orchard. ⁹ But the LORD God called to^I the man and said to him, “Where are you?” ¹⁰ The man replied,^K “I heard you moving about^L in the orchard, and I was afraid because I was naked, so I hid.” ¹¹ And the LORD God^M said, “Who told you that you were naked?^N Did you eat from the tree that I commanded you not to eat from?” ¹² The man said, “The woman whom you gave me, she gave^P me some fruit^Q from the tree and I ate it.” ¹³ So the LORD God said to the woman, “What is this^R you have done?” And the woman replied, “The serpent^S tricked^T me, and I ate.”

¹⁴ The LORD God said to the serpent,^U “Because you have done this, cursed^V are you above all the cattle

Hebrew word רוּחַ (*ruakh*) can mean “wind.” U. Cassuto (*Genesis: From Adam to Noah*, 152-54) concludes after lengthy discussion that the expression refers to afternoon when it became hot and the sun was beginning to decline. J. J. Niehaus (*God at Sinai* [SOTBT], 155-57) offers a different interpretation of the phrase, relating יוֹם (*yom*, usually understood as “day”) to an Akkadian cognate *umu* (“storm”) and translates the phrase “in the wind of the storm.” If Niehaus is correct, then God is not pictured as taking an afternoon stroll through the orchard, but as coming in a powerful windstorm to confront the man and woman with their rebellion. In this case קוֹל יְהוָה (*qol yehvah*, “sound of the LORD”) may refer to God’s thunderous roar, which typically accompanies his appearance in the storm to do battle or render judgment (e.g., see Ps 29).

H **TN** The verb used here is the Hitpaël, giving the reflexive idea (“they hid themselves”). In v. 10, when Adam answers the LORD, the Niphal form is used with the same sense: “I hid.”

I **TN** The Hebrew verb קָרָא (*qarā*, “to call”) followed by the preposition אֶל (*‘el*) or לְ (*lamed*) “to, unto”) often carries the connotation of “summon.”

J **SN** *Where are you?* The question is probably rhetorical (a figure of speech called erotesis) rather than literal, because it was spoken to the man, who answers it with an explanation of why he was hiding rather than a location. The question has more the force of “Why are you hiding?”

K **TN** *Heb* “and he said.”

L **TN** *Heb* “your sound.” If one sees a storm theophany here (see the note on the word “time” in v. 8), then one could translate, “your powerful voice.”

M **TN** *Heb* “and he said.” The referent (the LORD God) has been specified in the translation for clarity.

N **SN** *Who told you that you were naked?*

This is another rhetorical question, asking more than what it appears to ask. The second question in the verse reveals the LORD God’s real concern.

O **SN** The Hebrew word order (“Did you from the tree—which I commanded you not to eat from it—eat?”) is arranged to emphasize that the man’s and the woman’s eating of the fruit was an act of disobedience. The relative clause inserted immediately after the reference to the tree brings out this point very well.

P **TN** The Hebrew construction in this sentence uses an independent nominative absolute (formerly known as a *casus pendens*). “The woman” is the independent nominative absolute;

it is picked up by the formal subject, the pronoun “she” written with the verb (“she gave”). The point of the construction is to throw the emphasis on “the woman.” But what makes this so striking is that a relative clause has been inserted to explain what is meant by the reference to the woman: “whom you gave me.” Ultimately, the man is blaming God for giving him the woman who (from the man’s viewpoint) caused him to sin.

Q **TN** The words “some fruit” here and the pronoun “it” at the end of the sentence are not in the Hebrew text, but are supplied for stylistic reasons.

R **TN** The use of the demonstrative pronoun is enclitic, serving as an undeclined particle for emphasis. It gives the sense of “What in the world have you done?” (see R. J. Williams, *Hebrew Syntax*, 24, 118).

S **SN** The Hebrew word order puts the subject (“the serpent”) before the verb here, giving prominence to it.

T **TN** This verb (the Hiphil of נָשָׂא, *nashā*) is used elsewhere of a king or god misleading his people into false confidence (2 Kgs 18:29 = 2 Chr 32:15 = Isa 36:14; 2 Kgs 19:10 = Isa 37:10), of an ally deceiving a partner (Obad 7), of God deceiving his sinful people as a form of judgment (Jer 4:10), of false prophets instilling their audience with false hope (Jer 29:8), and of pride and false confidence producing self-deception (Jer 37:9; 49:16; Obad 3).

U **SN** Note that God asks no question of the serpent, does not call for confession, as he did to the man and the woman; there is only the announcement of the curse. The order in this section is chiasitic: The man is questioned, the woman is questioned, the serpent is cursed, sentence is passed on the woman, sentence is passed on the man.

V **TN** The Hebrew word translated “cursed,” a passive participle from אָרַר (*‘arar*), either means “punished” or “banished,” depending on how one interprets

the following preposition. If the preposition is taken as comparative, then the idea is “cursed [i.e., punished] are you above [i.e., more than] all the wild beasts.” In this case the comparative preposition reflects the earlier comparison: The serpent was more shrewd than all

others, and so more cursed than all others. If the preposition is taken as separative (see the note on the word “banished” in 4:11), then the idea is “cursed and banished from all the wild beasts.” In this case the serpent is condemned to isolation from all the other animals.

A **TN** *Heb* “go;” “walk;” but in English “crawl” or “slither” better describes a serpent’s movement.

B **SN** *Dust you will eat*. Being restricted to crawling on the ground would necessarily involve “eating dust,” although that is not the diet of the serpent. The idea of being brought low, of “eating dust” as it were, is a symbol of humiliation.

C **TN** The Hebrew word translated “hostility” is derived from the root אָבַח (*ev*, “to be hostile, to be an adversary [or enemy]”). The curse announces that there will be continuing hostility between the serpent and the woman. The serpent will now live in a “battle zone,” as it were.

D **SN** The Hebrew word translated “offspring” is a collective singular. The text anticipates the ongoing struggle between human beings (the woman’s offspring) and deadly poisonous snakes (the serpent’s offspring). An ancient Jewish interpretation of the passage states: “He made the serpent, cause of the deceit, press the earth with belly and flank, having bitterly driven him out. He aroused a dire enmity between them. The one guards his head to save it, the other his heel, for death is at hand in the proximity of men and malignant poisonous snakes.” See *Sib. Or.* 1:59–64. For a similar interpretation see Josephus, *Ant.* 1.14 (1.50–51).

E **TN** *Heb* “he will attack [or “bruise”] you [on] the head.” The singular pronoun and verb agree grammatically with the collective singular noun “offspring.” For other examples of singular verb and pronominal forms being used with the collective singular “offspring,” see Gen 16:10; 22:17; 24:60. The word “head” is an adverbial accusative, locating the blow. A crushing blow to the head would be potentially fatal.

F **TN** Or “but you will...;” or “as they attack your head, you will attack their heel.” The disjunctive clause (conjunction + subject + verb) is understood as contrastive. Both clauses place the subject before the verb, a construction that is sometimes used to indicate synchronic action (see Judg 15:14).

G **SN** *You will attack her offspring’s heel*. Though the conflict will actually involve the serpent’s offspring (snakes) and the woman’s offspring (human beings), v. 15b for rhetorical effect depicts the conflict as being between the serpent and

and all the living creatures of the field!

On your belly you will crawl^A and dust you will eat^B all the days of your life.

15 And I will put hostility^C between you and the woman and between your offspring and her offspring;^D her offspring will attack^E your head, and^F you^G will attack^H her offspring’s heel.^I”

16 To the woman he said,
“I will greatly increase^J your labor pains;^K with pain you will give birth to children.

the woman’s offspring, as if the serpent will outlive the woman. The statement is personalized for the sake of the addressee (the serpent) and reflects the ancient Semitic concept of corporate solidarity, which emphasizes the close relationship between a progenitor and his offspring. Note Gen 28:14, where the LORD says to Jacob, “Your offspring will be like the dust of the earth, and you [second masculine singular] will spread out in all directions.” Jacob will “spread out” in all directions through his offspring, but the text states the matter as if this will happen to him personally.

H **TN** The nuance of this rare verb is difficult to know with certainty. The woman’s offspring and the serpent’s offspring are both said to אָשַׁף (*shuf*) at each other. Some have supposed two homonymous roots meaning “to bite” and “to crush,” but this appears forced. In the other two uses of the verb the subjects are darkness (Ps 139:11) and a storm (Job 9:17). These make a meaning “bruise” look improbable for אָשַׁף. However for Ps 139:11 a conjectural reading from סָכַח (*sakhakh*; “to cover”) has become widely accepted in place of אָשַׁף. Others propose that אָשַׁף (*shuf*) and אָשַׁף (*shāaf*) are related, the latter including meanings “to pester, to attack” (*HALOT*, 1375). Cognates in West and South Semitic include meanings of spreading, rubbing, smearing, stroking, and polishing. Perhaps a certain motion, side to side or back and forth, is central to the meaning. This can easily be pictured in a confrontation between a man and a snake, whether striking at each other or swaying before the strike. The LXX uses τῆρεω (*têreō*) “to watch, keep, guard” which envisions the two watching each other in wary anticipation of attack.

SN Rom 16:20 may echo Gen 3:15 but it does not use any of the specific language of Gen 3:15 in the LXX. Paul uses the imagery of God soon crushing Satan’s head under the feet of the church. If Paul were interpreting Gen 3:15, he is not seeing it as culminating in and limited to Jesus defeating Satan via the crucifixion and resurrection, but extending beyond that.

I **TN** *Heb* “you will attack him [on] the heel.” The verb (translated “attack”) is repeated here, a fact that is obscured by some translations (e.g., NIV “crush...strike”). The singular pronoun agrees grammatically with the collective singular noun “offspring.” For other examples of singular verb and pronominal forms being used with the collective singular “offspring,” see Gen 16:10; 22:17; 24:60. The word “heel” is an adverbial accusative, locating the blow. A bite on the

heel from a poisonous serpent is potentially fatal.

SN The etiological nature of v. 15 is apparent, though its relevance for modern western man is perhaps lost because we rarely come face to face with poisonous snakes. Ancient Israelites, who often encountered snakes

in their daily activities (see, for example, Eccl 10:8; Amos 5:19), would find the statement quite meaningful as an explanation for the hostility between snakes and humans. (In the broader ancient Near Eastern context, compare the Mesopotamian serpent omens. See H. W. F. Saggs, *The Greatness That Was Babylon*, 309.) This ongoing struggle, when interpreted in light of v. 15, is a tangible reminder of the conflict introduced into the world by the first humans’ rebellion against God. Many Christian theologians (going back to Irenaeus) understand v. 15 as the so-called *protevangeli*um, supposedly prophesying Christ’s victory over Satan (see W. Witfall, “Genesis 3:15—a Protevangelium?” *CBQ* 36 [1974]: 361–65; and R. A. Martin, “The Earliest Messianic Interpretation of Genesis 3:15,” *JBL* 84 [1965]: 425–27). In this allegorical approach, the woman’s offspring is initially Cain, then the whole human race, and ultimately Jesus Christ, the *offspring* (*Heb* “seed”) of the woman (see Gal 4:4). The *offspring* of the serpent includes the evil powers and demons of the spirit world, as well as those humans who are in the kingdom of darkness (see John 8:44). According to this view, the passage gives the first hint of the gospel. Satan delivers a crippling blow to the Seed of the woman (Jesus), who in turn delivers a fatal blow to the Serpent (first defeating him through the death and resurrection [1 Cor 15:55–57] and then destroying him in the judgment [Rev 12:7–9; 20:7–10]). However, the grammatical structure of Gen 3:15b does not suggest this view. The repetition of the verb “attack,” as well as the word order, suggests mutual hostility is being depicted, not the defeat of the serpent. If the serpent’s defeat were being portrayed, it is odd that the alleged description of his death comes first in the sentence. If he has already been crushed by the woman’s “Seed,” how can he bruise his heel? To sustain the allegorical view, v. 15b must be translated in one of the following ways: “he will crush your head, even though you attack his heel” (in which case the second clause is concessive) or “he will crush your head as you attack his heel” (the clauses, both of which place the subject before the verb, may indicate synchronic action).

J **TN** The imperfect verb form is emphasized and intensified by the infinitive absolute from the same verb.

K **TN** *Heb* “your pain and your conception,” suggesting to some interpreters that having a lot of children was a result of the judgment (probably to make up for the loss through death). But the next

You will want to control your husband,^A
 but he will dominate^B you.”
 17 But to Adam^C he said,
 “Because you obeyed^D your wife
 and ate from the tree about which I commanded you,
 ‘You must not eat from it,’
 the ground is cursed^E because of you;
 in painful toil you will eat^F of it all the days of your life.
 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you,
 but you will eat the grain^G of the field.
 19 By the sweat of your brow^H you will eat food
 until you return to the ground,
 for out of it you were taken;
 for you are dust, and to dust you will return.”^I

²⁰The man^K named his wife Eve,^L because^M she was the mother of all the living.^N ²¹The LORD God made garments from skin^O for Adam and his wife, and clothed them. ²²And the LORD God said, “Now^P that the man has become like one of us,^Q knowing^R good and evil, he must not be allowed^S to stretch out his hand and take also from the tree of life and eat, and live forever.” ²³So the LORD God expelled him^T from the orchard in Eden to cultivate the ground from which he had been taken. ²⁴When he drove^U the man out, he placed on the eastern side^V of the orchard in Eden angelic sentries^W who used the flame of a whirling sword^X to guard the way to the tree of life.

The Story of Cain and Abel

4 Now^Y the man was intimate with^Z his wife Eve, and she became pregnant^A and gave birth to Cain. Then she said, “I have created^B a man just as the LORD did!”^C ²Then she gave birth^D to his brother Abel.^E Abel took care of the flocks, while Cain cultivated the ground.^F

³At the designated time^G Cain brought some of the fruit of the ground for an offering^H to the LORD.^I But Abel brought^J some of the firstborn of his flock—even the fattest^K of them. And the LORD was pleased with^L Abel and his offering, ⁵but with Cain and his offering he was not pleased.^M So Cain became very angry,^N and his expression was downcast.^O

⁶Then the LORD said to Cain, “Why are you angry, and why is your expression downcast? ⁷Is it not true^P that if you do what is right, you will be fine?^Q But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching^R at the door. It desires to dominate you, but you must subdue it.”^S

⁸Cain said to his brother Abel, “Let’s go out to the field.”^T While they were in the field, Cain attacked^U his brother^V Abel and killed him.

⁹Then the LORD said to Cain, “Where is your brother Abel?”^W And he replied, “I don’t know! Am I my brother’s guardian?”^X ¹⁰But the LORD said, “What have you done?” The

and her husband, and because the word is used in a romantic sense in Song 7:11 HT (7:10 ET). However, this interpretation makes little sense in Gen 3:16. First, it does

clause shows that the pain is associated with conception and childbirth. The two words form a hendiadys (where two words are joined to express one idea, like

“good and angry” in English), the second explaining the first. “Conception,” if the correct meaning of the noun, must be figurative here since there is no pain in conception; it is a synecdoche, representing the entire process of childbirth and child rearing from the very start. However, recent etymological research suggests the noun is derived from a root הרה (hrr), חסה (hrh), and means “trembling, pain” (see D. Tsumura, “A Note on הרה (Gen 3, 16),” *Bib* 75 [1994]: 398-400). In this case “pain and trembling” refers to the physical effects of childbirth. The word עצבון (‘itsevon, “pain”), an abstract noun

related to the verb (עצב, ‘atsav), includes more than physical pain. It is emotional distress as well as physical pain. The same word is used in v. 17 for the man’s painful toil in the field. אֶת־אִשׁוֹ Heb “and toward your husband [will be] your desire.” The nominal sentence does not have a verb; a future verb must be supplied, because the focus of the oracle is on the future struggle. The precise meaning of the noun תְּשׁוּקָה (teshuqah, “desire”) is debated. Many interpreters conclude that it refers to sexual desire here, because the subject of the passage is the relationship between a wife

not fit well with the assertion “he will dominate you.” Second, it implies that sexual desire was not part of the original creation, even though the man and the woman were told to multiply. And third, it ignores the usage of the word in Gen 4:7 where it refers to sin’s desire to control and dominate Cain. (Even in Song of Songs it carries the basic idea of “control,” for it describes the young man’s desire to “have his way sexually” with the young woman.) In Gen 3:16 the LORD announces a struggle, a conflict between the man and the woman. She will desire to control him, but he will dominate her

voice^A of your brother's blood is crying out to me from the ground!¹¹ So now, you are banished^B from the ground, which has opened its mouth to receive your brother's blood from your hand.¹² When you try to cultivate^C the

ground it will no longer yield^D its best^E for you. You will be a homeless wanderer^F on the earth."¹³ Then Cain said to the LORD, "My punishment^G is too great to endure!"¹⁴ Look! You are driving me off the land^I today, and I must hide from your presence.^J I will be a homeless wanderer on the earth; whoever finds me will kill me."¹⁵ But the LORD said to him, "All right then,^K if anyone kills Cain, Cain will be avenged seven times as much."^L Then the LORD put a special mark^M on Cain so that no one who found him would strike him down.^N¹⁶ So Cain went out from the presence of the LORD and lived in the land of Nod,^O east of Eden.

The Beginning of Civilization

¹⁷ Cain was intimate with^P his wife, and she became pregnant^Q and gave birth to Enoch. Cain was building a city, and he named the city after^R his son Enoch.¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad was the father of^S Mehujael. Mehujael was the father of Methushael, and Methushael was the father of Lamech.

¹⁹ Lamech took two wives for himself; the name of the first was Adah, and the name of the second was Zillah.²⁰ Adah gave birth to Jubal; he was the first^a of those who live in tents and keep^a livestock.²¹ The name of his brother was Jubal; he was the first of all who play the harp and the flute.²² Now Zillah also gave birth to Tubal-Cain, who heated metal and shaped^a all kinds of tools made of bronze and iron. The sister of Tubal-Cain was Naamah.

²³ Lamech said to his wives,
"Adah and Zillah! Listen to me!
You wives of Lamech, hear my words!
I have killed a man for wounding me,
a young man^a for hurting me.

²⁴ If Cain is to be avenged seven times as much,
then Lamech seventy-seven times!"^a

²⁵ And Adam was intimate with^a his wife again, and she gave birth to a son. She named him Seth, saying, "God has given^a me another child^a in place of Abel because Cain killed him."²⁶ And a son was also born to Seth, whom he named Enosh. At that time people^a began to worship^a the LORD.

From Adam to Noah

5 This is the record^a of the family line^a of Adam.
When God created humankind,^a he made them^a in the likeness of God.² He created them male and female; when they were created, he blessed them and named them "humankind."^a

instead. This interpretation also fits the tone of the passage, which is a judgment oracle. See further Susan T. Foh, "What is the Woman's Desire?" *WTJ* 37 (1975): 376-83.

A **DN** The Hebrew verb מָשַׁל (*mashal*) means "to rule over," but in a way that emphasizes powerful control, domination, or mastery. This also is part of the

baser human nature. The translation assumes the imperfect verb form has an objective/indicative sense here. Another option is to understand it as having a modal, desiderative nuance, "but he will want to dominate you." In this case, the LORD simply announces the struggle without indicating who will emerge victorious.

SN This passage is a judgment oracle. It announces that conflict between man and woman will become the norm in human society. It does not depict the NT ideal, where the husband sacrificially loves his wife, as Christ loved the church, and where the wife recognizes the husband's loving leadership in the family and voluntarily submits to it. Sin produces