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Creation and Salvation: A Study of Genesis 1 and 2

WALTER WEGNER

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Creation and Salvation

A Study of Genesis 1 and 2

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The purpose of this study is to highlight the soteriological significance of the Genesis creation accounts. The fourth gospel preserves our Lord's statement about the Old Testament Scriptures in which He declares that they "bear witness to Me" (John 5:39). The pages of this article reflect the conviction that this declaration of Jesus, which applies to the Old Testament as a whole, is fully applicable also to the creation chapters of Genesis.

I

THE NATURE OF THE GENESIS CREATION ACCOUNTS

To arrive at an understanding of the opening chapters of Genesis it is necessary to ask the questions that must be asked about any Biblical text one hopes to interpret. It is necessary, among other questions, to ask: What is the nature of the literary material we have before us in the Biblical text? What literary characteristics of the sacred text must be taken into account to enable us to determine its intended meaning? These are questions which Biblical scholarship asks about the Pentateuch as a whole as well as about the creation texts with which the Pentateuch begins.

One literary characteristic of the Pentateuch that has been the subject of study, discussion, and debate for several centuries is its appearance of being an edited, composite text. Quite obviously, the interpreter's recognition or rejection of the validity of this observation about the nature of the text will play an important role in determining his understanding of the Pentateuchal materials, including his interpretation of the creation passages in Genesis 1 and 2. The question, then, is: Is it valid to hold that the Biblical text of the Pentateuch supplies evidence suggesting that the present text of the Pentateuch is composed of materials drawn from more than one original source? There is nothing approaching unanimous agreement among those who seek to answer this question. Nevertheless, making full allowance for modifications or even outright rejection of the theory on the part of some, the view most widely held today appears to be that which regards the present text of the Pentateuch as the product of literary authorship that included the activities of compiling and editing. It will be helpful to review some of the evidence that suggests the plausibility of this view.*

Mr. Wegner is associate professor of exegetical theology at Concordia Seminary, St. Louis. This essay was read in substance to the Board of Control of Concordia Seminary, St. Louis, a pastoral conference of the Central Illinois District, and the North Dakota Pastoral Conference, both of The Lutheran Church — Missouri Synod.

* It is of interest to Lutheran interpreters of Genesis to note that the opinion that the first book of the Bible is an editorial composition was held already by Luther in combination with his conviction regarding the essential Mosaic authorship of the book. In his commentary on Genesis (WA 40, 356 f.; Am. Ed., 4, 308) Luther advanced the view that in the era from Adam to Abraham divine teaching and sacred history had been preserved and handed on from one patriarchal generation to the next by means

The evidence which supports the contemporary view that there are several sources underlying the present text of the Pentateuch is derived from the Biblical text itself. Some of this evidence is more readily discernible in the Hebrew text of the Pentateuch, yet much of it is also observable in the various English translations at our disposal. One of the more

familiar items of such evidence is the use made within different sections of the Pentateuch of the different names for God, *Elohim* and *Yahweh*, the first of which our English versions regularly translate as *God* whereas the other is rendered as *Lord*. The sections of the Pentateuch that are distinguished from one another by their use of the divine names are frequently further characterized by their distinctive use of characteristic sets of words, names, expressions, and idioms; and these, too, serve to corroborate the suggestion that our present Pentateuch text is a literary composite based on several originally distinct underlying strands. Other distinguishing characteristics of the assumed underlying sources of the Pentateuch include recognizable differences in literary style as well as a noticeable interest in distinctive themes and emphases. (Some of the items referred to in this paragraph will be discussed at greater length in Part 2 of this article.)

of oral tradition as well as in written form. Materials were thus passed, in Luther's opinion, from Adam to Noah and from Noah to Abraham. Luther further surmised that Abraham engaged in the work of editing "a little history" from Adam's time to his own. It was presumably this *Büchlein* compiled by Abraham which, in Luther's opinion, served as the basis for the later writing of the Book of Genesis.

The Reformer's theory regarding the literary origins of the materials of Genesis appears in a slightly elaborated version in the *Tischreden* (WA TR I, 291). Luther was reportedly asked on one occasion how it was possible for Moses to write about creation, the lives of the patriarchs, and other events some of which transpired more than two thousand years before Moses lived. Luther replied that in his opinion there was much that had been written before Moses. He inferred that Adam had jotted down a brief history of the Creation, of his own fall into sin, of the promise concerning the Seed of the woman, and the like. The other patriarchs similarly put into writing records of contemporary events. It was these documents from patriarchal times, Luther held, which were later utilized by Moses, who, in the manner of an editor, made extracts from them, supplied certain additions, and put all the material into proper order at the behest of God. Modern Biblical scholarship finds reason to disagree with details of Luther's theory outlined here, including his opinion that it was Moses who served as author or editor of the Pentateuch in its final form. But it is nevertheless interesting to note that certain aspects of Luther's suggestions regarding the early history of the materials of the Pentateuch are shared by many 20th-century Bible students. This is true in particular of Luther's suggestion that the author of the Pentateuch had at his disposal one or more source documents which had a preliterate history of centuries of oral tradition.

Perhaps the strongest evidence supporting the likelihood that a plurality of sources underlies our present Pentateuchal text is the existence of what are known as "doublets" or "parallel accounts." These are terms which are used to designate sets of Biblical passages which refer to the same fact or describe the same event but do so in ways that distinguish the one account from the other. These parallel accounts are distinguished from one another not only by the above-mentioned literary characteristics (use of the different divine names and the employment of distinctive vocabulary, style, and themes) but also at times by certain differences within the narrative material itself.

To observe one example of what we may

call "divergent parallels" within the Book of Genesis, notice that Genesis 10, which precedes the story of the Tower of Babel, plainly refers to dozens of nations speaking a plurality of languages; in fact, v. 5 makes express reference to "each with his own language." (See also vv. 20 and 31.) But then read Chapter 11, which displays the distinguishing literary characteristics of another source, and observe how its opening verse represents a differing point of view regarding the language situation in the era preceding the Tower of Babel. Unlike Chapter 10, which speaks of many nations each of which has its own language, Chapter 11 begins with the statement: "Now the whole earth had one language and few words." Verse 6 similarly speaks of "one people" who "have all one language."

Similar divergences in the manner of telling a story can be noted when we compare passages from one book of the Pentateuch with their parallel accounts in other books of the Pentateuch. For example, the account of the giving of the second set of tables of the Law to Moses on Mt. Sinai is recorded both in Exodus 34 and in Deuteronomy 10. The passage in Deuteronomy states that Moses, by divine command, made the Ark of the Covenant before ascending the mountain and that he deposited the stone tables of the Law in this ark upon his return from the mountain (Deut. 10:1-5). In the parallel passage in Exodus 34, on the other hand, there is no reference to Moses' making the ark prior to his ascent of the mountain nor of his placing the tables into the ark immediately upon his return. In fact, the completion of the ark is not described in Exodus until chapter 37:1; and there, unlike Deuter-

onomy 10, which twice (vv. 3 and 5) names Moses as the builder of the ark, the building of the ark is ascribed not to Israel's leader but to Bezalel, the chief craftsman of the tabernacle and its furnishings. This apparent difference from Deuteronomy 10 might be harmonized by suggesting that Moses built the ark through the agency of Bezalel. But the *chronological* discrepancy does not admit of such harmonization. While Deuteronomy places Moses' building of the ark *prior* to the giving of the second set of stone tables, the Exodus statement that "Bezalel made the ark" (37:1) is set in a temporal context of events which *follow* Moses' descent from the mountain. And Moses' act of placing the second set of stone tables into the ark, which in Deuteronomy 10 occurs upon his descent, is related in Exodus only in the last chapter (40:20) following a time lapse of at least seven months after the giving of the renewed tables of the Law. (Cf. the chronological notations in Exodus 19:1 and 40:17)

The same 10th chapter of Deuteronomy provides still another example of the "divergent parallels" under discussion. In Deuteronomy 10:6-7 we find a list of stopping-places in Israel's wilderness wanderings. A parallel passage in Numbers 33:30-39 names the same stopping-places but lists them in a different order. In addition, both passages relate the fact of Aaron's death, but they diverge from one another in locating his death at a different place as well as a different time. (On the place, see Num. 33:38; Deut. 10:6; also Num. 20:22-29 and Deut. 32:50. Regarding the time factor, note that if the death of Aaron is located at Moserah, as in Deut. 10:6, he could not have arrived at Kadesh, to which

the Israelites journeyed after their departure from Moserah; yet according to Numbers Aaron played a prominent role in the events at Kadesh and did not die until after the pilgrimage from Kadesh, at Mt. Hor on the border of Edom in the 40th year after the Exodus; Numbers 20:1-29; 33:38.)

Without going into a detailed study of the "divergent parallels" just mentioned, we may express the conviction that it is invalid to make such divergences the basis for assertions like these: "The Bible contradicts itself!" "The Bible is in error!" "The Bible is unreliable!" True, in the passages cited there are differences in the manner of narrating certain details. The parallel passages may yield different answers to such questions as: Who made the Ark of the Covenant? When was it made? When did Moses place the stone tables into the ark? Where did Aaron die? When did he die? Yet it must be recognized and confessed that these "divergent parallels" are in complete harmony with one another in what they teach about God and His relationship to His people, about divine wrath and mercy, sin and grace, judgment and redemption, Law and Gospel. Despite any diversity in narrative detail which may become apparent upon close examination of their textual data, the Pentateuchal records are in full and unanimous agreement with one another in their teaching of the religious truth that is of their essence.

What pertinence does the discussion of the preceding paragraphs have to our study of the nature of the Genesis creation accounts? Its pertinence lies in this that the existence of such "divergent parallels" elsewhere in the Pentateuch—and a sizeable number of others can be cited—alerts us

to the possibility of finding such doublets also in the creation chapters of Genesis. Precisely this possibility is in the opinion of many students of the Old Testament a strong probability, and it plays an important part in determining their understanding of these opening chapters of the Bible. The conclusion of these scholars, based on textual evidence within Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, is that we have *two* creation accounts in these chapters. The first account is seen as beginning at Gen. 1:1 and ending at Gen. 2:4a, followed by a second creation account beginning in Gen. 2:4b and extending through Gen. 2:25. (It should be noted that the so-called "second creation account" stands in close unitary relationship to the record of the Fall in Genesis 3 and is actually introductory to that account. It is really not an independent literary unit, and for this reason some scholars hesitate to call it a second "creation account." Aware of this limitation, we nevertheless retain the term in our discussion for the sake of convenience.)

The theory is—and open recognition should be given to the fact that it is a *theory*, although one which is based on evidence supplied by the Biblical texts themselves—that the author (some say authors) of Genesis had available to him two versions of the story of creation that had been preserved among his people, the Israelites. The inclusion of the doublets in the text suggests that the author was intent on retaining both accounts. Fully aware of the differences between the two, he was led to include both of them for the sake of the religious truth that each conveys and in which the two accounts are in complete harmony.

Biblical interpreters who take seriously

the doctrine of the inspiration of all Scripture (as enunciated, for example, of the Old Testament in 2 Tim. 3:16) express the conviction of faith that as the writer of the Book of Genesis worked with his source materials, he did so as a literary author who was under the guidance and inspiration of the Holy Spirit. In other words, to accept the possibility (as Luther did) that there are literary and/or oral sources underlying the present text of Genesis does not, contrary to the fears of some, involve a repudiation of the doctrine of the inspiration of the Sacred Scriptures. What is called for is a willingness to study the inspired creation texts of Genesis and to determine as precisely as possible what it is that God wants to say to us through them. The obligation to make such a study of these documents — word for word, as carefully and conscientiously as possible — rests especially heavily on interpreters who hold the doctrine of verbal inspiration. They of all people must be concerned to make a detailed verbal inspection of these documents and to allow the words and statements of the Biblical texts themselves to determine the understanding of the nature of the documents and the meaning of their individual words and statements. To undertake certain aspects of such a study of the Genesis creation accounts will be our concern in Part 2.

II

A COMPARISON OF THE TWO GENESIS CREATION ACCOUNTS

A time-honored interpretation, still shared by many, holds that the first two chapters of Genesis form basically a single creation account in which the second chapter enlarges on certain aspects of the first.

This was, for example, the view of Martin Luther, whose Genesis commentary introduces Gen. 2:4 with this explanation: "Now Moses proceeds with a clearer description of man, after first repeating what he had said in the first chapter. Although these statements appear to be unnecessary, nevertheless the repetition is not altogether unnecessary, because he wishes to continue his account in a connected manner." (WA 42, 62; Am. Ed., 1, 82)

As indicated above, this view, with various modifications, is still held by many. With no intention of disparaging that view or belittling those who hold it, we must state that from the standpoint of Biblical exegesis this is not the only view possible. As already stated, other exegetes see in these chapters *two* creation accounts. According to this view, the "first creation account" begins with Gen. 1:1 and concludes with the statement in Gen. 2:4a: "These are the generations of the heavens and the earth when they were created." The "second creation account" is seen as beginning with the words which immediately follow in Gen. 2:4b and concluding with the last verse of Chapter 2. (This view is reflected, for example, in the typographical arrangement of the text of the Revised Standard Version, which places a period after the first part of Gen. 2:4 and assigns the two parts of this verse to different paragraphs. The King James Version, on the other hand, printed this verse as one sentence, punctuated only with a comma.)

What are the textual criteria that serve as distinguishing characteristics on the basis of which scholars assign the creation record of Genesis 1 and 2 to two different sources? One of them has been alluded to

earlier, namely the use of the different names for God in the two accounts. The first account uses the Hebrew divine name *Elohim* (translated as "God") whereas the second account uses the divine name *Yahweh Elohim* (usually translated as "the Lord God").

The two accounts are further distinguished by their distinctive vocabulary terminology. One readily recognizable example may be seen in the distinctive verb that each account uses as its major verb to express God's creative activity. Both chapters use the Hebrew verb *asah*, which has the general meaning of "make." But the first account is distinctive in its use of the Hebrew verb *bara'*, which means "create," and the second account uses the distinctive verb *yatzar*, which has the meaning of "form" or "shape." The latter verb is used in Hebrew as a kind of technical term to describe the activity of a potter, who forms or shapes an item of pottery out of a lump of clay.

Another example of the distinctive vocabulary in each account is the term that each uses to denote the wild animals. In the first account the term in Hebrew is *chayath ha'aretz*, occurring in Gen. 1:24-25, 30 and having the literal meaning of "living thing of the earth." In the second account (Gen. 2:19-20) the Hebrew term *chayath bassadeh* is used, meaning literally "living thing of the field." Our English translations note this distinctive usage by rendering the first Hebrew term as "beast of the earth" and the second as "beast of the field." The context in both cases, however, makes it clear that the two different Hebrew terms denote the same general category within the animal world, namely

wild animals as opposed to domesticated animals.

Another distinguishing feature of the two accounts is the difference they display in portraying the methodology of God's creative activity. Whereas Chapter 1 describes God as creating by His divine *Word*, Chapter 2 portrays Him as creating by a series of divine *acts*. Whereas Chapter 1 portrays what we may call "fiat creation," Chapter 2 describes "action creation." In this second account God is said to "form" man (2:7-8), and here the verb that is used is the above-mentioned verb of the potter's action as he forms his lump of clay with his hands. Further, unlike the first account, in the second account God "breathes" into man's nostrils the breath of life; He "plants" the garden in Eden; He "puts" the man into the garden (recorded twice: vv. 8 and 15); He "forms" the beasts and the birds from the ground; and He "takes" one of the man's ribs and "builds" this into a woman.

A possible further difference in the portrayal of the creation methodology in the two chapters may be pointed out in the varying versions they present of the creation of the birds. The variance is especially noticeable if we follow the rendering of the Hebrew text that we have in the King James Version at Gen. 1:20. The translation reads: "And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of the heaven." This rendering, which is fully allowable on the basis of the Hebrew text, specifies that the birds (as well as the water animals) were created by God *out of the water*. In contrast, the second account states: "*Out of the ground* the Lord

God formed . . . every fowl of the air." (Gen. 2:19)

The differences between the two accounts in their respective portrayals of the methodology of God's creative activity have a close relationship to another observable difference: the difference between the two accounts in their manner of describing God. We have reference here to the fact that the account in Chapter 2 presents what may be called a much more anthropomorphic portrait of God than that of Chapter 1. The element of anthropomorphism is at a minimum in Chapter 1, restricted largely to such statements as "God said," "God saw," and "God rested." By contrast, Chapter 2 portrays God almost entirely in a "manlike" portrait, using the verbs of human action quoted above, such as forming, breathing, planting, and building.

Still another factor which distinguishes the two accounts is the different sequence of the creation acts that each presents. These are outlined in Chart A in the Appendix, titled "Sequence of Works of Creation." The different sequence in the two chapters is possibly most readily apparent in connection with the creation of the animals and of man. In the first account the land animals and man are created on the same day, with the creation of the animals occurring first, followed by the creation of man, both male and female (Gen. 1:24-27). In the second account, however, man (the male) is created first; then follows the creation of the animals; and only then, after no suitable helper fit for man is found in all the animal world, does the creation of woman follow. Other differences in sequence are readily discernible from the chart which simply repro-

duces the sequence as given in the two chapters under discussion.

The two accounts also differ in what they say about the chronology of the divine creative activity. The first account assigns a duration of six days to the divine work of creation, followed by the seventh day of divine rest. The second account, on the other hand, makes no mention of the six-day period of creative activity, nor does it assign the specific creative acts to individual days that follow one another in chronological sequence. As already pointed out, the second account actually reverses the sequence of the creation of certain creatures that Chapter 1 assigns to specific, successive days. The Hebrew word for day, *yom*, used to establish the chronological sequence in the first account, occurs only once as a time designation for God's creative activity in the second account. This single occurrence is in the expression: "In the *day* (*yom*) that the Lord God made the earth and the heavens" (2:4b). This one "day" is the only specific time designation in the second account. Some commentators accordingly hold—and it must be admitted that the Hebrew text allows their view—that the second account portrays all of God's creative activity as the work of a single day.

Chapter 1 is further distinguished from Chapter 2 by its use of a strongly schematized pattern of presentation. Charts B, C, and D in the Appendix endeavor to visualize some elements of the schematic structure of Chapter 1 that is wholly absent from Chapter 2. The six days of creative activity are divided into two equal periods of three each. In each triad of days, the first two days each include a *single* creative act whereas the third day

in each triad is marked by a *double* creative act. The schematic pattern of the six-day creation account in Genesis 1 is underscored by the repetition of a total of seven literary elements (listed as items A through G in Chart B: "Recurring Expressions in Genesis 1"). The pattern of distribution of these seven literary elements is shown in Chart C. The symmetry of the pattern suggests that this is not an accidental but a deliberate literary feature of the inspired account. The same statement applies also to the symmetry of arrangement reflected in Chart D: "Relationships Between the Two Triads of Creation Days in Genesis 1." Without entering into further discussion of the schematized patterns of Genesis 1, we may content ourselves at this point with two observations: (1) The schematized patterns of Genesis 1 are a prominent feature of the *literary form* which distinguishes the first creation account from the second; and (2) they suggest the possibility that the six-day chronological arrangement of the first creation account may (especially in the light of its differing sequence from Chapter 2) have been intended by the inspired author to be part of the literary form rather than the literal teaching of this account. When the possibility exists (and is strongly suggested by the text) that the author's intent was to speak of six "poetic" or "literary" days, the interpreter who insists that the schematic and artistic account must be understood as referring to historical or literal days would seem to insist on more than can be justified.

Perhaps less conspicuous than the other distinguishing elements, nevertheless discernible to the observant reader, is the factor of a distinctive literary style in each

of the two accounts. In a sense, this has already been alluded to. The carefully ordered schematic arrangement of the text of the first account (discussed in the preceding paragraph) is one aspect of the literary style that distinguishes this account from the second. The style of the first account is marked not only by its use of a stock of stereotyped expressions but also by the brevity and terseness of its narration. There is also a rhythmic flow in the literary style of Chapter 1 that is reminiscent of the measured language of liturgical worship with which we are acquainted from the Psalter. In fact, the "liturgical" style of Genesis 1 has prompted the suggestion that this chapter (like some of the Creation Psalms, e.g., 8, 19, 100, 104) may once have served in Old Testament worship as a kind of Hymn of Creation, a *Te Deum* in praise of Israel's Creator-God. The second creation account, on the other hand, is characterized by a much freer literary style with a noticeable absence of the factor of regular repetition of terminology. Since God is here portrayed in strong anthropomorphic terms, there is more "action" in the account, and the narrative style may be said to be more vivid than that of Chapter 1.

A final point of difference between the two accounts deserves to be mentioned: that each account includes reference to certain items and aspects of creation which do not appear in the other. In the interest of brevity the reader is referred to Chart E in the Appendix ("Distinctive Items in Each Creation Account"), which contains a list of not all but at least the major items that serve to differentiate the two accounts by appearing in one but not in the other. Even a cursory survey of the

created world in which we live will enable the average observer to enumerate many other features of the world of creation that are not mentioned in either of the two accounts in Genesis 1 and 2.

There are, in fact, many Scriptural creation passages outside of these first two chapters of the Bible that speak of other aspects of creation of which Genesis 1 and 2 make no specific mention whatever. We need recall only such items as setting the earth on its foundations (Ps. 104:5); the divine activity of overcoming a dragon or dragon-like monster mentioned in the context of such creation passages as Ps. 74:12-17 and Is. 51:9-16; the role played by personified Wisdom in the work of creation (Prov. 8:22-31); the activity of the "sons of God" when the earth's foundations were laid (Job 38:7); or the creation of clouds (Job 38:9) or the "storehouses" of snow and hail (Job 38:22). In other words, no single creation text of the Old Testament should be regarded as exhaustive to the exclusion of other creation passages. For all their diversity, the Old Testament creation passages are in full agreement with one another in proclaiming and praising the God who is Israel's Creator and Preserver and, above all, the Redeemer of His people.

With reference to the two creation accounts in Genesis, we discover, then, upon close examination that, despite their divergences, they are in complete agreement in the theological truth they convey. They provide us with another example of how it is possible for the Holy Scriptures to teach religious truth through parallel accounts that do not tell their stories in identical ways. The basic teachings common to both accounts are familiar enough

so that we need do little more than list them here. (1) Both accounts are in agreement in teaching that Israel's God is the sole Creator and Preserver of all creation. (2) With one voice the two accounts teach that this one Creator-God is prior to and distinct from the world He created. (3) They agree further in teaching that man is in a unique sense the special creature of God, created in His image and after His likeness to be the crown of creation, for whom all was made and who stands in a unique relationship of dependence on and responsibility to God. (4) Together both accounts teach that man's life draws its meaning and purpose solely from this relationship to God established at creation. And so together both accounts play their important role in providing the setting and the background for the Biblical drama of redemption, which follows when man the creature rebels against God, his Creator.

Despite their diversity, these two Genesis creation accounts find their unity, then, in their *religious teaching*, consisting of precisely those theological truths which the church has summarized in the First Article of the Apostles' Creed: "I believe in God the Father Almighty, Maker of heaven and earth." It is significant to note that in confessing its creation faith in the Ecumenical Creeds the church followed the example of the New Testament in highlighting the *fact* of divine creation (in which the Old Testament accounts are in full agreement) and refraining from raising to confessional level any statements about the *how* or *how long* of creation (in which the Old Testament accounts show a measure of freedom and diversity). The same restraint is shown in the con-

fessional explications of the doctrine of creation that appear in the Confessions of the Lutheran Church (notably in the explanations of the First Article in Martin Luther's Small and Large Catechisms).

What conclusions may be drawn regarding these areas of agreement and divergence in the two Genesis creation accounts? In view of the differing sequence of creative acts presented by the two accounts, it may be concluded that it is neither the purpose nor the intention of either the Divine Author or the human authors of Scripture to give us an item-for-item "reporter's story" of the chronological sequence of events relating to the creation of heaven and earth. Whether, for example, man was created first or last is not of the essence of either account. What is essential at this point in both accounts is to establish man's crowning position in God's creation, which the first account emphasizes by placing man's creation at the *climax* of God's creative work but which the second account emphasizes by naming man's creation *first*. Apparently, too, we may conclude that it is neither the purpose nor the intent of Genesis to inform us of the exact duration of God's creative work. The seven-day scheme of the first creation account may be legitimately understood as a divinely-inspired means of structuring the creation account in such a way as to highlight for the Israelite reader the religious significance of the Sabbath Day (cf. Gen. 2:1-3). Or it is possible (though perhaps less probable), as some hold, that the seven-day structure of the first account was deliberately used by the inspired writer as a means of opposing the polytheistic Babylonian creation account (the so-called

Enuma elish cuneiform text), which, at least in its major extant version, was written on *seven* tablets. Still others find it possible to interpret the number seven in the seven-day scheme as a symbolical number on the analogy of the Scriptural usage of this numeral as both a sacred number and a symbol of completeness (cf., e.g., Joshua 6:4; Deut. 16:3, 9, 13), a numeral especially associated in the Scriptures with acts and words of God. (It is interesting to observe also that the number seven occurs also in Biblical creation passages outside of the Pentateuch, but not as a number designating the days of creation. The creation hymn in Psalm 104, e.g., lists the seven *wonders* of God's creation; while Prov. 8 supplies a list naming seven *works* of God's creation.) Besides, when we note the author's concern in Chapter 1 for a *schematic* approach, which the second chapter does not follow, it becomes all the more difficult to insist that he has an objectively factual and chronological sequence of days in mind. This serves rather to favor the suggestion that the seven-day sequence is a deliberately chosen literary device used by the inspired writer as a vehicle for his religious message but not necessarily an essential part of that message. The writer's intention is apparently not to furnish chronological data about creation but rather to teach the theological truth that Israel's God is the "Maker of heaven and earth and of all things visible and invisible."

Our comparison of the two creation chapters of Genesis has shown us that the two accounts outline different sequences of creative acts, describe a different methodology of divine creation and employ a different chronology. It is therefore pos-

sible to come to the conclusion that evidence supplied by the Scriptures themselves suggests that questions relating to the methodology and the chronology of creation are not definitively answered for us by the Scriptures and lie therefore in the area of open questions.

III

THE PURPOSE OF THE GENESIS CREATION PASSAGES

We have had occasion to refer several times on preceding pages to the purpose for which the Genesis creation accounts were written and included in the Sacred Scriptures. Part 3 of this study will be devoted to a discussion of this purpose.

"Why were the Genesis creation accounts written down and preserved in the Bible? What purpose do they serve?" We have no record that specific questions like these were asked among the Israelites of the Old Testament. We can be sure, however, that the answers given by ancient Israelites would have converged at this point: "The purpose of the Genesis creation accounts is to deepen our faith in and to stimulate our praise of God our Redeemer."

That the essence of this answer was given in the early era of the Christian church is a matter of record in the New Testament. The Gospel record quotes our Lord as saying that the Old Testament Scriptures "bear witness to Me" (John 5:39). And we must note that Jesus' non-restricted use of the term "Scriptures" dare not be narrowed down to exclude the Genesis creation accounts. The same all-inclusive terminology in the Pauline statement in 2 Tim. 3:15-17 comprehends also the opening chapters of Genesis in the decla-

ration to Timothy: "From childhood you have been acquainted with the Sacred Writings, which are able to instruct you for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."

To take such passages seriously means that as New Testament Christians we must see the purpose of Chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis, as well as of all the Old Testament Scriptures, in their relationship to salvation-history as it culminates eventually in Jesus Christ and His redemptive work. If the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms contain that which was written about Jesus (Luke 24:44); if all the Old Testament Scriptures bear witness to Him (John 5:39); if the totality of the inspired writings of the Old Testament serves to instruct for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus, then the creation accounts of Genesis like the rest of the Old Testament, do more than merely answer the question of how the world and man came into existence. They are included not merely for their own sake, not merely to provide interesting information about beginnings, not merely to satisfy man's curiosity about origins. They are included above all for the sake of the testimony they give to Christ, for the sake of the contributions they make to the teaching that "instructs for salvation." They are in the Bible for the sake of their theological value. That this is not merely a New Testament "re-interpretation" of the Old Testament becomes apparent when we study the Genesis creation stories in their context and

setting in the Old Testament and see them in their theological significance.

What is their theological significance? To answer this question we shall make a brief survey of the so-called "primeval history" of the first 11 chapters of Genesis, to which the creation chapters serve as an introduction. We shall begin this survey with the suggestion that we regard the promise of God to Abraham in Gen. 12: 1-3 as a passage basic to our understanding of the entire Bible. The passage (quoted from the RSV, including the footnoted variant to v. 3) reads:

Now the Lord said to Abram, "Go from your country and your kindred and your father's house to the land that I will show you. And I will make of you a great nation, and I will bless you and make your name great, so that you will be a blessing. I will bless those who bless you, and him who curses you I will curse; and in you all the families of the earth shall be blessed."

Of this promise of God to Abraham Martin Luther once declared: "Indeed, the whole Bible depends on this oath of God!" (WA 7, 599 f.; Am. Ed., 21, 354). In his Genesis commentary Luther similarly emphasized the Scriptural centrality of this promise as he wrote of it: "Out of this promise flowed all the sermons of the prophets concerning Christ and His kingdom, about the forgiveness of sins, about the gift of the Holy Spirit, about the preservation and the government of the church, about the punishments of the unbelievers, etc." (WA 42, 448; Am. Ed., 2, 261). Again pointing to this same promise of God in Genesis Luther wrote: "This passage is profitable for us in various ways, and therefore it deserves to be noted by students of the Holy Scriptures. . . . What-

ever will be achieved in the church until the end of time and whatever has been achieved in it until now, has been achieved and will be achieved by virtue of this promise, which endures and is in force to this day. . . . Hence the divine wisdom is truly admirable, that such important matters and the history of all ages, so far as it concerns the church, have been reduced to a few words in this passage" (WA 42, 451; Am. Ed., 2, 265 f.). A study of this passage and of its relationship to the rest of the Bible will show that Luther's almost "extravagant" statements about it are fully justified.

This promise of God to Abraham (together with its subsequent statements and amplifications in such passages as Gen. 12:7; 13:14-17; 15:1-21; 17:1-21; 22: 15-18) is the climax to which the first 11 chapters of Genesis have been leading step by step. The Biblical drama in the first chapters of Genesis opens with a scene that is actually worldwide in scope: it includes the creation of the entire world, made to be the home of all mankind. The leading (human) characters are Adam (whose name, when read as a Hebrew common noun, actually means "*mankind*") and his wife, Eve, who according to Gen. 3:20 was "the mother of *all living*." The whole portrait of Genesis 1 and 2 makes it plain that man was the recipient of undeserved gifts of God's grace. In His love God created man to be the crown of His visible creation and placed it all at man's disposal for his personal use and enjoyment. But an essential point in the creation story is also this, that man's relationship to God is a relationship of *complete dependence* and of *holy responsibility*. Man is dependent on God for the world in which he lives,

for his body, for his life and breath, for his complete existence, for his wife, his sexuality, his children, his food—for everything! And man is responsible to God: he is the image of God, God's representative or vice-regent, who is to exercise dominion in the created world in God's behalf and in responsibility to Him.

But then follows Chapter 3 with its story of man's fall into sin, essentially the story of man's rebellion against his utter dependence on God and of his attempt to escape his responsibility to his Creator. The tragic fact is that man does not want to be dependent on God, and he does not want to be responsible to God. He desires rather to be like God Himself! So when the tempting serpent held out the lying promise: Eat of the forbidden tree, and "you will be like God" (Gen. 3:5), the Genesis record states that the woman took of the fruit and ate and her husband with her—and disobedience and rebellion entered into the world and destroyed the perfect relationship that had earlier existed between the Creator and His creatures. The stories that now follow in Genesis 1—11 serve the theological purpose of showing how sin grows and develops as it estranges man from God more and more, even as it estranges man from his fellowman in growing alienation.

A visualization of the structure and inner relationship of these first 11 chapters of Genesis is provided in Chart F in the Appendix. The chart singles out the four major stories that follow the creation accounts in order to demonstrate how a schematic pattern of *sin*, *judgment*, and *grace* constitutes the theological motif that connects the story of creation with the giving of the promise to Abraham. The

chart shows how to each act of God's grace man responds with ungrateful rebellion. To the divine grace showered upon man at creation man responds with disobedient rebellion in the story of the Fall (Gen. 3:1-13). To the providential love of God displayed to the first family there is the human response of wanton violence as the first son becomes the first murderer (Gen. 4:1-10). When the grace of God provides a divine sign to protect Cain against similar violence, human wickedness only increases, and moral depravity becomes widespread (Gen. 6:1-5). When God's grace spares Noah and his family and gives mankind an opportunity for a new start on earth after the Flood, men only go on in their wicked rebellion and rise up in ultimate defiance and rejection of God at the Tower of Babel.

The chart also shows how to each act of man's sinful rebellion God responded with a word of *judgment*. But, even more important than that, it shows how each word of judgment was *tempered by divine mercy*. In the Garden of Eden, when man transgresses the divine prohibition, he stands under the divine word of judgment that had been spoken in advance: "In the day that you eat of it *you shall surely die!*" (Gen. 2:17). The emphasis the Hebrew text gives to this word of judgment ("you shall surely die!") is sometimes weakened in translation or in interpretation. It deserves to be noted that the Hebrew grammatical construction here used (the infinitive absolute preceding the finite verb) constitutes one of the most emphatic expressions of a verbal idea of which the Hebrew language is capable. This construction is used throughout the Old Testament to strengthen a verbal idea by

adding the connotations of certainty, force, and completeness. In fact, the identical Hebrew verb used in Gen. 2:17 is used in this same emphatic (infinitive absolute) construction to announce the *death penalty* in such passages as Ex. 21:12-17; Lev. 20:9-16; 1 Sam. 14:39, 44; 22:16; 1 Kings 2:37, 42, and others. Our understanding of the divine word of judgment in Gen. 2:17 is heightened as we hear the note of certainty and finality with which it announces the death penalty to sinful man: "You shall surely die!" This is rebellious man's fully deserved punishment, which, if put into effect, would mark the complete and final end of God's dealings with the race of Adam! But read the record and note the wonder of grace: divine mercy tempers the word of judgment, and though man is now under the curse of sin and loses his home in the Garden as well as his access to the Tree of Life, he does not die on that day but is allowed to live out his days under the merciful providence of God. In His mercy God does not make a full end of His creature man nor of His relationship to him. Man is now indeed under the judgment of death, but the execution of that judgment is postponed so that mankind is not summarily destroyed. Man is not to be exterminated; he is allowed rather to continue to live, and it is divine mercy that makes the very provisions for his life. For as God speaks in Genesis 3, He does not invoke the previously-announced death penalty calling for the immediate termination of human life. We hear instead significant references to the continuation of life in the words about the woman's childbearing and about her future descendants, also in God's words and acts in which He makes provision for

the basic necessities of man's life: food (3:17-19) and clothing (3:21).

The message of this third chapter of Genesis declared to the ancient Israelite reader—and this is its message for the modern reader as well: The God of all creation is a God of mercy and love, who deals with mankind not only in judgment but above all in undeserved grace! In the narrative of this chapter we have a visualization of the truth that Israel learned at a time when it had similarly stood under the judgment of a fully-deserved divine word of destruction (Ex. 32:7-10), from which it was spared only by the fact that the Lord is "a God merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love and faithfulness, keeping steadfast love for thousands, forgiving iniquity and transgression and sin, but who will by no means clear the guilty, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children and the children's children, to the third and fourth generation." (Ex. 34:6-7)

The proclamation of this divine mercy, which tempers divine judgment, became a prominent theme also of Israel's prophets. It underlies passages in Isaiah (e. g., 57:16) and Jeremiah (e. g., 3:12) as well as the words of Joel 2:13: "Return to the Lord, your God, for He is gracious and merciful, slow to anger, and abounding in steadfast love, and repents of evil." It is the basis, too, of the concluding passage of the Book of Micah: "Who is a God like Thee, pardoning iniquity and passing over transgression for the remnant of His inheritance? He does not retain His anger forever, because he delights in steadfast love. He will again have compassion upon us, for He will tread our iniquities under foot. Thou wilt cast all our sins into the depth of

the sea. Thou wilt show faithfulness to Jacob and steadfast love to Abraham, as Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old." (Micah 7:18-20)

This same confidence in the God who "in wrath remembers mercy" (Hab. 3:2) found expression even amid "the wormwood and the gall" of the Exile in poems like Lamentations, in which we find the declaration: "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, His mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. . . . For the Lord will not cast off forever, but, though He cause grief, He will have compassion according to the abundance of his steadfast love; for He does not willingly afflict or grieve the sons of men" (Lam. 3:19-33). That this same theme resounded in Israel's liturgical worship is witnessed by its inclusion in such hymnic passages as Psalm 103, especially in the paragraph from verse 6 through 13, in which there are reminiscences both of the creation and of the deliverance from Egypt and which includes the classic passage: "He does not deal with us according to our sins nor requite us according to our iniquities" (Ps. 103:10). What prophets and poets thus expressed in measured meter and stately oracle is what the Book of Genesis teaches in the narrative of Chapter 3.

To return to Chart F, we find that the same sin-judgment-grace motif that is apparent in the account of the Fall is also woven into the structure of the chapters that follow. When Cain stands under the word of divine judgment which condemns him to a life of separation from his fellowmen and from God, God responds to his plea in merciful consideration and makes it possible for Cain to enjoy at least a mea-

sure of community life (cf. 4:10-17). Similarly when the wickedness of the pre-Flood generation grows to unearthly limits, God declares in righteous judgment: "I will blot out man whom I have created!" (Gen. 6:7). Once again we must note that if this fully-deserved death penalty were to be carried out, this would mark the end of the story of mankind. But it is not carried out! Even here divine mercy moves God to overrule this decree of judgment as He selects Noah and his family to be the means of preserving life on earth and giving all creation a new start after the Flood. Each of these Biblical accounts in these early chapters of Genesis serves as an object lesson to illustrate the truth that St. Paul later expressed in Romans 5: "Where sin increased, grace abounded all the more!" (V. 20)

But then follows that act of ultimate insolence when men flout God and unite in that grandiose scheme at Babel to set the Creator aside as unnecessary and to storm the very heights of heaven! (Cf. Gen. 11:4) Once more God's judgment sets in. Man is dispersed, and his language is confused so that such cooperative attempts to defy God become impossible. But now the narrative at first glance seems to be different; the schematic sin-judgment-grace pattern seems to be broken. Chapter 11 records God's judgment on mankind's act of rebellion at Babel—but it contains no corresponding word or act of divine grace or mercy. The balance of the chapter contains only the genealogy of Shem—and as we read, we are almost afraid to ask: Is this the tragic conclusion of it all? Has God's mercy reached its limits? Is this the final end of man's rebellion against God, that God has forsaken him and left him

in his state of scattered confusion and division and in the hopeless helplessness of his sinfulness? Instinctively at this point the question of the Psalmist leaps to our lips and we ask: "Has God forgotten to be gracious? Has He in anger shut up His compassion?" (Psalm 77:9)

It is against this dark background of the concluding chapter of the "primeval history" in Genesis 1—11 that the light of Genesis 12 shines with new brilliance. It is to questions such as those asked in Psalm 77 that Genesis 12 gives its answer of hope and confidence. For here we see that God has *not* forsaken man and that even to man's crowning act of insolent rebellion God responds not only in judgment but especially in grace! Though the Biblical story at this point narrows down from the story of all people scattered over all the earth (Gen. 11:11) to the story of one man, Abraham, and his descendants in the one nation of Israel, God has by no means forgotten all other men and nations. Rather, as His divine Word of promise states in the opening verses of chapter 12, it is through this one man and his descendants that God will bring His divine blessings to all nations, to "all the families of the earth" (Gen. 12:3). It is in this promise to Abraham that God's Word enters into human history and, according to the Biblical view, it is this Word of promise that shapes the course of all future history.

Here we see, then, how this promise of Gen. 12:1-3 helps us understand more clearly all the rest of Genesis and all the rest of the Bible. Whatever precedes this promise (Genesis 1—11, including the creation accounts) is introductory to it and preparatory for it. And all that follows in

the succeeding chapters of Genesis and in the balance of the Old Testament—and the New Testament as well—is simply the record of God at work in history bringing to fulfillment this Word of promise spoken to Abraham and, through Abraham, to all mankind.

As the Old Testament ends, this Word of promise is only partially fulfilled; but that is why the New Testament follows. And surely we can now understand better why in its opening verse the New Testament introduces Jesus Christ as "the Son of *Abraham*"; also why in the first chapter of the New Testament St. Matthew makes a special point of tracing the genealogy of Jesus Christ directly back to this very Abraham to whom God spoke His Word of promise in Genesis 12. The New Testament begins this way because it is intent upon telling us that God's Word of promise spoken to Abraham and restated throughout the Old Testament has found its culminating fulfillment in the person and work of Jesus Christ. The Word of promise that went forth from the mouth of God to Abraham did not return empty but it accomplished that which God purposed and it prospered in the thing for which He sent it.

What it affirms in its opening chapter the New Testament affirms repeatedly: that in sending Jesus Christ God made good His promise to Abraham. The Virgin Mary, for example, praises God in her *Magnificat* because in sending the Child who was to be born of her He was acting "in remembrance of His mercy, as he spoke to our fathers, to Abraham and to his posterity forever" (Luke 1:54 f.). Similarly Zechariah, standing beside the cradle of his newborn son John, the Messiah's fore-

runner, declares that in the sending of the Savior God is acting "to perform the mercy promised to our fathers"; in fact, he states specifically in the next words of his *Benedictus* that God is "remembering His holy covenant, the oath which He swore to our father Abraham" (Luke 1:67 ff., esp. 72 f.). Other New Testament passages that likewise interpret the redemptive work of Jesus Christ in terms of the fulfillment of God's promise to Abraham include: John 8:56; Acts 3:25 f.; Rom. 4:13-25; Gal. 3:6-29 (see especially v. 14).

When we discern the Scriptural centrality of God's Word of promise to Abraham in Genesis 12 and trace its working out in Biblical history, we are able to see and understand more clearly the plan and purpose of the "primeval history" or "pre-history" of Genesis 1—11. These 11 chapters, of which the creation chapters are an integral part, bear their "witness to Christ" by explaining the reason for the promise given in Genesis 12. They show why it was necessary for God Himself to enter into human history and to initiate, in His promise to Abraham, that redemptive work which culminated in the birth, the life, the suffering, the death, the resurrection, and the ascension of Jesus Christ. These first chapters of the Bible, then, including the creation accounts, are not intended merely to explain how the world came to be but rather why Israel had to be and why in the person of Jesus Christ the Creator Himself had to enter the world of His creation in order to seek and to find His rebellious creatures and to bring them back to Him in gracious love.

It is when we see the theological purpose that these first chapters of Genesis serve in the Biblical record of redemption that we understand more fully the signifi-

cance of statements like this: "The Bible is *not* a textbook of science." To approach the creation accounts of Genesis, then, for the purpose of finding in them a "scientific" description of the origin of the world or of man, or chronological information about such origins, or cosmological data, is to misunderstand the purpose for which they were written down and preserved in the Holy Scriptures. These sacred writings inspired by God were given, we need to remind ourselves, to make us wise: wise not in the realm of science, but "wise unto salvation through faith in Christ Jesus."

Chart G in the Appendix ("From the First Creation to the New Creation") is provided in the hope that it will aid in visualizing more readily the relationship that exists between the early chapters of Genesis, including the promise to Abraham, to the rest of the Bible. The chart endeavors to portray the sweep of Biblical history as it moves from the original creation at the beginning of time to the new creation at the end of time. The first creation, of course, involved "all the world," even as Adam's fall into sin involved all mankind in rebellion against its Creator-God. To make good the damage caused by man's rebellion, God in Biblical history focuses on one man, Abraham, and his descendants in the one nation of Israel, electing them to be the bearers of His promise of blessings for all nations. The promise culminates in that Descendant of Abraham and Israel whom we know from the New Testament as Jesus Christ, true God and true Man, whose redemptive work was performed for all mankind on a universal scale and who commissioned His church to proclaim His message of universal redemption to all mankind saying: "Go into all the world and preach the Gospel to the whole

creation" (Mark 16:15). As members of Christ's church who live in the era designated in Chart G by the triangle at the right, we have the privilege to serve the God of our creation and redemption as His messengers to bring to the fallen sons of Adam the message of the Last Adam, Jesus Christ, and through that Gospel to share with our fellow creatures the blessings of God's New Creation for time and eternity.

We see, then, that the doctrine of creation which the first two chapters of Genesis present is presented not for its own sake; it is presented rather as part and parcel of the doctrine that is the central theme of all Scripture: the doctrine of salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Genesis 1 and 2 are indeed "written for our learning"—not in the area of scientific knowledge but in the area of salvation-knowledge. These chapters appear as the background for and the prelude to the greater story of God's work of redeeming all mankind through His Son, Jesus Christ, in whom we all become new creatures and who is the source and author of the New Creation.

As these chapters speak to us, they point us back to the origin of the world and of our own origin from the creative hands of our almighty God. They speak to us of our relationship to God and of our purpose in life. They speak to us at the moment in history at which we live, and they remind us of our responsibility to our God and to our fellowmen. And, in the context of the whole Bible, they point us forward to the culmination of all history at the final "Day of the Lord," when God in Christ will restore His creation which has been marred by sin and will create "a new heaven and a new earth" (Rev. 21:1) where "God Himself will dwell with his people" and "will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be any mourning nor crying nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away" (Rev. 21:4)

Genesis 1 and 2, then, constitute the eternally valid religious interpretation of God's act of creation and its meaning for us and all mankind—"as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be, world without end!"

St. Louis, Mo.

Appendix

Chart A

SEQUENCE OF WORKS OF CREATION

GENESIS 1	GENESIS 2
LIGHT	MAN
FIRMAMENT	GARDEN
LAND & SEAS SEPARATED	TREES
VEGETATION	
LIGHTS	RIVERS
WATER & AIR ANIMALS	LAND & AIR ANIMALS
LAND ANIMALS MAN (M & F)	WOMAN

Chart B

RECURRING EXPRESSIONS IN GENESIS 1

THE ACCOUNTS OF THE VARIOUS CREATION DAYS IN GENESIS 1 INCLUDE A TOTAL OF 7 LITERARY ELEMENTS:

- A. THE INTRODUCTORY WORD: "AND GOD SAID"
- B. THE CREATIVE WORD: "LET THERE BE"
- C. THE WORD OF ACCOMPLISHMENT: "IT WAS SO"
- D. THE DESCRIPTIVE WORD: "AND GOD SEPARATED"
"AND GOD MADE"
- E. THE WORD OF BLESSING OR OF NAMING
- F. THE WORD OF DIVINE APPROVAL:
"GOD SAW IT WAS GOOD"
- G. THE CONCLUDING WORD:
"THERE WAS EVENING AND MORNING ETC."

Chart E

DISTINCTIVE ITEMS IN EACH CREATION ACCOUNT

<i>First Account</i>	<i>Second Account</i>
CREATION BY DIVINE <i>WORD</i> EARTH A FORMLESS VOID SPECIFIC CREATION OF LIGHT FIRMAMENT SEAS LIGHTS WATER ANIMALS THE DIVINE DELIBERATION SPECIFIC REFERENCE TO THE "IMAGE OF GOD" SEVEN-DAY CHRONOLOGY DIVINE REST ON SEVENTH DAY	CREATION BY DIVINE <i>ACT</i> MIST TO MOISTEN GROUND MAN FORMED OF DUST GOD BREATHED INTO MAN THE BREATH OF LIFE GARDEN IN EDEN THE TWO SPECIAL TREES THE FOUR RIVERS MAN TO CARE FOR GARDEN PROHIBITION AGAINST EATING OF TREE OF KNOWLEDGE MAN'S NAMING OF ANIMALS WOMAN MADE OF MAN'S RIB

Chart F

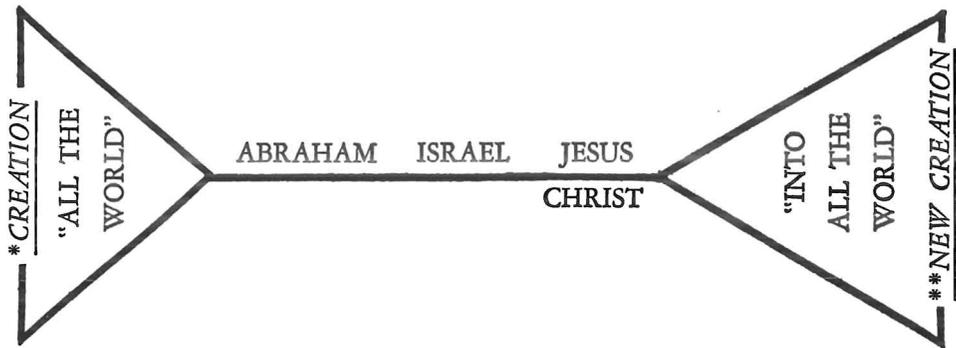
THE SIN-JUDGMENT-GRACE MOTIF:

The Theological Link Connecting the Genesis Creation
Accounts with the Promise to Abraham in Genesis 12

GRACE	CREATION	Gen. 1 and 2
SIN	THE FALL (Disobedience)	Gen. 3:1-13
JUDGMENT	DEATH	Gen. 3:14-19
GRACE	LIFE UNDER GOD'S PROVIDENCE	Gen. 3:20-24
SIN	CAIN'S MURDER (Violence)	Gen. 4:1-10
JUDGMENT	CAIN'S EXPULSION	Gen. 4:11-14
GRACE	CAIN'S PROTECTING SIGN	Gen. 4:15ff.
SIN	WICKEDNESS INCREASES (Moral Depravity)	Gen. 6:1-5
JUDGMENT	THE FLOOD TO DESTROY ALL LIFE	Gen. 6:6-7
GRACE	LIFE PRESERVED THROUGH NOAH	Gen. 6:8—9:28
SIN	BABEL (Rejection of God)	Gen. 11:1-4
JUDGMENT	DISPERSAL AND DIVISION OF MANKIND	Gen. 11:5-32
GRACE	THE PROMISE TO ABRAHAM	Gen. 12:1-3

Chart G

"FROM THE FIRST CREATION TO THE NEW CREATION"



* "The first heaven and the first earth": cf. the first 2 chapters of the Bible: Genesis 1 and 2

** "A new heaven and a new earth": cf. the last 2 chapters of the Bible: Rev.21 and 22 (esp. 21: 1ff.)