

Dr. Ted Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 5, Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, Days of Genesis 1 Resources from NotebookLM

1) Abstract, 2) Audio podcast, 3) Study Guide, 4) Briefing Document, and 5) FAQs

1. Abstract of Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 5, Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, Days of Genesis 1, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

This lecture by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt **analyzes Genesis 1:1-2**, exploring three interpretations of the verses' relationship: the Gap Theory (a pre-creation era of chaos), the Dependent Clause Theory (the earth pre-existing creation), and the Independent Clause Theory (an initial creation followed by shaping). He then **discusses the "days" of creation**, comparing three perspectives: the 24-hour literal day, the symbolic day, and the day-age theory. Finally, he **examines the literary context of Genesis**, considering oral tradition, Mesopotamian influences (like the Gilgamesh Epic and Enuma Elish), and the book's structure, including the *toledot* and tablet models. The lecture concludes by emphasizing the importance of understanding the original author's intent and avoiding unnecessary debates over secondary issues.

**2. 28 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of
Dr. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 5 – Double
click icon to play in Windows media player or go to the
Biblicalelearning.org [BeL] Site and click the audio podcast link
there (Old Testament → Introduction → Old Testament
Literature).**



**Hildebrandt_OTLit_
Session05.mp3**

3. Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 5, Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, Days of Genesis 1

Genesis 1:1-2 and the Days of Creation: A Study Guide

Quiz

Answer the following questions in 2-3 sentences each.

1. What are the four key concepts related to scripture that have been discussed prior to the focus on Genesis 1:1?
2. Briefly explain the "Gap Theory" of interpreting Genesis 1:1 and 1:2.
3. What is the primary criticism of the "Gap Theory" that the lecture presents?
4. How does the "Dependent Clause" theory interpret Genesis 1:1?
5. What are the problems with the "Dependent Clause" view?
6. Explain the "Independent Clause" interpretation of Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 and how it views the structure of these verses.
7. What does the lecture suggest about Moses' use of literary patterns in the writing of Genesis?
8. According to the lecture, how might the structure of Genesis reflect the use of clay tablets in Mesopotamia?
9. What three main interpretations are presented for the "days" of Genesis 1?
10. How can the concept of "day" (yom) in the Bible be understood beyond a literal 24-hour period?

Quiz Answer Key

1. The four key concepts are inspiration, canonization, transmission, and translation. Inspiration refers to the divine origin of the text, canonization is the process of compiling the books of the Bible, transmission concerns scribal copying, and translation is the process of making the text understandable in different languages.
2. The Gap Theory proposes a time gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, where a pre-Adamic creation and Satan's fall occurred, turning the original creation into chaos.

The seven days of creation described in Genesis are then considered a re-creation of the earth after this period of chaos.

3. The main criticism of the Gap Theory is that it reads sin and Satan into the context of Genesis 1 and 2 where those themes are not present, since sin does not enter the biblical narrative until Genesis 3. It also goes against the literary style of Moses by projecting the Fall backward.
4. The Dependent Clause theory re-translates Genesis 1:1 to mean "When God began to create, the earth was without form and void." This interpretation suggests that the earth was already existing in an unformed state when God began to shape it.
5. This view implies that matter, energy, and God are all eternal, which contradicts the biblical idea of God as the sole creator of everything. It also suggests that God did not create the earth *ex nihilo*.
6. The Independent Clause view sees Genesis 1:1 as a summary title of God's initial creative act ("In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth"). Genesis 1:2 is then interpreted as a negative circumstantial clause stating the state of creation at that point, followed by the main clause in Genesis 1:3, beginning with "God said."
7. The lecture suggests that Moses used the literary forms and structure of his day, such as the toledot structure for paragraph division. He also used contemporary Canaanite language patterns and tablet structure, which reflects the culture and era in which the text was composed.
8. The lecture connects the alternating patterns of history and genealogy in Genesis to the tablet structure of the time, which often included history on the front of the tablet and genealogies, colophons, and summaries on the back. This provides another layer of meaning to the structure of Genesis.
9. The three main interpretations of the "days" of Genesis 1 are the Literal 24-Hour Day, the Day-Age Theory, and the Symbolic Day. These different views vary on the length and nature of the "days" in the creation week.
10. The lecture explains that "day" (yom) can be used figuratively to refer to various periods of time, such as the "Day of the Lord" which can be a thousand years. It can also refer to the time of a person's life, or daylight which can vary. This helps show the complexity of the language and how the Bible uses time symbolically.

Essay Questions

1. Compare and contrast the Gap Theory, the Dependent Clause View, and the Independent Clause View interpretations of Genesis 1:1-2, and evaluate which one offers the most convincing exegesis of the text according to the lecture.
2. Discuss the role of oral tradition in the preservation and transmission of stories like those found in Genesis, considering how variations and adaptations might have occurred over time and how this relates to the Gilgamesh Epic and the Enuma Elish.
3. How does the lecture explain the idea that Moses might have borrowed from other ancient Near Eastern creation stories, and what implications does this have for understanding the authority and reliability of Genesis?
4. Evaluate the lecture's presentation of the different interpretations of the "days" of creation in Genesis 1, and how these interpretations can impact one's understanding of the relationship between the biblical text and scientific claims about the age of the earth.
5. Analyze the lecture's explanation of the importance of understanding the original intent of Moses as the original author and how it provides a necessary hermeneutical lens.

Glossary of Key Terms

Canonization: The process by which books were collected and recognized as the authoritative word of God within a religious tradition.

Colophon: A scribal note found at the end of ancient texts, including clay tablets, that might include the name of the scribe, the commissioner, and other information about the creation of the text.

Dependent Clause View: An interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2 which suggests that verse 1 is dependent on verse 2, implying that the earth was already existing in a formless and empty state when God began to create.

Doxology: A liturgical expression of praise to God, often found in scripture.

Enuma Elish: A Babylonian creation epic that describes the creation of the world through a battle among the gods.

Ex Nihilo: A Latin phrase meaning "out of nothing," referring to the idea of creation without pre-existing materials.

Gap Theory: A theory interpreting Genesis 1:1-2 as having a gap of time between the two verses, during which a pre-Adamic world was destroyed because of Satan's fall.

Gilgamesh Epic: An ancient Mesopotamian epic poem, notable for containing a flood story with parallels to the biblical account of Noah.

Hermeneutics: The study of how to interpret texts, particularly religious texts, involving the methods, principles, and theory of interpretation.

Independent Clause View: An interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2 which suggests that verse 1 is an independent summary statement about God's initial creation, with verse 2 describing the state of the earth at that time.

Inspiration: The belief that the text of the Bible is divinely inspired, with God directly speaking through prophets.

Intertextual: The relationship between texts, in which one text may influence the interpretation of another.

Oral Transmission: The passing down of stories, traditions, and cultural knowledge through spoken word from one generation to the next.

Polytheism: The belief in or worship of more than one god.

Scribal Copying: The process of hand-copying texts, typically on scrolls or papyrus.

Toledot Structure: A literary structure in Genesis, marked by the phrase "this is the account of," which is used to divide the book into ten different sections and provides a way to organize the narrative.

Transmission: The process by which a text is copied and passed down through time.

Translation: The act of conveying a text from one language into another, making it understandable to new readers.

Yom: The Hebrew word for "day," which can refer to different periods of time depending on context, including a literal 24-hour period, a longer era, or a symbolic representation.

4. Briefing Document

Okay, here is a detailed briefing document summarizing the main themes and important ideas from the provided lecture transcript by Dr. Ted Hildebrandt on Genesis 1.

Briefing Document: Dr. Ted Hildebrandt's Lecture on Genesis 1

Subject: Analysis of Genesis 1:1-2 and interpretations of the creation days.

Main Themes:

- **Interpreting Genesis 1:1-2:** The lecture focuses on the relationship between Genesis 1:1 ("In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth") and 1:2 ("The earth was formless and empty..."). Dr. Hildebrandt explores three main interpretations:
- **Gap Theory:** A theory positing a gap of time between verses 1 and 2, during which Satan fell and chaos (including dinosaurs) existed.
- **Dependent Clause Theory:** This theory interprets 1:1 as a subordinate clause, suggesting the earth already existed when God began to create, implying that matter is co-eternal with God.
- **Independent Clause Theory:** The view that 1:1 is an independent summary of creation, and 1:2 describes the state of the earth *after* that initial creation, before God began to form and fill it.
- **Theological and Literary Approaches:** Dr. Hildebrandt emphasizes the importance of understanding the text's original intent by analyzing Moses' literary style, the cultural context, and the structure of Genesis. He advocates for interpreting Genesis 1 as a doxology, emphasizing God's greatness and goodness.
- **Old Testament Context:** The lecture emphasizes that the OT was written by humans, who used the language and literary structures of their time. It suggests Moses was familiar with Mesopotamian creation accounts and shaped the Genesis story into a polemic against polytheism.
- **Interpretations of the "Days" of Creation:** The lecture discusses three views: the literal 24-hour day view, the symbolic day view (creation is a literary framework), and the "age-day" theory (days are long periods of time). It is ultimately pointed out that there are multiple interpretations of "day" in the Bible and that these interpretations should be handled as a "minor" point, not a "major."

Key Ideas & Facts:

1. Genesis 1:1-2 Interpretations:

- **Gap Theory:Description:** "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth... The earth then, became darkness and void, formless and empty." Satan's fall and creation of dinosaurs fill the 'gap' in verse two. The seven days of creation are really days of *recreation*.
- **Pros:** It provides an explanation for the presence of dinosaurs and a place for Satan's fall.
- **Cons:** It reads sin back into the context of Genesis 1 (where there is no sin) and is grammatically flawed. The word "hayah" meaning "was" or "became" is used to justify this but can be translated either way.
- **Quote:** "So this is called the Gap Theory. Do you see why it's called the Gap Theory? Because you've got God creating here (Gen. 1:1)--there's a gap where Satan comes in and chaos comes in, formless and empty (Gen. 1:2)--and then here God starts up again (Gen. 1:3) with 'Let there be light.'"
- **Dependent Clause Theory:Description:** "When God began to create, the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep." The Earth was already there when God came to shape it.
- **Pros:** It explains how the earth was already there before creation.
- **Cons:** It implies that matter is eternal along with God, contradicting the idea that God creates everything from nothing.
- **Quote:** "When God began to create, the earth was without form and empty." Is that different? What does this verse assume? The earth was already there and God came down merely to shape and form the heavens and the earth."
- **Independent Clause Theory:Description:** "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" (1:1) is an independent summary, and 1:2 is a negative circumstantial clause describing the earth's initial state (formless and empty). God forms and fills the empty earth and "lets there be light" in Genesis 1:3.
- **Pros:** Fits with Moses' writing style (summary/negative circumstance/main clause).
- **Cons:** Requires knowledge of Moses's literary style to understand it properly.

- **Quote:** "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." Wham bam-- God creates the heavens and the earth. It's kind of like a summary title, it's a summary independent clause that summarizes the initial act of creation.

2. Literary Style and Structure of Genesis:

- **Moses' Style:** Moses used a pattern of initial statement, negative circumstantial clause, and a main clause. Examples are found in both Genesis 1 and 2.
- **Quote:** "Moses then is a classic example of how this works: "in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, the earth was formless and empty, and then "let there be light and there's light." So this is an independent clause, a negative circumstantial clause, and then the main clause."
- **Toledot Structure:** Genesis is divided into ten sections using the phrase "This is the account of..." (toledot), showing Moses' organizational structure.
- **Quote:** "In Genesis 2:4, you've got one of these toledots, "this is the account of." "This is the account of the heavens and the earth and the day they were created."
- **Tablet Structure:** The lecture discusses how the oscillation between history and genealogy found in Genesis might reflect the style of ancient clay tablets (history on the front, genealogy on the back).
- **Quote:** "On the front of the tablet he noticed there was a title, a history, a colophon (it was a scribal note saying this tablet's mine), with a genealogy on the back. So a genealogy's on the back and the summary."

3. Creation Texts Outside of Genesis:

- **Psalms 19:** Highlights how creation declares God's glory.
- **Quote:** "The heavens declare the glory of God. The firmament shows his handiwork."
- **Psalms 136:** Emphasizes God's loyal love that endures forever as seen in creation.
- **Quote:** "To him who alone does great wonders, for his loyal love endures forever. Who by his understanding made the heavens? for his loyal love endures forever."
- **Revelation 4:11:** States that the angels in heaven praise God because he created all things.

- **Quote:** "You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory, honor, and power... For you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."

4. Moses' Sources and Cultural Context:

- **Oral Tradition:** Stories were passed down orally for generations before being written, and this process can change stories.
- **Quote:** "In oral tradition do people jazz the story? In other words, you never tell the story exactly the same way."
- **Mesopotamian Creation Accounts:** The lecture addresses the Enuma Elish and the Gilgamesh Epic, noting that these stories predate Moses and share some similarities with the Genesis account.
- **Quote:** "Did Moses know the story of Enuma Elish, the creation account that comes from Babylon? Again, it's from before the time of Moses. You've got a divine spirit and primeval chaos. Light emanates from the gods (plural). Firmament is made, the dry land is made, luminaries are made and notice, man is made last."
- **Hebrew Language:** Hebrew is identified as a Canaanite dialect that was adopted by Abraham's descendants.
- **Quote:** "The Hebrew language is just a Canaanite dialect. Where did the Jews get the Hebrew language? They got the Hebrew language when Abraham moved into the land of Canaan."
- **Accommodation:** God communicates to people using their understanding and language.
- **Quote:** "Did God accommodate his the truth to us in our day and time? He always accommodates himself to where we are."
- **Moses' Background:** Moses was raised by his parents until early adolescence and then trained in Egyptian wisdom. He would have known Hebrew fluently.

5. Interpretations of "Days" of Creation:

- **Literal 24-Hour Day:** Genesis 1:5 defines "day" as an oscillation of light and darkness (24-hour period). The Sabbath is also a literal 24-hour period.

- **Quote:** "it's that first twenty-four day, God defines as yom in Genesis 1:5. It is a twenty-four hour day. It's an oscillation of light and darkness which is a twenty-four hour period. So it's defined for us in Genesis 1."
- **Symbolic Day:** The days are a literary framework and represent the order of God's revelation to Moses, not actual periods of creation.
- **Quote:** "They're meant to be a logical or literary framework that Moses is using to describe the creation."
- **Age-Day Theory:** A "day" (yom) can mean a long period of time, as seen in the "Day of the Lord".
- **Quote:** "'a day with the Lord is as one thousand years and a thousand years is as a day."

6. Hermeneutics:

- **Original Intent:** Dr. Hildebrandt emphasizes the importance of hermeneutics – interpreting the Bible based on the original intent of the author (Moses) within its historical and cultural context, rather than reading it through modern lenses.
- **Quote:** "What I'm trying to do is get you out of you and look back at how Moses, as a writer, how he originally intended it. What did Moses originally intend? What was the original intent of Moses?"
- **Doxological Interpretation:** Genesis 1 is seen as a doxology, emphasizing God's greatness and goodness as creator.
- **Quote:** "Moses is basically saying Genesis 1 is a doxology. It's for the praise and worship of God. It tells us something about God, his majesty, the greatness and goodness of God in the creation."

Conclusion:

Dr. Hildebrandt's lecture provides a thorough exploration of Genesis 1, challenging listeners to engage with the text in its original context. It encourages a deeper understanding of the text's literary structure, historical background, and theological purpose, rather than getting bogged down on minor, divisive points. By understanding Moses's original intent, we can better understand the overall message of the Bible. The lecture also emphasizes a holistic view of creation, integrating scientific knowledge within a biblical worldview.

5. FAQs on Hildebrandt, Old Testament Literature, Session 5, Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, Days of Genesis 1, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

FAQ on Genesis 1 and Creation

1. **What are the three main views on the relationship between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2?** The three primary views are the Gap Theory, the Dependent Clause Theory, and the Independent Clause Theory. The Gap Theory suggests a temporal gap between the two verses where Satan's fall and the creation of dinosaurs occurred, making Genesis 1:3-2:3 a re-creation. The Dependent Clause Theory interprets 1:1 as a subordinate clause, implying the earth already existed when God began shaping it. Finally, the Independent Clause Theory views 1:1 as an independent summary statement of God's initial creation, with 1:2 describing its initial formlessness.
2. **What is the Gap Theory, and what are some arguments for and against it?** The Gap Theory posits that after the initial creation in Genesis 1:1, there was a gap in time where Satan fell to earth and created chaos, including dinosaurs. The earth became formless and empty before God began the recreation over seven days. Proponents use the Hebrew word *hayah* (to be/to become) to suggest that the earth "became" formless, and cite Jeremiah 4:23, where "formless and empty" appears as a judgment, linking it with Satan's fall. However, critics point out that Genesis 1 has no mention of sin or Satan, making it out of context to insert them there. Also, the grammar of the Hebrew is now seen to not support this.
3. **How does the Dependent Clause Theory interpret Genesis 1:1, and what are its implications?** This theory translates Genesis 1:1 as, "When God began to create," thus making the verse dependent on 1:2. It implies that the earth already existed when God began creation, and God merely shaped it. This theory suggests that three things are eternal: God, matter, and energy, and the Bible does not support this as God is the creator of everything. This significantly contrasts with traditional interpretations of God as the sole creator.

4. **What is the Independent Clause Theory's interpretation of Genesis 1:1 and 1:2, and why is it preferred by the source?** The Independent Clause Theory interprets Genesis 1:1 as an independent summary statement of God's initial creation, followed by 1:2, which describes the earth's initial formless state, and 1:3 onward explaining that God subsequently forms and fills it. The source prefers this view as it aligns with Moses's literary style, which often includes a summary statement followed by a negative circumstantial clause, and then the main clause.
5. **What is the significance of the “toledot” structure in Genesis, and how does it divide the book?** The "toledot" structure, marked by the phrase "this is the account of" (or "these are the generations of"), divides the book of Genesis into ten sections. It serves as Moses's way of organizing and structuring his narrative, with each division focusing on a specific account of events and genealogy. This framework helps understand Moses's literary technique.
6. **How do ancient Mesopotamian mud tablets inform our understanding of the structure of Genesis?** Ancient mud tablets often had a specific structure: a title, history, a scribal note (colophon), and genealogy. These tablet structures show a history-genealogy oscillation. This structure has similarities to the structure of Genesis, and the theory suggests that Moses may have been influenced by this structure in the writing of Genesis.
7. **How should Christians understand the similarities between Genesis and other ancient creation accounts like the *Enuma Elish* and the *Gilgamesh Epic*?** The similarities may be attributed to a shared oral tradition that was passed down for thousands of years before it was written down. These oral traditions evolved over time, resulting in stories with common themes, but adapted to their specific cultures. This suggests that Moses may have known and adapted these stories, and God worked through Moses to correct them and incorporate true elements into the biblical text. Moses also used the language and styles of the day to explain God's truth.

8. What are the three main views on interpreting the "days" of creation in Genesis

1? The three views on the days of creation are: the literal 24-hour day, the day-age theory (where each day represents an extended period of time), and the symbolic day theory. The literal day is based on the biblical text and the literal 24 hours of the Sabbath. The day-age theory suggests the days of creation could be long periods of time and is supported by verses like Psalm 90:4 where a thousand years is like a day in God's eyes. The symbolic theory sees the days as a literary structure, where God was revealing his creation to Moses, but that the days are not actual time periods of creation itself. Each interpretation has various support both biblically and theoretically.