

# Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 3, Genesis – The Creation Account Resources from NotebookLM

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

## 1. Abstract of Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 3, Genesis – The Creation Account, Biblicalelearning.org, BeL

Dr. Phillips' lecture focuses on the complexities surrounding the creation accounts in **Genesis 1 and 2**. It addresses common questions and controversies, especially as they relate to science and varying interpretations. **The lecture emphasizes the importance of considering both general revelation (nature) and special revelation (scripture) when studying creation.** Phillips explores different perspectives, such as young earth creationism, old earth creationism, and theistic evolution, aiming for a gracious understanding of diverse views. **The discussion includes the meaning of "image" in the context of human creation and contrasts the Genesis account with ancient Near Eastern creation myths like the Enuma Elish.** Ultimately, the goal is to thoughtfully examine the biblical text in light of scientific understanding and theological implications.

**2. 13 - minute Audio Podcast Created on the basis of Dr. Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 3 – 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 → OT Introduction → OT Lit).**



**Phillips\_OTLit\_Sessi  
on03.mp3**

### **3. Briefing Document: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 3, Genesis – The Creation Account**

Okay, here is a briefing document summarizing the main themes and ideas from the provided excerpts of Dr. Elaine Phillips' lecture on Genesis 1-2.

#### **Briefing Document: Dr. Elaine Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Lecture 3, Genesis 1-2**

##### **Overview:**

This lecture focuses on Genesis 1-2, exploring the creation account in light of both special (Biblical text) and general (natural world/scientific findings) revelation. Dr. Phillips emphasizes the potential for controversy surrounding interpretations of Genesis, particularly regarding the relationship between creation and evolution. She advocates for a gracious and nuanced approach, acknowledging the diversity of viewpoints while also presenting her own perspective. She also stresses the importance of understanding the nature and purpose of the text (historical/factual vs. theological/mythical).

##### **Key Themes and Ideas:**

##### **1. Importance of General and Special Revelation:**

- Dr. Phillips stresses the need to take both general revelation (God's revelation through nature and scientific study) and special revelation (Scripture) seriously when interpreting Genesis. "We can't forget that both of these are God's messages to us. And we have to take both very seriously as we talk about the whole issue of creation, in Genesis 1 and 2 particularly."
- She cautions against dismissing scientific findings or disregarding the implications of scriptural language.

##### **1. Genesis: Beginnings and Origins:**

- Genesis means "beginning" or "beginnings," derived from the Greek translation of the Hebrew word "Toledot" ("this is the account of").
- Genesis 1-11 broadly covers the origin of the universe, humankind, sin, and ethnic distinctions.
- She notes the beautiful poetry of Genesis 1 but stresses it's a broad brushstroke and that the natural sciences are needed for a full understanding.

##### **1. Creation vs. Evolution: A Nuanced Approach:**

- Dr. Phillips challenges caricatures of both "creationism" and "evolutionism."
- She defines "evolution" in this context primarily as the spontaneous origin of life and the view that humankind evolved systematically over a long period.
- She introduces the terms macro and micro evolution. Macroevolution representing major species jump, microevolution representing smaller changes within species.
- She acknowledges the potential differences in perspective on this topic within Gordon College, specifically compared to the natural science departments.

#### 1. **Creation: God as Beginner, Designer, and Source of Life:**

- The creation model emphasizes that God is the beginner and designer of the universe and the source of life, including a special creation of humankind.
- This perspective highlights the inherent value of human life, as humans are made in God's image.
- She mentions the wide range of positions within the creation concept, from young-earth creationism to old-earth creationism.

#### 1. **Interpreting Genesis 1:**

- Dr. Phillips presents different models for interpreting the creation account:
- **Literal interpretation:** God created the world in seven 24-hour days.
- **Day-Age Theory:** Each "day" in Genesis represents a long period of time. The article by her husband Perry Phillips goes into this theory.
- **Framework Hypothesis:** Genesis 1 is primarily a theological statement, not a scientific one, designed as a polemic against polytheistic cultures.
- **Revelatory Days:** God revealed aspects of creation to Moses on specific days while on Mount Sinai.
- She seems to lean towards a day-age theory in some way, indicating, "I would suggest that we are still in day 7. Now of course, I've already given away to you then how I conceive of the length of all these days. Very long periods of time."

#### 1. **Genesis 1 & 2: Structure and Key Elements:**

- Genesis 1 presents an orderly progression of creation, structured around large frameworks (days 1-3) and their corresponding populations (days 4-6).

- Day 7 is unique, lacking closure and representing God's rest and ongoing providential sustaining of the universe. She notes that Hebrews chapter 4 alludes to entering God's rest.
- She highlights God's intimate involvement in the creation process as described in both Genesis 1 and 2.

### 1. The Meaning of "Image" (Imago Dei):

- The "image of God" (Imago Dei) is not primarily a physical representation but a functional one.
- Humans, as God's image-bearers, are meant to function as his viceroys, ruling over creation.

### 1. The Creation of Adam and Eve:

- Adam was formed from the dust of the earth and given the breath of life, making him unique.
- Eve was created as an *ezer kenegdo*, a "helper opposite" Adam, indicating a position of equality and partnership. "Eve is created to be a help, Adam's equal, opposite him. They're going to live in harmony until the end of Genesis 2."
- God gives the purpose of creation: be fruitful, multiply, tend the earth, and steward it.

### 1. Elohim vs. Yahweh:

- *Elohim* (God) in Genesis 1 represents God's transcendence, might, and power.
- *Yahweh* (LORD) in Genesis 2 represents God's covenant relationship with Adam and Eve.
- The serpent in Genesis 3 only refers to God as *Elohim*, suggesting a lack of understanding of God's relational nature.

### 1. Contrasting Genesis with the Enuma Elish:

- The lecture briefly contrasts the Genesis creation account with the Enuma Elish, a Babylonian creation myth.
- While there are some general parallels (creation from nothing, prominence of water and darkness), the contrasts are significant.

- Genesis presents a single God, while the Enuma Elish features multiple, often chaotic deities. She says that this myth is an example of humans "recreating God in our own image."

#### **Quotes of Importance:**

- "We can't forget that both of these are God's messages to us. And we have to take both very seriously as we talk about the whole issue of creation, in Genesis 1 and 2 particularly."
- "Eve is created to be a help, Adam's equal, opposite him. They're going to live in harmony until the end of Genesis 2."

#### **Questions Raised:**

- When were angels created?
- What does the creation of Eve imply in terms of the process?
- Was it God's intention that Adam and Eve would eat from the tree of knowledge?

#### **Actionable Items/Next Steps:**

- Attend the optional lecture by Dr. Phillips' husband, Perry, on the scientific aspects of creation.
- Further reading and study of Genesis 1-2.
- Consider the implications of different interpretations of Genesis for theology and worldview.
- Be prepared to discuss and debate these topics with grace and respect.

## 4. Study Guide: Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 3, Genesis – The Creation Account

### Genesis 1-2: Creation and Origins

#### Study Guide

This study guide is designed to help you review and solidify your understanding of the Genesis 1-2 creation accounts, as presented by Dr. Elaine Phillips, with connections to Psalm 104 and the Enuma Elish. It includes a quiz, essay questions, and a glossary of key terms.

#### Quiz: Short Answer Questions

Answer each question in 2-3 sentences.

1. According to Dr. Phillips, what is the importance of both general and special revelation when studying creation accounts?
2. What does the Hebrew word *Toledot*, which is translated as "the account of" in Genesis, mean in English?
3. What is the significance of the statement "In the beginning, God created" from Genesis 1:1, according to the lecture?
4. Describe the framework structure presented in the lecture regarding Genesis 1 and the creation days.
5. What is the implication of God breathing the breath of life into Adam, according to Genesis 2, and how does it differentiate humans from animals?
6. Explain the meaning of the Hebrew term *ezer kenegdo* as it relates to the creation of Eve.
7. Why is it significant that Genesis 1 uses "Elohim" to refer to God, while Genesis 2 uses "Yahweh"?
8. In the context of studying creation, what does it mean to take a "theistic position"?
9. What is stellar evolution and what implications does it have for life, according to the lecture?
10. How does the lecturer use the term "adumbration" in connection with facets of the divine person within the Genesis creation account?

## Quiz Answer Key

1. **General revelation** (God's revelation in nature) and **special revelation** (scripture) are both essential for understanding creation, as we must take both what we observe in the natural world and what the scriptures say seriously. We cannot ignore the natural world, but it is equally important to take exceedingly seriously what the scriptures say.
2. The Hebrew word *Toledot*, translated as "the account of" in Genesis, means **beginnings or origins**. This word in Greek is the basis for the English word, Genesis.
3. "In the beginning, God created" is a crucial statement because it establishes **God as the originator and creator of everything**. How one interprets this (literally, as myth, etc.) has significant implications.
4. The framework structure of Genesis 1 presents days 1-3 as establishing **large structures or frameworks (light/dark, waters/sky, land/vegetation)**, while days 4-6 describe the **population of these frameworks (sun/moon/stars, birds/fish, land animals/humans)**. Day 7 is unique in that it does not have closure to it, with theological implications that we are still in day 7.
5. God breathing the breath of life into Adam **distinguishes humans from the rest of the animal world** and suggests that he has an important and special connection to the divine. This sets humanity apart, even though humans share commonalities with other living creatures, such as the use of *nephesh hayah*.
6. *Ezer kenegdo* means **help opposite him** and suggests that Eve was created to be Adam's equal helper, not his slave. The word *ezer* is often used of God and is not a demeaning term.
7. The use of "Elohim" (God) in Genesis 1 emphasizes **God's transcendence, power, and might** as the creator of everything. The use of "Yahweh" (LORD) in Genesis 2 emphasizes **God's covenant relationship and interaction with Adam and Eve**.
8. Taking a "theistic position" in the context of studying creation means **affirming that there is a God** and that he has something to do with the creation in which we are living.
9. Stellar evolution refers to changes in the solar system and implies that those changes have implications for life. Stellar evolution and the vast reaches of space are another component in which there is continual change.

10. Phillips uses the term "adumbration" to point out how facets of the divine person (God, Word, and Spirit) appear in the Genesis creation account. She says that this will keep coming up, and means foreshadowing, typing, looking ahead, et cetera.

## Essay Questions

Consider these questions for deeper reflection and written analysis. There are no right or wrong answers as long as you use the source material and your reasoning to support your answers.

1. Discuss the potential points of conflict and potential harmonies between general revelation (scientific findings) and special revelation (the Genesis creation accounts). How does Dr. Phillips suggest approaching these issues with humility and grace?
2. Explain the different interpretations of "day" (*yom*) in Genesis 1, as presented in the lecture, and their implications for understanding the age of the Earth.
3. Compare and contrast the creation account in Genesis 1-2 with the Enuma Elish, focusing on the portrayal of God/gods and the nature of creation. What are the theological implications of these differences?
4. Analyze the concept of humans being made "in the image of God" and how this relates to their function and purpose in the created world, according to Dr. Phillips's lecture.
5. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the different approaches to creation (theistic evolution, progressive creationism, framework hypothesis, young earth creationism, revelatory days' approach) as presented by Dr. Phillips. Which approach do you find most compelling and why?

## Glossary of Key Terms

- **General Revelation:** God's revelation of himself through nature and the created order, accessible to all people.
- **Special Revelation:** God's revelation of himself through specific means, such as the Bible, prophecy, and Jesus Christ.
- **Toledot:** A Hebrew word meaning "generations," "origins," or "beginnings," often used to introduce new sections in Genesis.
- **Elohim:** The Hebrew word for God, often used in Genesis 1, emphasizing God's power and transcendence.
- **Yahweh:** The Hebrew name for God, often translated as LORD, emphasizing God's covenant relationship with his people.
- **Nephesh Hayah:** A Hebrew term used to describe both animals and humans, indicating a commonality in their creation.
- **Ezer Kenegdo:** A Hebrew term used to describe Eve as a "helper fit for" Adam, emphasizing her role as a partner and equal.
- **Adumbration:** Foreshadowing; a hint of something to come. In the context of the lecture, it refers to the foreshadowing of the divine persons in the Genesis creation account.
- **Creationism:** The belief that God created the universe and life, often in a literal interpretation of Genesis.
- **Evolution:** The process by which different kinds of living organisms are thought to have developed and diversified from earlier forms during the history of the earth.
- **Macroevolution:** Major evolutionary change, especially with regard to whole taxonomic groups over long periods of time.
- **Microevolution:** Evolutionary change within a species or small group of organisms, especially over a short period.
- **Theistic Evolution:** The view that God used evolution as the mechanism for creating the universe and life.
- **Progressive Creationism:** The view that God created in stages over long periods, intervening at various points in history.

- **Framework Hypothesis:** The view that Genesis 1 is a theological framework or structure, rather than a literal historical account.
- **Young Earth Creationism:** The view that the Earth is relatively young (approximately 6,000-10,000 years old) and that creation occurred in six literal 24-hour days.
- **Revelatory Days' Approach:** The view that the days of creation in Genesis 1 represent days when God revealed aspects of his created order to Moses.
- **Theistic Position:** Affirming that there is a God and that he has something to do with the creation in which we are living.
- **Myth:** In scholarly usage, a narrative that conveys universal truths but is not necessarily factually accurate.
- **Polemic:** A verbal or written attack on a belief or opinion.

## 5. FAQs on Phillips, Old Testament Literature, Session 3, Genesis – The Creation Account, Biblicalelearning.org (BeL)

Here is an 8-question FAQ based on the provided source:

### FAQ on Genesis 1-2 and Creation

- **What is the significance of studying Genesis 1-2 in relation to both general and special revelation?**
- It is crucial to consider both general revelation (God's revelation through nature, as seen in the natural sciences) and special revelation (God's revelation through scripture) when understanding Genesis 1 and 2. Discounting either is a mistake. We must take the words of scripture seriously and acknowledge the implications of those words, while also acknowledging the information we get from careful study of the world around us, from the vastness of the universe to the smallest quantum particles.
- **What does the term "Genesis" mean, and what are some of the key themes covered in Genesis 1-11?**
- The word "Genesis" means "beginning" or "beginnings." Genesis 1-11 broadly covers the origins of the universe, humankind (including Adam and Eve and the implications of being made in God's image), the origin of sin, the covenant, and ethnic distinctions (particularly related to language and land, as illustrated by the Tower of Babel).
- **What are some of the different perspectives on the purpose and interpretation of Genesis 1?**
- There are varying views, ranging from interpreting it as a historically and scientifically accurate account to viewing it as a theological statement or even a myth (defined as a narrative that's not factually accurate but conveys universal truths). Understanding Genesis 1 as a theological statement emphasizes its purpose of conveying truths about God without necessarily adhering to historical or scientific standards.

- **What is the difference between "creationism" and "evolution," and how does the lecture approach these terms?**
- "Creationism" is often caricatured as the belief that God created the world in seven 24-hour days, while "evolution" is sometimes viewed as a godless system of thought that suggests life arose spontaneously from protoplasm. The lecture aims to move beyond these caricatures, acknowledging that there are different nuances within both perspectives. Evolution can refer to the origin of life and the appearance of humankind. The lecture brings up the distinction between Macro and Micro evolution.
- **What are some different models of how to reconcile the Genesis creation account with scientific findings about the age of the Earth and the universe?**
- The lecture outlines several models:
- **Theistic Evolution:** God used evolution as the mechanism for the unfolding of the universe after its initial creation.
- **Progressive Creationism:** Creation is the focus, with "yom" (day) in Genesis interpreted as either a long period of time or a 24-hour day where God made particular pronouncements with vast amounts of time in between.
- **Framework Hypothesis:** Genesis 1 is primarily a theological statement against surrounding cultures, not a scientific account.
- **Young Earth Creationism:** The days in Genesis 1 are 24-hour days, and the Earth is approximately 10,000 years old.
- **Revelatory Days Approach:** The days in Genesis 1 are not related to the actual days of creation, but rather the days Moses spent on Mount Sinai where God revealed the nature of creation to him.
- **What does it mean to be created "in the image of God," and how does this relate to human function and purpose?**
- In Near Eastern thinking, "image" had to do with function. It signifies that humans (Adam and later Eve) were created to function as God's viceroys, ruling over creation. It is not necessarily a physical representation. God breathes the breath of life into Adam making him unique.

- **What are the roles of Adam and Eve, and how is Eve's role as an "ezer kenegdo" (helper opposite him) understood?**
- Adam and Eve are meant to live in harmony, tend the Earth, and steward it properly. Eve's role as an "ezer kenegdo" does not imply inferiority or servitude. "Ezer" is often used to describe God as a helper, and "kenegdo" signifies that Eve was created to be Adam's equal, standing opposite him in a complementary relationship.
- **What is the significance of the different names for God used in Genesis 1 and 2 (Elohim and Yahweh), and how do they reflect different aspects of God's character and relationship with creation?**
- In Genesis 1, "God" translates to Elohim in Hebrew, which conveys transcendence, might, and power. In Genesis 2, "LORD" translates to Yahweh, God's covenant name, emphasizing his relationship with Adam and Eve. This reflects that God is both transcendent and relational.