

Dr. Meredith Kline, Kingdom Prologue, Lecture 4

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We had discussed one thing in that question of the antiquity of man and what we can say about that, by looking at the genealogies from Genesis 5 and 11. We concluded that these genealogies were incomplete, that there was an element of discontinuity. We simply took the position that the Bible itself does not compel us to any particular view in respect to the antiquity of man. This leaves us open to accommodate the valid findings of science in that regard.

Review of the 3 views on the age of the cosmos

Then we moved on from there to the question of the age of the cosmos, which is another big area of dispute, of course. We had time, I think, last week, just to set forth what are generally recognized as the three major views. For example, right now I am sort of indirectly involved in a book, which is being produced to present these three views. There are three authors, in the case of the other two views, there are co-authors, and with the case I'm involved with, I'm a consultant. But, in any case, the three views that will be dealt with in this particular book, it will probably be four or five or six months before it is out, are that the days are solar days. Secondly, the days represent ages, each one. Then, there is the third view, which has become known as the framework interpretation and would have been the least familiar to you, so we spent a little time trying to sketch out what it was. But very quickly reviewing, the literal view, the first view, holds and that what we have here was an actual week in Genesis, with six regular solar days and the seventh being the Sabbath. The second view, then holds that the Hebrew word *yom* should be translated "age." The picture that is formulated in Genesis 1 would not be that of a week of normal days, but a week of ages, with an attempt made to show there is a correspondence successfully of the six ages and the succession of geological eras. So that would be the second view. Then there is the third view, which is the framework interpretation.

Now, the second and the third views are both figurative. The second view, the

Day-Age view, takes the matter of duration, and says it can be handled figuratively. So the “days” can be stretched as to their duration instead of taken literally. On the framework interpretation, the principal of figurativeness impacts the thing in such a way that it is not just a question of the duration of the time that could be understood figuratively, but also, and this is the distinctive feature of the Framework view, it would hold that the narrative sequence is not intended to correspond to the actual biological sequence. There was, of course, a period of time, whatever it was, where it was a real historical chronology, but the narrative sequence is not designed, then, to portray the actual historical sequence. That is, the view we develop, trying to show the actual narrative sequence is a matter of theme. It is interested in various themes rather than just driving ahead in terms of straightforward chronology.

The total structure of Genesis: ten sections thematically arranged

Now, earlier in our lesson last week, we had been looking at the total structure of the book of Genesis, and we had already discovered there, that the whole book of Genesis is structured in such a way, that instead of following straightforward chronology from beginning to end, it is set up in such a way that after the prologue, which is the creation story we are now concerned with, the whole of Genesis is divided up into ten sections. These ten sections were arranged in interesting patterns, which reflected a concern to achieve certain numbers, like triads. So there are groupings of the ten sections of Genesis, that produce triads, or pairs. So more to our present way, what we discovered was that here in the first section, for example, it treats the entrance and the escalation of sin in the world from the actual fall of man up to the time of the flood. So the first chapters, two, three, and four, take you all the way up to that period.

Then, instead of proceeding forward in a straightforward chronological line, another theme is picked up. This story of the line of Cain, the line of the City of Man, then having gotten up to the flood, you go back in chapter 5:1, and you go through the whole history again from Adam to the flood, but now, from the point of view, not from the line of Cain, but of the line of Seth, which is the content of the Community of faith,

the City of God. The same thing happens here in the fourth section, the Table of Nations, the City of Man. In the fifth section, the line is the Community of Faith. So Moses, the author, has a particular style that he arranges things thematically. So he takes one theme up from a certain point, and then backs up and takes another theme.

Support for and elaboration of the framework interpretation

The framework interpretation suggests that that is what is going on in Genesis 1 where, again, things are divided into triads plus the climactic seven. You follow along with one theme, mainly the various Kingdoms that God has created--the spheres of Creation, the Kingdoms. That is the theme here. Then the second three days, four, five and six, pick up another theme. Interestingly, this will be one of the points we will underscore in a few minutes. When you come to Day Four, you find yourself repeating Day One; exactly the same things are produced on Day Four as in Day One, but chronologically you are back there. Thematically, on Days Four, Five, and Six, are the story of a kings who ruled over the kingdoms. The story of man and how he ruled over everything, that he's a priest of God and how he delivers his kingdom and subdues it under the great king of the Seventh day, the Lord of the Sabbath. That very quickly, then, may serve to identify the Framework Interpretation, which is, then, another figurative view.

Now to get at this, let me say this first, the view that I will be advocating by now you understand is the framework interpretation. This view agrees with the literal view that what is being portrayed is ordinary days, with the evenings and mornings. That is the language and that is the picture that is being portrayed. Those who hold to the solar day, I don't think are right. It isn't that this thing, called in Hebrew, a *yom* [day] should be translated an "age." No, these are regular days. That is right. What the question is: Is this total picture a week of normal days, or is this picture as a whole? We're not just talking about an individual word, the word *yom* or something else. Is this picture to be understood literally, or as the whole thing? That's the real question, I think, and what I

would like to proceed to do is to show, that this picture of the normal week is not to be understood literally, but figuratively.

Figurative approach: Sabbath as figurative

Now to compare it, let's say, here is the parable of the sower. Now if you ask, "What is the actual literal picture there?" Well, the literal picture is the farmer goes out, with actual seed, and sows the seed, and so forth. Is that what Jesus is talking about? Is he talking about agriculture? No, literally, that's the picture all right, but the exegetical question for the whole piece is: What's the nature of this piece, this genre? Is it intended as a whole to be understood literally, or is it a parable? Now in the case of the sower, yes, Jesus is not talking about agriculture, he is talking about the Son of God going forth and preaching the word of God. Now, that is not literally what the text says, but that's what the contextual considerations tell you is going on. So one question is: What is the literal picture? It is a week of days. But the bigger question is: Is that intended to be understood figuratively? Now let me give you a series of arguments to show that that literal picture is intended to be understood for something else just as the parable of the sower, the farmer sowing the seed, is given as a picture intended to convey the truth about the preaching of the Gospel.

The first thing along that line that I would cite as evidence that these "days" are intended to be understood figuratively, is the seventh day. Seventh Day, the Sabbath day, the Lord's Sabbath day is his rest. How long did that one last? Of course, it's still going or, isn't it. In the nature of the case, what is the nature of God's Sabbath rest? God's Sabbath rest is that when he had consummated his work, he had created the heavens and the earth, "the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." When he has created this cosmic temple, this "cosmic throne" for himself, he takes his place on his heavenly throne. The Sabbath is the enthronement of the one who has consummated his work of creation. He takes his position as the one who has finished the work, as the one who is sovereign, as the one who rules in majesty over all the works of his hand. When did he stop doing that? Twenty-four hours after he started his work? Obviously not! Or a month

later? No. God's Sabbath rest, God's Sabbath status, as the Sabbath God who is enthroned over his consummated creation in the nature of this case is unending.

The proof of the pudding, exegetically, is what we read elsewhere in the Scripture about that Sabbath. In Hebrews 4, you can look it up for yourselves, we have the discussion of the Sabbath. Readers are reminded of how Joshua, in the Old Testament, led the people into their Sabbath land. So what the Sabbath signifies was the consummated Kingdom. What is being prototypically portrayed there is Israel's experience of entering into the land. So Joshua, led them into the Sabbath land. But that wasn't the real one, the author of Hebrews quickly reminds us. The real Sabbath, is the one that is still out there. In this connection, he quotes now from Genesis 2 about God's seventh day. He quotes from Genesis 2, this is the thing he is explaining and expounding - God's seventh day of rest - and what he says is that, "Look, you believers in the Lord Jesus, this is where you are heading. God is entered into, from the beginning, that Sabbath rest, and that Sabbath rest is going on. Heaven is there, the Sabbath is there; they are all in place. Here we are on earth, and we're making our earthly journey in terms of the covenant, as God sets up the way whereby we can get up into heaven, to his Sabbath rest with him. In Christ this is being fulfilled as the Old Testament Joshua was enabled to do it. Jesus is doing the real thing, and he is leading us into that real Sabbath rest, into that Seventh Day of God." So Hebrews 4 expounds God's seventh day of creation and says that the goal, that *telos*, that we are moving to it goes on forever. Now, that is the seventh day. That is the best clue you have, then, as to what the nature of these days is. One of them certainly is not a literal day. It had a beginning, but it has no end. There's one of them.

Sabbath as literal? Exod. 20:11

Maybe in this connection, I could cite something which is usually an appeal to the strongest arguments for a literal view if you're against a figurative view, namely, the fourth commandment. So when you turn to Exodus 20:11, you remember, of course, there that Sabbath observance, in terms of working six days and resting the seventh day,

the ordinance of the Sabbath, which is a sign to mankind. Let me qualify that a little bit, it's a sign to mankind within the covenant. We'll talk more about the Sabbath later on. But the ordinance of the Sabbath is there, based squarely on the fact that God worked six days and he rested the seventh. Therefore, you work six days and rest on the seventh. The point of the objection to my approach, or to any figurative view, is that it is assumed there is a one-to-one relationship between the original and the copy. God worked six days and rested the seventh; therefore, you work six days and rest the seventh.

Now, our working six days and resting on the seventh, we know as normal solar days. The argument is there must be a one to one relationship, otherwise, this doesn't make any sense. If God's days are not literal ones, then there is no copy. Now that's a false assumption. What we're talking about here is a likeness. With the likeness, there is similarity, but also difference.

Realities in heaven copied on earth: Image of God in Adam

Now, before we're done, we hope to be showing how there's a whole series of things, whereby, the realities of heaven are copied on earth. That's a very important theme, that the reality of heaven, the Heavenly Temple, is replicated here on earth. God, his nature is replicated in Adam, who was made in the image of God. Let's take that one.

Adam was made in the image of God. There's the original, and there's a copy. There's likeness, and that's what justifies calling Adam, the image of God. There's likeness, but with a big difference. Likewise, not just with the nature of man, that he is like God but with a difference, but with man's activity: his working six days and rest on the seventh, that is like God, but with a difference, in each case.

So, the assumption that there must be a one-to-one relationship between the two things is simply false. What proves it is Hebrews 4, because we already have seen that there is not a one-to-one relationship when you come to the seventh day. God's seventh day is forever. The weekly ordinance of the Sabbath is twenty-four hours. So there is likeness between the two, but with a difference, we know, with respect to the seventh day.

So what you usually hear as a big argument for insisting on a literal view, it is one of the two main arguments I hear most against a figurative view. It doesn't say that at all, and in fact it points us in the opposite direction. It leads us to recognize that God's Sabbath day was eternal. Therefore, it is a figure in Genesis 2:1-3. So there is one point. So now I might have prefaced that, I jumped right in to a first argument for treating this picture of a week of days figuratively.

Genesis 1 as prose or poetry?

I might begin with just a general comment. I'll do it quickly. Where do you expect figures of speech in prose or poetry? Well you can have them in either can't you. You can encounter a figure of speech in prose but you would expect more of it in poetry. So you get more figures of speech in poetry. So, for what it's worth, it's worth noting, then, that the creation narrative is formed in a way, which would be difficult to say is just ordinary prose. It has many striking features of poetry. Poetry is created in stanzas, which have a certain format which keeps being repeated. It has certain refrain lines, initial lines, closing lines, and refrain lines that keep getting repeated. Various other features of Semitic poetry might be mentioned. Now, when you look at Genesis 1 and 2, the Creation Narrative, what you right away realize is that the formalized structure of the thing, it's six stanzas, the six work days, each one with the same basic format: Fiat--"Let there be...and it was so—fulfillment. So there is this arrangement of six blocks of material. It's not just strung out in some indefinite kind of paragraphs, but the thing is shaped in these six stanzas, these six strophes all with the same form, Fiat-Fulfillment, "Let there be [fiat]... and there was [fulfillment]."

Then, interspersed throughout the strophes, there are all kinds of refrains. Now, if I read through them, it will ring bells: "and God said, 'Let there be,' and it was so and God separated this from that, and God made, and God named, and God blessed. God saw that it was good, and it was evening and morning day whatever." Now, you just underline all of those refrains, each of them appears several times, you will have taken up most of

the material in the narrative. So, here we have something, which is written in sort of poem style in stanzas with refrains, and other things could be mentioned.

Parallelism and Poetry

One striking feature of Semitic Hebrew poetry is what is known as the “parallelism of clauses.” Parallelism is where you say something and then you say virtually the same thing all over again in synonyms. It produces a certain logical balance and sometimes a certain rhythmic balance; a quantitative balance that gives at least the appearance of meter. The synonymous parallelism, especially the “balance of clauses,” is the repetition of a particular thought. You don’t need that feature to have genuine poetry. For example, take the Song of Solomon, the Song of Songs is certainly beautiful poetry and about only fifty percent of the lines in the Song of Songs have this particular feature of this kind of poetic balance. So you don’t need this in order for the thing to qualify as poetry; although, it is a striking feature. In Genesis 1, you might note, then, that this poetic feature is used sparingly but it is used very effectively. It is used only twice, but it is used at the two climax points. So that here is this particular poetic device and the author has saved it in order to highlight the two climax points in his narratives.

What would you say is the first highlight? I would think certainly, that when you come up to the creation of man, that’s the first climax of the story--the crown of creation under God. There was Genesis 1:27 where it says “so he created man in his own image. Yet in the image of God he created them.” The thought is restated, not even in synonymous terms, rather virtually the same terms. Then the ultimate climax, is certainly when you come to the seventh day and there, it would be Genesis 2:2, it says, “So God completed everything. Yes, he had completed everything. All that he had made.”

All I’m trying to say then is that as you look at this record, you should come to the conclusion that this is poetic. Now this doesn’t settle the question, all it does is this though: you shouldn’t be so surprised if this is a piece of poetically flavored material. You shouldn’t be so surprised if it should turn out that there are some figures in it such as what we are suggesting is the case with the chronological refrain “it was evening and it

was morning day one,” “it was evening and it was morning day two” and so on. So this just sets us up so that we shouldn’t be too hostile to the thought of figures of speech.

Poetry and History

Now, in that connection, however, let me just add this further word of explanation because one is very often misunderstood in this regard. I know, about thirty years ago, I wrote an article on this subject for the *Westminster Theological Journal*, and we might refer to this later on. It was called “Because It Had Not Rained.” In that article I made something like the point I just made to you, that this material is sort of poetic and therefore could be considered as figurative. My good colleague E.J. Young, who was my senior colleague in the Old Testament department, didn’t hold to the view that I’m advocating, but to one of the others, which I’m not quite sure which one he held to. He at least was cautioning people, that if you hear that material is poetic that you shouldn’t buy into the notion that it was not historical, as if to say if something was poetic and figurative meant that you were denying the historicity of the thing. Now that doesn’t follow. I do say that it is figurative, but I say that it is very much historical.

For example, in Exodus 14 and 15 you have two accounts of the crossing of the Red Sea, a great salvation event there in the Old Testament. In Exodus 14 you have the prose account, and in Exodus 15 you have the poetic account. No one doubts, of those who believe the Bible, that Exodus 15, the Song of Moses, is actually an account of the history, but it isn’t poetry. When you cut right to the big event, Exodus 14 speaks about, God caused an east wind to blow all night long. So there’s this appeal to certain natural secondary causes that might have come in to play that God used in order to dry up the waters for the passage of his people. Now, when you come to that same point in the poem you get a tremendously strong anthropomorphic figure there, saying, “by the blast of his nostrils, God dried up the water.” No more east wind talk over here, it was a very strong figure of speech. Non-historical? No, absolutely historical, but a very strong figure of speech.

So, I don’t want people that are listening to me to think that I’m denying the

historicity of these events. No, absolutely this is real historical stuff just like the crossing of the sea is real historical stuff. Real history can be described in real poetic ways and that's the question, that we must face. What's the evidence for it? So I looked at the seventh day, and I said, "There's one of them. There's one of the seven days that's not literal as interpreted by the Bible itself. It's figurative."

Along the line, I might be making some use here of an article I wrote more recently, as I just said, about thirty years ago, I guess it was about 1957. Wow! How time flies, doesn't it? I hate to think about how long ago I wrote that other article. Okay, here's the article I wrote more recently in March 1996, in *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. The title of the article was "Space and Time in the Genesis Cosmogony." Cosmogony is the account of the origin of the universe. So I might, from time to time, be reading from that. If you are interested in seeing the whole article, that's where you would find it. It's *Perspectives on Science and Christian Faith*. It used to be the *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation (ASA)*, but it's still the magazine put out by them. The editor of it is Jack Hodges, one of our elders at the OPC in church in Northshore of Massachusetts. If I do make use of it, I will be reading from a typed copy of my own here.

[Student question]

It's hard to appeal to how people back there understood the thing because we don't know how they understood it. So, all we can do is try to use honest principles of biblical exegesis to find out what they should have understood by it. We always run into this problem. For example, if you are talking about messianic prophecies, well, we know what they should have thought about them, for example, Jesus, in Luke 24, when he expounded all Messiah sufferings and glory and Moses and the prophets and the Psalms. But they should have understood what Jesus said and they meant, but of course, they didn't. So I don't know what they actually understood, and all I can do is to try to find some biblical evidence as to what they, and we, should understand about these things. Now, part of it has to do, of course, with having some sensitivity to the literary styles and

so on of the ancient world. That will certainly help us, and along with a certain modesty about approaching it, that we do not already know everything about that.

Reflections on the Sabbath and the two registers

The Sabbath, then, as we have already discussed, reminds us, then, that there are two levels to reality. In this article I talk about the upper and lower register. There's that seventh day, God's seventh day, which is an eternal thing, and what does it consist of? We've already said, it consists of God taking his throne in heaven as Creator of the whole world in an unending Sabbath rest. It is invisible to us now, but with the invitation one day we are going to get into that Sabbath seventh day, which is invisible to us because it is part of that heavenly realm. It has dimensions that we cannot penetrate with our present earthly bodies. The day will come when we are glorified and we have new capabilities and so on. And, so what is now invisible to us will be opened up to us, and it will put a new face on the whole world, so it becomes to us a new heaven and a new earth. But there is that invisible realm of heaven up above. "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." What is Jesus talking about there? He's talking about the two registers? "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." In heaven is where God is enthroned in the midst of his angels, unseen to us, the invisible realm, the upper register, the invisible. That's all we are talking about. So over against this earthly realm to which, until our glorification, we are limited.

So, the seventh day reminds us of these two levels. Because up there, there is the divine original, that ongoing thing which is forever, and down here, there is the ordinance; the ordinance of the Sabbath. I have already taken the position, then, that in Genesis 2:2-3 there you have the ordinance of the Sabbath. The Sabbath, as I understand it, is a creation ordinance, the ordinance of the Sabbath, what we are supposed to do: work six literal days and rest the seventh day. The ordinance of the Sabbath brings us down here to the lower register. All the way through this thing, there's going to be a replication of what's going on up there as it's copied down here. So I want to develop that. I might have said this as an introductory word, we are dealing with this whole thing

in terms of this one problem of the days of Genesis and the chronology. But I want our study to be more positive than that, and so, while we are at this, I am trying also to bring out the positive teaching of Genesis 1, and I think I can interlock the two discussions so that we don't get lost along the way. So, what we are doing is trying to give you some insight into the teaching of Genesis 1 about the nature of the cosmos.

The Nature of the cosmos

I think Christian people are a lot more interested in that kind of thing--the nature of the whole cosmos. Especially, as modern science gives us some beginnings of an understanding of the vastness of it and the questions about its origin, and its future, whether it is headed for the big crunch, or stability, or whatever. But people are interested in that. I think the Bible has things to say about it, and it's a subject that deserves more attention than it gets. I'll just say a little bit about it here. Let's go back to and work right through Genesis 1, right back to the Sabbath day. As I said repeatedly, we are going to see that God has structured the cosmos in such a way that heavenly realities serve as archetypes that reproduce themselves in copies here in earthly existence.

Genesis 1:1 and Proverbs 8—upper register perspective

So Genesis 1, then, verse 1, "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth..." We have "in the beginning." You can read that can't you? "In the beginning," that says, then "heaven and earth." All right, original Sabbath up here and copy of the Sabbath down here. Heaven/earth, all right, my contention is going to be, as we look at this presently, is that heaven, in Genesis 1:1, is not describing the visible sky up there, but it's describing the invisible heaven as we just said in the Lord's prayer, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven..." That's the heaven and earth contrast that you have in Genesis 1:1 already. Genesis 1:1 is saying that in the beginning God made everything: invisible-heaven and earth-visible. Now, before we get to that we have this expression "In the beginning," and especially, in the connection with this problem with the days of Genesis. We are interested in that timeline up there. The thing that begins with "in the beginning" and ends with the Sabbath day up in that upper register, not down in this

lower, literal register down here but up there. Of course, this line of argument will end up by showing, that the six days, the form it is about, “it was morning and it was evening, one day, two day, three” and so on. The six days, of course, are bracketed by these beginning and ending points, which have to do with the upper register with the original, not with the literal day of the Sabbath ordinance, but with the thing for which it is a figure up there. That’s where these six days fit in. Likewise, in the beginning. What is the “In the beginning”?

Let me just read a spectrum of that article. I see the heading there is “Upper Register Time: The Beginning” “as observed above, the allusion is in Proverbs 8.” Now we are going to get to Proverbs 8. It’s a fascinating thing. In Proverbs 8, you have the first interpretation of Genesis 1, and Solomon, or whoever is writing there in Proverbs 8, believed in the framework interpretation, because he expounds on Genesis 1 in terms of wisdom, and we’ll get back to that in a minute. But the allusions in Proverbs 8 to the “in the beginning” *bereshit* of Genesis 1:1 shows that this beginning precedes the situation surveyed in Genesis 1:2 and following, it stands at the head of the creation days while belonging to the creation week it marks.

“In the beginning,” what do other passages in the Bible do you think of right away? Well, here, I’m suggesting “in the beginning,” while belonging to the creation week, marks the interface of pre-creation and the space-time continuum. Pointing back, “in the beginning,” pointing back to what is signified by, “was” in the identification of God as the one “who is, and who was, and is to come.” “In the beginning” is that God who “was.” Now he “is and is to come.” In Genesis 1:1, the beginning is peculiarly associated with God himself. “In the beginning God created.” Likewise, echoes of the Hebrew word of *Bereshit*, “In the beginning,” in the scriptures focus on divine acts and intra-trinitarian relationships back of creation. “In the beginning” has to do, what I’m trying to say, with the upper register here not with this lower register. It has to do the heavenly scene not so much the earthly scene. It has to do with divine acts and intra-trinitarian relationships back of creation, equating the beginning with the stage before the earth was. As we will see in a moment, Proverbs 8:23 asserts that the personified divine

wisdom was present with God at the beginning.

The prologue of John's gospel, which I suppose is the one we all think of right away when we think of "in the beginning." The prologue of John's gospel identifies "the beginning" in terms of the relationship between God and the *Logos*, who was God and made all things; the one who identifies himself as "the beginning of the creation of God," and speaks of the glory of what he had with the Father before the world was.

So all the indicators tell us that "in the beginning" refers to that upper register where Father, Son, and Spirit act together in sovereign purpose, in words and power to create the world. "In the beginning," is a time coordinate of invisible space. So the story begins then by putting us up in heaven, through the account of creation. It isn't told from the point of view of someone on earth. It's told in the perspective of God in Heaven. "In the beginning" there is God. He is the one who proceeds to act. He is the one who, in the end of the thing, is enthroned in this world, that he has created. This is the perspective of the passage. "In the beginning" has that flavor. As I said, Proverbs 8 is a good place to find out just exactly what "in the beginning" means.

"In the beginning"

Some people have said that "in the beginning" describes the whole period of the six days of creation. That was the beginning period. Now what I've just been arguing is that "in the beginning" is not the equivalent of the whole time span of creation, but it belongs there to the initial chunk of time. If your trying to figure out how much time was involved, and if you accept something like the modern estimate of the cosmos, being some 12 billion or so years old. Actually, this beginning period lasted for billions of years.

According to Proverbs 8, it describes the period before those developments, which begins to be described in Genesis 1:2. When you come to Genesis 1:2, you have to do with a planet earth, that exists in a certain condition of deepened darkness which, as the days move along gets structured. First, the waters, the darkness gets structured by the introduction of light into a cycle of day and night. Then the waters get structured

horizontally and vertically as you move along.

But here now according to Proverbs 8, “in the beginning” is the period before you come to that stage. What is that? The earth is supposed to be about 5 billion years old? So, the universe is 12 billion years old “in the beginning” has covered about 7 billion, but forget that, if you don’t buy into that, at least “in the beginning” describes that chunk of time before you come to where Genesis 1:2 describes the situation of planet earth as being in such and such a condition.

[Student question]

The six days can’t be separated from the seventh day. They belong to that series. So, the seventh day is up there that already settles that the six days, that are linked to them, must also be. Then I’m also trying to show that it’s very difficult to disassociate “in the beginning” from that time. So really, the six days are bracketed by two things that put you up in the upper register and, ergo, the six days must be figurative. That’s the argument.

Proverbs 8 and the creation

You might want to turn to Proverbs 8 with me now. It’s a wonderful passage. In the opening nine chapters of Proverbs, you keep reading about this woman Wisdom. She is extolled and she is commended to everyone to receive this woman. She is set as the foil to the harlot. So don’t go after the harlot whose ways lead down to death, but follow this woman [Wisdom] and her ways are the ways of life. So, you get that personified divine wisdom through these opening chapters. Then, when you come here in Proverbs 8, you have a wonderful poem. We talked about poetry in Genesis 1 the poetic feature is limited to certain chronological details, maybe one or two other things. Here [Prov. 8], you have a beautiful piece of poetry throughout. It tells us about the role of wisdom in creation. Why should we be so eager to embrace and follow Wisdom? Well, she says, “look at who I am and what I did.” So, Wisdom commends herself to us in terms of the role she played in connection to creation. “You’re impressed by the wonders of creation are you? Well, then, you should be impressed with me because, look, I was there when all that was

happening.” Then, the punch line at the end, “I was not only there but I was the architect.” This one, the boss man, said, “I’m ‘*amon*,” he’s an architect. That’s what wisdom says. Let’s look at it, beginning at verse 22, Proverbs 8:22. Get your Bibles out. Well, what we’re going to be finding here is that business of theme and recapitulating chronologically, after you’re done with a certain theme.

Transcribed by Jordan Clare and others unnamed
Rough edited by Ted Hildebrandt