Colossians 1:17 He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together [συνίστημι (*sunístēmi*): **gravity**].

8.   The verb, συνίστημι (*sunístēmi*), is an intensive present active indicative.

The verb for creation is *bara'*, which is one of four creation verbs found in the Hebrew of the Old Testament. It is important that each is distinguished from the others and defined:

1) בָּרָא *bara'* refers in Scripture exclusively to God, specifically, Jesus Christ, and His creative acts. It means, "to create something out of nothing." That is, where nothing previously existed, by the voice command of Christ, all things came into existence. The equivalent Greek word is κτίζω (*ktízō*) as found in Colossians 1:16. The equivalent Latin phrase is *creatio ex nihilo*.

2) עָשָׂה *'asah* generally means, "to make; to fashion." The more precise meaning is "to create something according to a pattern." For example, the creation of the human soul is described by both of these verbs. Genesis 1:26 reads, "Let Us make man in Our image." The verb "make" is עָשָׂה (*'asah*), to create according to a pattern, i.e., the image of divine essence.

However, in the following verse we read:

Genesis 1:27 And God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.

On all three occasions, verse 27 uses the verb בָּרָא *bara',* confirming that the soul itself was created out of nothing. However, when God created the human soul, both male and female, that creation was patterned after divine essence, therefore the verb used in verse 26 is עָשָׂה (*'asah*): according to a pattern.

3) יָצַר (*yatsar*) is used to describe the molding of materials to create a finished product such as a potter would mold clay. This is the verb used in Genesis 2:7 to describe how the Lord formed Adam's physical body from the chemicals of the soil.

Genesis 2:7 Then the Lord God formed [יָצַר (*yatsar*)] man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of lives; and man became a living being.

4) בָּנָה (*banah*) is the final creation verb used in the Old Testament and it refers to the techniques used by a sculptor to form an image. This is the creation verb used to describe the creation of *'Ishshah* in:

Genesis 2:22 And the Lord God fashioned [בָּנָה (*banah*)] into a woman the rib which He had taken from the man, and brought her to the man.

7. In summary, then, we have four verbs that describe various methods of creation used by God in Scripture:

1) בָּרָא *bara'* : to create matter or energy from *no* preexisting materials.

2) עָשָׂה *'asah*: to create matter or energy from a preexisting pattern.

3) יָצַר *yatsar*: to create by molding preexisting matter.

4) בָּנָה *banah*: to create by sculpting preexisting materials.

8. Now the reason we have taken the time to distinguish all these verbs is because three of them come into view in Isaiah 45:18 in a very important way. [Note the parentheses imbedded in the verse below.]

Isaiah 45:18 For thus says the Lord, Who created [בָּרָא (*bara'*): **out of nothing**] the heavens [**the universe**] (He is the God who formed [יָצַר (*yatsar*): **to mold preexisting matter**] the earth and made it [עָשָׂה (*'asah*): **from a preexisting pattern**], He established it and did not create it [בָּרָא (*bara'*): **out of nothing**] a waste place [תֹּהוּ (*tohu*)], but formed it [יָצַר (*yatsar*): **to mold preexisting matter**] to be inhabited), "I am the Lord, and there is none else."

9. Isaiah is reporting a quote under divine inspiration from the Lord Jesus Christ. In introducing the quote, he identifies Him as the One "Who created the heavens." The word Isaiah uses for "created" is the past tense of [בָּרָא *bara'*, to create *ex nihilo*. He then elaborates on a number of additional details in a parenthesis that follows.

10. In this parenthesis he uses three creation verbs: **(1)** יָצַר (*yatsar*) twice, **(2)** עָשָׂה (*'asah*) once, and (3) בָּרָא (*bara'*) once.

11. First, Isaiah points out that the One Who created the universe is the very same One Who "formed the earth": יָצַר (*yatsar*), which indicates that He "molded" it from preexisting materials. This does not refer to the original *ex-nihilo* creation but to an act that occurred after that. It refers to the restoration of a fallen planet.

12. To this, Isaiah adds the statement that as the Lord molded the earth He did so according to a preexisting pattern: "… and <u>made it</u>—עָשָׂה (*'asah*)." The pattern used was the perfection of the original creation before it fell into a chaotic state.

13. This chaotic condition is addressed by the next phrase, "… He established it and <u>did not create</u> it [בָּרָא (*bara'*): **out of nothing**] a <u>waste place</u> [תֹּהוּ (*tohu*)]."

14. Isaiah informs us that the original *ex-nihilo* creation was perfect by saying that the Lord did *not* create it— בָּרָא (*bara'*)—a "waste place."

15. However, it is obvious that it was altered since it required restoration, a fact that is repeated at the end of the parenthesis: "… but <u>formed</u> it [יָצַר (*yatsar*): **to mold from preexisting matter**] to be inhabited."

16. The restoration was undertaken so the earth would be inhabited by creatures in the same perfect environment that accompanied the earth's original *ex-nihilo* creation.

17. We can see from this verse that the earth was created perfect, was placed in a suspended condition, and was then restored to its pristine perfection.

18. This sequence occurred in Genesis, chapter one, but Moses did not elaborate. He simply states that the condition existed in:

> **Genesis 1:2**   <u>And the earth was</u> [*waw aretz hayah*] <u>formless and void</u> [*tohu wabohu*], and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters. (NASB)

19. The verse begins with a disjunctive clause introduced by the conjunction "but" followed by the Qal perfect of the verb: הָיָה (*hayah*): Best translated, "<u>But</u> the earth <u>became</u>."

20. The NASB translates the phrase, "And the earth was," as if it were a sequential construction linking verse 2 with verse 1. However, this is not the case:

> In Hebrew syntax, a sequential construction is expressed by a וְ (*waw*) + verb + noun word order **[translated "and the earth was"]**. A disjunctive or contrastive construction is expressed by a *waw* + noun + verb word order **[translated "but the earth became"]** as in Genesis 1:2.[1]

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[1] R. B. Thieme, Jr., *Creation, Chaos, and* Restoration, 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1995), 10n9.

21. Genesis 1:2 begins with the disjunctive **waw,** [וְ] followed by the noun "earth": אֶרֶץ [**'aretz**], plus the verb הָיָה [**hayah**] in the Qal perfect. The correct translation is, "<u>But</u> the earth <u>became</u>."

22. This disjunctive construction not only separates verse two from verse one but, grammatically, it introduces three circumstantial clauses in verse two which describe the events that preexisted verse three before God began the first day of restoration.

23. In other words, Genesis 1:1 is original creation. The student must imagine an unspecified expanse of time between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 in which the fall of Satan occurs, his trial at bar before the Supreme Court of Heaven is prosecuted, his and the fallen angels' sentence is pronounced, the lake of fire is created, and his appeal is granted. Genesis 1:2*b* begins the restoration of Planet Earth for habitation by mankind for the purpose of becoming witnesses for the Prosecution in this appeal.

24. The restoration is required because of the ramifications the fall of Lucifer had upon the perfect universe in which the angels were allowed to function. Therefore, our study of verse two will instruct us about the chaos that resulted from these events.

> **Genesis 1:2*a*** But the earth became formless and void …

והבו *tohu* תֹּהוּ *wabohu***:** Best translation: "desolate and empty."

25. If we had stayed with the sequential construction then "desolate and empty" would refer back to the creative act of verse one. However, the correct translation recognizes that this is a disjunctive construction and thus the verse does not relate back to Genesis 1:1 but rather to:

> **Isaiah 45:18** For thus says the Lord, Who <u>created</u> [בָּרָא (*bara'*)**: out of nothing**] the <u>heavens</u> [**the universe**] (He is the God who <u>formed</u> [יָצַר (*yatsar*)**: to mold preexisting matter**] the earth and <u>made</u> it [עָשָׂה (*'asah*)**: from a preexisting pattern**], He established it and did <u>not create</u> it [בָּרָא (*bara'*)**: out of nothing**] a <u>waste place</u> [תֹּהוּ (*tohu*)], but <u>formed</u> it [יָצַר (*yatsar*)**: to mold preexisting matter**] to be inhabited), "I am the Lord, and there is none else."

26. Thus, תֹּהוּ (*tohu*) וָבֹהוּ (*wabohu*) in Genesis 1:2 describes the conditions on Planet Earth that occurred as a result of the Luciferian Rebellion.

27. Many Hebrew lexicons and dictionaries reject this exegesis and assert that the original creation was chaotic. An example is found in this reference:

> The "gap" or "interval" theory, which posits a millennia-long period of time implied by or in Genesis 1:2 and which usually translates 1:2*a* by the less likely "but the earth became without form and void," has come into increasing disfavor in recent years. Its main exegetical support, Isaiah 45:18, reads "(God) did not create (the earth) *tohu*," and has been interpreted to mean that therefore an original creation (described briefly in Genesis 1:1) was destroyed; that the geologic ages ensued (during the "gap"); and that the new creation portrayed in Genesis 1:3ff. was built on the wreckage of the old. But Isaiah 45:18, after the phrase quoted, goes on to say that God "formed (the earth) to be inhabited," thereby assuring the reader that *tohu* was not his ultimate purpose in creation.[2]

28. In response to this critique there are several points made which do not correspond with the "gap" or "interval" that we have discussed. We'll take them point by point:

    1. I do not "posit" that there is a "millennia-long period" between verse one and verse three. The period of time is unknown and could contain millions of years, hundreds of years, or even less. The length of time is dictated by how long it took for several events to transpire:

        - the time period between original creation of the universe and the Luciferian Rebellion (Job 38:7),

        - the length of the original trial of Lucifer and the fallen angels (Matthew 25:41),

        - the time it took Lucifer to prepare his appeal (Revelation 20:10), and

        - the time it took for the Supreme Court of Heaven to make the decision to allow Lucifer's appeal to go forward (Genesis 1:2*b*).

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[2] R. Laird Harris. Gleason L. Archer, and Bruce K. Waltke, *Theological Wordbook of the Old Testament* (Chicago: The Moody Bible Institute of Chicago, 1980), 965.