

The Inscrutable Question: Eternal Life: Retrospective Look at the Old Heavens and Old Earth: 4 Creation Verbs; Gen 1:1-2 cp/w Isaiah 45:18

D. A Retrospective Look at the Old Heavens and the Old Earth

1. In this paragraph we will apply the first and second laws of thermodynamics to the creation passages of Scripture.
2. In doing so we will prove that the universe was created up and running as we observe it today and that it is not the result of any evolutionary processes.
3. We will begin with a principle that the perfect God of this universe, Who is our Lord Jesus Christ, could not by definition create anything that is imperfect.
4. We can establish this by examining the creation verbs in Genesis 1:1 and Isaiah 45:18.
5. Further, we can establish that the earth entered a state of chaos and suspended animation as a result of the Luciferian Rebellion by noting Genesis 1:2.
6. First of all we need to establish the premise that God is perfect.

Deuteronomy 32:4a - "The Rock! His work is perfect."

Matthew 5:48 - "Therefore, you are to be perfect, as your heavenly Father is perfect."

Hebrews 5:9 - Having been made perfect, He became to all those who obey Him the source of eternal salvation.

7. A perfect God can only create that which is perfect. It is incongruous to imagine that the perfect Christ would create anything imperfect. This is borne out by two passages dealing with the creation of the universe.

Genesis 1:1 - In the beginning [of the universe] God [specifically, Jesus Christ] created [ברא *bara*] the heavens and the earth.

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

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

- 3) **יצר 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 [**יצר yatsar**] man of the dust from the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life [**soul life**]; and man became a living being.

- 4) **בנה 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 Ishah in:

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

8. In summary, then, we have four verbs that describe various methods of creation used by God in Scripture:
- 1) **ברא bara**: to create matter or energy from *no* preexisting materials.
 - 2) **עשה asah**: to create matter or energy from a preexisting pattern.
 - 3) **יצר yatsar**: to create by molding preexisting matter.
 - 4) **בנה banah**: to create by sculpting preexisting materials.
9. 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.

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

10. 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 **ברא bara**, to create *ex nihilo*. He then elaborates on a number of additional details in a parenthesis that follows.
11. In this parenthesis he uses three creation verbs: (1) **יצר yatsar** twice, (2) **עשה asah** once, and (3) **ברא bara** once.
12. First, Isaiah points out that the One Who created the universe is the very same One Who "formed the earth": **יצר 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.
13. To this, Isaiah adds the statement that as the Lord molded the earth He did so according to a preexisting pattern: "... and made—**עשה asah**—it." The pattern used was the perfection of the original creation before it fell into a chaotic state.
14. This chaotic condition is addressed by the next phrase, "... He established it and did not create [**ברא bara**: out of nothing] it a waste place [**תהו tohu**]."
15. Isaiah informs us that the original *ex-nihilo* creation was perfect by saying that the Lord did not create it— **ברא bara**—a "waste place."

16. However, it is obvious that it did become a waste place from the fact it required restoration, a fact that is repeated at the end of the parenthesis: "... but formed [יצר *yatsar*: to mold from preexisting matter] it to be inhabited."
17. 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.
18. So we can see from this verse that the earth was created perfectly, fell into chaos, and was restored to its pristine perfection.
19. The fall into chaos occurred in Genesis, chapter one, but Moses did not mention it as such. He simply states that the condition existed in:

Genesis 1:2 - [NASV] And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

20. The verse begins with a disjunctive clause introduced by the conjunction "but" followed by the qal perfect of the verb:

היה *hayah* - Best translated, "But the earth became."

21. The NASV translates the phrase, "And the earth was," as if it were a sequential construction linking verse 2 with verse 1. However, this is refuted by:

Thieme, R. B., Jr. *Creation, Chaos, & Restoration*. 3d ed. (Houston: R. B. Thieme, Jr., Bible Ministries, 1995), 10n:

In Hebrew syntax, a sequential construction is expressed by a ו (*waw*) + verb + noun word order [translated "and"]. A disjunctive or contrastive construction is expressed by a *waw* + noun + verb word order [translated "but"] as in Genesis 1:2. Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 1990), 650-51.

22. Genesis 1:2 begins with the disjunctive *waw* (ו) followed by the noun "earth" (אֶרֶץ *aretz*) plus the verb היה *hayah* in the qal perfect, thus the corrected translation, "But the earth became."