

## LESSON 3

# IN THE BEGINNING GOD...

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## INTRODUCTION

Theologians put tremendous weight on the creation account in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and not without reason, as the origins of creation sets the foundation upon which to build a Christian worldview. To Moses's original listeners, the creation account would have been understood as *true history*, not as allegory or metaphor. If we are to interpret this passage rightly, we too need to understand it as historical truth. Moses's listeners, moreover, would have recognized that the Genesis account stands in contrast to other ancient cosmologies, which saw creation as the result of many gods, indeed, even as the result of the gods' sexual activity. Such a creation would have been seen as inherently imperfect. The biblical account, however, revealed only one God creating the world, which came about through the power of His word and was inherently good. The Psalmist says

*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. <sup>7</sup>He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. <sup>8</sup>Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. <sup>9</sup>For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. (Psalm 33:6-9)*

Contemporary discussion of the creation account tends to focus on how the Days of Creation relate to modern scientific theories, and while that question has some merit, if we are to read Scripture covenantally then we need to recognize that it is not the right focus. Since Deuteronomy is the apex of the Pentateuch and the narratives of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, and Numbers are the historical backdrop to it, Genesis needs to be read in light of Moses's purposes for Deuteronomy. There, Moses sought to highlight to God's people that the LORD who saved them from slavery is the God with whom they are in covenant. So, in reading the creation account covenantally, it behooves us to focus more on God than on the creation. The LORD who saved His people in the Exodus also created heaven and earth, and for this reason, He alone ought to be worshiped and glorified above all things. This is who Israel's savior is, and their relationship with Him, in turn, defines who they are as a people.

God created the world not because He needed it, but, as the Confession of Faith says, "for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness" (WCF IV.1). The creation account lays out three things about God: first, it establishes that the **LORD is our covenantal suzerain**; second, it describes the **realm** — that is, all of creation — over which He rules; and lastly, it shows the **nature of His rule**. Recognizing these three aspects puts into perspective man's proper place as a creature, albeit an exalted one, serving as a viceregent to God, in communion with Him and wholly dependent upon Him. What this means concretely requires closer examination.

## CONFSSIONAL READINGS

Westminster Confession of Faith	
CHAPTER IV – <i>Of Creation</i>	
<p>1. It pleased God the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, <sup>(a)</sup> for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness, <sup>(b)</sup> in the beginning, to create, or make of nothing, the world, and all things therein whether visible or invisible, in the space of six days; and all very good. <sup>(c)</sup></p> <p>(a) Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 8:6; Heb. 1:2; John 1:2-3; Gen. 1:2; Job 26:13; 33:4</p> <p>(b) Rom. 1:20; Jer. 10:12; Ps. 104:24; Ps. 33:5-6</p> <p>(c) Gen. 1:1-31; Ps. 33:6; Heb. 11:3; Col. 1:16; Acts 17:24; Exod. 20:11</p>	
<p>2. After God had made all other creatures, He created man, male and female, <sup>(d)</sup> with reasonable and immortal souls <sup>(e)</sup>, endued with knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, after His own image <sup>(f)</sup>; having the law of God written in their hearts <sup>(g)</sup>, and power to fulfill it: <sup>(h)</sup> and yet under a possibility of transgressing, being left to the liberty of their own will, which was subject unto change. <sup>(i)</sup> Beside this law written in their hearts, they received a command, not to eat of the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil, <sup>(j)</sup> which while they kept, they were happy in their communion with God, and had dominion over the creatures. <sup>(k)</sup></p> <p>(d) Gen. 1:27</p> <p>(e) Gen. 2:7; Eccl. 12:7; Luke 23:43; Matt. 10:28</p> <p>(f) Gen. 1:26; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24</p> <p>(g) Rom. 2:14-15</p> <p>(h) Eccl. 7:29; Gen. 2:17</p> <p>(i) Gen. 3:6, 17; Eccl. 7:29</p> <p>(j) Gen. 2:15-3:24</p> <p>(k) Gen. 1:26, 28-30; Ps. 8:6-8</p>	
Westminster Larger Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<p><b>Question 15</b></p> <p><b>Q. What is the work of creation?</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> The work of creation is that wherein God did in the beginning, by the word of his power, make of nothing the world, and all things therein, for himself, within the space of six days, and all very good. <sup>(a)</sup></p> <p>(a) Gen. 1, Heb. 11:3, Prov. 16:4</p>	<p><b>Question 9</b></p> <p><b>Q. What is the work of creation?</b></p> <p><b>A.</b> The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good. <sup>(a)</sup></p> <p>(a) Gen. 1, Heb. 11:3</p>

Westminster Larger Catechism	
<b>Question 16</b> <b>Q. How did God create angels?</b> <b>A.</b> God created all the angels <sup>(a)</sup> spirits, <sup>(b)</sup> immortal, <sup>(c)</sup> holy, <sup>(d)</sup> excelling in knowledge, <sup>(e)</sup> mighty in power, <sup>(f)</sup> to execute his commandments, and to praise his name, <sup>(g)</sup> yet subject to change. <sup>(h)</sup> <div> <div>(a) Col. 1:16</div> <div>(b) Ps. 104:4</div> <div>(c) Matt. 22:30</div> <div>(d) Matt. 25:31</div> <div>(e) 2 Sam. 14:17, Matt. 24:36</div> <div>(f) 2 Thess. 1:7</div> <div>(g) Ps. 103:20–21</div> <div>(h) 2 Pet. 2:4</div> </div>	
Westminster Larger Catechism	Westminster Shorter Catechism
<b>Question 17</b> <b>Q. How did God create man?</b> <b>A.</b> After God had made all other creatures, he created man male and female; <sup>(a)</sup> formed the body of the man of the dust of the ground, <sup>(b)</sup> and the woman of the rib of the man, <sup>(c)</sup> endued them with living, reasonable, and immortal souls; <sup>(d)</sup> made them after his own image, <sup>(e)</sup> in knowledge, <sup>(f)</sup> righteousness, and holiness; <sup>(g)</sup> having the law of God written in their hearts, <sup>(h)</sup> and power to fulfill it, <sup>(i)</sup> and dominion over the creatures; <sup>(j)</sup> yet subject to fall, <sup>(k)</sup> <div> <div>(a) Gen. 1:27</div> <div>(b) Gen. 2:7</div> <div>(c) Gen. 2:22</div> <div>(d) Gen. 2:7, Job 35:11,</div> <div>Eccl. 12:7,</div> <div>Matt. 10:28,</div> <div>Luke 23:43</div> <div>(e) Gen. 1:27</div> <div>(f) Col. 3:10</div> <div>(g) Eph. 4:24</div> <div>(h) Rom. 2:14–15</div> <div>(i) Eccl. 7:29</div> <div>(j) Gen. 1:28</div> <div>(k) Gen. 3:6,</div> <div>Eccl. 7:29</div> </div>	<b>Question 10</b> <b>Q. How did God create man?</b> <b>A.</b> God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures <sup>(a)</sup> . <div>(a) Gen. 1:26–28, Col. 3:10, Eph. 4:24</div>

## DELVING DEEPER

### I. The LORD as Our Covenantal Suzerain

The account of the creation in Genesis has a hymnic quality to it, which has led some theologians to wrongly consider it to be poetry. It is prose history, but this hymnic quality gives the account a grandeur befitting its subject.

*In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. <sup>2</sup> And the earth was without form, and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep. And the Spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.*

*<sup>3</sup> And God said, Let there be light: and there was light. <sup>4</sup> And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. <sup>5</sup> And God called the light Day, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.*

*<sup>6</sup> And God said, Let there be a firmament in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters. <sup>7</sup> And God made the firmament, and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so. <sup>8</sup> And God called the firmament Heaven. And the evening and the morning were the second day.*

*<sup>9</sup> And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so. <sup>10</sup> And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good. <sup>11</sup> And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>12</sup> And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good. <sup>13</sup> And the evening and the morning were the third day.*

*<sup>14</sup> And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years: <sup>15</sup> And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so. <sup>16</sup> And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. <sup>17</sup> And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, <sup>18</sup> And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good. <sup>19</sup> And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.*

*<sup>20</sup> And God said, Let the waters bring forth abundantly the moving creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven. <sup>21</sup> And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. <sup>22</sup> And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth. <sup>23</sup> And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.*

*<sup>24</sup> And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, cattle, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so. <sup>25</sup> And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and everything that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.*

<sup>26</sup> *And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.* <sup>27</sup> *So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.* <sup>28</sup> *And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.*

<sup>29</sup> *And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.* <sup>30</sup> *And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to everything that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.*

<sup>31</sup> *And God saw everything that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.*

<sup>2:1</sup> *Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them.* <sup>2</sup> *And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made.* <sup>3</sup> *And God blessed the seventh day, and sanctified it: because that in it he had rested from all his work which God created and made.*

This account is paralleled by the opening of John's Gospel (John 1:1-4):

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* <sup>2</sup> *The same was in the beginning with God.* <sup>3</sup> *All things were made by him; and without him was not anything made that was made.* <sup>4</sup> *In him was life; and the life was the light of men.*

In reading these accounts, we can see a number of things that should properly fix our understanding of the LORD as our covenant suzerain.

**First, it is the LORD who created Heaven and Earth *ex nihilo*** (i.e., out of nothing). The phrase, "*In the beginning, God...*" (Gen. 1:1-2) indicates that God is eternal and precedes the existence of everything. This contrasts with many ancient and modern ideas about the eternality of the universe. God is the only Absolute and is behind all reality. With the statement, "*The earth was without form, void, and darkness was on the face of the deep,*" (1:2) we see that unlike some ancient pagan views, God did not emerge from the chaos, and there was no preexistent matter which He used to fashion creation. Nothing is more ultimate than Him, not even chaos. He alone is the source of all reality, and for this reason, God is rightly due all honor, glory, and worship from His creation.

**Second, the Triune God who saved Israel in the Exodus and made a covenant with it at Sinai, is the same God who is behind all things; indeed, He is the only real God.** This is implicit in Genesis 1. The use of *Elohim* (a plural singular noun) in ch. 1 is joined in 2:4 with the covenantal name of God (i.e.,

YHWH, the LORD God), and thus, there is only one God. Throughout the Pentateuch Moses does not posit any other God. That this one creator God is also the Triune God can be seen from the Genesis passage and its counterpart in the Gospel of John. In the Old Testament period, the Jews could not resolve the use of the plural *Elohim* here, ascribing it to either a royal “we” or to God and the host of Heaven. Although both are possible, the Christian Trinitarian understanding is reinforced by reference to the Spirit of God moving upon the face of the waters (1:2) and by the New Testament reference in John’s Gospel, where he identifies the Word (i.e., the Son of God) as being with God and as God, by whom all things were made and from whom the light and life of men comes (John 1:1-4).

This sets off the biblical understanding of God from pagan and (after the advent of Christ) Gnostic ideas of God, which distinguish a creator god from other gods extant and active. In the biblical account, there is no differentiation between the creator God and sustainer or redeemer gods (cf. John 1:1). Pagan religions and Gnosticism look for a demiurge and typically deny unity between the creator and other gods. The result of this denial is that it is up to man to navigate the conflicts among the pantheon of gods. The Bible, however, is solidly monotheistic, and man is directly confronted with a God who is both the source of all things and is absolutely transcendent over all things. Man cannot play any other divine being off against God. Moreover, because creator and the redeemer are one and the same, there is a fundamental unity of God’s purposes in creation and providence; *all* things work together to fulfill God’s plans.

**Third, the God who created all things is completely holy, that is, separate from His creation.** God is set apart by His transcendence over time, space, matter, and all knowledge. He is omnipresent, omniscient, and, by the efficacy of His Word, omnipotent. His holiness is evident in what He creates first. On Day 1 (Gen. 1:3-5), He creates light apart from the sun, moon, and stars. Some interpreters see this simply as the creation of light as a phenomenon but compare this with John 1:4-5 and Rev. 22:5—God Himself is described as light. Elsewhere in Scripture, light is commonly associated with holiness, truth, and life. Here, God pronounces light into existence, divides it from darkness, and names the light and the darkness. Through the very act of dividing and of naming light and darkness, He established the principle of separation that is key to holiness, all the while exhibiting His sovereign power over creation. Subsequently throughout the Pentateuch, this holy God calls those with whom He covenanting to be holy as He is holy (see, e.g., Exod. 22:31, Lev. 20:7, 26).

There is nothing in the Genesis 1 account to suggest creation is somehow part of God or that He is part of creation. Instead, the account consistently depicts God as separate from and transcendent over all creation. Christianity, thus, steadfastly rejects pantheism. God is not an impersonal “Force,” as in the Star Wars saga. This distinction between the Creator and the creation is absolutely fundamental to Christian thinking. If God were not separate from His creation, then there would be little way He could actually exert absolute sovereignty over it, since He really could not transcend it. Moreover, blurring the distinction between the creator and the creation provides the false promise that, somehow, we could be master over creation or at least be able to manipulate God. In reality,

we are contingent creatures, and because of that fact, we find our true fulfillment in our relationship with Him, and obedience to His word.

## II. The Realm of the LORD's Dominion

**W**hat does Genesis say of God's dominion, the created order? **First, God created all things with a set order suggestive of purpose.** Most ancient suzerains would try to show their power and glory through vast building projects, such as temples, pyramids, or gardens. The Genesis account, however, shows that for the LORD God, His "building project" was to make all of creation out of nothing. This shows His absolute superiority over His dominion. The very literary structure of the Days of Creation highlights that there is an order to creation, in that each day of creation embodies a focal act and those acts progressively build upon each other into a comprehensive overarching order. There is an underlying fixed natural order, set by God. Many Christian theologians throughout history have noted that the Days of Creation are structured around two sets of three that have some parallels to each other. The first set are Days of Forming (Day 1—light and darkness; Day 2—waters under the firmament and waters above the firmament; Day 3—dry land and grass). The second set are Days of Filling (Day 4—lights in the heavens; Day 5—living creatures on land, water, and sky; Day 6—beasts of burden, man, green herbs for food). As the Confession of Faith notes, one purpose for which God did this was "for the manifestation of the glory of His eternal power, wisdom, and goodness" (WCF IV.1). David captures this in Psalm 19: *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament sheweth his handywork. <sup>2</sup>Day unto day uttereth speech, and night unto night sheweth knowledge. <sup>3</sup>There is no speech nor language, where their voice is not heard"* (Psalm 19:1-3). This contrasts with the modern view that the universe is random and purposeless.

**Second, all created things are part of not only a material order, but a moral order as well, and that moral order was originally good, reflecting God's own character.** When Moses says, *"And God saw that it was good... And God saw everything that he had made, and behold, it was very good"* (1:3ff, 1:31), this shows that it is God Himself who is final judge of what is good or not good. What is good is that which fulfills the purposes God has for things and in how those things reflect His own inherent goodness. The good is not good just because God said so, but because it is rooted in and a reflection of God's own character. This contrasts with other ancient Near Eastern cosmologies which assume the existing flawed order is the way things have always been, that there is no inherent moral order and what order exists is socially constructed. The ancients thought morals either transcended the gods or were dictated arbitrarily by them. Moderns also accept the eternity of the cosmos and believe there is no transcendent moral order, but substitute themselves as the deciders of morality. In the Christian view, there is a transcendent moral order grounded in and accountable to God.

**Third, creation itself is situated in a Sabbatical pattern.** The connection between the Sabbath and the Days of Creation is explicitly given by God Himself in His explanation for the Fourth Commandment:

*Remember the sabbath day, to keep it holy. <sup>9</sup> Six days shalt thou labour, and do all thy work: <sup>10</sup> But the seventh day is the sabbath of the LORD thy God: in it thou shalt not do any work, thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, thy manservant, nor thy maidservant, nor thy cattle, nor thy stranger that is within thy gates: <sup>11</sup> For in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that in them is, and rested the seventh day: wherefore the LORD blessed the sabbath day, and hallowed it. (Exod. 20:8-11)*

This Sabbatical pattern is inherently referential to God, having both a present dimension and an eschatological dimension. Ultimately the Sabbath is not only for our good, but for God's glory. Keeping the Sabbath is more than just being obedient or even just getting some physical rest. It is a weekly reorientation to our purpose of communion with God. It involves looking back on God's work in creation, in His present providence, and looking forward to the greater rest to come in the fulfillment of His covenantal promises. In a sense, keeping the Sabbath is akin to us paying tribute to God, just as a vassal would to his lord.

**Fourth, at the apex of that created order, God created mankind, male and female, to reflect His image.** Only mankind is identified as being made in the image of God (1:26-27). As viceregent over creation, man has been set apart to be holy, representing creation to God and representing God to creation. Man was originally righteous, obedient to God in his will, enjoying a right relationship to God, communing with Him, and being blessed by Him (2:15-18, 25). Man also was endued with knowledge and rationality, giving names to the creatures that God brought to him (2:20). This elevates man above the animals but imposes a weighty responsibility, making man's subsequent failure a major covenantal breach. Restoring this is the focus of God's redemptive activity. Modern evolutionary views, however, assume man is no better than the animals, resulting in the propensity to dehumanize, degrade, and destroy people.

### III. The Nature of the LORD's Rule

**The LORD's rule is solely through the power of His Word.** This contrasts with other ancient Near Eastern creation accounts, which see creation as the result of some kind of sexual act from a god or gods. When Moses records in Gen. 1:3 "*And God said...*" there is intentionality behind God's acts of creation; they did not just happen unexpectedly or haphazardly. The nature of God's rule is well summarized by John 1:3: "*All things were made by him [the Word] and without him was not anything made that was made.*" Implicit in the biblical account of creation is the understanding that God is intelligent, and His word alone is potent and effective, having both information and creative power. Because of this, we need to live by God's Word: "... *that he might make thee know that man doth not live by bread only, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of the LORD doth man live.*" (Matt. 4:4 cf. Deut. 8:3)

**Second, God works through time and secondary causes.** In whatever way one understands the Days of Creation, Genesis 1 depicts creation as a process over time, not as an instantaneous act. The repeated refrain, "*And the evening and the morning were...*" (Gen. 1:5ff) is clearly a temporal reference. His sovereignty over



all things transcends time and reflects His eternity. This mode of operation in creation is the same that He has in His sustaining providence and in unfolding and accomplishing his redemptive-historical work through the span of history. God has chosen to work through time. Along with this, it necessarily follows that God also works through secondary causes in ways that are necessary, contingent or both. This makes for a more sophisticated understanding of God's working regarding God's providence. Because of this and because we are time-bound creatures, we need to live by faith since we often do not know all that He is doing in a given moment.

**Third, God also works through mediation.** We see this in the climax of the Days of Creation, with the creation of Adam on Day 6. The doctrine of Adam's covenantal headship over the human race is important because what happens to him affects all mankind. Parallel to that (per Romans ch. 5), undoing the effects of Adam's sin can only be done by the second covenantal head, that is, Christ Jesus. If Adam were not an historical figure and not initially righteous (as would be the case, for example, if he were the product of naturalistic evolution), then there would be no moral standard from which we have fallen, and this would undercut any explanation for the existence of evil. If federal headship did not exist, then not only would we not be in Adam, but also Christ's work would not apply to His people, and therefore, we would still be in our sins.

## CONCLUSION

When we step away from the typical focus of how the Days of Creation relate to scientific theories and read the creation account covenantally, we see key elements that are foundational to a biblical worldview. The LORD, *our suzerain God*, precedes the existence of all things and brings them into being out of nothing. He is absolutely holy, separate from His creation, not dependent on anyone or anything. He is behind all things and, indeed, is the only real God. For this reason, He is the cornerstone of all reality. In relation to us, He both created us and saved us, and this justifies our worship of Him. As suzerain, His *realm* encompasses all creation, which He has made to possess both a material and moral order, with inherent purpose, reflecting His own good character. He *rules* by the power of His Word, through time and secondary causes and exercises mercy and justice, all for His glory. Recognizing all this puts into perspective man's proper place as a creature, albeit an exalted one, serving as a viceregent to God, in communion with Him and wholly dependent upon Him.

## For Review

1. What does the lesson posit to be the real focus of the Genesis account of creation?
2. What are three ways that the lesson describes the LORD as our covenant suzerain?
3. What are four ways that the lesson describes the created realm of God's suzerainty?
4. How does the lesson characterize the LORD's rule over His creation?
5. How does what has been described here situate man's role in the created order?

## FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. In writing the Pentateuch, Moses is helping God's people see their identity as rooted in their relationship with God. How do you see that in this lesson?
2. What Moses showed about the LORD as our covenant suzerain would have been a contrast with the common religious notions of the gods in his day. How are those same truths a contrast to religious notions today?
3. Similarly, how do the truths laid out in the creation account about creation--the realm of God's activity--contrast with assumptions people make about the nature of reality that we live in today?
4. How should understanding the nature of God's rule--through His word, through time and secondary causes and through mediation--shape our understanding of the Christian life?

## AFTERWORD

There are two issues this lesson is aimed at addressing, namely (1) the integration of the creation account into a covenantal schema of things, and (2) the necessity of reading the creation account in a God-centric manner. Regarding the first issue, in literature on covenant theology, discussion of the creation account is typically given short shrift, at best factoring into examination of the Covenant of Works in Adam. In discussions of Christian worldview, however, treatment of the topic is almost always extensive. If the covenant is the lens through which all Scripture must be interpreted, then this disjuncture needs to be resolved. The creation account is as covenantal as any other part of Scripture and needs to be read as such.

That raises the question, however, as to exactly how to read the creation account covenantally. For this reason, the modern propensity to focus on the Days of Creation detracts from a more fundamental focus on who God is. The lesson highlights the connection of Genesis as a prologue to the remainder of the Pentateuch and especially to Deuteronomy. From the perspective of Deuteronomy, who is this God who has saved Israel and made a covenant with the nation? Israel needed to know who her God was. Genesis answers that question from the very beginning. As discussed in Lesson 2 (both in the Lesson proper and in the excursus that followed), the covenantal paradigm for reading Scripture revolves around the King, His Kingdom (or realm), and His rule and glory. This set the basis for the threefold division in the current lesson of “The LORD as Our Covenant Suzerain,” “The Realm of the LORD’s Dominion,” and “The Nature of the LORD’s Rule.”

Even with this focus, the question of the Days of Creation is inescapable for modern readers, and it is very much bound up with the question of how do we reliably interpret Scripture. In fact, the modern preoccupation with the question has always fundamentally been about the reliability of Scripture. For some, if one does not accept a literal Six-Day creation, then one is in effect rejecting Scripture as the inerrant and infallible Word of God; for others, the exact opposite is the case: Scripture cannot be reliable precisely because it does not agree with what we can conjecture from science about the origins of all things. The excursus that follows is my effort to address this question. At its root, this is not a question of faith versus reason or religion versus science, as it is typically framed; it is a question of different epistemologies (i.e., ways of knowing things). The key epistemologies are those of (historical) testimony and scientific empiricism/rationalism. Looked at this way, one can deal more concretely with the uncertainties surrounding both epistemologies and reason more clearly to a resolution. In my view, this approach actually strengthens the traditional case for Six-Day creation, while recognizing the contribution and the limitation of scientific empiricism.

The literature on the Days of Creation is vast and many approaches simply posit the different positions and let the reader decide which one to accept. As a teacher, however, I feel compelled to provide a conclusion as to which position or positions are most likely to be true. One can agree or disagree with such conclusions, but that would be most helpful to our congregants.

In terms of useful resources, commentaries on Genesis abound. Ones that I have found useful include those by John Calvin, Meredith G. Kline, Derek Kidner (in the Tyndale Old Testament Commentary series), and Kenneth Matthews (two volumes in the New American Commentary series). Kline, *Kingdom Prologue; Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*, provides a unique and much more theological treatment of Genesis as a whole, and goes beyond a typical commentary. Lane Tipton's *Foundations of Covenant Theology; A Biblical-Theological Study of Genesis 1-3* is also a very good theological approach, although I have found it more useful in thinking about the dimensions of the Covenant of Works than about the Days of Creation. Richard P. Belcher, Jr.'s commentary, *Genesis, The Beginning of God's Plan of Salvation* (Glasgow, UK: Christian Focus, 2012), has an excellent section describing each of the different views and evaluating their strengths and weaknesses.

In terms of specialized treatments, the Study Committee reports by the Presbyterian Church in America (PCA) and the Orthodox Presbyterian Church (OPC) on Creation are excellent overviews of the different interpretive positions. These were developed with an eye toward what positions could ministerial candidates hold and still be within the bounds of Reformed orthodoxy. David G. Hagopian's book, *The Genesis Debate* (Mission Viejo CA: Crux Press, 2001), presents three different views (Calendar Day, Framework, and Day Age) by advocates of each view, with responses from those holding the competing views. Joseph A. Pipa, Jr. and David W. Hall, were the editors for *Did God Create in 6 Days?* (White Hall WV: Tolle Lege Press, 2005), a collection of academic papers on the Days of Creation delivered at a conference sponsored by Greenville Presbyterian Theological Seminary. Although the book favors the Calendar Day view, some of the papers are from leading advocates of the major alternative views. In terms of the major alternative views, Meredith G. Kline's article, "Because It Had Not Rained," *Westminster Theological Journal* 20 (1958), 146-57 and Mark Futato's counterpart, "Because It Had Rained," *Westminster Theological Journal* 20 (1998), 1-21 are core for understanding the Framework Hypothesis. In a similar manner, E. J. Young, a noted Old Testament scholar who held to the Day Age view, wrote two books propounding that view, *In the Beginning* (Carlisle PA: Banner of Truth Trust, 1976) and *Studies in Genesis One* (Phillipsburg NJ: P&R, 1964).