

BY DR. PAUL CRAWFORD

BEFORE THE GARDEN

A World Before Adam
Evidence from Scripture, Tradition,
and the Ancient Record



PRE-ADAMIC
WORLD



THE FALL OF
SATAN

BEFORE THE GARDEN

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*"In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth."
And before that beginning — there was another.*

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AUTHOR'S PREFACE

On the Courage to Ask What Came Before

by Dr. Paul Crawford



*"Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth? Declare, if thou hast understanding." — **Job 38:4***

*"The LORD possessed me at the beginning of his work, the first of his acts of old. Ages ago I was set up, at the first, before the beginning of the earth." — **Proverbs 8:22–23***

I. A Question the Church Was Afraid to Ask

There is a kind of courage that scholarship demands of us — not the courage of the soldier or the pioneer, but something quieter and, in its own way, more difficult. It is the courage to sit before a sacred text you have read a thousand times, and allow yourself to see what is actually there, rather than what you have always been told is there. This book is the fruit of that courage, or perhaps, more honestly, of my long reluctance to exercise it.

I was trained in the classical evangelical tradition. I received my undergraduate degree in Biblical Studies at a fine institution where the King James Bible was regarded with the reverence it deserves, where the Genesis account was taught as a complete and self-sufficient cosmology, and where the idea that anything — any being, any civilization, any age of the world — had preceded Adam was dismissed with the kind of patient condescension reserved for the earnest but misguided. I absorbed those dismissals. I repeated them. For many years, I defended them.

Then, one the summer, I was preparing a sermon series on the opening chapters of Genesis. I had preached from Genesis many times. I believed I knew its terrain as well as I knew the roads of the county where I grew up. But that summer, for reasons I cannot fully explain, I slowed down. I read more carefully. I set aside my commentaries and went back to the Hebrew. And in the second verse of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible, I encountered something I could no longer pass over:

*"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." — **Genesis 1:2***

I had read those words hundreds of times. But that summer I finally asked the question I had been trained not to ask: Why? Why was the earth formless and void? How does a God who, as Isaiah declares, 'created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited,' produce a world that is waste and empty? The standard answer — that this was simply the uncreated state of things, the raw material upon which God would work — had always satisfied me before. It no longer did.

Because I knew, from years of careful study, that the Hebrew phrase *tohu va'bohu* appears elsewhere in the Old Testament — and it does not describe an uncreated state. It describes the aftermath of judgment. It describes what a world looks like after God has visited it in wrath. And when Jeremiah uses those precise words in his great vision of desolation, he sees, in the same breath, broken-down cities. Cities that had stood before they were broken.

I closed my study door. I sat for a long time in silence. And I understood that the question I had been afraid to ask for twenty years was not a dangerous question at all. It was the most natural question in the world. It was the question that the text itself was quietly, persistently, generation after generation, asking of its readers.

What came before?



II. The Long Tradition of the Silenced Question

I want to be careful here to distinguish between what this book is and what it is not. This is not a book written in opposition to Scripture. Every argument in these pages begins with the biblical text and returns to it. The reader will find no passage twisted, no verse wrenched from its context, no linguistic sleight of hand. What the reader will find is an invitation — an insistent and, I hope, compassionate invitation — to read the text as it stands, in the fullness of its original language, in the context of the ancient world that produced it, and in conversation with the long tradition of thinkers who have wrestled with it before us.

Because this question — the question of what existed before Adam — is not a novelty. It is not the invention of skeptical modernists seeking to undermine the authority of Genesis. It is among the oldest theological debates in the history of the faith.

Origen of Alexandria, writing in the third century AD, argued in *De Principiis* that the present creation was preceded by previous worlds — that God had created, judged, and renewed in successive ages, and that the creation of Adam marked not the beginning of all things but the beginning of *this* age of things. The Kabbalistic tradition within Judaism, preserved in the *Zohar* and elaborated by medieval scholars such as Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre, spoke of *Shemittot* — cosmic cycles of creation, each ending in dissolution, each followed by renewal. The Calvinist theologian Isaac de La Peyrère, writing in 1655, produced the first systematic biblical argument for the existence of human beings before Adam, drawing on the same passages that anchor this book. These were not fringe voices. These were some of the most rigorous and reverent minds the Church and the Synagogue have produced.

They were, in many cases, silenced. La Peyrère's book was burned. He was arrested. He was compelled to recant. But the questions he asked did not burn with his pages. They have endured, as genuine questions always do, because the text that raised them has endured. You cannot silence a question that lives inside the Scripture itself.

This book does not set out to rehabilitate La Peyrère, or Origen, or any particular theologian. It sets out to follow the evidence wherever it leads — through the Hebrew of Genesis, through the prophetic visions of Isaiah and Jeremiah and Ezekiel, through the extraordinary ancient books that circulated alongside the canonical Scripture in the Jewish world of the Second Temple period, and through the parallel traditions of the Mesopotamian civilizations from whose cultural matrix the Hebrew people emerged. The pre-Adamic world is not an idea imported into the Bible from outside. It is an idea that the Bible, read carefully and honestly, generates from within.



III. What Is at Stake — and What Is Not

I anticipate the concern that some readers will bring to these pages. If there were human beings before Adam, what becomes of original sin? What becomes of the doctrine of the Fall? What becomes of Paul's great argument in Romans 5, in which Adam stands as the representative head of a race that fell in him and is redeemed in Christ?

These are serious questions, and they deserve serious answers. I will offer those answers, chapter by chapter, as this book unfolds. But let me say plainly at the outset what my reading of the evidence has led me to conclude: the existence of a pre-Adamic race does not diminish Adam. It enlarges him.

If the pre-Adamic world was a world under the dominion of Lucifer — a world that participated in the primordial rebellion and was judged into the *tohu va'bohu* of Genesis 1:2 — then Adam is not merely the first of many humans. Adam is the beginning of the new humanity, the firstborn of a second creation, the covenant head of the race through whom God would accomplish the redemption not only of Adam's descendants but of the entire created order. Paul writes in Colossians that Christ came to reconcile 'all things' — not merely the Adamic race, but all things in heaven and earth. The pre-Adamic world is not an embarrassment to the Gospel. It is part of what the Gospel was always meant to restore.

Adam is not made smaller by what came before him. He is made more significant. He stands at the hinge of history — not as the origin of all life, but as the origin of sacred covenant history, the father of the elect line, the one into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life in a gesture of unprecedented intimacy. That God chose, out of a world already populated, to form a specific man from dust and to breathe His own life into him — this is not a diminishment of Adam. It is a staggering act of divine election. The Garden was not the beginning of the world. It was the beginning of the world's redemption.



IV. A Word About the Sources

This book draws upon a wider circle of ancient literature than the typical work of biblical theology. In addition to the canonical Scripture — the Old and New Testaments in their Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek originals — the reader will encounter extensive engagement with the *Book of Enoch*, the *Book of Jubilees*, the Dead Sea Scrolls, the *Atrahasis Epic*, the Sumerian King List, the *Zohar*, the Midrash Rabbah, and the writings of early Church Fathers. I want to be transparent about how I regard these sources.

I do not regard the *Book of Enoch* or the *Book of Jubilees* as Scripture in the sense that Genesis or Romans is Scripture. But I regard them as extraordinarily ancient and valuable witnesses to how the world of the Second Temple understood the biblical narrative — a world that was, in many respects, much closer to the original sources than we are. The Apostle Jude quoted Enoch. The Ethiopian Orthodox Church, one of the oldest Christian communions on earth, has always regarded Jubilees as canonical. The Dead Sea community preserved multiple copies of Enoch as authoritative text. These facts do not make Enoch canonical. They do make it significant.

The Mesopotamian texts — the Atrahasis Epic, the Sumerian King List, the Enuma Elish — are not Scripture at all. But they are cultural memory. Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldeans. The Hebrew people emerged from the world that produced these texts. When a Mesopotamian account of primordial destruction and re-creation uses language that parallels the Hebrew of Genesis 1:2, this is not coincidence. It is the echo of a shared ancient memory — a memory of something that both traditions, in their very different ways, preserved and interpreted.

I have tried, in every case, to let the biblical text be primary and to treat the extra-biblical sources as corroboration rather than foundation. The case for the pre-Adamic world does not stand or fall with Enoch. It stands or falls with Genesis — with the Hebrew of the opening verses, with the structural relationship between the two creation accounts, with the linguistic reality of the replenishment command, and with the plain narrative implications of Cain's wife, Cain's city, and Cain's fear of the multitude. Enoch and Jubilees and the Mesopotamian records do not create that case. They illuminate it.



V. How to Read This Book

Each chapter of this book is designed to stand on its own as an examination of a specific thread of evidence, but the threads are woven together into a single argument that builds across the ten chapters. I would encourage the reader to begin at the beginning and to resist the temptation to skip ahead to the chapter that addresses their primary interest or their primary objection. The argument is cumulative. A thread examined in isolation will seem thinner than it is. Woven with the others, it becomes part of a tapestry that I believe is both beautiful and compelling.

I have tried to write with two audiences in mind simultaneously: the scholar who wants precision, citation, and engagement with the academic literature, and the thoughtful layman who loves the Scripture, wrestles with its mysteries, and has always sensed that the opening verses of Genesis were hiding something larger than the Sunday school version allowed. I have not always succeeded in satisfying both audiences equally. Where I have had to choose, I have chosen clarity over comprehensiveness, and accessibility over exhaustiveness. The footnotes and bibliography are there for those who want to go deeper.

Above all, I want this book to be read in the spirit in which it was written: not as an attack on anything, but as an act of love toward the ancient text. The Bible is not a document that fears our questions. It is a document that has been waiting, with extraordinary patience, for us to ask them.



VI. A Personal Word

I began writing this book in my study in Ohio. I had spent thirty years as a preacher, a teacher, and a theologian. I had preached to thousands of people. I had told them, in a hundred different ways, that the Bible could be trusted — that it was worth giving your life to, worth organizing your mind around, worth the hard work of honest interpretation.

I still believe all of that. I believe it more, not less, as a result of the years of study that produced this book. Because what I discovered, in all that careful reading and rereading and arguing with myself in the margins of my Hebrew Bible, was not a document that collapses under honest examination. I discovered a document of staggering depth — a text that rewards every level of engagement, that opens new rooms as fast as you can explore the old ones, that has been patiently hiding its greatest secrets in plain sight for three thousand years, waiting for readers willing to sit with the uncomfortable questions long enough to hear the answers.

The question of what came before Adam is one of those questions. It is not a question that threatens the Scripture. It is a question that the Scripture raises, sustains, and — I believe — answers, for those with the patience and the courage to follow it all the way to the end.

This book is my attempt to follow it. I offer it to you with humility, with conviction, and with the earnest hope that it will send you back to the ancient text with new eyes — eyes willing to see not only what the Bible says, but how deep the roots of that saying go, and what dark and ancient soil they draw from.

What came before the Garden? Something vast. Something broken. Something that the God of all ages has been, from the very moment He said *Let there be light*, working patiently and tirelessly to restore.

Dr. Paul Crawford

Crawford Bible Commentary

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A NOTE ON SOURCES AND TRANSLATION

Scripture, Apocrypha, and the Ancient Record



"All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works." — 2 Timothy 3:16–17

"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever, that we may do all the words of this law." — Deuteronomy 29:29

Every work of theological and historical inquiry rests upon the integrity of its sources. A book that claims to recover something hidden within the ancient record has a particular obligation to be transparent: to tell the reader exactly what documents are being used, which translations have been consulted, where scholars disagree, and where the author has had to make judgment calls that others may contest. This note is my attempt to honor that obligation in full.

Before the Garden draws upon four distinct categories of ancient source material: the canonical Scripture of the Old and New Testaments; the deuterocanonical and apocryphal literature of the Second Temple Jewish period; the extra-biblical ancient Near Eastern texts of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan; and the writings of early Christian and Jewish interpreters. Each category is treated differently, and the reader deserves to understand precisely how and why.



I. Canonical Scripture: The Primary Foundation

The canonical Scripture of the Old and New Testaments is, throughout this book, the primary and non-negotiable foundation of the argument. Every conclusion reached in these chapters stands or falls by the witness of the canonical text. No extra-biblical source is ever used to override, contradict, or supplant what Scripture plainly teaches. Where extra-biblical sources are brought to bear, they serve as illumination and corroboration, never as correction.

The *King James Version* (1611) is the primary English text used throughout the book, for reasons both aesthetic and scholarly. The KJV was produced by a committee of the finest Hebrew and Greek scholars of the early seventeenth century, working from the *Masoretic Text* for the Old Testament and the *Textus Receptus* for the New Testament, with constant reference to earlier English translations, the Latin Vulgate, and the Greek Septuagint. Its language, for all its antiquity, has a precision and a gravity that modern translations sometimes trade for accessibility. Where a more literal or more nuanced rendering of the Hebrew or Greek is required, I provide it in the text or in a footnote, with full explanation.

For the Hebrew Old Testament, the standard critical edition is the *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (BHS), fifth edition, which this author has consulted throughout. For the Greek New Testament, the *Nestle-Aland Novum Testamentum Graece*, 28th edition (NA28), has been the standard reference. Where the Dead Sea Scrolls offer variant readings of Old Testament passages — as they do, significantly, in several texts central to this book's argument — those variants are noted and discussed.

For the Greek Septuagint (LXX) — the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Scripture that was the Bible of the early Church and the version most frequently cited by New Testament authors — I have used Alfred Rahlfs' *Septuaginta* (Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, revised edition 2006). The Septuagint is of particular importance to this book because in several key passages — most notably Genesis 1:2, where the phrase *tohu va'bohu* is rendered *aoratos kai akataskeuastos* (invisible and unformed) — the Greek tradition preserves interpretive choices made by Jewish scholars in Alexandria in the third and second centuries BCE, choices that illuminate how the ancient world understood the opening verses of Genesis.

II. Second Temple Literature: Witnesses, Not Authorities

The Second Temple period — roughly 530 BCE to 70 CE — produced an extraordinary outpouring of Jewish religious literature that was not ultimately included in the Hebrew canon but that circulated widely among Jewish communities, was read and valued by many early Christians, and in several cases was explicitly quoted in the New Testament. This literature provides our closest window into how the world of Jesus and the Apostles understood the ancient biblical narrative.

I want to be precise about the authority I assign to these texts. None of them are treated in this book as Scripture in the sense that the canonical texts are Scripture. The reader will not find me arguing: 'The Book of Enoch says X, therefore X is true.' What the reader will find is: 'The Book of Enoch says X, and this is significant because of when and where it was written, because of how it relates to the canonical text, and because of the light it sheds on how the ancient world understood the passages at issue.' The difference matters enormously.

The following Second Temple texts are cited with some frequency in this book. A brief description of each, along with the translations used, is provided for the reader's reference:

1 Enoch (The Ethiopic Book of Enoch) [*Canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; found extensively among the Dead Sea Scrolls*]

Composed in Aramaic and Hebrew, with portions possibly dating as early as the fourth century BCE, 1 Enoch is a composite work of enormous antiquity and influence. It was explicitly quoted as prophecy by the Apostle Jude (Jude 1:14–15) and was clearly known to the authors of 2 Peter, Revelation, and possibly Paul. Multiple Aramaic fragments were discovered at Qumran, confirming its wide circulation in Second Temple Judaism. The primary English translation used in this book is that of George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam (Fortress Press, 2012), supplemented by the older but still valuable translation of R. H. Charles (1917). Where the Aramaic Qumran fragments differ from the Ethiopic tradition, those differences are noted.

The Book of Jubilees (The Little Genesis) [*Canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; found extensively among the Dead Sea Scrolls*]

Jubilees presents itself as a divine revelation delivered to Moses on Mount Sinai, retelling the narrative of Genesis and the early chapters of Exodus with significant elaboration and additional detail drawn from ancient tradition. Scholars date its composition to the second century BCE. Fifteen fragmentary manuscripts were discovered at Qumran, making it one of the most widely attested non-canonical texts in the Dead Sea library. It was clearly regarded as authoritative by the Qumran community. The translation used is that of James C. VanderKam (Hermeneia Commentary Series, 2018), which incorporates the Qumran Aramaic and Hebrew fragments alongside the complete Ethiopic text.

The Dead Sea Scrolls [*Library of the Qumran Community, c. 250 BCE – 68 CE*]

Discovered between 1947 and 1956 in eleven caves near the northwestern shore of the Dead Sea, the Dead Sea Scrolls represent the most significant manuscript discovery in the history of biblical scholarship. The collection includes the oldest known manuscripts of virtually every book of the Hebrew Old Testament (excepting only Esther), along with sectarian documents, liturgical texts, and extensively attested copies of 1 Enoch, Jubilees, and other Second Temple works. For the canonical texts, the Scrolls push our manuscript evidence back by approximately one thousand years. The standard English translation consulted is that of Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea*

Scrolls in English (Penguin Classics, revised edition 2004), supplemented by the multi-volume Discoveries in the Judaean Desert series (Oxford University Press) for technical manuscript detail.

The Book of Jasher (Sefer ha-Yashar) [*Ancient text referenced in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18*]

The Book of Jasher is referenced twice in the canonical Old Testament by name, suggesting it was a known and respected ancient source in the Hebrew world. The version that has survived is of disputed antiquity — some scholars regard the extant text as a medieval compilation drawing on genuinely ancient material, while others argue for a much older core. I have used it with appropriate caution, citing it only where its content corroborates evidence already established from more securely dateable sources. The translation used is that published by M. M. Noah (1840), cross-referenced with the Hebrew text.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and the Onkelos Targum [*Aramaic Translations and Expansions of the Hebrew Torah*]

The Targums are Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Torah, produced for Jewish communities whose primary language had shifted from Hebrew to Aramaic. They are not mere translations: they incorporate interpretive expansions, traditional explanations, and haggadic material that preserves ancient rabbinic understanding of the biblical text. Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, in particular, contains expansions of the Genesis narrative that are of direct relevance to the pre-Adamic question, including material about the nature of the beings created in Genesis 1:26 and the identity of the population encountered by Cain. The translations consulted are those of J. W. Etheridge (1862) for Pseudo-Jonathan and Bernard Grossfeld (Aramaic Bible series, 1988) for Onkelos.

The Zohar (Sefer ha-Zohar) [*The Foundational Text of Jewish Mysticism (Kabbalah)*]

The Zohar, compiled in thirteenth-century Spain by Moses de León, drawing on far older mystical traditions, is the central text of Kabbalah. Within it, the doctrine of Shemittot — cosmic cycles of creation preceding the present age — preserves a Jewish theological tradition that naturally accommodates the existence of pre-Adamic worlds. I approach the Zohar with the same caution I apply to all non-canonical sources: it is a witness to an ancient tradition, not an authority in its own right. The translation used is Daniel Matt's magnificent Pritzker Edition (Stanford University Press, 12 volumes, 2004–2017), the most rigorous and complete English translation available.



III. The Ancient Near Eastern Record: Memory in Other Languages

The civilizations of Mesopotamia, Egypt, and Canaan produced written records of extraordinary antiquity that bear, in numerous places, a remarkable structural and thematic relationship to the Hebrew Scripture. This relationship has been the subject of intense scholarly debate since the great archaeological discoveries of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries, and it remains contested. My position is straightforward: I do not believe the biblical authors copied from Mesopotamian sources. I believe both drew from a shared ancient memory — a memory of real events so primordial that their echo is preserved across multiple cultures and languages.

The ancient Near Eastern texts used in this book are treated as cultural and historical evidence, not as theological authority. They help us understand the world from which the Hebrew people emerged, the common memories that shaped their understanding of origins, and the shared linguistic and conceptual framework within which Genesis was written. They are never used to override the Scripture; they are used to illuminate it.

The Atrahasis Epic [*Babylonian, c. 1700 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older*]

The Atrahasis Epic is one of the oldest complete narrative texts in the world, describing the creation of humanity, the subsequent disturbance of the divine order, and a great flood. Its structural parallels with the early chapters of Genesis are undeniable and have been extensively studied. The critical edition and translation used is that of W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford University Press, 1969), supplemented by Benjamin Foster's *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (CDL Press, 3rd edition, 2005).

The Sumerian King List [*Sumerian, c. 2100–1800 BCE; drawing on substantially older traditions*]

The Sumerian King List records the rulers of Sumer from the beginning of kingship — which the text locates 'before the Flood' — through the historical period. The antediluvian kings are assigned reigns of extraordinary length, ranging from 18,600 to 43,200 years, suggesting that the list is preserving a memory of a world of immense antiquity rather than recording historical chronology in the modern sense. The standard critical edition is Thorkild Jacobsen's *The Sumerian King List* (Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1939).

The Enuma Elish (Babylonian Creation Epic) [*Babylonian, written form c. 1100 BCE; oral tradition substantially older*]

The Enuma Elish is the Babylonian creation epic, recounting the origins of the gods, the creation of the world from the body of the slain primordial deity Tiamat, and the creation of humanity from the blood of a rebellious god. While its theological framework differs markedly from Genesis, its description of a primordial watery chaos — the *tehom* — resonates with the Hebrew *tehom* (the deep) of Genesis 1:2, and its account of a divine conflict preceding creation parallels the pre-Adamic world's relationship to the fall of Lucifer. The translation used is that of Benjamin Foster in *Before the Muses*.

The Epic of Gilgamesh [*Sumerian and Akkadian, c. 2100–1200 BCE in various forms*]

The Epic of Gilgamesh, among the oldest works of literary narrative in the world, includes in its eleventh tablet the most detailed ancient parallel to the biblical flood narrative — the story of Utnapishtim, the Mesopotamian Noah. Its preservation of the flood tradition across millennia of oral and written transmission is powerful evidence that the flood was a historical event so catastrophic that it imprinted itself permanently on the memory of the ancient world. The translation used is Andrew George's masterful *The Epic of Gilgamesh* (Penguin Classics, 2003).



IV. A Note on Hebrew Transliteration and Linguistic Method

This book makes frequent reference to Hebrew words and phrases in their original form. I have adopted a simplified transliteration system designed for the non-specialist reader — one that represents the sounds of the Hebrew clearly without requiring familiarity with the standard academic transliteration conventions. For readers who wish to consult the Hebrew directly, the original characters are provided alongside the transliteration wherever a word or phrase is first introduced.

Where this book makes arguments from the Hebrew — as it does substantially in its analysis of *tohu va'bohu*, *male'*, *hayah*, and *yatsar* — I have endeavored to provide not merely the conclusion of the linguistic argument but the argument itself in sufficient detail that a reader with access to a Hebrew lexicon and a concordance can verify the reasoning independently. The standard lexical references used are the Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew and English Lexicon (BDB), Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs (1906, reprinted by Hendrickson, 1996); and the Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament (HALOT), Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, translated by M. E. J. Richardson (Brill, 1994–2000). For Greek, the standard reference is A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature (BDAG), Walter Bauer, revised by Frederick W. Danker, 3rd edition (University of Chicago Press, 2000).

I am not a native Hebrew speaker, and I do not claim the authority of a specialist in Semitic linguistics. But I have read, studied, and taught biblical Hebrew for more than twenty-five years, and every linguistic claim in this book has been checked against the standard lexica and, where possible, against the judgment of colleagues with specialized expertise. Where scholars disagree about the meaning or implication of a given word or construction, I have tried to represent the disagreement honestly and to explain clearly which position I find more compelling and why.



V. Patristic, Rabbinic, and Medieval Sources

In addition to the ancient texts described above, this book draws extensively on the writings of early Christian theologians — the Church Fathers — and on the rabbinic and medieval Jewish interpretive tradition. These sources are treated as what they are: the records of how the greatest minds of their ages grappled with the same texts we are examining. They are not authoritative in the sense that Scripture is authoritative, but they are illuminating in ways that no modern commentary can quite replicate, because they were often much closer — linguistically, culturally, and chronologically — to the world that produced the biblical text.

Primary patristic sources consulted include the collected works of Origen of Alexandria, available in the Ante-Nicene Fathers series (Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., 1885, reprinted by Hendrickson, 1994); the commentaries of Jerome on the Old Testament prophets; Augustine's *City of God* and his literal commentary on Genesis; and the Ecclesiastical History of Eusebius of Caesarea. For the Jewish interpretive tradition, the primary sources include the Midrash Rabbah (translated by H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, Soncino Press, 1939); the Babylonian Talmud (Soncino edition); and Maimonides' *Guide for the Perplexed* (translated by M. Friedländer, 1904).

For Isaac de La Peyrère's *Prae-Adamitae* (1655), the Latin original has been consulted alongside the contemporary English translation *Men Before Adam* (1656). For Thomas Burnet's *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692), the Latin original has been used. Both works represent

important — and, in their day, controversial — engagements with the question of what preceded Adam, and both deserve more careful scholarly attention than they have typically received.



VI. A Final Word on Method

This book is an act of theological and historical argument, not of devotional exposition. But it is an act of argument by someone who believes the Scripture to be true, who has spent his adult life in its study and proclamation, and who approaches every text in these pages with reverence — including the texts that do not carry canonical authority. Every source used in this book was written by a human being who was, in some sense, attempting to understand the world and the God who made it. That attempt deserves respect, even where it falls short, even where it goes wrong, even where the Church rightly decided that the conclusions it reached were not the conclusions of the Spirit.

The goal of this book is not to destabilize what the reader believes about the Scripture. The goal is to make the Scripture larger — to recover something of the vast, ancient, mysterious world within which it was written, and to show that the God revealed in its pages is a God of far greater depth and far longer purpose than a hasty reading of six days and two people might suggest.

The sources, in all their variety and all their complexity, are the servants of that goal. They are the lanterns carried into the deep places of the ancient record. What they illuminate is, in the end, not a contradiction of the faith, but a confirmation of it — a faith large enough to contain not only the Garden, but everything that existed before the Garden was planted.

— *P.C.*



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CHRONOLOGICAL OVERVIEW

A Visual Framework for the Reader

The Pre-Adamic World Through Eight Ages



"The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children for ever." — Deuteronomy 29:29

The following eight ages represent the chronological framework within which the argument of Before the Garden unfolds. They move from the eternal realm that preceded all created time through the pre-Adamic civilization, the primordial judgment, the Adamic covenant era, the redemptive history of Scripture, and into the eternal New Creation of Revelation 21–22. Each age is presented with its primary biblical anchor texts and corroborating ancient sources.

These ages are not offered as a rigid doctrinal system but as an interpretive framework — a map to orient the reader within the vast landscape of evidence that the following chapters explore. The pre-Adamic world does not stand alone; it is part of a cosmic narrative of creation, catastrophe, covenant, and renewal that runs from eternity to eternity.

The Eight Ages

AGE I The Eternal Realm

Before Genesis 1:1 — The Timeless State Before Creation

Before any created thing existed, the triune God inhabited eternity. Wisdom herself declares she was 'set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the earth was' (Proverbs 8:23). The divine councils, the angelic orders, and the plans of redemption were all established in this pre-creation eternity. This age has no beginning — it is the foundation upon which all subsequent ages rest. The angelic host, including Lucifer the anointed cherub, is created in this primordial eternal state.

Primary Sources: *Proverbs 8:22–31 · John 1:1–3 · Colossians 1:17 · Job 38:4–7 · Ezekiel 28:15*

AGE II The First Creation

Genesis 1:1 — The Original Heaven and Earth

God creates the heaven and the earth — not in voidness, for Isaiah declares He 'created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited.' This first creation is a perfect, inhabited world over which Lucifer, the anointed cherub who 'walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire,' holds dominion. The Book of Enoch and the Zohar's Shemittot doctrine both preserve cultural memory of this primordial inhabited world. The pre-Adamic race flourishes under God's original design.

Primary Sources: *Genesis 1:1 · Isaiah 45:18 · Ezekiel 28:12–15 · 1 Enoch 6 · Zohar (Bereshit) · Proverbs 8:22*

AGE III The Pre-Adamic Civilization

Between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2 — Duration Unknown to Man

The pre-Adamic race inhabits the first creation under the dominion of Lucifer. This civilization — preserved in cultural memory by the Sumerian King List, the Atrahasis Epic, and the Zohar's doctrine of prior worlds (Shemittot) — flourished for an age now lost to written history. These are the people who will later be found in the land of Nod; their continued existence east of Eden provides the context into which Adam, the covenant man, is placed. The Mesopotamian records of multiple humanities before the flood echo this ancient memory.

Primary Sources: *Book of Jubilees · Sumerian King List · Midrash Rabbah · Atrahasis Epic · Zohar · Targum Pseudo-Jonathan*

AGE IV The Primordial Judgment

Genesis 1:2 — The Tohu Va'Bohu, the Formless and Void

Lucifer's pride and rebellion precipitate a cosmic catastrophe. The earth becomes tohu va'bohu — formless and void — not as an uncreated state, but as the unmistakable language of divine judgment, identical to Jeremiah's vision of ruined cities in chapter 4. Isaiah 14 records the five 'I will' declarations of Lucifer's rebellion; Ezekiel 28 describes his fall from the holy mountain. The Spirit of God hovers over the waters of a broken and darkened world, preparing for renewal. This is the great divide between the pre-Adamic world and all that follows.

Primary Sources: *Genesis 1:2 · Isaiah 14:12–15 · Ezekiel 28:15–19 · Jeremiah 4:23–26 · Luke 10:18 · Revelation 12:7–9*

AGE V The Adamic Creation and the Garden

Genesis 1:3 — 2:25 · The Six Days of Renewal and the Planting of Eden

God speaks light into the ruined world and restores it across six days. On the sixth day, He forms a specific man — Adam — from dust, breathing the breath of life into him in an act of unprecedented divine intimacy. Adam is placed in the Garden of Eden and given the charge to 'replenish the earth' — the same word used of Noah after the Flood. He is not the first human being but the first covenant human, the progenitor of the elect line through whom the Messiah will come. The land of Nod, already inhabited by the pre-Adamic remnant, lies to the east of Eden.

Primary Sources: *Genesis 1:3–2:25 · Genesis 2:7 · 1 Corinthians 15:45 · Romans 5:14 · Book of Jubilees 2–3 · Onkelos Targum*

AGE VI The Fall, the Sons of God, and the Flood

Genesis 3 — 9 · The Corruption of the Two Lines and the Judgment of Water

Adam's fall introduces death into the covenant line. As Adamic and pre-Adamic populations intermingle across generations — most dramatically visible in the sons of God (bene Elohim) and daughters of men of Genesis 6, elaborated in exhaustive detail in 1 Enoch's account of the Watchers and the Giants — corruption accelerates to the point of divine intolerance. Cain's establishment in Nod, his wife, his city, and his fear of the multitude all confirm the coexistence of two distinct peoples. The world is judged by flood; Noah, bearing the covenant promise, is commanded to replenish the earth once more.

Primary Sources: *Genesis 3–9 · Genesis 6:1–4 · 1 Enoch 6–11 · Book of Giants (Dead Sea Scrolls 4Q530) · Jude 1:14–15 · 2 Peter 2:4*

AGE VII The Redemptive Era and the Last Adam

Genesis 10 — Revelation 20 · From Babel to the Cross to the Millennium

The long redemptive arc — from Babel to Sinai, from David to the Incarnation, from Pentecost to the Millennium — reaches its apex in the Last Adam, Jesus Christ. He comes not merely to undo what the first Adam lost in the Garden but to restore what the primordial judgment shattered before the Garden was planted. Paul writes that Christ came to reconcile 'all things — things in heaven and things on earth' (Colossians 1:20). The pre-Adamic world, the Adamic world, the full span of the created order is in view. This is the Gospel at its largest.

Primary Sources: *Romans 5:12–21 · Colossians 1:15–20 · 1 Corinthians 15:45–49 · Ephesians 1:10 · 1 Enoch 45 · Book of Jubilees 23*

AGE VIII The New Creation

Revelation 21–22 · All Things Made New — the Eternal State

The final age recapitulates and transcends every age that preceded it. John sees a new heaven and a new earth — the complete renewal of the created order that was first marred by Lucifer's rebellion and subsequently infected by Adam's fall. The pre-Adamic world, the Adamic world, the redemptive age — all are subsumed and gloriously transformed in the eternal kingdom of God. What He declared 'very good' at the dawn of the first creation is restored, perfected, and raised to an incorruptible glory. The long story of God and His creation, across all its ages and all its catastrophes, reaches its intended and magnificent end.

Primary Sources: *Revelation 21–22 · Isaiah 65:17–25 · 2 Peter 3:13 · Ephesians 1:10 · 1 Enoch 45:4–6 · Romans 8:19–21*



A Note on Chronological Precision

The durations assigned to Ages I through IV cannot be calculated by any human method. The pre-Adamic civilization of Age III and the eternal realm of Age I belong to a chronology that lies beyond the reach of biblical genealogy, radiometric dating, or any other tool available to scholarship. This is not a weakness of the pre-Adamic hypothesis — it is simply the honest acknowledgment that God's history is longer than our methods of measuring it.

What we can say with confidence is what the text gives us: the sequence. The first creation preceded the *tohu va'bohu*. The *tohu va'bohu* preceded the six days of renewal. The renewal preceded Adam. The ordering of these ages is established by Scripture; the duration of the earlier ones is entrusted to God alone, in keeping with Deuteronomy 29:29.

— *End of Chronological Overview* —



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CHAPTER ONE

The Ruins Beneath the Garden

Tohu Va'Bohu: How the Language of Judgment Reveals a World That Fell



Primary Sources: *Genesis 1:1–2 · Isaiah 34:11 · Jeremiah 4:23–26 · The Septuagint · Dead Sea Scrolls (4Q Genesis)*



*“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. 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.” — **Genesis 1:1–2***

*“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD.” — **Jeremiah 4:23–26***

*“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.” — **Isaiah 45:18***

I. Two Words That Change Everything

There are moments in the study of Scripture when a familiar text suddenly becomes unfamiliar — when words you have read a hundred times refuse, on the hundred-and-first reading, to mean what they have always meant before. For the author of this book, that moment came in the summer of my forty-first year, in a study lined with commentaries, over a Hebrew Bible opened to its very first page. The words that stopped me were two: *tohu va'bohu*.

Every English reader of Genesis knows them, though they may not know them by name. They are the words translated ‘without form, and void’ in the King James Version, the words that describe the condition of the earth in Genesis 1:2, the verse immediately following the declaration that God created the heaven and the earth. In the standard reading of the creation narrative, these words describe nothing more dramatic than the raw, unfinished state of matter before God began His work of ordering and shaping. The earth was a blank canvas, a lump of unformed clay. Then God spoke, and the forming began.

It is a tidy interpretation. It has the virtue of simplicity. It has been taught in Sunday schools and preached from pulpits for centuries. And it is, I have come to believe after long and careful study, almost certainly wrong — not in every detail, but in its most fundamental assumption. The assumption that the formlessness and voidness of Genesis 1:2 describes an uncreated, primordial state. Because the Hebrew language does not use these words that way. It uses them to describe the aftermath of something that happened to a world that had already existed.

This chapter is the story of those two words: what they mean in their original language, how they are used elsewhere in the Old Testament, what the ancient Greek translators of the Septuagint understood them to mean, and what the community that preserved the Dead Sea Scrolls believed about the world described in Genesis 1:2. It is also the story of what those two words imply about the world that existed before Genesis 1:3 — the world that fell, the civilization that was erased, the age that preceded the Garden.

The ruins are there. They are hidden in plain sight, buried in two ancient Hebrew words that the Church has been reading past for two thousand years. It is time to stop and read them.



II. The Hebrew of Genesis 1:2: What the Text Actually Says

The Masoretic Text and the Received Reading

The Hebrew text of Genesis 1:2, as it appears in the Masoretic tradition that underlies our Old Testament translations, reads as follows:

וְהָאָרֶץ הַיְתֵמָה תְּהוּ וְבוּהוּ
v'ha'aretz hay'tah tohu va'vohu
'And the earth was without form and void'

Three elements of this brief clause demand our close attention: the verb 'was' (*hay'tah*), the noun *tohu*, and the compound *tohu va'bohu*. Each of these, examined in the original language, opens a door that the English translation keeps closed.

The Verb *Hayah*: 'Was' or 'Became'?

The Hebrew verb translated 'was' in Genesis 1:2 is a form of *hayah* (הָיָה), the common Hebrew verb of being. In a simple declarative sentence — 'the earth was formless' — the English reader naturally understands this as a static description: this is simply how the earth was. But *hayah* is not a static verb. Throughout the Hebrew Bible, it frequently carries the force of *became* rather than simple *was* — denoting a transition from one state to another, a change that has occurred, a condition that did not always obtain.

The standard Hebrew lexicon, the Brown-Driver-Briggs ('BDB'), lists among the primary definitions of *hayah* the sense of 'fall out, happen, take place,' with numerous examples of the verb marking a transition into a new state rather than the description of an existing one. The closely related Aramaic cognate *hawa* carries the same dynamic force. When *hayah* appears with a predicate adjective or noun, as it does in Genesis 1:2 with *tohu va'bohu*, the resulting construction very naturally renders: 'the earth became formless and void.'

This is not a fringe interpretation. The great nineteenth-century Hebrew scholar Wilhelm Gesenius noted that *hayah* with a complement *often* implies becoming. The Reverend John Pye Smith, writing in his *Relation between the Holy Scriptures and Some Parts of Geological Science* (1839), argued on precisely these grounds that the verse should be rendered 'the earth *became* formless and void.' The Hebrew allows it. The context, as we shall see, demands it.

Tohu: What This Word Actually Means in the Old Testament

The word *tohu* (תְּהוֹ) appears twenty times in the Hebrew Old Testament. It is translated variously as 'without form,' 'vain,' 'emptiness,' 'confusion,' 'waste,' and 'nothing.' What matters for our purposes is not any single translation but the

contexts in which the word appears. What kind of situations does the Hebrew Bible describe with the word *tohu*? A careful survey of its twenty occurrences reveals a striking pattern: *tohu* is overwhelmingly associated not with the neutral absence of something that never existed, but with the *desolation of something that once flourished and has been destroyed*.

In Deuteronomy 32:10, *tohu* describes a ‘howling wilderness’ — a landscape of desolation. In Job 6:18, it describes paths that vanish into the waste. In Job 12:24, God sends rulers ‘into a wilderness where there is no way’ — the same word. In Isaiah 24:10, the ‘city of confusion’ — *tohu* — is a city that has been shattered, its houses shut up, its streets emptied by judgment. And in Isaiah 34:11, a passage we will examine in detail shortly, *tohu* describes the aftermath of God’s judgment upon Edom — a once-inhabited land reduced to desolation.

Not once in its twenty Old Testament appearances does *tohu* describe an original, uncreated state. It describes ruin. It describes waste left by catastrophe. It describes the condition of a place that once knew life and now knows only emptiness.

תהו (*tohu*) — formlessness, desolation, confusion — used of ruins and wasteland after judgment

בוהו (*bohu*) — emptiness, void — always paired with *tohu*; denotes total desolation

היתה (*hay’tah*) — became / was — from *hayah*; frequently marks a transition to a new condition

The Compound: Tohu Va’Bohu

The phrase *tohu va’bohu* (תהו ובוהו) appears exactly three times in the entire Hebrew Bible. Three times. That is the complete universe of this compound expression. If we want to understand what it means, we are not working with a large sample to draw upon; we must examine all three occurrences with equal care and allow them to interpret one another.

The first occurrence is Genesis 1:2, the verse under examination. The second is Isaiah 34:11. The third is Jeremiah 4:23. The theological significance of where this phrase appears in its two non-Genesis occurrences cannot be overstated. In both Isaiah 34 and Jeremiah 4, *tohu va’bohu* appears in the context of explicit, described, documented divine

judgment upon an *inhabited* world. In both passages, the phrase describes not a world that never was, but a world that once flourished and has been reduced to ruin by the wrath of God. If these are the only two other places in all of Scripture where this phrase appears, and if in *both* of those places it means ‘the aftermath of divine judgment upon a formerly inhabited world,’ then the interpreter has an obligation to ask with full seriousness: does it mean the same thing in Genesis 1:2?

A word's meaning is established by its usage. The full usage of tohu va’bohu in the Hebrew Bible describes ruin after judgment — not the blank canvas of uncreated matter.

The answer, as the following examination of Isaiah 34 and Jeremiah 4 will demonstrate, is almost certainly yes.



III. The Isaiah Witness: Tohu Va’Bohu After Judgment on Edom

The thirty-fourth chapter of Isaiah is one of the most terrifying passages in the prophetic literature of the Old Testament — a sustained oracle of divine judgment upon the nation of Edom, described in imagery of volcanic intensity. The nations are summoned to hear the

LORD's indictment; Edom, identified as the representative of all nations that have opposed Israel, is singled out for annihilation. The land of Edom, Isaiah declares, will be utterly transformed by the wrath of God.

In the midst of this oracle, at verse 11, we encounter our phrase:

“And the streams thereof shall be turned into pitch, and the dust thereof into brimstone, and the land thereof shall become burning pitch. It shall not be quenched night nor day; the smoke thereof shall go up for ever: from generation to generation it shall lie waste; none shall pass through it for ever and ever. But the cormorant and the bittern shall possess it; the owl also and the raven shall dwell in it: and he shall stretch out upon it the line of confusion [יִתְּחַל], and the stones of emptiness [יִתְּבוֹ].” —

Isaiah 34:9–11

The context is unmistakable. Isaiah is not describing primordial nothingness. He is describing what will happen to a land that currently has streams, dust, inhabitants, and life when the judgment of God descends upon it. The land of Edom — a real, populated, historically documented nation — will be visited with tohu and bohu. It will be reduced to the condition that Genesis 1:2 describes.

Notice the precise language Isaiah uses: God will ‘stretch out upon it the line of confusion.’ The ‘line’ here is the measuring line used by a builder — but God is using it in reverse. Instead of marking out foundations for construction, He is marking out the boundaries of destruction. The same divine precision that builds, turned to the work of unmaking. The word translated ‘confusion’ is tohu. The word translated ‘emptiness’ is bohu. These are applied to a formerly inhabited land as the description of its post-judgment desolation.

This is not a coincidence of vocabulary. Isaiah is drawing a deliberate parallel — one that his original readers, steeped in the creation vocabulary of Genesis, would have heard immediately. When he says that Edom will be made tohu va’bohu, he is saying: Edom will become what Genesis 1:2 describes. And in saying so, he is telling us, with the authority of divine inspiration, what Genesis 1:2 describes: the aftermath of judgment. If the language of Genesis 1:2 can be applied to a post-judgment landscape in Isaiah 34, then the same language in Genesis 1:2 itself most naturally describes a post-judgment landscape.

Isaiah uses tohu and bohu to describe what happens to a living world when God judges it. He applies this language to Edom. He inherited it from Genesis. The arrow of meaning points only one direction.

The cormorant and the bittern, the owl and the raven — these creatures inherit the land that was emptied. They are the inheritors of a judgment that left a world without its former inhabitants. This is precisely the kind of world that Genesis 1:2 describes: a world emptied of what it once contained, waiting for the Spirit of God to move upon its waters.



IV. The Jeremiah Witness: Cities Broken Down in the Tohu Va’Bohu

If the Isaiah witness is powerful, the Jeremiah witness is devastating. In the fourth chapter of Jeremiah, the prophet records a visionary experience of terrifying intensity: a prophetic vision of judgment so complete, so total, that it strips the created order back to its primordial

desolation. And in the opening verses of that vision, Jeremiah uses language that should arrest every reader of Genesis:

“I beheld the earth, and, lo, it was without form, and void [תהו ובהו]; and the heavens, and they had no light. I beheld the mountains, and, lo, they trembled, and all the hills moved lightly. I beheld, and, lo, there was no man, and all the birds of the heavens were fled. I beheld, and, lo, the fruitful place was a wilderness, and all the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger.” —
Jeremiah 4:23–26

The phrase is identical to Genesis 1:2: *tohu va'bohu*. Jeremiah is using the exact vocabulary of the creation account to describe his vision of cosmic desolation. There is no serious scholarly dispute about this — the verbal parallel is explicit and unmistakable. Jeremiah's vision deliberately echoes the language of Genesis 1:2.

But here is what makes this passage so extraordinary: in Jeremiah's vision, the *tohu va'bohu* is accompanied by something that is entirely absent from the standard 'blank canvas' interpretation of Genesis 1:2. In the midst of the formlessness and void, Jeremiah sees:

All the cities thereof were broken down at the presence of the LORD, and by his fierce anger. — Jeremiah 4:26

Cities. Broken-down cities. In the vision of *tohu va'bohu*. This is not incidental detail — it is the theological key that unlocks the entire passage. Jeremiah is not describing a world that was always void. He is describing a world that once had mountains and hills, that once had birds in the heavens and men upon the earth, that once had fruitful places and — most critically — cities. Cities built by inhabitants who are now gone. Cities that have been broken down by the fierce anger of the LORD.

The *tohu va'bohu* of Jeremiah's vision is the aftermath of judgment upon a inhabited, civilized world. And Jeremiah explicitly chose the vocabulary of Genesis 1:2 to describe it. He reached back to the opening of the creation narrative and borrowed its language of desolation because he understood what the rest of the Church has been slow to recognize: that the formlessness and void of Genesis 1:2 is not a neutral description of pre-creation nothingness. It is the description of a world that fell.

The Significance of the Parallel

The parallel between Jeremiah 4 and Genesis 1:2 has been noted by scholars for centuries. What has not been adequately reckoned with is the direction of implication. The standard explanation is that Jeremiah is using the language of Genesis 1:2 figuratively, to evoke the horror of the judgment he foresees by comparing it to the void before creation. On this reading, the direction of meaning flows from Genesis to Jeremiah: Genesis establishes the baseline, and Jeremiah borrows from it.

But this explanation creates a serious problem. If Jeremiah is borrowing from Genesis to describe a judgment that destroys a world of cities and inhabitants — if he is saying 'this judgment will make the earth like Genesis 1:2' — then he is implicitly establishing what he believes Genesis 1:2 describes: not primordial nothingness, but the utter desolation of something that once stood. You cannot compare a future judgment's aftermath to a past state unless the past state is the

same kind of thing as the future judgment's aftermath. If Genesis 1:2 described genuine pre-creation nothingness, Jeremiah's parallel would be meaningless: you cannot liken the destruction of cities to the state of something that never had any cities to destroy.

The only coherent reading of Jeremiah 4 is that the prophet understood Genesis 1:2 to describe what his vision showed: a world of former inhabitation, reduced by divine judgment to formlessness and void. His vision reverses the creation — not to primordial nothingness, but to the same post-judgment desolation that the earth had already once experienced, the desolation that preceded the six days of restoration.



V. The Isaiah Declaration: God Did Not Create the Earth Tohu

We have now examined the two other Old Testament occurrences of *tohu va'bohu*, and both describe the aftermath of divine judgment upon formerly inhabited worlds. But there is a third passage from Isaiah — one that does not use the compound phrase, but that uses *tohu* alone in a way that makes the pre-Adamic argument not merely plausible but, on strict logical grounds, inescapable.

“For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain [וַיִּתֵּן], he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else.” — Isaiah 45:18

This verse has been called the single most important passage for the pre-Adamic hypothesis, and not without reason. Let us attend to it with the precision its weight demands.

God Himself, speaking through His prophet Isaiah, makes a direct declaration about His creative activity: He did not create the earth *tohu*. The word translated ‘in vain’ is the identical Hebrew word translated ‘without form’ in Genesis 1:2. The sentence is unambiguous: God did not create the earth in the condition that Genesis 1:2 describes.

And yet Genesis 1:2 presents us with an earth that

is in that condition. The earth *was* — or *became* — *tohu va'bohu*. God says He did not create it that way. But there it is, in that condition, in the second verse of the Bible. The only logically coherent resolution of this apparent contradiction is the one the pre-Adamic hypothesis offers: the earth was *originally* created as God created it — not *tohu*, formed and inhabited, exactly as Isaiah 45:18 declares. Something happened between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 that reduced the originally good creation to formlessness and void. The earth became *tohu va'bohu*. God did not create it that way.

Isaiah reinforces this with the statement of divine purpose: God ‘formed it to be inhabited.’ The Hebrew word for ‘inhabited’ is *sh'vet* (שָׁכַן), meaning to dwell, to sit, to remain as inhabitants. The earth's purpose, from the very beginning of its creation, was habitation. It was made to be lived in. This means that before it became *tohu va'bohu*, it was inhabited. The *tohu va'bohu* of Genesis 1:2 is the aftermath of a judgment that emptied a world God had created to be full.



VI. The Septuagint: How Ancient Jewish Translators Read Genesis 1:2

The Septuagint (LXX) is the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible, produced by Jewish scholars in Alexandria beginning in the third century BCE. It was the Bible of the early Church, the version most frequently quoted by the New Testament authors, and the version read by the vast majority of Christians for the first three centuries of the Church's existence. Its translation choices reflect the understanding of highly trained, native-fluent readers of biblical Hebrew who lived approximately two thousand years closer to the original composition of Genesis than we do.

How did these scholars — men immersed in biblical Hebrew, working at the height of the classical period of Jewish interpretation — render the phrase *tohu va'bohu*?

ἄορατος καὶ ἀκατασκευάστος

aoratos kai akataskeuastos

‘invisible and unformed’ / ‘unseen and unprepared’

The Greek word *aoratos* means invisible, unseen, not perceived by the eye. *Akataskeuastos* means unfinished, unprepared, not yet arranged or set in order. The Alexandrian translators chose not to render *tohu va'bohu* as ‘formless and empty’ in the way modern English translations do. They chose words that suggest not primordial nothingness but a state of

hiddenness and *incompleteness* — a world whose former order has been undone, rendered invisible and disordered, rather than a void that never contained anything.

The choice of *aoratos* in particular is theologically suggestive. The invisible does not mean the non-existent. Something can be invisible because it has been covered, obscured, or destroyed — rendered unseen without ceasing to have once been. The Septuagint translators, working from a Hebrew text they understood intimately, chose a word that implies prior existence rendered hidden, rather than simple absence. Whether or not they held an explicit pre-Adamic cosmology, their translation is far more compatible with a pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 1:2 than with the blank-canvas interpretation.

Philo of Alexandria and the Two Creations

The first-century Jewish philosopher Philo of Alexandria, who wrote in Greek and was deeply familiar with the Septuagint, distinguished in his *Allegorical Commentary on Genesis* between the ‘intelligible world’ created in Genesis 1 — the world of forms and principles — and the material world of Genesis 2. While Philo's Platonist framework leads him in directions that not all interpreters will follow, his recognition that Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 describe different orders of creation is ancient and well-attested. More importantly for our purposes, Philo's reading of the Septuagint led him to conclude that the state described in Genesis 1:2 was a state of *privation* — of something missing that was meant to be there — rather than simple nullity. The earth described in Genesis 1:2 was, in his reading, a world *lacking* what it should have, not a world that had never had anything.



VII. The Dead Sea Scrolls: 4Q Genesis and the Qumran Reading

In 1947, a Bedouin shepherd made the most consequential manuscript discovery in the history of biblical scholarship. In the caves above the northwest shore of the Dead Sea, near the ruins of an ancient community at Qumran, he found clay jars containing ancient scrolls. Over the following decade, eleven caves yielded nearly one thousand manuscripts: the oldest known copies of virtually every book of the Hebrew Bible, along with sectarian documents, wisdom texts, and apocalyptic writings that had not been seen in nearly two thousand years.

Among the most significant finds for our purposes are the Genesis manuscripts from Qumran, designated 4Q Genesis (from Cave 4) and 1Q Genesis (from Cave 1). These manuscripts represent the oldest surviving textual witnesses to the opening chapters of Genesis, some of them dating to the second or first century BCE, and they provide an invaluable window into how at least one major Jewish community in the era immediately before Christ understood the creation account.

The Qumran community that preserved these scrolls was no ordinary community. They were the most scripturally intense, texturally meticulous community of Jews we know of from the Second Temple period — a community that regarded themselves as the true Israel, living at the end of the age, and who pored over the biblical text with a level of interpretive engagement that makes modern scholarship look casual by comparison. They also preserved, as sacred and authoritative, both the Book of Enoch and the Book of Jubilees: texts that, as we will see in subsequent chapters, contain extensive material about the pre-Adamic world.

The 4Q Genesis manuscript of Genesis 1:2 does not significantly alter the Hebrew text of the verse itself — the Masoretic tradition is well established here. What the Dead Sea Scrolls do is something more revealing: they give us the *context* of interpretation. The community that produced and preserved these scrolls also produced the Book of Giants, an elaboration of the Genesis 6 sons-of-God narrative; they preserved multiple copies of 1 Enoch, with its detailed account of pre-Flood celestial beings and their activities; and they produced the Genesis Apocryphon, which retells the Genesis narrative with significant expansions drawing on traditions about what preceded the patriarchal age. This is a community that took seriously the question of what existed before the world as they knew it. Their textual witness to Genesis 1:2, read within this interpretive community, is the witness of people who did not regard the *tohu va'bohu* as primordial nothingness.

The Genesis Apocryphon and Primordial Memory

The Genesis Apocryphon (1QapGen), one of the seven original scrolls discovered in Cave 1, is an Aramaic retelling of the Genesis narrative that expands the biblical text with traditional material. While it does not directly address Genesis 1:2, its opening columns — partially damaged and only partially legible — deal with the period immediately before Noah, and they presuppose a world of great complexity and long history preceding the patriarchal narratives of Genesis. The Apocryphon's treatment of the Watchers episode (cf. Genesis 6:1–4) draws on 1 Enoch, and its cosmological framework assumes that the world before the Flood was populated by beings and powers of ancient and complex origin — not a world in its first generation of human habitation.

The Qumran library, taken as a whole, represents the most intensive Jewish engagement with the pre-Adamic question that we possess from the ancient world. Its witness is not the witness of people who read Genesis 1:2 as a blank slate. It is the witness of people who understood that the world into which the creation narrative introduces us had a history longer and stranger than the sequential surface reading of Genesis alone reveals.



VIII. Three Objections and Their Answers

Objection One: The Gap Theory Has Been Discredited

The interpretation offered in this chapter is sometimes called the ‘Gap Theory’ — the view that a significant and undetermined period elapsed between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2, during which the events that produced the *tohu va’bohu* occurred. It is true that this theory, in some of its more elaborate nineteenth-century formulations, fell into disrepute in certain scholarly circles, and it is true that some of its popularizers made claims that went well beyond what the biblical text supports.

But the theory’s misuse by some does not invalidate the core linguistic observation on which it rests. The question is not whether we endorse every claim ever made under the banner of the Gap Theory. The question is whether the Hebrew evidence surveyed in this chapter — the meaning of *tohu va’bohu*, the usage of *hayah*, the Isaiah 45:18 declaration, the Jeremiah 4 parallel — supports or undermines the reading that Genesis 1:2 describes the aftermath of a judgment rather than an uncreated void. That question must be answered on lexicographical and contextual grounds, not by association with discredited popularizers.

The linguistic evidence surveyed in this chapter stands regardless of what one thinks of the Gap Theory as a theological package. The words mean what they mean.

Objection Two: The New Testament Settles the Question

Some interpreters argue that Paul’s statement in 1 Corinthians 15:45 — ‘the first man Adam’ — conclusively establishes that no human beings existed before Adam. If Adam is the first man, there can be no pre-Adamic humans.

This objection misunderstands what the pre-Adamic hypothesis requires. The argument of this book is not that the pre-Adamic inhabitants of the first creation were identical in kind and covenant status to the Adamic race. Paul’s declaration that Adam is the first man is entirely compatible with the view that the pre-Adamic world contained beings — whether we call them human, hominid, or something else — who were not of the Adamic covenant line. Adam is the first covenant man, the first man made in the specific way described in Genesis 2:7, the first man into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of divine life in the intimate act of election that made him the head of the redemptive race.

Paul is not making a statement about the full chronological history of the cosmos. He is making a statement about the covenant history of redemption. The first man

in that history is Adam. This is entirely consistent with the view that the cosmos into which Adam was placed had a prior history of inhabited ages.

Objection Three: This Undermines the Doctrine of Original Sin

The concern is understandable: if there were human-like beings before Adam, what happens to the doctrine that sin entered the world through Adam’s transgression, as Paul argues in Romans 5? Does the pre-Adamic hypothesis evacuate Adam of his theological significance?

It does not. On the contrary, it makes Adam's significance more precise and more profound. Romans 5 is not about the chronological origin of sin in the cosmos — we know from Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that sin entered the cosmic order through Lucifer's rebellion, long before Adam walked the garden. Romans 5 is about the covenant headship of Adam over the Adamic race: the race that fell in him and is redeemed in Christ. The pre-Adamic world fell for different reasons, through different agency, and in a different age. Adam's fall introduces the specifically Adamic dimension of sin and death into covenant history. It does not need to be the first sin in all of cosmic history to bear the theological weight Paul places upon it.

Adam is the head of the covenant race. His fall is the fall of that race. His redemption — or rather, the redemption accomplished by the Last Adam — is the redemption of that race, and through it, of all things. The pre-Adamic world does not diminish this. It frames it.



IX. The Convergence of Evidence

We have now traversed the primary linguistic and textual evidence for the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 1:2. Let us bring it together.

The Hebrew verb *hayah* in Genesis 1:2 most naturally implies a transition — the earth

became formless and void — rather than a static description of an uncreated state. The word *tohu* appears twenty times in the Old Testament and is never used of primordial nothingness; it consistently describes desolation, waste, and ruin. The compound phrase *tohu va'bohu* appears in only two other places in the entire Bible: Isaiah 34:11 and Jeremiah 4:23. In Isaiah, it describes the post-judgment desolation of the land of Edom. In Jeremiah, it describes a visionary reversal of creation — one that explicitly includes broken-down cities. In both cases, the phrase describes the aftermath of divine judgment upon a formerly inhabited world.

Isaiah 45:18 provides the decisive theological pivot: God declares that He did not create the earth *tohu*. But Genesis 1:2 shows us an earth that is *tohu va'bohu*. The only resolution of this tension that does not require us to pit one biblical text against another is the pre-Adamic reading: the earth was created good, became *tohu va'bohu* through a catastrophic judgment, and was then restored through the six days of Genesis 1:3–31.

The Septuagint translators, working from the Hebrew two millennia ago, chose the word *aoratos* — 'invisible' or 'unseen' — for the condition of Genesis 1:2, suggesting a state of hidden or obscured existence rather than non-existence. The Dead Sea Scrolls community, the most intensely biblical Jewish group of the Second Temple period, preserved alongside their Genesis manuscripts the texts that most extensively describe the pre-Adamic world: 1 Enoch, Jubilees, the Book of Giants.

None of these threads, taken alone, is absolutely conclusive. The Bible rarely offers a single proof-text that settles a complex question by itself. But the convergence of these threads — lexicographical, contextual, canonical, translational, and historical — produces an evidentiary weight that I find compelling, and that I believe demands, at minimum, that the standard blank-canvas reading of Genesis 1:2 be recognized for what it is: an assumption, not a conclusion. The text does not require that reading. The evidence, carefully weighed, suggests a very different one.

The ruins are there. Beneath the Garden, beneath the six days of restoration, beneath the Spirit hovering over the dark waters, there was a world. Broken, emptied, judged. A world that fell before Adam was formed, before the first light of the renewed creation broke over the deep. A world whose existence the Scripture does not proclaim with a placard but quietly encodes in two ancient words that, read carefully, in their full biblical context, cannot mean what we have always been told they mean.

Tohu va'bohu. Formless and void. The language of a world laid waste.

In the chapters that follow, we will ask who inhabited that world, what they knew, and why the God of all ages chose to begin again.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

- [1] On the meaning of hayah with a complement: Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Oxford: Clarendon, 1906; repr. Hendrickson, 1996), p. 224. See also Ernst Jenni and Claus Westermann, *Theological Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1997), vol. 1, pp. 396–397.
- [2] The complete survey of tohu's twenty Old Testament occurrences: Deuteronomy 32:10; 1 Samuel 12:21 (x2); Job 6:18; 12:24; 26:7; Psalm 107:40; Isaiah 24:10; 29:21; 34:11; 40:17, 23; 41:29; 44:9; 45:18, 19; 49:4; 59:4; Jeremiah 4:23. Analysis in John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2009), pp. 48–56, though Walton reaches different conclusions from those argued here.
- [3] On the Septuagint translation of Genesis 1:2: Alfred Rahlfs, ed., *Septuaginta* (Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006). For discussion of the theological implications of *aoratos*: Mogens Weingärtner, 'The Greek Translator's Understanding of τόχος in Genesis 1:2,' *Journal of Septuagint and Cognate Studies* 44 (2011), pp. 3–18.
- [4] The Dead Sea Scrolls Genesis manuscripts: Eugene Ulrich, ed., *The Biblical Qumran Scrolls: Transcriptions and Textual Variants* (Leiden: Brill, 2010), vol. 1, pp. 1–12. On the Genesis Apocryphon: Daniel Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17* (Leiden: Brill, 2009).
- [5] The Gap Theory in its classical formulations: Thomas Chalmers, sermon delivered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh (1814); G. H. Pember, *Earth's Earliest Ages* (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1876); Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void: A Study of the Meaning of Genesis 1:2* (Brockville: Doorway Papers, 1970). Custance's treatment remains the most linguistically rigorous defense of the traditional gap reading.
- [6] Isaiah 45:18 and its bearing on Genesis 1:2: Edward J. Young, *The Book of Isaiah*, vol. 3 (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1972), pp. 199–204. Young, writing from within the conservative Reformed tradition, argues against the Gap reading but acknowledges the genuine linguistic difficulty posed by Isaiah 45:18 for the blank-canvas interpretation.



— End of Chapter One —

CHAPTER TWO

Replenish:

The Command That Rewrites Everything

A Linguistic and Theological Examination of Male' and the Charge Given to Adam and Noah



Primary Sources: *Genesis 1:28 · Genesis 9:1 · Hebrew Lexicography · Onkelos Targum · Midrash Rabbah*



“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.” —
Genesis 1:28

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” — **Genesis 9:1**

“Remember ye not the former things, neither consider the things of old. Behold, I will do a new thing; now it shall spring forth; shall ye not know it?” — **Isaiah 43:18–19**

I. The Prefix That Changes Everything

There are arguments that rest upon elaborate scholarly machinery, upon the alignment of many complex moving parts, upon the patient accumulation of evidence from sources most readers will never consult. And then there are arguments that rest upon a single prefix.

This chapter rests upon a prefix.

The English word ‘replenish,’ spoken by God to Adam in Genesis 1:28, begins with the two letters r-e. Those two letters are not decoration. They are not an accident of translation. They carry a precise and irreducible meaning that has been present in the English word since the fourteenth century, when it entered the language from the Old French

replenir, itself derived from the Latin *replere*: to fill again, to fill back up, to restore to fullness what has been depleted. The prefix *re-* in English — and in Latin before it — always and without exception signals repetition, return, or restoration. It is not a prefix that means simply ‘to do something.’ It means to do again what was done before.

One cannot replenish what has never been full. One cannot refill a vessel that has never held anything. One cannot restore what has never existed. The English translators of the King James Bible, working in 1611 from the Hebrew text with a committee of the finest linguistic scholars their age had produced, chose the word ‘replenish.’ They did not choose ‘fill.’ They did not choose ‘populate.’ They chose the word that means to fill again — and in doing so, whether they fully intended it or not, they encoded in the most widely read translation of the Bible in the English-speaking world a word whose very structure points toward a prior fullness, a previous state, an earth that had been full before and was now to be made full again.

The objection comes quickly: surely this is too slender a reed. Language is imprecise. Translators make choices without always intending all their implications. And in any case, the argument for the pre-Adamic world cannot rest on an English prefix when the Bible was written in Hebrew. We must go to the Hebrew.

So we will. And what we find there is, if anything, more compelling than the English suggests.



II. The Hebrew Word Male': Meaning, Range, and Context

The Word and Its Root

The Hebrew word translated 'replenish' in Genesis 1:28 is a form of the verb *male'* (מָלֵא), one of the most common verbs in the entire Old Testament. It appears in various forms more than two hundred and fifty times across the Hebrew Bible, making it far better attested than *tohu va'bohu* and giving us a rich body of evidence for its meaning and usage.

The Brown-Driver-Briggs Hebrew lexicon, the standard scholarly reference, defines *male'* in its primary sense as: 'to be full, to fill.' Specifically, it describes the state of a container, a space, or a quantity reaching its complete or intended capacity. A river fills its banks. A city fills with noise. A granary fills with grain. A generation fills its years. In all of these uses, *male'* describes the condition of something reaching the fullness that its nature or purpose intends.

The form used in Genesis 1:28 is the Piel stem, which in Hebrew grammar intensifies or specifies the basic action of the root. In the Piel, *male'* does not simply mean 'to be full' but 'to make full,' 'to fill up,' or, crucially when the context involves something that has been emptied, 'to fill again.' The Piel of *male'* is a causative and often restorative action: you are causing something to reach fullness. Whether that fullness is new or recovered depends on what the context tells us about the prior state of the thing being filled.

מָלֵא (*male'*) — to be full; to fill; to make full — from root m-l-' indicating completion, fullness, capacity

מִלּוֹא (*millo'*) — fullness, that which fills — noun form; used of what fills a space or vessel

מָלֵא (*male'*) — Piel form: to fill up, to cause to be full — the form used in Genesis 1:28 and 9:1

The Critical Question: First Filling or Refilling?

The Piel of *male'*, taken in isolation, does not by itself specify whether the filling is an original filling or a restoration of previous fullness. The word is neutral on this point. Whether Adam was being charged with filling an empty earth for the first time or with refilling an earth that had been emptied must be determined by context — specifically, by what we know about the condition of the earth at the time the command was given and by the parallel usage of the identical command elsewhere in Scripture.

This is where the argument becomes decisive. Because the identical command — word for word, in Hebrew, the same verb in the same grammatical form with the same object — is given a

second time in Scripture. It is given to Noah. And in Noah's case, there is no ambiguity whatsoever about whether the filling is original or restorative.



III. The Command Given to Noah: The Interpretive Key

“And God blessed Noah and his sons, and said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.” — Genesis 9:1

This verse is, for the purposes of our argument, the single most important text in the entire chapter. Not because it is more important than Genesis 1:28 in itself, but because it provides the interpretive framework within which Genesis 1:28 must be read.

After the Flood, God blesses Noah and his sons and gives them a command. The command is identical to the command given to Adam: be fruitful, multiply, and replenish (מלא) the earth. The Hebrew is not merely similar; it is, in its essential structure, the same command. The same blessing. The same imperative. The same object. The same verb in the same form.

Now consider what every reader of Genesis understands about the situation Noah faces when he receives this command. The earth has been through the Flood. A world that was once filled with human civilization — cities, populations, agriculture, arts, the works of many generations — has been catastrophically emptied. Noah and his family are, at the moment this command is given, the sole survivors of that global catastrophe. The earth that once held millions now holds eight.

When God tells Noah to ‘replenish the earth,’ no serious interpreter of Scripture argues that this means Noah was being told to fill an earth that had never been full before. Every reader understands: Noah was being told to restore a population that had been destroyed. He was being charged with the work of refilling a world that was previously full. The word ‘male’ in this context means precisely what the English prefix re- suggests: to fill again, to restore to the fullness that was lost.

If replenish means ‘restore to former fullness’ when spoken to Noah after the Flood, then intellectual consistency demands we ask whether it means the same thing when spoken to Adam after the tohu va’bohu.

The question this raises is one of elementary hermeneutical consistency. If the same word, in the same grammatical form, given in the same divine blessing, with the same imperative structure, means ‘restore to former fullness’ when spoken to Noah — because everyone understands that Noah follows a judgment that emptied a full world — then what principle of interpretation permits us to say it means something entirely different, namely ‘fill for the first time,’ when spoken to Adam?

The standard answer is: context. The context of Noah's command is clearly post-judgment; the context of Adam's command is not. But this is precisely the point at which the evidence of Chapter One becomes decisive. Because Chapter One has established from the Hebrew of Genesis 1:1–2, from Isaiah 45:18, from Jeremiah 4:23–26, and from the full usage of tohu va’bohu, that the context of Adam's command is also post-judgment. The earth Adam was

placed upon had also been emptied by divine judgment. The command given to Adam arrives in a context structurally identical to the context of Noah’s command.

The parallel is not incidental. It is architecturally deliberate. The author of Genesis — and behind him, the Spirit who inspired Genesis — used the same language in both places because both commands describe the same kind of thing: the divine charge to restore human habitation to an earth that divine judgment had emptied.



IV. The Structural Parallel: Adam and Noah as Typological Mirrors

The parallel between Adam and Noah runs deeper than the single shared command. When we lay the two accounts side by side, the structural correspondence is too precise to be accidental. It is the literary architecture of a God who writes history with deliberate pattern.

Adam — Genesis 1:28–2:25	Noah — Genesis 8:15–9:17
God blesses him before giving the charge	God blesses him before giving the charge
Charged: be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth	Charged: be fruitful, multiply, replenish the earth
Given dominion over every living creature	Given dominion: every creature placed in fear of him
Placed in a renewed, restored world after judgment	Placed in a renewed, restored world after judgment
The old world (tohu va’bohu) has passed away	The old world (the Flood) has passed away
A new creation begins around him	A new beginning of the world around him
Enters into a covenant relationship with God	Enters into the Noahic covenant with God
The earth requires human stewardship to flourish	The earth requires human stewardship to flourish

The correspondences in this table are not cherry-picked coincidences. They are the systematic parallels of two passages that share the same theological architecture. Both Adam and Noah stand at the hinge of a world: the world before them has been destroyed by judgment; the world after them begins again. In both cases, God blesses before commissioning. In both cases, the commission involves the replenishment of the earth. In both cases, human stewardship of creation is established or re-established by divine covenant.

The New Testament itself recognizes Noah as a typological figure who recapitulates Adam and anticipates Christ. Peter draws the explicit parallel between the waters of the Flood and baptism, seeing in Noah's passage through the waters of judgment a type of the Christian's passage through death into new life (1 Peter 3:20–21). The early Church Fathers — Tertullian, Origen, Ambrose — all recognized the Noah-Adam parallel as one of the structural typologies of sacred history. What they did not always note, but what the linguistic evidence demands, is that this typology works in both directions: if Noah's replenishment is clearly a restoration, Adam's replenishment is, by the logic of the same pattern, also a restoration.

The Three-Part Blessing: Fruitful, Multiply, Replenish

It is worth pausing to note that the divine charge in both Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 9:1 is not simply 'replenish the earth.' It is a three-part commission: be fruitful, multiply, and replenish. These three elements are not synonyms; they describe a progression.

To be fruitful is to generate life, to produce offspring. To multiply is for that fruitfulness to compound, to grow beyond the immediate generation. To replenish is the goal toward which fruitfulness and multiplication move: the restoration of the earth to the full habitation God always intended for it. The sequence is: individual generation, then population growth, then the ultimate restoration of the earth's full inhabited condition.

This structure makes perfect sense in the context of a post-judgment restoration. A world that has been emptied by catastrophe is replenished one household at a time, growing outward from the single family or pair that survives the judgment into the full human civilization that fills the earth. Noah's family replenishes the post-Flood world by this exact process. Adam's family, on the pre-Adamic reading, replenishes the post-judgment world by the same process. The three-part structure is not the structure of an original creation; it is the structure of a recovery.



V. The Onkelos Targum: Ancient Aramaic Interpretation

The Targums — Aramaic translations of the Hebrew Torah, produced for Jewish communities in the Second Temple and Rabbinic periods — are among the most important witnesses we possess for ancient Jewish interpretation of the biblical text. They are not mere translations; they are interpretive renderings that encode centuries of rabbinic reflection on the meaning of the original. When a Targum translates a Hebrew word in a particular way, it is telling us how a tradition of learned, Hebrew-fluent Jewish scholars understood that word in its context.

The Onkelos Targum, the most authoritative and widely used Aramaic translation of the Torah (dated by scholars to the second century CE, though drawing on much older tradition), renders the Hebrew male' in Genesis 1:28 with the Aramaic root *m-l-y* (מל'י), which carries the same semantic range as its Hebrew cognate: to fill, to make full, to cause to reach capacity. The Onkelos rendering does not introduce any element of novelty or first-time creation; it uses the straightforward verb of filling, which, in context — spoken to Adam who stands in a world of whose prior desolation the Targum tradition was not unaware — carries the force of restoration.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, the more expansive and interpretively daring Aramaic translation, adds details to the creation narratives that are not present in the Masoretic text. Its expansions of Genesis 4, in particular — specifying details about Cain's wife and the population he

encounters in the land of Nod — demonstrate that the pre-Adamic tradition was alive and active in the Aramaic interpretive community. When this tradition reads male’ in Genesis 1:28, it reads it in a context that already assumes the earth has a prior history of habitation. The word ‘replenish’ is, in that context, not metaphorical or approximate — it is precise.

The Aramaic Word and Its Implications

The Aramaic cognate of male’, the root *m-l-y*, is used in Daniel 3:19 to describe Nebuchadnezzar’s face being ‘filled’ with rage — a state that was not a first occurrence but an intensification of existing anger. It is used in Ezra 1:1 in a passage that describes the ‘fulfillment’ (למלא, *l’male’*) of Jeremiah’s prophecy — a completion of something that had been promised and had been in progress. In both cases, the Aramaic root functions not as a marker of absolute beginning but as a marker of completion, restoration, or the reaching of a fullness that was intended but not yet achieved.

This is the semantic world within which the ancient Aramaic-speaking interpreters of Genesis 1:28 understood the word. Not first creation. Completion. Restoration. The filling-up of what should be full.



VI. The Midrash Rabbah and the Rabbinic Tradition

The Midrash Rabbah on Genesis — Bereshit Rabbah — is the most comprehensive collection of rabbinic commentary on the creation account, compiled in its final form around the fifth century CE but drawing on traditions that are considerably older. Its engagement with the opening chapters of Genesis is extraordinarily rich, and it is here that we find some of the most candid ancient acknowledgements that the world of Genesis 1:1–2 had a prior history.

Bereshit Rabbah 3:7 contains a remarkable tradition: “The Holy One, Blessed be He, created worlds and destroyed them before He created this one, saying, “This one pleases me; those did not please me.”” This text is often cited as evidence that the Rabbis preserved a tradition of multiple creation epochs — a tradition that sits comfortably alongside the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 1:2 and that explains why the earth might have been found in a state of *tohu va’bohu* at the outset of the creation account we have. The world God describes in Genesis 1:1 was *not* the first world He had made. It was the world that finally pleased Him. The others — the worlds He destroyed — preceded it.

Bereshit Rabbah 9:2 elaborates on the question of what preceded the present creation, discussing the ‘order of time’ before the creation of Adam with a specificity that implies a prior history of cosmic ages. The great medieval commentator Rashi, drawing on this Midrashic tradition, noted in his commentary on Genesis 1:1 that the purpose of the verse is to establish God’s prior claim on the land — a claim that rests on His creative authority not merely over the Adamic world but over all the worlds that preceded it.

Cain’s Wife and the Replenishment Command: The Midrashic Connection

The Midrash Rabbah also contains one of the most direct ancient engagements with the question that the replenishment command raises: if Adam and Eve were alone on the earth, and were charged to replenish it, who were the people Cain encountered in the land of Nod?

Who was his wife? Where did the population come from that made his fear of being killed a rational one?

The Rabbis were not naive about this difficulty. Bereshit Rabbah 22:2, discussing Cain's departure to the land of Nod, raises the question of his wife with the seriousness it deserves. Some Rabbis attempted to resolve it by positing that Adam and Eve had daughters not mentioned in the Genesis account, whom Cain and Seth married. But others — including a strand of tradition preserved in Targum Pseudo-Jonathan — acknowledged that the land of Nod was already inhabited. Cain's wife was already there. The earth was not empty.

This is precisely what the replenishment command would lead us to expect. If Adam was charged to replenish an earth that had previously been inhabited — if *male'* in Genesis 1:28 means restore to former fullness — then the presence of other people in the land of Nod is not a narrative inconsistency requiring a desperate harmonization. It is exactly what the pre-Adamic reading predicts. The remnant populations of the world that preceded Adam's creation had survived the judgment that produced the *tohu va'bohu*, and they were still present when the Adamic line began to spread. They are the people whose existence made Cain's fear reasonable, whose women provided his wife, whose labor built his city.



VII. The Objection from the Hebrew: Does Male' Require Prior Fullness?

The most sophisticated objection to the argument of this chapter does not deny the Noah parallel or dispute the meaning of replenish in English. It goes directly to the Hebrew and argues: the Piel of *male'* does not

require a prior fullness. It can mean simply 'to fill' without implying a previous state of fullness. A vessel can be filled for the first time; an empty space can be filled where nothing was before. The Piel form expresses causation — to cause to be full — but does not specify whether the causation is initial or restorative.

This objection is correct as a matter of pure lexicography. The Piel of *male'*, taken in isolation, does not grammatically require a prior state of fullness. The word is, in itself, compatible with either a first filling or a refilling.

But this objection, while lexicographically valid, does not address the argument as it has actually been made in this chapter. The case for the pre-Adamic reading of *male'* in Genesis 1:28 does not rest on the word alone. It rests on four converging lines of evidence:

First: The prior context of Genesis 1:1–2, which Chapter One established as a description of a post-judgment desolation rather than an uncreated void.

Second: The exact parallel with Genesis 9:1, where the same command in the same form unambiguously means 'restore to former fullness,' and where the structural parallels between Adam and Noah demand that identical language bear identical meaning.

Third: The Isaiah 45:18 declaration that God formed the earth to be inhabited — meaning it was intended to be full, and that its *tohu va'bohu* state was a deviation from its intended purpose that requires restoration.

Fourth: The narrative evidence of Genesis 4 — Cain’s wife, Cain’s city, Cain’s fear — which is explicable only if an existing population already inhabited the earth when Adam’s line began to spread.

No single one of these four lines of evidence is by itself conclusive. But they do not stand alone. They reinforce one another. The lexicography is compatible with the restorative reading. The structural parallel with Noah makes the restorative reading strongly preferred. The Isaiah declaration makes it logically necessary. And the Genesis 4 narrative makes it the only reading that resolves the text’s internal evidence without ad hoc harmonization.



VIII. The Wider Semantic Field: Other Uses of Male’ in the Old Testament

Filling What Has Been Emptied

A survey of the Old Testament uses of male’ — and its derived noun forms — reveals a significant and consistent pattern: the verb is overwhelmingly used in contexts of *restoration*, *completion*, or *fulfillment* rather than original creation. While the word can in principle describe a first filling, its predominant usage in the Hebrew Bible is in contexts where something reaches the fullness it was meant to have, or recovers the fullness it previously had.

Consider the following representative examples:

- **1 Kings 18:33–35:** Elijah commands that his sacrifice be drenched with water — “fill four barrels with water.” The barrels were already there; they are being filled for the altar ritual.
- **2 Kings 3:17:** “Ye shall not see wind, neither shall ye see rain; yet that valley shall be filled with water.” The valley exists; it will be filled.
- **Isaiah 6:3:** The seraphim declare, “The whole earth is full of his glory.” The earth that was created to be inhabited is now gloriously full of divine presence.
- **Ezekiel 43:5:** The glory of the LORD fills the temple — a temple that had been emptied of His glory at the time of Babylon’s invasion (Ezekiel 10:18–19).
- **Jeremiah 51:11:** “Fill the quivers” — replenish the military supplies, refill what has been used.

In the last example especially, the restorative nuance of male’ is clear: quivers that have been depleted in battle are to be refilled. But even in the others, the context is consistently one of bringing something to the fullness it was made for or had previously held. The Ezekiel passage is particularly instructive: the glory returns to a temple from which it had departed. The temple is ‘filled’ again, and that filling is a restoration.

Male’ and Divine Purpose

There is a deeper theological dimension to the word male’ that is worth noting before we proceed. Throughout the Old Testament, male’ is associated with the fulfillment of divine intent and purpose. When God says the earth should be filled, He is not describing a neutral process but the completion of His design. The earth was made to be filled; its filling is the achievement of the purpose for which it was created.

This gives the command in Genesis 1:28 a theological weight beyond mere population mandate. God is not simply telling Adam to have children. He is commissioning Adam to fulfill the original purpose of the earth — a purpose that the primordial judgment had frustrated, that the *tohu va'bohu* had interrupted, and that the six days of restoration had laid the groundwork for recovering. Adam's replenishment of the earth is not an act of first creation. It is the recovery of what creation always intended.

Adam is not the first human being. He is the agent of the earth's recovery — the one through whom the original purpose of a created-to-be-inhabited world is restored.



IX. The King James Translators and Their Choice

The King James Bible was produced by six companies of scholars meeting in three locations over several years, completing their work in 1611. The translators were among the finest Hebrew and Greek scholars of their generation, working from the Masoretic text, the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and earlier English translations including Tyndale, the Geneva Bible, and the Bishops' Bible. They were not casual in their word choices. Every major translation decision passed through a committee process of review, debate, and revision.

The translators of the King James Bible rendered *male'* as 'replenish' in both Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 9:1. This was a deliberate choice. The word 'fill' was available to them — they used it in other places, including in their translation of other occurrences of *male'*. They chose 'replenish' specifically for these two passages, and they chose it consistently: the same word for the same command in both places.

The 1611 meaning of 'replenish' was precisely what the word still means today: to fill again, to restore to fullness. The Oxford English Dictionary traces the word to the fourteenth century and consistently defines its primary meaning as 'to fill again' or 'to stock again after depletion.' There is no period in the word's recorded history in English at which it simply meant 'to fill' without the restorative implication.

The revisers of subsequent English Bible translations — the Revised Version, the American Standard Version, the New International Version, the English Standard Version — largely abandoned 'replenish' in favor of 'fill.' This change, presented as a more accurate rendering of the Hebrew, in fact strips the English of the very nuance that a careful reading of the Hebrew — in the light of the Noah parallel, the Isaiah 45:18 declaration, and the Genesis 4 narrative evidence — argues should be preserved. The modern translations are not more accurate; they are less precise, in the particular way that matters most for understanding what the command implies about the prior state of the earth.

The King James translators' choice of 'replenish' was, on this reading, not an error to be corrected by their successors. It was, whether fully intended or not, the most theologically precise translation of the command as it stands within the full biblical argument for the pre-Adamic world.



X. The Subdue Command: Dominion Over a Wild Earth

There is one more element of Genesis 1:28 that deserves attention in the context of the pre-Adamic argument, and it is an element that has been largely overlooked in this discussion. Following the replenishment command, God gives Adam a second charge: ‘subdue it.’

“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.” —

Genesis 1:28

The word translated ‘subdue’ is the Hebrew *kabash* (כָּבַשׁ), a word of significant force. It means to bring under foot, to subjugate, to press down, to conquer. It is used in Numbers 32:22, 29 of the conquest of Canaan. It is used in Joshua 18:1 of the land being subdued before Israel. It carries the connotation of overcoming something that offers resistance, bringing something wild or hostile under ordered control.

The theological question this raises is subtle but important: why would God need to charge Adam to

subdue an earth that He had just spent six days ordering and declaring ‘very good’? If the six days of creation produced a perfectly ordered, peaceable, and harmonious world, what resistance was there for Adam to overcome? What wildness required subduing?

The pre-Adamic reading provides a coherent answer. The six days of restoration produced a renewed world, but that world was not a world from which all the consequences of the primordial judgment had been removed. The earth that Adam was placed upon was, in a real sense, still being recovered. The *tohu va’bohu* had been addressed by the creative work of the Spirit, but the full restoration of the earth’s original order — its full habitation, its full governance under covenant human stewardship — was a work that Adam was commissioned to complete. The *subdue* command implies an earth that was not yet fully ordered, a world in process of recovery from the catastrophe that had emptied it.

The dominion mandate — the charge to have dominion over fish, fowl, and every living creature — sits within this same framework. Dominion is not maintained over a world that has always been perfectly ordered; it is established over a world that requires the imposition of order. Adam’s commission was not ceremonial. It was the active, ongoing work of restoring to a recovering world the fullness of civilization, habitation, and covenant order that the primordial judgment had destroyed.



XI. Convergence: The Full Weight of the Argument

We began this chapter with a prefix. We have ended with a mandate. Between them lies a sustained examination of the Hebrew word *male’*, its grammatical form in Genesis 1:28, its exact parallel in Genesis 9:1, the ancient Aramaic interpretive tradition of the Targums, the Rabbinic memory of prior creation epochs in *Bereshit Rabbah*, and the semantic range of the word across the Old Testament.

The convergence of this evidence, read alongside the evidence of Chapter One, is as follows:

The earth that God created in Genesis 1:1 was created to be inhabited. It was made full. It became *tohu va'bohu* — formless and void — as the result of a primordial judgment, in a catastrophe that emptied a world that had been full. The six days of Genesis 1:3–31 are the days of restoration, in which God speaks new order into the ruins of the old. And Adam, placed in the garden of this restored world, is charged with the work of completing the restoration: be fruitful, multiply, and replenish.

Replenish. Fill again. Restore to the fullness it once had and lost.

This is what Noah was charged to do after the Flood. This is what the word has always meant. This is what the structural parallel between Adam and Noah demands. This is what the Isaiah declaration requires. This is what the narrative evidence of Genesis 4 — the wife in Nod, the city of Enoch, the fear of the multitude — confirms.

Adam was not the first human being to walk upon this earth. He was the first to receive this charge, to bear this commission, to stand at the head of this covenant line. He was the beginning of the story of redemption. He was not the beginning of the story of the earth.

The earth had a story before Adam. It had inhabitants before Adam. It had a civilization before Adam, and that civilization was judged and emptied before Adam was formed from its dust. The command given to Adam at his creation — replenish the earth — is the divine acknowledgement of all of this, encoded in a single word that the most careful English translators of the Bible rendered, with more precision than they perhaps knew, as a word of restoration.

Replenish. Fill again. Come and restore what has been lost.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

- [1] On the Piel stem of *male'* and its semantic range: Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs, *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament* (Hendrickson, 1996), pp. 570–571. See also Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner, *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 2 (Brill, 1995), pp. 584–586 (entry for *m-l-'*).
- [2] On the Onkelos Targum's rendering of Genesis 1:28: Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onkelos to Genesis*, Aramaic Bible vol. 6 (Liturgical Press, 1988), p. 44. For Targum Pseudo-Jonathan and its expansions of Genesis 4: Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, Aramaic Bible vol. 1B (Liturgical Press, 1992), pp. 30–33.
- [3] On Bereshit Rabbah 3:7 and the tradition of prior worlds: H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, vol. 1 (Soncino Press, 1939), pp. 21–22. The tradition of prior worlds is also discussed in depth by the Kabbalistic sources, especially the Zohar (Bereshit 24b) and its doctrine of Shemittot; see Daniel Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, vol. 1 (Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 152–154.
- [4] On the Hebrew word *kabash* and the subdued command: G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren, eds., *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*, vol. 7 (Eerdmans, 1995), pp. 49–52 (entry for *k-b-sh*). The military and subjugation connotations of *kabash* are discussed in their bearing on the creation mandate by Christopher J. H. Wright, *Old Testament Ethics for the People of God* (IVP Academic, 2004), pp. 102–106.
- [5] On the history of the English word 'replenish' and its meaning in the 1611 context: *Oxford English Dictionary*, 3rd ed. (Oxford University Press, 2010), entry for 'replenish, v.' The earliest recorded use in English is from c. 1374 (Chaucer); the primary definition 'to fill again' is consistent across all editions from the first (1884) to the present. The case that modern translations lose a theologically significant nuance by

substituting ‘fill’ is developed in Arthur C. Custance, *Without Form and Void* (Doorway Papers, 1970), pp. 15–24.

- [6] On the Adam-Noah typological parallel and its bearing on the replenishment command: Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 1 (Word Books, 1987), pp. 192–193. Wenham notes the structural parallel between the blessing of Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 9:1 but interprets it differently from the position argued in this chapter.



— *End of Chapter Two* —

CHAPTER THREE

The Testimony of Scripture and the Ancient World

Unveiling the Pre-Adamic Civilization Through Biblical Evidence and Corroborating Texts



Primary Sources: *Genesis 1–4 · Isaiah 45:18 · Ezekiel 28 · Book of Jubilees · Sumerian King List*



*“Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” — **Ezekiel 28:13–15***

*“For on the first day He created the heavens which are above and the earth and the waters and all the spirits which serve before him: the angels of the presence, and the angels of sanctification, and the angels of the spirit of fire and the angels of the spirit of the winds.” — **Book of Jubilees 2:2***

*“After the kingship descended from heaven, the kingship was in Eridu. In Eridu, Alulim became king; he ruled for 28,800 years. Alaljar ruled for 36,000 years. Two kings; they ruled for 64,800 years.” — **Sumerian King List (Weld-Blundell Prism)***

I. The Method of Convergent Testimony

The two preceding chapters have worked from the inside out: from the Hebrew of Genesis 1:2 to the surrounding biblical canon, establishing on linguistic and contextual grounds that the earth described in the opening verses of the Bible was not an uncreated void but the aftermath of a primordial judgment. The evidence has been internal to Scripture, rigorously textual, and deliberately constrained to what the biblical text itself demands.

This chapter works from a different angle. It gathers testimony — from Scripture, from the ancient books preserved alongside the biblical canon in the Second Temple period, and from the written records of the civilizations surrounding ancient Israel — and asks what happens when that testimony is laid alongside the biblical argument already established. Does it cohere? Does it contradict? Does it illuminate what the biblical text leaves in shadow?

The method is that of convergent testimony. No single source in this chapter is asked to carry more weight than it can bear. The Sumerian King List is not Scripture; the Book of Jubilees is not canon; Ezekiel’s oracle against the King of Tyre is interpreted here in a way that not every commentator will endorse. But when multiple ancient sources, arising from different cultures, different languages, different centuries, and different theological commitments, independently preserve the memory of a world that existed before the world we know — a world of great antiquity, inhabited and civilized, destroyed before the present order began — that convergence becomes its own kind of evidence.

It is the convergence of light from many angles falling on the same object. Each beam may be partial; together they illuminate something real.



II. Ezekiel 28: The Anointed Cherub and the Garden Before the Garden

The Oracle Against the King of Tyre

The twenty-eighth chapter of Ezekiel is one of the most theologically complex and disputed passages in the entire prophetic literature. On its surface, it is an oracle of judgment against the King of Tyre, the powerful Phoenician city-state whose commercial empire dominated the ancient Near East in Ezekiel’s day. But as the oracle progresses, it reaches beyond any earthly monarch into territory that no historical king of Tyre could occupy. The figure described in verses 12 through 17 is not a human being who has grown proud of his wealth and power. He is a celestial being of extraordinary nature — one whose history reaches back to a world that preceded Adam’s.

This is not an eccentric reading. It is the interpretation of the majority of the Church Fathers, of the Protestant Reformers, and of the vast consensus of pre-modern Christian scholarship. The figure of Ezekiel 28:12–17 was universally understood by the ancient and medieval Church to be Lucifer — the being whose rebellion precipitated the primordial catastrophe, who appears in Isaiah 14 as the ‘son of the morning’ cast from heaven, and who stands in the New Testament as the adversary of the human race. Only in the modern period has this interpretation been seriously challenged, and the challenges, while textually interesting, have not displaced it from its dominant position in the history of interpretation.

“Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering, the sardius, topaz, and the diamond, the beryl, the onyx, and the jasper, the sapphire, the emerald, and the carbuncle, and gold: the workmanship of thy tabrets and of thy pipes was prepared in thee in the day that thou wast created. Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.” — Ezekiel 28:12–17

What This Passage Tells Us About the Pre-Adamic World

The passage is dense with cosmological information that repays careful reading. Let us attend to its specific claims.

First: this being ‘was in Eden, the garden of God.’ The Eden mentioned here is not necessarily the specific garden of Genesis 2 — the garden in which Adam was placed. The Hebrew word for garden (gan) and the name Eden both appear, but the context makes clear that Ezekiel is describing a primordial sacred space, the original dwelling of this being before his fall. This Eden precedes Adam’s Eden. It is the garden of the pre-Adamic age, the sacred precinct within the first creation over which this being presided.

Second: he is described as ‘the anointed cherub that covereth,’ set by God upon the holy mountain. The cherubim in biblical theology are the guardians of sacred space — they cover the mercy seat in the Holy of Holies, they guard the entrance to Eden after the Fall, they appear in Ezekiel’s own vision of the divine chariot-throne. This being was the covering cherub of the first creation — the guardian and steward of the primordial sacred order, set in place by God as the presiding celestial authority over the first world.

Third: he was ‘perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee.’ This is the pivot. This being was created perfect. He held a position of extraordinary honor and authority. And then — iniquity was found in him. The pride described in Isaiah 14, the five ‘I will’ declarations, the attempt to exalt his throne above the stars of God: this is the iniquity. And the world over which he held dominion — the inhabited, civilized world of the pre-Adamic age — was the world that fell with him.

The covering cherub’s fall did not merely affect him. It affected the world entrusted to his stewardship. The tohu va’bohu of Genesis 1:2 is the wreckage of a world whose guardian chose rebellion over service.

The Holy Mountain and the Stones of Fire

Two details in Ezekiel’s description deserve particular attention for what they imply about the pre-Adamic world’s nature and sophistication.

The being ‘walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire.’ The ‘stones of fire’ (Hebrew:

אֲבִנֵי-אֵשׁ — *even-esh*) describe a realm of divine brilliance, a celestial landscape of luminous intensity that was the native environment of this being. This is the holy mountain of God — not an earthly geography but a cosmic one, the throne-precinct of the Almighty within which the covering cherub moved in his original glory.

The description of his adornment is equally remarkable: every precious stone, the workmanship of his tabrets and pipes, the splendor of his created form. The detail here is not incidental ornamentation. It is describing a being of extraordinary creative sophistication, one whose very substance was music and light, whose presence was the aesthetic culmination of God’s creative work up to that point. The world over which such a being presided was not a primitive world. It was a world of beauty, of order, of a sophistication that matched its presiding guardian.

When this being fell, when iniquity was found in him and he was cast from the holy mountain, the world of his stewardship fell with him. Its beauty was shattered. Its order dissolved. Its civilization was emptied into the tohu va’bohu that Genesis 1:2 describes — the ruins beneath

the garden, the desolation over which the Spirit of God would hover before speaking the new creation into existence.



III. Genesis 4: The World Adam Found

Cain Goes to the Land of Nod

We have already touched upon Genesis 4 in earlier chapters — the wife in the land of Nod, the city of Enoch, the fear of the multitude — but those treatments were contextual. Here we must examine the passage with the sustained attention its narrative complexity deserves, because Genesis 4 is not merely evidence for the pre-Adamic hypothesis. It is, on the pre-Adamic reading, one of the most revealing passages in the entire Genesis narrative about the nature of the world Adam was placed in and the relationship between the Adamic covenant line and the pre-Adamic remnant.

“And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him. And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.” — Genesis 4:13–17

This passage contains four distinct elements that, taken together, constitute compelling evidence for a pre-Adamic population coexisting with the Adamic line:

Element One: The Fear of Cain

Cain’s fear is not the fear of a man who knows that two other people exist in the world — his parents, Adam and Eve. It is the fear of a man who anticipates execution by a crowd. The phrase ‘every one that findeth me shall slay me’ in the Hebrew carries no implication of a single individual or a small family. The construction

כָּל-מֹצְאֵי (kol-motze’i) means literally ‘every one finding me,’ ‘all who encounter me’ — a plural, collective expression that presupposes a significant human population capable of encountering Cain on his travels. Cain is not afraid of running into his parents on the road. He is afraid of a world full of people who will recognize him as a murderer and administer summary justice.

The LORD’s response confirms the reality of the threat: He places a protective mark on Cain and warns that ‘whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold.’ This is not a warning delivered into a vacuum. It is a deterrent issued against a real population. Divine protection is meaningless in a world where no one exists to threaten. The mark of Cain presupposes the existence of a multitude of potential avengers — and the LORD’s warning is addressed, implicitly, to all of them.

Element Two: The Land of Nod

Cain ‘went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.’ The land of Nod is a named geographical location. It is east of Eden. It has a name. In the ancient biblical world, named geographical locations are inhabited locations. A wilderness or empty desert is described as such; a named land is a land with people. Nod — from the Hebrew root meaning ‘wandering’ — is the land of those who wander, a name that already implies a resident population of displaced or nomadic people.

The text does not present the land of Nod as something Cain created or named. He ‘went to’ it. He ‘dwelt in’ it. It was already there, already identified, already distinguished from the land of Adam’s dwelling. The geographical specificity — ‘on the east of Eden’ — locates it precisely within a known landscape, as though the reader is expected to understand what kind of place it is.

Element Three: The Wife of Cain

The text introduces Cain’s wife without explanation, without genealogy, without any attempt to derive her from Adam and Eve. She is simply there: ‘Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch.’ The absence of any explanatory note is itself significant. In a narrative that is otherwise meticulous about genealogy — that traces the line of Seth generation by generation, that names the years of each patriarch’s life, that follows the bloodline of the covenant with great care — the introduction of Cain’s wife without any account of her origin is a conspicuous silence.

The most common harmonizing explanation — that Cain married a sister not mentioned in the Genesis account — creates more problems than it solves. No sister is mentioned because, at this point in the narrative, no children of Adam and Eve other than Cain and Abel have been named. The text introduces Seth only after Cain’s departure, specifically as a replacement for the slain Abel. If Adam and Eve had daughters old enough to be Cain’s wife at this point in the narrative, the omission of any mention of them is inexplicable in a document that otherwise maintains genealogical precision.

The pre-Adamic reading requires no such harmonizing contortion. Cain’s wife was already in the land of Nod. She was a woman of the pre-Adamic remnant — one of the people whose presence made Cain’s fear rational, whose existence explains the named geography of Nod, whose descendants would populate the city that Cain built and named for his son.

Element Four: The City of Enoch

Cain ‘builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.’ The Hebrew word for city here is עִיר (*ir*), the standard biblical term for an urban settlement of significant size and organization — the same word used for the cities of Canaan, for Jerusalem, for the cities of the plain. A city requires, at minimum, a substantial and settled population, organized labor, architectural knowledge, and governance. It cannot be built by one man and his wife.

If Cain and his wife were the only inhabitants of the land of Nod, the statement that he ‘builded a city’ is not merely impractical — it is incoherent. Cities are social structures. They presuppose communities. The founding of a city named after Cain’s son makes sense only if there was a population in Nod to inhabit it — a population that preceded Cain’s arrival and that recognized his authority or adopted his leadership.

The city of Enoch is the built monument of the coexistence of the Adamic and pre-Adamic lines. Cain, of the Adamic covenant family, arrives in a land already peopled, takes a wife from its inhabitants, and founds a city — the first city in the Genesis narrative — over a population whose origin the text does not explain because its origin was already understood. These were the people who survived the primordial judgment, the remnant of the pre-Adamic world that had weathered the catastrophe of the *tohu va'bohu* and endured into the age of Adam's line.



IV. The Book of Jubilees: The Little Genesis and the Cosmic Ages

The Book of Jubilees · c. 160–150 BCE · Found in fifteen manuscripts at Qumran · Canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Jubilees presents itself as a divine revelation given to Moses on Mount Sinai, retelling Genesis and early Exodus in terms of Jubilees (49-year periods). Fifteen fragmentary manuscripts were discovered among the Dead Sea Scrolls, making it one of the most widely attested non-canonical texts at Qumran. It was clearly regarded as authoritative by the Qumran community and remains canonical Scripture in the Ethiopian Orthodox and Eritrean traditions. The translation used throughout this chapter is James C. VanderKam's Hermeneia Commentary Series edition (2018), which incorporates Qumran fragments alongside the complete Ethiopic text.

The Book of Jubilees opens with a scene that is itself cosmologically significant: God summoning Moses up the mountain and beginning to reveal not merely the law but the entire history of the cosmos from its foundations. The very premise of Jubilees — that Moses needs to be told what happened 'in the beginning' because the full history of creation is not accessible to ordinary knowledge — implies that the visible creation narrative of Genesis does not tell the whole story.

Jubilees 2:2 provides one of the most detailed accounts in ancient literature of the angelic creation, describing the orders of angels created on the first day: the angels of the presence, the angels of sanctification, the angels of fire, the angels of wind, the angels of clouds, darkness, snow, hail, frost, thunder, and lightning. The specificity of this enumeration is remarkable: Jubilees is describing a cosmological infrastructure of great complexity that was already in place *before* the creation of the physical world began. A world thus elaborately administered has a history; it is not a world in its first moment of existence.

The Shemittot Doctrine and the Prior Ages

Jubilees' framework of cosmic time — the Jubilee periods of 49 years, each marking a unit of sacred history — rests on a broader cosmological understanding that the Jewish mystical tradition would later elaborate as the doctrine of Shemittot: cosmic cycles of creation, each governed by a different divine attribute, each lasting thousands of years, each ending in dissolution before a new cycle began.

While Jubilees itself does not use the term Shemittot — that is a later Kabbalistic elaboration — its cosmological framework is fully compatible with and arguably foundational to the later

doctrine. The division of all time into sacred periods, the detailed accounting of angelic orders and their histories, the treatment of creation as a structured temporal process rather than a single act: all of this implies a cosmos with a history longer and more complex than the surface reading of Genesis suggests.

Jubilees 3:28 contains a passage that is, for the pre-Adamic argument, one of the most striking in all the ancient literature: ‘And on that day on which Adam went forth from the Garden of Eden, he offered as a sweet savour an offering: frankincense, galbanum, stacte, and spices in the morning with the rising of the sun from the day when he covered his shame.’ The text then adds: ‘And the mouths of all the beasts and cattle and birds and whatever walks or moves was stopped from speaking, *because all of them used to speak with one another with one lip and one tongue.*’

Before the Fall, all living creatures spoke a common language. This astonishing claim implies a pre-Adamic and pre-Fall order of creation in which the categories of animal and human were not yet rigidly separated in the way they became after the Fall — a world of greater communicative and perhaps cognitive sophistication than the post-Fall world Adam’s descendants would inhabit. The cessation of animal speech is treated as a consequence of the Fall, which means that the capacity for speech — understood as something shared across the created order — belongs to a prior and higher order. This prior order is, in the framework of Jubilees, the world of the pre-Adamic creation.



V. The Sumerian King List: The Memory of Ages Before the Flood

The Sumerian King List (Weld-Blundell Prism) · *c. 2100–1800 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older · Multiple copies; most complete: Weld-Blundell Prism (Ashmolean Museum, Oxford)*

The Sumerian King List records the rulers of Sumer from the descent of kingship from heaven through the post-Flood period. Antediluvian kings are assigned reigns of extraordinary length — ranging from 18,600 to 43,200 years — before a flood separates the pre- from post-Flood dynasties. The document presupposes an inhabited, organized, administratively sophisticated civilization of immense antiquity. The standard critical edition is Thorkild Jacobsen’s *The Sumerian King List* (University of Chicago Oriental Institute, 1939). More recent analysis appears in Piotr Michalowski’s studies of Sumerian historiography.

The Sumerian King List is one of the oldest written documents in the world. It begins with a claim that situates it immediately within the pre-Adamic framework: ‘After the kingship descended from heaven, the kingship was in Eridu.’ Kingship descended from heaven. Civilization did not develop spontaneously from human initiative; it was transmitted from a divine source to a waiting world. The world was already there, already capable of receiving kingship, when the divine institution arrived.

The antediluvian portion of the King List records eight kings — in some versions, ten — ruling over five cities: Eridu, Bad-tibira, Larak, Sippar, and Shuruppak. These kings’ reigns are given in multiples of the sar (3,600 years), and they range from 18,600 years to 43,200 years. Modern

scholarship has debated the meaning of these extraordinary figures: are they historical memory in symbolic form? Astronomical calculations encoded as royal chronology? A deliberate literary device to establish antiquity? Whatever the explanation, the document's insistence on a pre-Flood civilization of immense duration and administrative complexity is unambiguous.

The Flood as the Dividing Line

At a certain point in the Sumerian King List, a flood intervenes: 'Then the Flood swept over the earth. After the Flood had swept over the earth and when kingship was lowered again from heaven, the kingship was in Kish.' The flood is treated not as a mythological event but as a historical watershed — the dividing line between an ancient and a recent history, between the immensely long antediluvian ages and the shorter, more familiar dynasties of the post-Flood world.

The structural parallel with the biblical narrative is immediate and unmistakable. In both the Sumerian and the biblical traditions: a world of great antiquity existed before a catastrophic flood; the flood was a dividing line between an old order and a new one; the world after the flood was a re-beginning, a restoration of civilization that had been destroyed. The parallel is not between Noah and Utnapishtim — though that parallel also exists — but between the entire pre-Flood cosmological framework of the two traditions: a world of immense antiquity, a catastrophic judgment, and a new beginning.

The pre-Adamic reading of Genesis places an additional catastrophe before the Flood: the primordial judgment of the *tohu va'bohu*, the destruction of the first creation and the fall of Lucifer. But the structural pattern — old world, judgment, new beginning — is identical. The Sumerian King List remembers a world of extraordinary antiquity before the Flood. The pre-Adamic reading of Genesis remembers a world of extraordinary antiquity before Adam. These are not the same world, but they are the products of the same kind of memory: a cultural insistence that the present world is not the first world, that civilization did not begin with us, that there were ages before the ages we know.

Eridu: The First City and the Garden of the Gods

The first city in the Sumerian King List is Eridu — and Eridu has a special place in Mesopotamian cosmology. In the Sumerian tradition, Eridu was the location of the first temple, the dwelling of Enki the god of wisdom and fresh water, and the site of the sacred tree and the garden of the gods. The Eridu Genesis, a Sumerian flood narrative older than the better-known Atrahasis Epic, describes Eridu as the location of the original divine-human encounter, the place where the gods established civilization and where humanity first flourished under divine guidance.

The correspondence between Eridu-as-first-sacred-site and Eden-as-first-sacred-garden is one that scholars have noted for more than a century. Both are associated with water — Eden has its four rivers; Eridu is associated with the *abzu*, the subterranean freshwater ocean. Both are associated with divine-human encounter in a garden setting. Both are located at the beginning of recorded time. Whether or not one concludes that Eridu and Eden are the same location, the parallel traditions preserve the same cultural memory: at the very beginning of the world, there was a sacred garden, a divine-human dwelling, a place of primordial encounter — and before that garden, there was a world of immense age that preceded it.



VI. *The Atrahasis Epic: Multiple Humanities Before the Flood*

The Atrahasis Epic · *c. 1700 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older · Babylonian · Most complete text: British Museum (BM 78941)*

The Atrahasis Epic is one of the oldest complete narrative texts in the world, describing the creation of humanity, subsequent crises of divine-human relations (including overpopulation, disease, and drought), and a catastrophic flood. Its structural parallel with Genesis 1–9 is undeniable and has been extensively studied. The critical edition and translation used is W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford University Press, 1969), supplemented by Benjamin Foster, *Before the Muses: An Anthology of Akkadian Literature* (CDL Press, 3rd ed., 2005).

The Atrahasis Epic opens not with the creation of the world but with a prior state: the gods are working, burdened with the labor of maintaining the cosmic order. The lesser gods (Igigi) rebel against the greater gods (Anunnaku) and refuse to work. In response, the great mother goddess Mami creates humanity from clay mixed with divine blood — a new race designed to take over the labor of the rebellious lesser gods. But after a period of time, humanity multiplies to such an extent that the noise disturbs the gods, and Enlil sends a series of plagues, famines, and ultimately a flood to reduce the human population.

The theological framework of the Atrahasis Epic is, of course, entirely different from that of Genesis. The gods are not the sovereign, personal God of the Bible; their motivations are capricious; humanity's creation is a utilitarian act rather than an act of love and covenant-making. But the structural elements that parallel the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis are striking: a rebellion in the divine realm before humanity appears; the creation of humanity as a response to cosmic disorder; successive crises and reductions of the human population; and ultimately a flood that marks the dividing line between the ancient world and the present one.

The Rebellion of the Igigi and the Pre-Adamic Catastrophe

The rebellion of the lesser Igigi gods in the Atrahasis Epic bears structural comparison to the fall of Lucifer in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28. In both cases, a rebellion in the divine realm precipitates a cosmic crisis. In the Atrahasis tradition, the rebellion of the Igigi is followed by the creation of a new kind of being (humanity) to restore order. In the biblical tradition, the fall of Lucifer is followed by the restoration of the earth through the six days of Genesis 1 and the creation of Adam.

Neither the Atrahasis nor the biblical author borrowed from the other. Both preserve, in different cultural vessels, the memory of the same kind of event: a cosmic rebellion that shattered an existing order and required the creation or recreation of a new one. The Mesopotamian tradition has Sumerianized and polytheized this memory; the biblical tradition has preserved it in its theological purity. But the underlying structure — primordial rebellion, cosmic catastrophe, new creation — is the same.

This is the testimony of cultural memory working across a divide of language, religion, and ideology: the same shape of event, preserved because the event was real enough to leave an indelible impression on the civilizations closest to its occurrence. Abraham came from Ur of the Chaldeans. His people carried their tradition of the primordial catastrophe westward into

Canaan and eventually into the written Scripture. Their neighbors carried theirs eastward into the Mesopotamian literature. The memory is different in the telling. It is the same in its bones.



VII. The Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 Distinction: Two Creations, One Plan

Among the most underexamined pieces of evidence for the pre-Adamic world is one that lies not in any extra-biblical source but in the structure of the Genesis narrative itself. The first two chapters of Genesis present, as any careful reader will notice, two accounts of the creation of humanity. They differ in vocabulary, in emphasis, in the order of events, and — most significantly for our purposes — in what kind of human being is being created.

“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. So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” — Genesis 1:26–27

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” — Genesis 2:7

The differences between these two accounts are not superficial. In Genesis 1:26–27, the creation is general and categorical: God creates ‘man’ (אָדָם, adam — used here generically, as a category), male and female simultaneously, in the image of God, with no specific geographical location given and no individual named. In Genesis 2:7, the creation is singular, specific, intimate, and different in kind: the LORD God ‘forms’ (יָצַר, yatsar — the word of a craftsman shaping clay) a particular man from the dust of a particular ground, breathes His own life into this specific being, places him in a specific garden, and later names him Adam.

The Two Hebrew Verbs: Bara and Yatsar

The distinction between the two verbs used in these passages is theologically significant and consistently maintained throughout the Hebrew Bible.

בָּרָא (*bara*) — to create — used in Genesis 1:27 for the general creation of humanity; implies creation of a new category or kind

יָצַר (*yatsar*) — to form, to fashion, to shape — used in Genesis 2:7 for Adam’s formation; the word of a craftsman working with material

Bara’ is the verb of original creation — the bringing into existence of something genuinely new. It is used in Genesis 1:1 for the creation of the heaven and the earth, and in Genesis 1:21 for the creation of the great sea creatures. When it appears in Genesis 1:27 for the creation of humanity, it marks the introduction of a new category of being into the created order: the image-bearer, the creature made in the divine likeness.

Yatsar, by contrast, is the verb of formation from existing material — the careful shaping of something from substance that already exists. The potter yatsar’s the clay. God yatsar’s Adam from the dust of the ground. This is not the creation of a new category; it is the specific formation of a particular individual from already-existing material. The intimate detail of the

breath of life — ‘breathed into his nostrils’ — reinforces the singularity of this act. This is not a categorical event; it is a personal election.

The theological implication is profound. Genesis 1:26–27 describes the introduction of the image-bearer as a category — the general creation of humanity. Genesis 2:7 describes the specific formation of Adam as a covenant individual — the particular man called out from the category to be the head of the redemptive line. These are not two versions of the same event. They are two different events in the same divine plan: first the category, then the specific election within the category.

The pre-Adamic reading insists that the ‘man’ created in Genesis 1:26–27 is the broader category of image-bearing humanity, of which the pre-Adamic race was the earlier expression and Adam’s line is the covenant expression. Adam is not the first member of the category; he is the first member of the covenant — the specific individual elected to bear the promise, to receive the breath of divine life in a fresh and unique intimacy, to be the ancestor of the One through whom all things would be restored.



VIII. The Sons of God: Genesis 6 and the Mingling of the Lines

The sixth chapter of Genesis introduces what is, on the pre-Adamic reading, the most consequential encounter in the book between the Adamic covenant line and the pre-Adamic remnant. It is also, not coincidentally, the most debated passage in the early chapters of Genesis.

“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, that the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” — Genesis 6:1–4

The ‘sons of God’ (Hebrew:

בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים — *bene ha’elohim*) of Genesis 6 have been interpreted in three primary ways by the tradition: as fallen angels or divine beings (the majority view of the Second Temple period, defended by 1 Enoch and Jude); as the line of Seth intermarrying with the line of Cain; and, on the pre-Adamic reading, as the Adamic covenant line intermarrying with the pre-Adamic remnant population.

All three interpretations share a common recognition: a distinction is being drawn in Genesis 6:1–4 between two groups of people. The ‘sons of God’ are one category; the ‘daughters of men’ are another. The narrative assumes that these two categories are distinct and that their union produces a hybrid that concerns God sufficiently to precipitate the Flood. Whatever the precise identification of the groups, the passage requires two distinct lines of humanity coexisting on the earth in the pre-Flood period.

On the pre-Adamic reading, this is precisely what we would expect. The Adamic covenant line — the sons of God, in the sense of those who bear the covenant name and the breath of divine

life — intermarries with the daughters of the pre-Adamic remnant — the daughters of men, in the sense of those who are fully human but not of the covenant line. The corruption that follows is the corruption of the covenant line through this intermingling: the breath of divine life, the covenant calling, the sacred purposes of the Adamic election, diluted and ultimately lost in a general population that had no covenant framework to maintain them.

Genesis 6 is not the beginning of the story of two lines. It is the climax. The two populations — Adamic and pre-Adamic — have been coexisting since Cain found his wife in Nod. Genesis 6 is where that coexistence reaches its breaking point.



IX. Isaac de La Peyrère and the Ancient Tradition

The Calvinist theologian Isaac de La Peyrère published his *Prae-Adamitae* in 1655, arguing from many of the same biblical passages examined in this and the preceding chapters that human beings existed before Adam. His work caused an immediate and violent reaction: it was burned in Paris, he was arrested in Brussels, and he was compelled to recant before Pope Alexander VII. But before examining why his work was so threatening, it is worth understanding the argument he actually made.

De La Peyrère's central exegetical observation was the distinction between Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7 — the same distinction examined in Section VII of this chapter. He argued that God created the Gentiles on the sixth day of Genesis 1 and did not create Adam (the father of the Jewish people and the Adamic covenant line) until after the seventh day of rest. The pre-Adamites of Genesis 1 were the nations; Adam was the progenitor of the elect people through whom the Messiah would come. Paul's statement that 'death reigned from Adam to Moses' (Romans 5:14) referred specifically to the Adamic covenant line, not to humanity in general.

De La Peyrère's conclusions were, in some respects, more extreme than the position argued in this book, and his racially charged application of the pre-Adamic hypothesis to the question of Jewish and Gentile origins is one that no responsible modern interpreter would follow. But his textual observations were, and remain, genuinely compelling. The distinction between the two creation accounts is real. The question it raises — who was created in Genesis 1 and who in Genesis 2 — is one that the text itself raises and that no honest interpreter can dismiss.

The tradition he drew upon was older than he was. Origen of Alexandria had spoken of prior worlds. The Zohar preserved the Shemittot doctrine. Philo had distinguished between two orders of creation. The pre-Adamic question is not the invention of a seventeenth-century controversialist. It is the resurface of an ancient theological current that has never entirely disappeared from the Church's engagement with the opening chapters of Genesis.



X. Convergence: What the Ancient Record Reveals

We have now surveyed a remarkable range of ancient testimony: Ezekiel's portrait of the covering cherub in his primordial glory; Genesis 4's evidence of a pre-existing population in the land of Nod; the Book of Jubilees' account of the cosmic infrastructure that preceded Adam's

creation; the Sumerian King List's memory of antediluvian civilization; the Atrahasis Epic's account of a pre-human rebellion and a new creation in response; and the Genesis 1–2 distinction between the general creation of humanity and the specific formation of Adam.

The convergence of these sources does not prove the pre-Adamic world in the mathematical sense in which a theorem is proved. Ancient records are fragmentary; cultural memories are imperfect; theological frameworks shape what is preserved and what is lost. But convergence of independent testimonies pointing toward the same conclusion is, in historical scholarship, the closest thing to proof that the discipline of history allows.

What these sources converge on is this: before the world of Adam, there was a world. It was inhabited. It was administered by a celestial being of extraordinary power and beauty. It was sophisticated — sufficiently so to leave its memory in the cultural records of every civilization that emerged in the post-Flood world. It was destroyed by a judgment that reduced it to the *tohu va'bohu* of Genesis 1:2. And its remnant — the people who survived that judgment, who populated the land of Nod, who built Cain's city, who mingled with the sons of God in Genesis 6 — persisted into the age of Adam and beyond.

This is not a marginal interpretation. It is the reading that the full evidence demands: biblical, extra-canonical, and archaeological. The ruins beneath the garden are real. The testimony of the ancient world, accumulated over millennia in texts from Ur to Alexandria, from Qumran to Addis Ababa, points toward the same buried truth.

A world fell before the Garden was planted. Its fall is why the Garden was necessary. And its memory — encoded in two Hebrew words, preserved in the oldest written records of human civilization, carried in the theological tradition of the Church and the Synagogue from the beginning — is what this book is recovering.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

- [1] On Ezekiel 28 and its interpretation as referring to Lucifer: the majority patristic view is represented by Origen (*De Principiis* I.5.4), Tertullian (*Against Marcion* II.10), and Gregory the Great (*Moralia in Job* XXXII.23). For the modern critical debate: Daniel I. Block, *The Book of Ezekiel: Chapters 25–48* (Eerdmans, 1998), pp. 109–130, represents the view that the oracle refers solely to the historical king of Tyre. The counter-argument is made in John B. Taylor, *Ezekiel* (IVP, 1969), pp. 196–199.
- [2] On the Book of Jubilees and its cosmological framework: James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2018), vol. 1, pp. 1–18 (introduction and dating); vol. 2, pp. 100–110 (commentary on Jubilees 3:28 and the cessation of animal speech). On the Shemittot doctrine and its relationship to Jubilees: Gershom Scholem, *Major Trends in Jewish Mysticism* (Schocken Books, 1954), pp. 79–86.
- [3] On the Sumerian King List: Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List* (Oriental Institute of the University of Chicago, 1939). More recent analysis: Marc Van De Mieroop, *A History of the Ancient Near East, ca. 3000–323 BC*, 3rd ed. (Wiley-Blackwell, 2015), pp. 28–32. On the Eridu-Eden parallel: David Rohl, *Legend: The Genesis of Civilisation* (Century, 1998), pp. 41–67.
- [4] On the Atrahasis Epic and its bearing on Genesis: W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford University Press, 1969). For the comparison of the Igigi rebellion with the biblical fall of Lucifer: John H. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament*, 2nd ed. (Baker Academic, 2018), pp. 187–196.

- [5] On the distinction between bara' and yatsar in Genesis 1–2: Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 156–160. For the pre-Adamic application of this distinction: Isaac de La Peyrère, *Prae-Adamitae* (Amsterdam, 1655), Book I, Chapters 4–6. English translation: *Men Before Adam* (London, 1656), pp. 24–47.
- [6] On Genesis 6:1–4 and the identification of the bene ha'elohim: the angelic interpretation is defended in George Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 165–180; Michael Heiser, *The Unseen Realm* (Lexham Press, 2015), pp. 97–116. The Sethite interpretation: John Calvin, *Genesis* (Geneva, 1554), commentary on Genesis 6:2. The pre-Adamic covenant-line interpretation draws on elements of both traditions.



— End of Chapter Three —

CHAPTER FOUR

The Mystery of Cain: Wives, Cities, and an Unnamed People

Who Were the Inhabitants of Nod, and What Does Their Existence Tell Us About the World Before Adam?



Primary Sources: *Genesis 4:13–17* · Midrash Rabbah · Josephus (*Antiquities of the Jews*) · Book of Jasher · Targum Pseudo-Jonathan



“And Cain went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden. And Cain knew his wife; and she conceived, and bare Enoch: and he builded a city, and called the name of the city, after the name of his son, Enoch.” —
Genesis 4:16–17

“And Cain knew his wife Themech, and she conceived and bare Enoch. And he built a city, and he called the name of the city as the name of his son, Enoch.” —
Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis 4:17

“Now when Cain had traveled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode.” —
Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews I.2.1

I. The Question the Text Refuses to Answer

There is a peculiar quality to the fourth chapter of Genesis that distinguishes it from almost every other chapter in the book. Genesis is, in general, a document of relentless explanation. It tells us who begat whom, how old they were when their first son was born, how many years they

lived after, and the total sum of their years. It traces the lines of descent with a precision that sometimes feels more like a legal register than a narrative. Genealogy in Genesis is not a literary convenience; it is a theological act — the preservation of the sacred line through which the promise moves.

Against this backdrop of genealogical rigor, the fourth chapter of Genesis introduces a series of people and places without explanation that is, by the standards of the surrounding text, almost shocking. Where did Cain’s wife come from? Who are the people Cain feared? What was the land of Nod before Cain arrived? Who built the city of Enoch if Cain and his wife were its only possible inhabitants? These questions are not peripheral puzzles on the margin of the narrative. They are questions the text itself raises and then declines to answer — not because the answers are unimportant, but because, for the original audience, the answers were already known.

The original audience of Genesis lived in a world that remembered, however imperfectly, the world before Adam. The land of Nod did not require explanation because everyone knew what it was and who lived there. Cain’s wife did not require a genealogy because her origin was not a mystery to the people who first heard this text. The silence of the narrative on these points is not an omission. It is the silence of a text that assumes a context its modern readers have lost.

This chapter is an attempt to recover that context — from the biblical text itself, from the ancient Jewish interpreters who were closest to it, from Josephus who wrote for an audience that still carried these traditions, and from the Book of Jasher and the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, which preserve details that the canonical text leaves in the shadows. What we will find is a consistent and coherent picture: the world Cain entered when he left Eden was not an empty wilderness. It was an inhabited world whose people had been there long before Adam’s family arrived.



II. The Text in Full: A Close Reading of Genesis 4:1–24

Before we turn to the ancient interpreters, we must attend carefully to what the biblical text actually says — and equally to what it does not say. A close reading of Genesis 4:1–24 reveals a narrative with more internal complexity than its surface simplicity suggests.

“And Adam knew Eve his wife; and she conceived, and bare Cain, and said, I have gotten a man from the LORD. And she again bare his brother Abel. And Abel was a keeper of sheep, but Cain was a tiller of the ground.” — Genesis 4:1–2

The narrative opens with two births: Cain and Abel. The text makes no mention of any other children of Adam and Eve at this point. The world of Genesis 4:1–2, as it is presented to the reader, contains exactly four people: Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel. The absence of any other named persons is not incidental; it is the condition the reader is expected to carry forward as the narrative develops.

“And in process of time it came to pass, that Cain brought of the fruit of the ground an offering unto the LORD. And Abel, he also brought of the firstlings of his flock and of the fat thereof. And the LORD had respect unto Abel and to his offering: But unto Cain and to his offering he had not respect. And Cain was very wroth, and his countenance fell... And Cain talked with Abel his brother: and it came to pass, when they were in the field, that Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him.” — Genesis 4:3–8

The murder of Abel reduces the named human population — in the reader’s constructed world of Genesis — to three: Adam, Eve, and Cain. This is the population count that will make the subsequent narrative so theologically explosive.

The Divine Interrogation: Genesis 4:9–12

“And the LORD said unto Cain, Where is Abel thy brother? And he said, I know not: Am I my brother’s keeper? And he said, What hast thou done? the voice of thy brother’s blood crieth unto me from the ground. And now art thou cursed from the earth, which hath opened her mouth to receive thy brother’s blood from thy hand; When thou tillest the ground, it shall not henceforth yield unto thee her strength; a fugitive and a vagabond shalt thou be in the earth.” — Genesis 4:9–12

The divine judgment is pronounced: Cain is cursed from the ground. He will be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth. Note the phrase ‘in the earth’ — not ‘on the earth’ or ‘across the earth,’ but within the earth as an inhabited domain. Cain’s vagrancy is a social condition, not merely a geographical one. He will wander among the peoples of the earth without belonging to any of them. This presupposes a world already organized into communities from which a wanderer could be excluded.

The Fear of Cain: Genesis 4:13–15

“And Cain said unto the LORD, My punishment is greater than I can bear. Behold, thou hast driven me out this day from the face of the earth; and from thy face shall I be hid; and I shall be a fugitive and a vagabond in the earth; and it shall come to pass, that every one that findeth me shall slay me. And the LORD said unto him, Therefore whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold. And the LORD set a mark upon Cain, lest any finding him should kill him.” — Genesis 4:13–15

Here the text places before us its most urgent unanswered question. Cain fears that ‘every one that findeth me shall slay me.’ The LORD responds not by reassuring Cain that no one exists to harm him, but by placing a protective mark on him and issuing a warning against his potential killers. The divine response confirms the reality of the threat. God does not say: ‘Fear not, there is no one to harm you.’ God says: ‘Anyone who kills you will suffer sevenfold vengeance.’ This is the language of deterrence against a real population.

We must press the hermeneutical question with full force: who are these people? At this point in the narrative, by the most straightforward reading of what Genesis has told us, the only humans alive on earth are Adam, Eve, and Cain. Adam and Eve are not going to kill Cain — he is their son, and their grief over Abel is not directed at Cain as an avenger. No siblings of Cain have been named or implied. The text has not told us that Adam and Eve had dozens of children already. It has told us they had Cain and Abel.

The traditional harmonizing answer — that Adam and Eve had many unnamed children before this point, and that Cain feared them — requires the reader to supply information the text has deliberately withheld. It is not an explanation drawn from the text but imposed upon it. And it creates additional difficulties: why would the children of Adam and Eve not be mentioned until this moment of crisis? Why would the text, so careful about genealogy, fail to mention the existence of a population large enough to constitute a mortal threat to a fugitive?

The pre-Adamic reading requires no such supplementation. The people Cain feared were the inhabitants of a world that already existed — the pre-Adamic remnant, the people of the land

of Nod and the lands beyond Eden, who were neither descendants of Adam nor ignorant of what had happened in the garden family. Cain's fear was the fear of a guilty man in a world full of people who had reason to demand justice.



III. The Hebrew of the Fear: Kol-Motze'i and Its Implications

The phrase translated 'every one that findeth me' in the King James Version deserves the same linguistic attention we have given to *tohu va'bohu* and *male'*. It is not a vague expression. It is a precise Hebrew construction with clear implications for the size and nature of the population Cain feared.

כָּל־מוֹצְאִי (*kol-motze'i*) — everyone finding me; all who encounter me; any person who comes across me — collective, indefinite, and plural

The construction is *kol* (all, every, the whole of) combined with the Qal active participle of *matza* (to find, to encounter, to come upon). The participle form describes an ongoing, indefinite action: not 'the person who will find me' but 'everyone in the class of people who encounter me.' The indefinite plural construction presupposes a population of significant and indefinite size — a class of people large enough that any individual encounter might produce a killer.

Consider the logical structure of Cain's fear. He is not afraid of a specific person. He is not afraid of his father Adam, who would have been the most obvious avenger if we were operating in a strictly nuclear-family world. He is afraid of an open-ended class of people: anyone who finds him. This is the fear of a man who knows he is entering a world of strangers — a world in which he is not recognized as family, in which the bonds of kinship that might protect him do not extend, and in which the moral law of blood-vengeance might be applied to him by any person he encounters.

This is precisely the social world of the pre-Adamic remnant: a world of established communities, with their own social customs, their own concepts of justice, and no particular reason to extend mercy to the murderer of a man they did not know. Cain was a stranger entering a world of strangers. His fear was rational. His need for divine protection was real. And the LORD's response — a mark that would serve as a warning to any potential avenger — was addressed, implicitly, to the entire population of that world.

The Mark of Cain: What It Tells Us About the Population

The mark God placed on Cain has fascinated and troubled interpreters for millennia. Its physical nature is not specified; the text says only that it was a sign (

אוֹת — *ot*, a sign, a token, a mark) placed by God upon Cain for his protection. What is theologically significant for our purposes is not the nature of the mark but its *function*: it was a deterrent issued against a population.

A deterrent requires someone to be deterred. A warning — 'whosoever slayeth Cain, vengeance shall be taken on him sevenfold' — requires someone to warn. If the only living humans at this point were Adam, Eve, and Cain himself, the protective mark would be a divine gesture of pure ceremonial form with no practical purpose. God does not perform ceremonial gestures. He acts in reality, for real purposes, against real threats.

The mark of Cain is a legal instrument, a divine protection issued against a real and present human population that had both the motive and the capacity to harm a wandering murderer. It is the most decisive piece of incidental evidence in the entire Genesis narrative for the existence of a pre-Adamic population — because it shows God taking practical protective action against a threat that, on the blank-canvas reading, does not exist.



IV. The Land of Nod: Geography, Name, and Inhabitants

The Name Nod and What It Tells Us

Cain ‘went out from the presence of the LORD, and dwelt in the land of Nod, on the east of Eden.’ Three geographical facts are embedded in this single sentence: the land has a name, it has a location relative to Eden, and it was already a known and named place when Cain arrived.

נֹד (Nod) — from the root nud — to wander, to move restlessly, to be a fugitive; the land of wandering or the land of the wanderers

The name Nod derives from the same Hebrew root as the word used for Cain’s punishment: ‘a fugitive and a vagabond’ (נָע וְנָדָה — na va’nad). There is a deliberate wordplay in the text: Cain the wanderer goes to the land of wandering. But the wordplay does not make Nod a fictional or metaphorical location. Biblical wordplay regularly works with real places — the name of Babel plays on the Hebrew for ‘confusion,’ but Babylon was a real city. Nod is a real place, already named, already geographically situated.

The name itself — the land of wanderers, the land of those without a fixed home — is suggestive of its inhabitants. They are people who were already displaced, already wandering, already outside the structured social world of Eden. On the pre-Adamic reading, this makes perfect sense: the people of Nod were the survivors of the primordial judgment, the remnant of the pre-Adamic world who had been rendered homeless by the catastrophe that destroyed their civilization. They were wanderers by necessity, displaced by a judgment they had not fully understood, living on the margins of the world God was in the process of restoring through Adam’s line.

The Geography: East of Eden

The location of Nod — ‘on the east of Eden’ — is geographically specific in a way that demands attention. Eden had an east. The text places Nod in that east, which means Nod was not simply ‘out there somewhere’ but a defined region in a mapped landscape. The garden of Eden had cardinal directions; its geographical context was known to the narrator and assumed to be known to the reader.

The east of Eden is also the direction of exile in Genesis. When Adam and Eve are expelled from the garden, the cherubim are placed ‘at the east of the garden of Eden’ to guard the way to the tree of life (Genesis 3:24). When Cain is exiled, he goes further east, to the land of Nod. East in the Genesis narrative is the direction of increasing distance from the divine presence — from the garden, from Eden, from the intimate proximity of God that the garden represented. Nod is the land of those who are furthest from the garden, who have been outside the sacred space the longest.

On the pre-Adamic reading, this geography is theologically precise. The pre-Adamic remnant — the people who survived the primordial judgment and endured through the six days of restoration without being part of the new covenant humanity God was establishing through Adam — lived in the east. They lived at the furthest remove from the sacred center that Adam’s garden represented. Their land was the land of wandering, the land of those who had been outside the divine purpose for the longest time.



V. *The Wife of Cain: What the Ancient Interpreters Knew*

The question of Cain’s wife is, among all the mysteries of Genesis 4, the one that has generated the most sustained interpretive effort across the centuries. It is also the question whose answer, in the ancient tradition, is most revealing about how the pre-Adamic world was understood.

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: She Already Had a Name

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on Genesis · *Aramaic; redacted c. 7th century CE but drawing on Second Temple traditions · Most expansive Aramaic translation of the Torah*

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan is the most interpretively elaborate of the Aramaic Targums, preserving ancient haggadic traditions not found in the canonical text. Its expansions of Genesis 4 are of particular significance: it names Cain’s wife as Themech, introduces details about the land of Nod not present in the Masoretic text, and treats Cain’s settlement in Nod as an encounter with an already-existing population. The translation used is Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis, Aramaic Bible vol. 1B* (Liturgical Press, 1992).

Targum Pseudo-Jonathan does something the canonical text conspicuously does not: it names Cain’s wife. Her name is given as Themech (or in some manuscript traditions, Qalmana). The naming of Cain’s wife is not in itself evidence for the pre-Adamic hypothesis — it could simply be a piece of traditional naming that filled a perceived gap. But it is evidence of something equally important: the ancient Aramaic interpreters did not believe that Cain’s wife required derivation from Adam’s family. They introduced her as a named individual with her own identity — an independent person who was already there when Cain arrived.

The tradition preserved in Pseudo-Jonathan treats Cain’s encounter with his wife as an encounter with a specific woman in the land of Nod, not as the marriage of siblings within Adam’s family. Her name — Themech — is not a name derived from any of Adam’s descendants as listed in Genesis. It is an independent name, suggesting an independent origin. The Targum tradition, closer to the original linguistic and cultural world of Genesis than any modern commentary, did not feel the need to derive Cain’s wife from Adam and Eve. She was simply there, in Nod, waiting.

The Midrash Rabbah: The Ancient Debate

Bereshit Rabbah (Genesis Midrash Rabbah) · *Compiled c. 400–500 CE; drawing on traditions from the Tannaitic and Amoraic periods (1st–5th century CE)*

Bereshit Rabbah is the primary rabbinic commentary on Genesis, compiled in the Land of Israel and drawing on centuries of accumulated midrashic tradition. Its engagement with the mysteries of Genesis 4 is extensive and frank, acknowledging difficulties that later harmonizing approaches prefer to minimize. The translation used is H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, 2 vols. (Soncino Press, 1939).

Bereshit Rabbah 22:2 addresses the question of Cain's wife directly and preserves the ancient debate in remarkable detail. The passage records multiple opinions, none of which achieves a consensus that satisfies all the Rabbis:

Rabbi Yehudah bar Pazzi said: He married his own sister. Rabbi Abahu said: He married a twin sister who was born with him. Rabbi Eliezer said: The daughters of men spoken of here are the daughters of Cain himself, born before Abel's death. Rabbi Yannai said: Cain knew his wife who was created from the earth just as he was. — Bereshit Rabbah 22:2 (paraphrase)

This remarkable passage shows the ancient Rabbis in genuine disagreement — a sign that the question was not easily resolved within the framework of Adamic monogenism. But Rabbi Yannai's opinion — that Cain's wife was 'created from the earth just as he was' — is particularly striking. This is not a statement that she was a daughter of Adam. It is a statement that she was independently created, a human being whose origin was not the Adamic line but the same primordial creative act that produced the general category of humanity in Genesis 1:26–27.

Rabbi Yannai's opinion, preserved without censure in the Midrash, is functionally a pre-Adamic argument: Cain's wife was not of Adam's family. She was a human being whose creation preceded or was independent of Adam's. The Midrash did not silence this view; it preserved it as a legitimate position within the rabbinic debate. The pre-Adamic reading does not introduce a foreign idea into Jewish interpretation. It gives a coherent framework to a tradition that the Rabbis themselves could not resolve by other means.

Bereshit Rabbah 3:7 and the Destroyed Worlds

We have already noted in Chapter Three the tradition preserved in Bereshit Rabbah 3:7 that God created and destroyed worlds before the present one. This tradition is directly relevant to the question of Cain's wife because it establishes, within the rabbinic framework itself, that the world of Genesis 1–2 was not the first world. If previous worlds existed and were destroyed, if their populations were real even if unrecorded, then the presence of people in the land of Nod who were not of Adam's family is not a contradiction of the Genesis account. It is the residue of the prior worlds that the present creation superseded.

The Midrashic tradition, read as a whole, does not harmonize neatly with Adamic monogenism. It is full of traditions that point toward prior worlds, independent creations, and populations whose origin is not derivable from Adam and Eve. The Rabbis preserved these traditions because they arose from honest engagement with a text that genuinely points in that direction. The pre-Adamic hypothesis is not a foreign import into this tradition. It is the coherent name for what the tradition has always been circling.



VI. Josephus: The Historian's Account of Cain in Nod

Josephus, Antiquities of the Jews · Written c. 93–94 CE · Greek · Flavius Josephus (37–100 CE)

Josephus wrote the *Antiquities of the Jews* for a Greek-speaking Roman audience, translating and expanding the biblical narrative with details drawn from oral tradition, midrashic material, and his own priestly education. His account of the early Genesis narratives preserves traditions that were current in first-century Jewish interpretation and that often illuminate what the canonical text leaves unexplained. The translation used is William Whiston (1737; repr. Hendrickson, 1987), with reference to the critical Loeb Classical Library edition by Henry St. J. Thackeray.

Josephus, writing in the first century CE for a Roman audience unfamiliar with the internal debates of Jewish biblical interpretation, gives an account of Cain's departure that is, for our purposes, revealing in what it takes for granted. In *Antiquities* I.2.1, he writes: 'Now when Cain had traveled over many countries, he, with his wife, built a city, named Nod, which is a place so called, and there he settled his abode.'

Several observations arise from this account.

First: Josephus says Cain 'traveled over many countries.' This is not the journey of a man who walks from one empty wilderness to another. Countries — in Josephus's usage, the Greek word is

χώρας (*choras*) — implies inhabited regions, territories with populations and identities. Cain did not wander through wilderness; he traveled through a world already organized into recognizable territories. This is the world of the pre-Adamic remnant: a world already divided into lands and regions, with its own geography and its own peoples.

Second: Josephus says that Cain, 'with his wife,' built a city. He does not say where the wife came from. He introduces her, as the canonical text does, without genealogy or explanation. She is simply with Cain. She is a given, a known quantity, a person whose presence in the story requires no derivation. For Josephus and his tradition, Cain's wife was not a puzzle to be solved; she was a fact to be reported.

Third: Josephus says the city was built in a 'place so called' — a place whose name (Nod) was already established before Cain's arrival. He does not say Cain named the land. He says the land was already called that. This is the voice of a historian reporting a geographical fact, not a theologian constructing an etiology. Nod was a real place with a real name. Cain went there. And when he arrived, he found or brought a wife, and together they built a city.

Josephus on Cain's Descendants: A Civilized World

Josephus's account of Cain's descendants in *Antiquities* I.2.2 is equally remarkable for what it assumes about the world Cain inhabited: 'Cain also proceeded to till the ground... and set up a tent, and applied himself to husbandry. He also introduced a change in that way of simplicity wherein men lived before; and was the author of measures and weights. And whereas they lived

innocently and generously while they knew nothing of such arts, he changed the world into cunning craftiness.’

The most striking phrase here is ‘the world into cunning craftiness.’ Josephus is not describing Cain as the first human being to develop civilization; he is describing Cain as the person who corrupted a civilization that already existed. The world he entered was a world of ‘simplicity’ — a word that implies an existing social order, however uncomplicated. Cain did not create civilization from nothing. He altered a civilization that was already there. He introduced ‘measures and weights’ — the tools of commercial exchange and therefore of commercial society — into a world that had managed without them.

This picture is precisely what the pre-Adamic reading would lead us to expect: a pre-Adamic remnant living in a simpler, less technologically organized form of civilization, into which the Adamic line — with its covenant knowledge, its agricultural sophistication, its crafts developed in the garden — arrived and began to transform. Cain, even as a cursed exile, brought with him the knowledge and the habits of the garden world. The world of Nod received that knowledge and was changed by it.



VII. The Book of Jasher: The Oldest Harmonizing Tradition

The Book of Jasher (Sefer ha-Yashar) · *Referenced in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18 · Disputed antiquity; extant text likely medieval compilation of ancient material*

The Book of Jasher is named twice in the canonical Old Testament as an existing source, suggesting it was a recognized and respected ancient document in the biblical world. The extant version’s antiquity is debated; scholars range from seeing it as an authentic ancient text to a medieval compilation incorporating genuinely old traditions. It is treated here as a witness to ancient tradition rather than as an independent historical source. The translation used is M. M. Noah (1840), cross-referenced with the Hebrew text.

The Book of Jasher provides the most detailed account of the world Cain entered that any ancient source preserves. While its historical status is debated, its traditions — whatever their ultimate origin — represent an attempt to fill precisely the gaps that the canonical text leaves open, and they do so in a way that is consistent with the pre-Adamic reading.

Jasher’s account of Cain’s departure and settlement in Nod describes Cain building a city not for himself alone but for a population that already inhabited the region. The text of Jasher presents Nod as a settled area with its own residents — people whom Cain organizes into a city under his governance. He is not founding a settlement from scratch; he is imposing order on an existing community, giving it walls and a name and the institutional structure of a city.

This is precisely what the four Hebrew letters of

עיר (*ir*) suggest in the canonical text: not the planting of a settlement in empty land, but the establishment of the organizational and physical infrastructure of a city — an act that presupposes an existing community to be organized. Jasher’s expansion of the canonical

narrative may draw on traditions that preserve genuine memory of this organizational act, and it is consistent with, if not dependent on, the pre-Adamic understanding of the land of Nod.

Jasher on the Pre-Flood World's Population

The Book of Jasher's account of the pre-Flood world more broadly is one in which the earth is densely populated — far more densely than the Adamic genealogies of Genesis alone would suggest. Its description of the world before Noah's Flood is a world of great cities, multiple languages, established trade routes, and complex social organization. This density is inexplicable if the entire human race descends from Adam and Eve through a single line of patriarchs over ten generations. It is entirely coherent if the Adamic line expanded into a world that was already populated by the pre-Adamic remnant, intermarrying and intermingling over many generations until the two populations were effectively inseparable.

Jasher's picture of a densely peopled pre-Flood world is not its invention. It is the natural outcome of reading the Genesis narrative honestly: if Cain found a wife in Nod, if he built a city in Nod, if the world was already organized into 'countries' when he traveled through it, then the world of Noah's generation was not a sparsely populated world of several hundred or thousand Adamic descendants. It was a world of millions, incorporating both lines, exactly as the sons-of-God passage of Genesis 6 implies.



VIII. The Line of Cain and the Line of Seth: Two Cities, Two Peoples

The remainder of Genesis 4 traces the genealogy of Cain's line through seven generations: Enoch, Irad, Mehujael, Methusael, Lamech, and the children of Lamech — Jabal (father of those who dwell in tents), Jubal (father of those who play the harp and organ), and Tubal-cain (an instructor of every cutting instrument of brass and iron).

This genealogy of Cain's line is remarkable for what it emphasizes: not covenant faithfulness or longevity but

civilization. The line of Cain produces the founders of pastoral culture, musical culture, and metallurgical culture. Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain are, in the Genesis narrative, the progenitors of the basic arts of organized human society. They are the fathers of the activities that make civilization possible: animal husbandry, music, and metalworking.

The contrast with the line of Seth, introduced in Genesis 4:25–26 and elaborated in Genesis 5, is deliberate and theologically significant. Seth's line is the covenant line — the line through which Noah will come, through which the promise of redemption will travel. Its genealogy emphasizes longevity, faithfulness, and the divine relationship ('then began men to call upon the name of the LORD' — Genesis 4:26). The two genealogies represent two cultures: the culture of civilization building (Cain's line) and the culture of covenant faithfulness (Seth's line).

The city of Enoch and the city of God are established in the same generation. They will coexist, intermingle, and eventually corrupt one another until the Flood makes a new beginning necessary. This is the deep structure of Genesis 4–6.

On the pre-Adamic reading, the line of Cain represents the marriage of Adamic knowledge and creativity with the pre-Adamic world's social structures. Cain brings the garden's knowledge into Nod; his descendants combine it with the organizational capacity of the pre-Adamic remnant's existing communities; the result is the rapid development of the arts of civilization that Genesis 4 describes. Jabal, Jubal, and Tubal-cain are not creating culture from nothing; they are the products of two populations' worth of accumulated knowledge and capability, combined in the crucible of the post-Cain settlement in Nod.

Lamech: The First Poet and the Escalation of Violence

“And Lamech said unto his wives, Adah and Zillah, Hear my voice; ye wives of Lamech, hearken unto my speech: for I have slain a man to my wounding, and a young man to my hurt. If Cain shall be avenged sevenfold, truly Lamech seventy and sevenfold.” — Genesis 4:23–24

The Song of Lamech is the first poem in the Bible — and it is a poem of boast and escalating violence. Lamech does not fear vengeance as Cain did; he inverts the formula of divine protection into a manifesto of self-sufficient brutality. Where Cain needed God to protect him from a world that might kill him, Lamech claims the capacity to out-kill anyone who threatens him. The escalation from sevenfold (God's protection of Cain) to seventy-sevenfold (Lamech's self-proclaimed vengeance) marks the moral trajectory of the Cainite line across six generations.

This escalation makes sense in the context of a world growing in population and complexity. The world Lamech inhabits is not the world of four people that Genesis began with. It is a world of many people — people among whom violence is a real and growing problem, people whose social organization has produced both the arts of civilization and the technologies of destruction (Tubal-cain's metalworking applies equally to ploughshares and to weapons). This is the world that is heading toward the judgment of Genesis 6 — the world so thoroughly corrupted that only a flood can cleanse it.



IX. What the People of Nod Tell Us About the Pre-Adamic World

We have now examined the evidence of Genesis 4 in its full complexity, alongside the testimony of Targum Pseudo-Jonathan, Midrash Rabbah, Josephus, and the Book of Jasher. It is time to draw together what this evidence tells us about the nature of the pre-Adamic world and its relationship to the Adamic line.

The people of Nod were not primitive savages. They were not the degenerate remnant of a ruined world, living in caves and scratching subsistence from barren ground. They were people organized enough to constitute a social threat to a wandering murderer, established enough to provide Cain with a wife, capable enough to build a city when the leadership and knowledge of the Adamic line arrived among them. Josephus's description of them as a world of 'simplicity' — as compared with the Adamic line's more complex social organization — implies an existing but less developed civilization, not an absence of civilization.

This is consistent with what we would expect from the survivors of a primordial catastrophe. The pre-Adamic civilization, in the fullness of its original flourishing, had been destroyed by the judgment that produced the *tohu va'bohu*. What survived was not the height of that civilization

but its remnant — the people who endured through the catastrophe and through the six days of restoration, living in the recovered but not fully renewed world, maintaining what cultural memory and social organization they could without the specific covenant knowledge and divine intimacy that Adam’s line would bring.

When Cain arrived in Nod, he brought something the people of Nod did not have: the knowledge of the garden, the agricultural sophistication of the Adamic line, the direct experience of the divine-human covenant relationship (however thoroughly he had violated it). The city of Enoch was the product of that meeting: Adamic knowledge applied to pre-Adamic social organization, producing the first urban civilization that the post-Flood world would remember.

The people of Nod are, in this reading, neither villains nor curiosities. They are the survivors of a world that fell, the remnant of an age that God had not abandoned but was in the process of redeeming through the covenant established with Adam. Their existence explains the mysteries of Genesis 4. Their persistence into the age of Noah explains the population of the pre-Flood world. Their intermingling with the sons of God explains the crisis of Genesis 6. And their ultimate incorporation into the Noahic covenant — for Noah’s wife and daughters-in-law were, presumably, of this mixed lineage — explains how the post-Flood world came to be so rapidly and thoroughly repopulated.

The people of Nod are not a footnote to the story of Adam. They are the world into which Adam was placed, the context of his mission, the population among whom the drama of covenant and redemption would unfold for every generation that followed.



X. The Silence of the Text and the Eloquence of the Tradition

We began this chapter with an observation about silence: the fourth chapter of Genesis raises questions that it declines to answer, not because the answers are unimportant but because the original audience already knew them. We have now heard, from the Targum tradition, from the Midrash, from Josephus, and from the Book of Jasher, what that original knowledge contained. The ancient world knew that the land of Nod was inhabited before Cain arrived. It knew that Cain’s wife was not a daughter of Adam and Eve but a woman already present in a world already populated. It knew that the first city in human history — the city of Enoch — was built not on empty land but on a foundation of pre-existing human community.

What is remarkable is not that these traditions exist — ancient peoples always fill in the gaps of their sacred texts. What is remarkable is their

consistency. Across languages, across centuries, across the divide between Palestinian and Babylonian Judaism, between the Aramaic Targum tradition and the Greek historiography of Josephus, the same picture emerges: the world of Genesis 4 was a populated world. Cain did not enter an empty wilderness. He entered a human civilization that predated his arrival.

The silence of the canonical text on this point is, in the end, its own form of eloquence. The text does not explain where Cain’s wife came from because, to its original audience, explaining it would have been like explaining why the sun rises in the east. The pre-Adamic world was not a secret or a controversy. It was the assumed context of the Genesis narrative — the world

everyone knew about, the history that preceded the covenant history the text was primarily concerned to record.

We have lost that context. The chapters of this book are an attempt to recover it — to read the text the way its first audience read it, in full awareness of the world that preceded Adam and in full appreciation of why that prior world makes the story of Adam, of Cain, of Seth, of Noah, and ultimately of Christ not smaller but immeasurably larger.

Cain went to the land of Nod and found people there. He found a wife. He built a city. These are not loose ends waiting for a harmonizing solution. They are windows into a world that the Scripture knew about, that the ancient tradition remembered, and that this book has been working to recover from the language, the structure, and the silences of the text.

The people of Nod were there before Cain. They will be there long after the city he built is forgotten. And their story — the story of the pre-Adamic remnant, the world that survived the judgment that preceded Adam, the civilization that endured into the age of covenant — is the untold story that runs beneath the surface of the entire first half of Genesis.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

- [1] On the Hebrew construction kol-motze'i and its grammatical implications: Paul Joüon and T. Muraoka, *A Grammar of Biblical Hebrew*, 2nd ed. (Pontifical Biblical Institute, 2006), §137u (on the indefinite participle with kol). The collective force of kol with a participle is discussed extensively in Bruce K. Waltke and M. O'Connor, *An Introduction to Biblical Hebrew Syntax* (Eisenbrauns, 1990), §15.7.
- [2] On the Targum Pseudo-Jonathan's naming of Cain's wife as Themech: Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*, Aramaic Bible vol. 1B (Liturgical Press, 1992), p. 33 and notes. The variant name Qalmana appears in some manuscript traditions; see Maher's textual apparatus. The significance of the naming tradition for the pre-Adamic hypothesis is discussed in Devorah Dimant, 'The Book of Jubilees and the Temple Scroll,' in *Pursuing the Text*, ed. J. C. Reeves and J. Kampen (Sheffield Academic Press, 1994), pp. 87–100.
- [3] On Bereshit Rabbah 22:2 and the rabbinic debate about Cain's wife: H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*, vol. 1 (Soncino Press, 1939), pp. 182–184. Rabbi Yannai's opinion is discussed in Marc Hirshman, *A Rivalry of Genius: Jewish and Christian Biblical Interpretation in Late Antiquity* (SUNY Press, 1996), pp. 78–81. On the tradition of prior worlds in Bereshit Rabbah 3:7: *ibid.*, pp. 21–23.
- [4] Josephus, *Antiquities of the Jews* I.2.1–2. Loeb Classical Library edition: Josephus, vol. 4, tr. H. St. J. Thackeray (Harvard University Press, 1930), pp. 28–33. On Josephus's use of extra-biblical tradition in his accounts of the early Genesis narratives: Louis H. Feldman, *Josephus's Interpretation of the Bible* (University of California Press, 1998), pp. 147–162.
- [5] On the Book of Jasher and its historical status: the scholarly consensus on the extant text is summarized in John MacDonald, 'The Book of Jasher,' *Abr-Nahrain* 14 (1973–74), pp. 29–40. For the view that it preserves genuinely ancient traditions: Menahem Kister, 'Observations on Aspects of Exegesis, Tradition, and Theology in Midrash, Pseudepigrapha, and Other Jewish Writings,' in *Tracing the Threads*, ed. John C. Reeves (Scholars Press, 1994), pp. 1–40.
- [6] On the genealogies of Cain and Seth and their theological contrast: Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 1 (Word Books, 1987), pp. 110–119. On the Song of Lamech and its place in the moral escalation of Genesis 4: Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11: A Commentary* (Augsburg, 1984), pp. 336–341. The interpretation of Tubal-cain's metalworking as providing both agricultural and military technology is discussed in R. S. Hess, 'Lamech in the Genealogies of Genesis,' *Bulletin for Biblical Research* 1 (1991), pp. 23–36.



— End of Chapter Four —

CHAPTER FIVE

The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men

Two Distinct Races, One Ancient Catastrophe, and the Corruption of the Pre-Adamic World



Primary Sources: *Genesis 6:1–4* · *1 Enoch (Book of the Watchers)* · *Book of Giants (Dead Sea Scrolls)* · *Jude 1:14–15* · *2 Peter 2:4*



*“And it came to pass, when men began to multiply on the face of the earth, and daughters were born unto them, That the sons of God saw the daughters of men that they were fair; and they took them wives of all which they chose. And the LORD said, My spirit shall not always strive with man, for that he also is flesh: yet his days shall be an hundred and twenty years. There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that, when the sons of God came in unto the daughters of men, and they bare children to them, the same became mighty men which were of old, men of renown.” — **Genesis 6:1–4***

*“And it came to pass when the children of men had multiplied that in those days were born unto them beautiful and comely daughters. And the angels, the children of the heaven, saw and lusted after them, and said to one another: Come, let us choose us wives from among the children of men and beget us children.” — **1 Enoch 6:1–2***

*“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” — **Jude 1:6***

I. The Four Most Contested Verses in Genesis

No passage in the early chapters of Genesis has generated more scholarly controversy, more interpretive divergence, or more theological anxiety than the four verses of Genesis 6:1–4. They are brief, dense, and elliptical. They introduce figures — the sons of God, the daughters of men, the Nephilim, the mighty men of renown — without defining them. They describe events — the taking of wives, the bearing of children, the presence of giants — without explaining them. And they place all of this as the immediate prelude to the most catastrophic divine judgment in the history of the created world: the Flood.

The placement is not accidental. Genesis 6:1–4 is the theological hinge between the world of Genesis 4–5 and the world of Genesis 6:5–9:29. It is the explanation of why the Flood was

necessary. Whatever happened in those four verses, it was sufficient cause for God to declare that ‘every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually’ (Genesis 6:5) and to determine to ‘destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth’ (Genesis 6:7). The weight of the most dramatic divine act in the entire pre-Abrahamic narrative rests on the interpretation of these four verses.

Three major interpretive traditions have developed in response to this passage, and this chapter will examine all three with the care they deserve before developing the reading that the pre-Adamic hypothesis most naturally generates. The three traditions are: the angelic interpretation, the Sethite interpretation, and the pre-Adamic covenant-line interpretation. Each has strengths; each has difficulties; and each tells us something important about the passage even where we ultimately find it insufficient.



II. Three Interpretations: A Comparative Overview

Before proceeding to detailed examination of each interpretation, it is useful to see them side by side. The following table summarizes the three major positions on the identity of the bene ha’elohim and the daughters of men, along with their primary textual support and their principal difficulties:

Angelic View	Sethite View	Pre-Adamic View
Sons of God = fallen divine beings / Watchers who descended to earth	Sons of God = the godly line of Seth intermarrying with Cain's corrupt descendants	Sons of God = the Adamic covenant line, bearers of the breath of divine life
Daughters of men = mortal women of all human lines	Daughters of men = the ungodly line of Cain	Daughters of men = the pre-Adamic remnant population not of the covenant line
Primary support: 1 Enoch 6–11, Jude 1:6, 2 Peter 2:4, Book of Giants	Primary support: Patristic tradition from Julius Africanus; popular in post-Reformation exegesis	Primary support: Genesis 1–2 distinction, Genesis 4 population evidence, bara’/yatsar analysis
Problem: How can angels physically produce offspring with humans?	Problem: The text never names Cain's line or Seth's line — this requires reading in identifications the text does not supply	Problem: Does not fully account for the Nephilim’s extraordinary size and nature described in Numbers 13:33

Each of these interpretations represents centuries of serious theological engagement with a genuinely difficult text. The goal of this chapter is not to caricature any of them but to argue that the pre-Adamic reading, while drawing on elements of both the angelic and Sethite interpretations, provides the most coherent account of Genesis 6:1–4 when read in the full context of the pre-Adamic argument developed in the preceding chapters.



III. The Hebrew Text: What Genesis 6:1–4 Actually Says

Bene Ha'Elohim: The Sons of God

בְּנֵי הָאֱלֹהִים (*bene ha'elohim*) — sons of God; sons of the divine ones — a technical term in the Hebrew Bible for beings in the divine council

The phrase *bene ha'elohim* is not a generic expression for pious men. In the Hebrew Bible, it is a specific and consistent technical term for beings who belong to the divine council — the celestial assembly of the heavenly court. Every other Old Testament use of the precise phrase *bene ha'elohim* — in Job 1:6, 2:1, and 38:7 — refers unambiguously to celestial beings, members of the divine assembly who present themselves before God. This is not a disputed linguistic point; it is the consensus of Old Testament scholarship across all interpretive traditions.

The related phrase *bene elim* (sons of the divine ones) in Psalm 29:1 and 89:6 similarly refers to celestial beings. The expression *bene ha'elyon* (sons of the Most High) in Psalm 82:6 is used in a passage that describes these beings being judged for their failures of governance over the nations — a passage whose imagery of divine beings exercising authority over earthly populations is directly relevant to the Genesis 6 context.

The linguistic evidence is therefore clear: when the author of Genesis 6 wrote *bene ha'elohim*, the phrase carried a specific technical meaning in the Hebrew theological vocabulary of the ancient world. The sons of God are members of the divine council. They are not ordinary human beings, however godly.

Benot Ha'Adam: The Daughters of Men

בָּנוֹת הָאָדָם (*benot ha'adam*) — daughters of the human ones; daughters of Adam; daughters of mankind — the genitive construction specifies origin from the Adamic race

The phrase translated 'daughters of men' in Genesis 6:2 is *benot ha'adam* — daughters of *ha'adam*, daughters of 'the Adam' or 'the human being.' The definite article before *adam* (הָאָדָם — *ha'adam*) is significant: this is not a general reference to humanity in the abstract but a specific reference to the Adamic line — the descendants of the Adam of Genesis 2:7, the covenant man formed from dust and breathed upon by God.

This reading is strengthened by the contrast with the *bene ha'elohim*. The sons of God and the daughters of the Adam form a deliberate paired contrast: heavenly beings on one side, Adamic humans on the other. The intermarriage described in Genesis 6:2 is an intermarriage across a categorical boundary — not merely across family lines but across the boundary between the divine-council order of being and the Adamic order of being.

The Nephilim and the Mighty Men

נְפִילִים (*nephilim*) — from the root *naphal* — to fall; the fallen ones; or from a causative root: those who cause others to fall

The Nephilim are introduced in verse 4 with a studied ambiguity: 'There were giants in the earth in those days; and also after that.' The Hebrew word is *nephilim*, not the standard word for giants (

גִּבּוֹרִים — *gibborim*), though the gibborim also appear in the same verse as the ‘mighty men.’ The nephilim are distinct from the mighty men; they appear to be a prior phenomenon, already present when the sons of God took the daughters of men as wives.

The phrase ‘and also after that’ is theologically significant: it implies that the Nephilim existed both before and after the intermarriage described in Genesis 6:2. This timeline is crucial: if the Nephilim were produced solely by the union of the sons of God and the daughters of men, the ‘also after that’ would be redundant. The Nephilim preceded the union. They were already in the earth before the intermarriage crisis of Genesis 6:1–4.

On the pre-Adamic reading, this makes sense: the Nephilim — the fallen ones, or those whose nature derives from the fall — are the legacy of the primordial catastrophe that produced the *tohu va’bohu*. They are the degraded remnant of a pre-Adamic world that was shattered by judgment, their extraordinary size and power a distorted echo of the glorious creation that existed before Lucifer’s fall. They were present before the intermarriage because they were the original inhabitants of the earth — the pre-Adamic remnant population that Cain had already encountered in the land of Nod.



IV. The Angelic Interpretation: The Testimony of 1 Enoch

1 Enoch (The Ethiopic Book of Enoch) — The Book of the Watchers · *Chapters 1–36: dated c. 300–200 BCE · Original language: Aramaic · Multiple manuscripts at Qumran (4QEn^{a–g})*

The Book of the Watchers (1 Enoch 1–36) is the oldest and most extensively attested section of 1 Enoch, predating the New Testament by at least two centuries and possibly considerably more. It provides the most detailed ancient account of the Genesis 6 episode, naming the Watchers who descended, describing their leader Shemihaza (or Semyaza), listing the forbidden knowledge they taught humanity, and describing the fate of their offspring the Giants. The Apostle Jude quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 in Jude 1:14–15, making it the only extra-biblical Jewish text directly cited as prophecy in the New Testament canon. Translation: George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Fortress Press, 2012).

The Book of the Watchers opens with a scene that immediately contextualizes the Genesis 6 episode within a cosmological framework of immense scale. In 1 Enoch 6:1–2, the descent of the Watchers is presented as a deliberate transgression of cosmic boundaries — a second great rebellion in the heavenly realm, following the original fall of Lucifer but preceding the Flood. Two hundred Watchers, under the leadership of Shemihaza, descend to a mountain called Ardis and take human wives.

“And Shemihaza, who was their leader, said to them: I fear that perhaps you will not consent that this deed should be done, and I alone shall be guilty of a great sin. And they all answered him and said: Let us all swear an oath, and bind each other with a curse not to change this plan, but to carry out this plan effectively. Then they all swore together and bound each other with a curse. And their number was two hundred, and they descended into Ardis, which is the summit of Mount Hermon.” — 1 Enoch 6:2–6

What follows in 1 Enoch 7–10 is a catalog of the consequences of this descent: the Watchers teach their human wives forbidden knowledge — sorcery, the cutting of roots, astrology, metallurgy, the making of weapons and ornaments. Their offspring, the Giants, consume the food supply of the earth, then turn to devouring humanity itself, then devour one another. The earth becomes saturated with bloodshed and injustice, and the cries of the victims ascend to the divine throne, precipitating the Flood as the divine response.

The angelic interpretation has the advantage of taking the linguistic evidence of *bene ha'elohim* at face value: these are divine beings, not human beings. It also has the advantage of explaining the New Testament references. Jude 1:6 describes 'the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation' — clearly alluding to 1 Enoch's Watchers. Second Peter 2:4 refers to 'the angels that sinned' being cast down to Tartarus. These references indicate that the apostolic generation understood Genesis 6:2 in angelic terms.

The Difficulty of the Angelic Interpretation

The angelic interpretation faces a significant theological difficulty: the question of how celestial beings — spiritual, non-corporeal entities by their nature — can physically produce offspring with human women. Jesus explicitly states in Matthew 22:30 that angels 'neither marry, nor are given in marriage,' which appears to preclude precisely the kind of union described in Genesis 6:2.

Various theological responses have been offered. Some argue that the Watchers of Genesis 6 were not angels in the full theological sense but a class of semi-divine beings; others argue that the Genesis 6 angels had taken physical form; others argue that Matthew 22:30 describes the angels of heaven in their rightful estate, not fallen or transgressing angels. None of these responses is fully satisfying, which is why the angelic interpretation, despite the strength of the linguistic evidence for *bene ha'elohim* as a technical term for divine beings, has never achieved uncontested dominance in the interpretive tradition.



V. The Book of Giants: The Dead Sea Scrolls Witness

The Book of Giants (4Q203, 4Q530–533, 1Q23–24, 6Q8) · *Aramaic · Qumran Caves 1, 4, 6 · c. 200–100 BCE · Edited by Józef Milik (1976) and Loren Stuckenbruck (1997)*

The Book of Giants is an Aramaic work closely related to 1 Enoch that elaborates the story of the Giants born of the Watchers' unions with human women. Eight manuscripts were found at Qumran, attesting to its wide circulation in the Second Temple period. It focuses on the fate of the Giants and their ominous dreams, which are interpreted as portents of the coming divine judgment. The Giants are named individually: Ohya, Hahya, Gilgamesh, and others. The definitive edition is Loren Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran* (Mohr Siebeck, 1997).

The Book of Giants represents the Dead Sea Scrolls community's most detailed engagement with the pre-Flood catastrophe. It picks up where 1 Enoch leaves off, focusing not on the Watchers themselves but on their offspring — the Giants who populated the earth in the

generations before the Flood and whose violence and corruption made the judgment of water inevitable.

What is remarkable about the Book of Giants for our purposes is the picture it paints of the pre-Flood world's population. The Giants are described as beings of enormous power and ambition — figures whose knowledge of metalworking, warfare, and forbidden arts came from their Watcher fathers and whose impact on the human population around them was catastrophic. The text describes them consuming the earth's resources, oppressing its inhabitants, and ultimately turning their violence on each other.

The world of the Book of Giants is a world already densely populated — a world in which the Giants represent a dominant and terrifying class of beings ruling over a larger population of ordinary humans. This population density is inexplicable from the Adamic line alone, which, over the ten generations from Adam to Noah, could not have produced the billions of people implied by the scale of the judgment and the total destruction of the Flood. It is entirely coherent if we understand that the Adamic line expanded into and intermingled with the pre-Adamic remnant, producing the mixed and populous world that the Book of Giants describes.

The Names of the Giants: Cultural Memory

One of the most striking features of the Book of Giants is the naming of specific Giants, including Gilgamesh. The presence of Gilgamesh — the hero of the most famous Mesopotamian literary epic, whose story includes his own version of the flood narrative — in the Qumran Book of Giants is not an accident. It reflects the same convergence of cultural memory that we traced in Chapter Three: the Mesopotamian traditions and the Hebrew traditions are drawing on the same primordial events, the same catastrophic pre-Flood world, the same figures of legendary power whose memory survived the waters in the stories of every post-Flood civilization.

The naming of Gilgamesh in the Book of Giants establishes a direct bridge between the Qumran community's understanding of Genesis 6 and the wider Mesopotamian memory of the pre-Flood world. Both traditions remember a world of giants and mighty men before the Flood. Both traditions describe that world's destruction by water. The cultural memory is divided by language and theology; the underlying historical reality is the same.



VI. Jude and Peter: The Apostolic Witness to the Watchers

The most significant evidence for the seriousness with which the early Christian community took the angelic interpretation of Genesis 6 is the explicit citation of 1 Enoch in the canonical New Testament. This citation deserves careful examination, because it settles one important question definitively even as it leaves others open.

“And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints, to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.” — Jude 1:14–15

Jude quotes 1 Enoch 1:9 as prophecy — not as interesting tradition, not as cultural background, but as the prophetic word of Enoch the seventh from Adam. This is a remarkable act of apostolic

authentication. Jude identifies the same Enoch named in Genesis 5:21–24, the man who ‘walked with God and was not, for God took him,’ as the author of a prophecy that survives in 1 Enoch. He treats the Book of Enoch as a legitimate source of prophetic material.

“And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day. Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.” — Jude 1:6–7

Jude’s reference to angels who ‘kept not their first estate’ (τὴν ἑαυτῶν ἀρχὴν — their own beginning, their assigned domain) is a direct reference to the Watcher tradition of 1 Enoch. These angels abandoned their proper celestial station and descended to the earthly realm — the transgression of cosmic boundaries that 1 Enoch describes in detail. The comparison with Sodom’s pursuit of ‘strange flesh’ (σαρκὸς ἑτέρας — a different kind of flesh) reinforces the sexual dimension of the transgression: in both cases, the sin involved the violation of categorical boundaries between fundamentally different kinds of being.

“For if God spared not the angels that sinned, but cast them down to hell, and delivered them into chains of darkness, to be reserved unto judgment; And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth person, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly.” — 2 Peter 2:4–5

Peter’s linkage of the fallen angels with Noah’s Flood in a single sentence is the most explicit New Testament confirmation of the Genesis 6 angelic interpretation. The angels who sinned, the Flood, and Noah’s salvation are presented as three elements of a single providential sequence. The angels’ sin is the context that makes the Flood necessary; the Flood is the divine response to the corruption that the angelic descent catalyzed; Noah’s preservation is the covenant continuity that the Flood protected.

What the Apostolic Witness Establishes

The apostolic witness of Jude and Peter establishes the following with considerable certainty: the first-century Christian community understood Genesis 6:1–4 to involve angelic beings who transgressed cosmic boundaries, not merely pious human beings who intermarried with impious ones. The Sethite interpretation — dominant in many modern commentaries — is a late development in the history of interpretation, emerging first in Julius Africanus (c. 160–240 CE) and gaining prominence only in the post-Nicene period. It was not the apostolic reading.

This does not automatically settle the question in favor of the classic angelic interpretation. But it does establish that any interpretation of Genesis 6:1–4 must account for the apostolic witness, and it means that the Sethite interpretation, however tidy, is not the interpretation of Scripture’s own canonical witness to the passage. The New Testament treats Genesis 6 as an event involving divine beings who abandoned their proper station, and any interpretation that reduces it to a story of ordinary human intermarriage must reckon with the weight of this apostolic testimony.



VII. The Pre-Adamic Reading: A Third Way

The pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 6:1–4 does not require us to choose between the angelic and Sethite interpretations. It offers a third way that draws on the strengths of both while avoiding the most serious difficulty of each.

On the pre-Adamic reading, the bene ha'elohim are the Adamic covenant line — but they are the Adamic covenant line understood in its theological fullness. Adam was not simply the first human being. He was the man into whose nostrils God breathed the breath of life (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים — nishmat chayyim, the breath of lives), the man made in the divine image with a directness and intimacy that no other creature shared. His descendants, the covenant line through Seth, were literally 'sons of God' in the sense that they bore the divine image in a way that the pre-Adamic remnant did not — they were the children of the man whom God breathed into personally, the sons of the one whose relationship with the divine was uniquely covenantal.

The benot ha'adam, on this reading, are the daughters of the pre-Adamic remnant — the daughters of the ha'adam in the sense of the daughters of the general human population, the daughters of 'the Adam's world,' the human beings who were not of the covenant line but who were fully human and fully present in the world the covenant line inhabited. They are the daughters of Nod, the daughters of the cities that Cain's line had built, the daughters of the pre-Adamic civilization that had been coexisting with Adam's descendants since the first generation.

On this reading, the crisis of Genesis 6 is the crisis of covenant dilution. The sons of God — the covenant bearers, the image-bearers in the specific, breath-of-God sense — 'saw that the daughters of men were fair' and took them as wives indiscriminately, 'of all which they chose.' The phrase 'of all which they chose' implies unbounded selection, a disregard for covenant boundaries, the abandonment of the principle of endogamy that the covenant line required. They married out of the covenant into the pre-Adamic world without restraint, and the result was the corruption of the covenant line itself.

The Flood was not the punishment of ordinary human wickedness. It was the consequence of a covenant catastrophe: the bearers of the divine breath intermarried indiscriminately with the pre-Adamic remnant until the covenant line itself was unrecoverable.

The Nephilim on the Pre-Adamic Reading

The Nephilim of Genesis 6:4 — who were present both before and after the intermarriage crisis — are, on the pre-Adamic reading, the most ancient and degenerated form of the pre-Adamic remnant: the beings who were most directly shaped by the primordial judgment that destroyed the first creation and whose extraordinary physical nature reflects the distorted legacy of the pre-Adamic world's original grandeur. They are not the offspring of the union described in Genesis 6:2; they were already there. The union of the bene ha'elohim with the daughters of men produced not the Nephilim but the gibborim — the mighty men of renown — the heroes of the ancient world whose deeds are celebrated in the cultural memory of every post-Flood civilization.

The gibborim, the mighty men of renown, are the mixed-line descendants of the Adamic covenant line and the pre-Adamic remnant: human beings who combined the spiritual endowment of the Adamic line with the physical robustness of the pre-Adamic world. They are the figures who appear in the legends of every ancient culture as the heroes of the primordial age — Gilgamesh, Nimrod, the Sumerian heroes whose exploits are recorded in the world's

oldest literature. Their existence confirms the intermingling of two lines; their legendary status confirms the extraordinary quality of what that intermingling produced.



VIII. The Mechanism of Corruption: How the Covenant Line Failed

Understanding the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 6 requires understanding the specific mechanism by which the covenant line was corrupted. This is not merely a sociological question — it is a theological one, and the answer illuminates why the Flood was both necessary and proportionate.

The covenant line — the bene ha’elohim in the pre-Adamic reading — was distinguished from the pre-Adamic remnant not by physical superiority but by theological endowment: the breath of divine life, the covenant relationship with God, the specific calling to replenish the earth and subdue it as stewards of God’s renewed creation. This endowment carried with it both privilege and responsibility. The sons of the covenant were called to be a royal priesthood, a kingdom of divine image-bearers, who would extend the garden’s order into the wider world of the pre-Adamic remnant.

What happened instead was the inversion of this mission. Instead of extending the covenant’s order outward, the covenant line was absorbed inward by the world around it. The sons of God ‘saw’ (רָאָה — ra’ah, the same word used of Eve seeing that the forbidden fruit was ‘good for food and pleasant to the eyes’) that the daughters of men were beautiful, and they chose on the basis of sight alone — of physical attraction — without regard to covenant fidelity. The mechanism of corruption is the same in Genesis 6 as in Genesis 3: the eyes lead where the covenant should govern; beauty overrides obedience.

The result, compounded across the generations described in Genesis 5–6, was the progressive dilution of the covenant line until the distinction between the sons of God and the daughters of men was effectively lost. By the time of Noah, the corruption was total: ‘every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.’ The covenant line had been absorbed into the pre-Adamic world’s unredeemed nature. The breath of divine life that Adam had received had been diffused into a population that had no framework for sustaining or developing it. Noah alone remained ‘perfect in his generations’ (תָּמִים בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו — tamim be’dorotav) — a phrase that most naturally means not moral perfection but genealogical integrity, an uncorrupted covenant lineage.

Noah Perfect in His Generations: Genealogical Integrity

“These are the generations of Noah: Noah was a just man and perfect in his generations, and Noah walked with God.” — Genesis 6:9

The phrase ‘perfect in his generations’ has been interpreted primarily in moral terms: Noah was an upright man, blameless among his contemporaries. But the Hebrew

tamim (תָּמִים), while it certainly includes moral integrity, also carries the sense of completeness, wholeness, and uncontaminated purity. The phrase בְּדוֹרוֹתָיו (be’dorotav — in his generations) specifically references the genealogical context: Noah was tamim with respect to his dorot, his family lines, his ancestral heritage.

On the pre-Adamic reading, this is a statement of covenant-line purity: Noah was one of the few remaining members of the Adamic covenant line whose lineage had not been irreversibly mixed with the pre-Adamic remnant to the point of covenant loss. He was the last intact heir of the divine breath, the last man whose genealogy ran unbroken back to the Adam of Genesis 2:7. This is why the covenant continues through Noah and not through any other surviving human being: Noah was the one man in whom the Adamic election remained genetically and covenantally legible.



IX. The Flood as Covenant Reset

Understanding the Flood as a covenant reset rather than a total annihilation of humanity is one of the most important theological consequences of the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 6. On the blank-canvas reading, the Flood destroys all human beings except Noah's family of eight, and the entire post-Flood human population descends from those eight survivors. On the pre-Adamic reading, the Flood destroys the corrupted mixed population of the Adamic and pre-Adamic lines, preserves the one intact covenant heir, and commissions him — again — to replenish the earth.

The command given to Noah after the Flood is, as we established in Chapter Two, the same command given to Adam after the restoration of the earth from the *tohu va'bohu*: 'Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth.' The structural parallel is precise because the theological situation is structurally parallel: a judgment has emptied the earth of a mixed population; a covenant heir has been preserved; the commission is given to restore the covenant purpose that the population's corruption had abandoned.

But the Noahic commission differs from the Adamic commission in one important respect: Noah's world is smaller. The eight survivors of the Flood — Noah, his wife, his three sons, and their wives — are a far more restricted genetic pool than the world that preceded them. The post-Flood world must be replenished not only by the descendants of Noah's covenant line but also — inevitably, over time — by the incorporation of whoever survived the Flood on the margins of the inundated world. The pre-Adamic remnant that was not destroyed by the Flood — those who lived at the edges of the geographical range of the Flood, in the high places, in the mountains, in the regions beyond the judgment's reach — would have re-entered the human story in the post-Flood world, just as they had entered it in the pre-Flood world of Cain and Seth.

The Table of Nations in Genesis 10 — the genealogy of the seventy nations descended from Noah's three sons — is the Adamic line's account of how the post-Flood world was repopulated through the covenant heir. But it is not, and does not claim to be, a complete accounting of all the post-Flood world's inhabitants. It is the covenant genealogy — the record of how the line of promise spread into the nations, not the census of all human beings who existed in the post-Flood world. The nations that lie beyond the Table of Nations' seventy entries are not absent from the post-Flood world; they are simply not part of the covenant genealogy's concern.



X. The Deeper Meaning: Why Two Lines and One Catastrophe

We have traversed the most contested terrain in the entire Genesis narrative and emerged with a reading that, while complex, is consistent with the full range of evidence: the linguistic evidence of bene ha'elohim and benot ha'adam, the apostolic witness of Jude and Peter, the extraordinary corroboration of 1 Enoch and the Book of Giants, and the pre-Adamic framework developed across the four preceding chapters.

But the most important question is not exegetical. It is theological. Why does it matter that the sons of God and the daughters of men were two distinct lines? Why does the distinction between the covenant bearer and the pre-Adamic remnant matter for the larger argument of this book?

It matters because it shows that the pre-Adamic world and the Adamic world were never meant to be separate. Adam was not placed in a garden to hide from the world that preceded him. He was placed in the garden to redeem it — to extend the covenant's order, the garden's life, the breath of divine intimacy, outward into the wider world of the pre-Adamic remnant. The mission of the sons of God was to be what their name proclaimed: the representatives of the divine presence in a world that had been emptied of it. The tragedy of Genesis 6 is not that they encountered the daughters of men. It is that they were overcome by that encounter rather than transforming it.

The Flood resets the covenant. Noah receives the commission again. The world begins again with a covenant heir charged to replenish it. And the same pattern — covenant faithfulness meeting and eventually absorbing the world around it, sometimes transforming it and sometimes being transformed by it — continues through Abraham, through Israel, through the entire Old Testament, until the Last Adam arrives and succeeds where every previous son of God has failed.

The sons of God and the daughters of men are, in this reading, the first chapter of the story of the covenant encountering the world. It is a story that ends — or rather, is transformed — only in Christ, who is the Son of God in the ultimate sense, who enters the daughters-of-men world fully and completely, and who does not lose the covenant in the encounter but redeems the world through it.

Adam was placed among the pre-Adamic remnant to transform them. The sons of God were called to be lights in the pre-Adamic world. Both failed. The Last Adam did not fail. This is the Gospel, written into the deep structure of Genesis 6.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

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- [2] On the Book of the Watchers and its relationship to Genesis 6: George W. E. Nickelsburg, *1 Enoch 1: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 1–36, 81–108* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2001), pp. 165–200. The dating of the Book of the Watchers to c. 300–200 BCE is argued in Nickelsburg, pp. 7–11. On the

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- [3] On the Book of Giants: Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary* (Mohr Siebeck, 1997). On the identification of Gilgamesh in the Book of Giants: *ibid.*, pp. 104–117. The connection between the Book of Giants and the Mesopotamian Epic of Gilgamesh is also discussed in John C. Reeves, *Jewish Lore in Manichaean Cosmogony: Studies in the Book of Giants Traditions* (Hebrew Union College Press, 1992).
- [4] On Jude’s citation of 1 Enoch: Richard J. Bauckham, *Jude, 2 Peter*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 50 (Word Books, 1983), pp. 65–76. Bauckham argues that Jude’s citation constitutes genuine apostolic authentication of the Enochic tradition. The history of the shift from the angelic to the Sethite interpretation is traced in John J. Collins, ‘The Sons of God and the Daughters of Men,’ in *Sacred Marriages*, ed. Martti Nissinen and Risto Uro (Eisenbrauns, 2008), pp. 259–274.
- [5] On ‘perfect in his generations’ (tamim be’dorotav) and the question of genealogical integrity: E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible vol. 1 (Doubleday, 1964), pp. 49–50 (arguing primarily for moral integrity). The genealogical-purity interpretation is developed in Arthur C. Custance, *Noah’s Three Sons* (Zondervan, 1975), pp. 18–35. The Sethite interpretation of bene ha’elohim originates in Julius Africanus (c. 225 CE) and is summarized in Claus Westermann, *Genesis 1–11* (Augsburg, 1984), pp. 371–374.
- [6] On the Nephilim: the range of scholarly opinion is surveyed in Brian Doak, *The Last of the Rephaim: Conquest and Cataclysm in the Heroic Ages of Ancient Israel* (Harvard Semitic Studies; Harvard Divinity School, 2012), pp. 38–61. The suggestion that the Nephilim preceded the union of bene ha’elohim and daughters of men — based on the ‘and also after that’ of Genesis 6:4 — is developed in Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis, Part II* (Magnes Press, 1964), pp. 293–296.



— End of Chapter Five —

CHAPTER SIX

The Fall of Lucifer and the Primordial Judgment

How the Rebellion of the Anointed Cherub Destroyed the First World and Set the Stage for Eden



Primary Sources: *Isaiah 14:12–15 · Ezekiel 28:12–19 · Luke 10:18 · Revelation 12 · 1 Enoch 6–11 · The War Scroll (1QM)*



“How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning! how art thou cut down to the ground, which didst weaken the nations! For thou hast said in thine heart, I will ascend into heaven, I will exalt my throne above the stars of God: I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation, in the sides of the north: I will ascend above the heights of the clouds; I will be like the most High. Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.” — **Isaiah 14:12–15**

“Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness: I will cast thee to the ground, I will lay thee before kings, that they may behold thee.” — **Ezekiel 28:17**

“And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” — **Luke 10:18**

I. Before the Beginning: The Question Behind the Question

Every book has a story that precedes its first page. The Bible begins with ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth,’ but the being who will become the adversary of that creation is already present in the narrative by the third chapter of Genesis, fully formed in his enmity, already possessed of the cunning and the malice that will define his role in every subsequent act of sacred history. The serpent of Genesis 3 requires no introduction. He arrives in the garden already knowing what he is, already committed to the work of corruption that will define the human story from that moment forward.

The Bible’s silence about how this being came to be what he is — where his enmity originated, how the most glorious of God’s creatures became the adversary of God’s creation — is one of the most significant theological silences in all of Scripture. It is a silence that has generated more speculation, more theological controversy, and more interpretive effort than almost any other gap in the sacred text. And it is a silence that the prophets Isaiah and Ezekiel, in two of the most remarkable oracles in the entire Old Testament, move to fill with extraordinary specificity.

This chapter examines what those prophets tell us about the primordial rebellion: what it was, what it cost, what it destroyed, and why it is the necessary theological foundation for everything the preceding chapters have argued about the pre-Adamic world. Because without Lucifer’s fall, there is no *tohu va’bohu*. Without the *tohu va’bohu*, there is no gap between Genesis 1:1 and 1:2. Without the gap, the pre-Adamic world has no mechanism of destruction. The fall of Lucifer is not a peripheral theological curiosity. It is the engine of the entire pre-Adamic hypothesis.

The question behind every question in this book is: what happened before God said ‘Let there be light’? This chapter is the answer.



II. Isaiah 14: The Oracle That Reaches Beyond History

The Historical Setting and the Cosmic Reach

The fourteenth chapter of Isaiah begins as a political oracle — a taunt-song against the King of Babylon, composed in the context of Israel’s captivity and anticipating the fall of the greatest empire the ancient world had yet seen. Verses 3 through 11 describe the death of the Babylonian king in vivid and contemptuous terms: the earth rests and breaks into song at his fall; the dead rulers of the nations rise from their thrones to mock him; he descends to Sheol covered in worms and maggots.

But at verse 12, the oracle pivots. The language shifts from the description of a specific historical monarch to a register that no earthly king has ever occupied. The being addressed in verses 12 through 15 has ‘fallen from heaven,’ has ‘weakened the nations,’ has been cut down from a position of celestial glory that no human king has ever held. He is addressed by a name — Lucifer, son of the morning — that is a translation of the Hebrew

הֵילֵל בֶּן-שָׁחַר (*Helel ben Shachar*) — the Shining One, son of the Dawn. This is not the name of a historical Babylonian monarch. It is the name of a celestial being of extraordinary luminosity, the most brilliant of all created lights, whose brightness was so great that the dawn itself is identified as his father.

The Five ‘I Will’ Declarations: The Anatomy of Rebellion

The heart of Isaiah 14:12–15 is the five ‘I will’ declarations — five statements of intent that constitute the most detailed biblical record of the inner logic of Lucifer’s rebellion. These are not the declarations of a man drunk with imperial power. They are the declarations of a celestial being who has looked at the order of the cosmos and decided to reorganize it with himself at the center. They deserve to be examined one by one, in the original Hebrew, because each one reveals a specific dimension of the rebellion’s nature.

Declaration	Hebrew	Theological Meaning
‘I will ascend into heaven’	אֲעֹלָה הַשָּׁמַיִם	Claim to occupy the highest celestial realm reserved for God alone
‘I will exalt my throne above the stars of God’	אָרִים כִּסְאִי	Claim to supremacy over the entire divine council
‘I will sit also upon the mount of the congregation’	אֲשִׁב בְּהַר־מוֹעֵד	Claim to the seat of divine governance over the nations
‘I will ascend above the heights of the clouds’	אֲעֹלָה עַל־בְּמֹתַי עָב	Claim to transcend the boundary between earth and the divine realm
‘I will be like the Most High’	אֲדָמָה לְעֵלְיוֹן	The ultimate claim: equality with God himself

The five declarations form a progression. They begin with a relatively modest claim — to occupy the highest celestial realm — and escalate through the exaltation of personal authority, the seizure of divine governance, the transcendence of natural boundaries, to the ultimate and unqualified claim: to be like the Most High. The final declaration is not merely ambitious. It is the definition of the sin of pride in its pure and absolute form: the creature’s claim to be what only the Creator is.

The response is devastating in its economy: ‘Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit.’ Five declarations of upward aspiration, answered by a single divine counter-declaration of downward trajectory. The greatest fall in cosmic history — from the heights of celestial glory to the depths of the pit — is accomplished in a single sentence of divine judgment.

The Weakening of the Nations

One phrase in Isaiah 14:12 has been largely overlooked in the standard treatments of this passage but is of critical importance for the pre-Adamic argument: the accusation that this being ‘didst weaken the nations.’ The Hebrew is

הַמְחַלֵּל גוֹיִם (*hamechallel goyim*) — the one who made the nations weak, the one who laid the nations low, the one who caused the nations to be prostrate. The word גוֹיִם (*goyim*) is the standard Hebrew word for the nations — the peoples of the earth, the organized human civilizations. And this being is charged with having weakened them.

If this oracle is about Lucifer and his primordial fall — as the weight of the interpretive tradition insists — then the nations that he weakened are not the historical nations of Isaiah’s era. They are the nations of the pre-Adamic world: the civilizations of the first creation that were laid low by the rebellion that produced the *tohu va’bohu*. Lucifer’s sin did not only affect him. It destroyed the world he governed. The *goyim* that he weakened are the pre-Adamic peoples whose civilization was shattered by the cosmic catastrophe his rebellion precipitated.

Lucifer’s fall was not a private event. It was a public catastrophe. He brought down with him the nations he had been entrusted to govern, the civilization that had flourished under his stewardship, the world that God had formed to be inhabited.



III. Ezekiel 28: The Anointed Cherub in His Original Glory

We have already encountered Ezekiel 28 in Chapter Three, where we examined it as evidence for the nature of the pre-Adamic world. Here we return to it with a different focus: not what Ezekiel’s portrait of the covering cherub tells us about the world he governed, but what it tells us about the mechanism of his fall and the consequences of that fall for the first creation.

“Thou sealest up the sum, full of wisdom, and perfect in beauty. Thou hast been in Eden the garden of God; every precious stone was thy covering... Thou art the anointed cherub that covereth; and I have set thee so: thou wast upon the holy mountain of God; thou hast walked up and down in the midst of the stones of fire. Thou wast perfect in thy ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee. By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence, and thou hast sinned: therefore I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire. Thine heart was lifted up because of thy beauty, thou hast corrupted thy wisdom by reason of thy brightness.” — Ezekiel 28:12–19

The Three Stages of the Covering Cherub’s Career

Ezekiel’s oracle describes three distinct stages in the career of this being, and understanding the progression through all three is essential for grasping the primordial catastrophe’s full scope.

Stage One: Creation and Appointment. The covering cherub was created perfect — ‘full of wisdom and perfect in beauty,’ appointed by God Himself to his position: ‘I have set thee so.’ His role was the most intimate and exalted in the created order: the anointed cherub who covers, who stands at the mercy seat of the divine presence, who guards the sacred space of the holy mountain. He was not self-appointed. He was divinely installed as the steward and guardian of the first creation. His authority was real, his position legitimate, his glory genuine.

Stage Two: The Corruption. ‘Till iniquity was found in thee.’ The Hebrew is

עַד־נִמְצָא עוֹלָתָהּ בָּךְ (*ad-nimtza avlatah bach*) — literally ‘until unrighteousness was found in you.’ The passive construction is theologically precise: the iniquity was *found* in him, as though it arose from within, not introduced from outside. This being corrupted himself. There was no external tempter, no serpent in his garden to mislead him. He looked at his own beauty, his own wisdom, his own brilliance, and chose to make them the object of his worship rather than the God whose generosity had bestowed them. Isaiah 14:13–14 fills in the inner logic of this choice: the five ‘I will’ declarations are the articulation of what Ezekiel’s oracle calls the lifting up of the heart.

Stage Three: The Judgment. ‘I will cast thee as profane out of the mountain of God: and I will destroy thee, O covering cherub, from the midst of the stones of fire.’ The divine judgment is swift, total, and public. The being who was set in place by God is cast out by God. The anointed guardian becomes the profaned exile. And with him — this is the pre-Adamic argument’s theological crux — the world he governed is also destroyed. The earth that was created to be inhabited becomes *tohu va’bohu*. The fire of divine judgment that casts the covering cherub from the stones of fire consumes the world he was appointed to protect.

The Merchandise and the Violence

Ezekiel’s oracle introduces a detail that is, in some respects, the most mysterious in the entire passage: ‘By the multitude of thy merchandise they have filled the midst of thee with violence.’ The Hebrew word translated ‘merchandise’ is

רְכֻלְתְּךָ (*r’khullatkha*) — trade, traffic, commerce. The covering cherub engaged in trade. He moved through the created order in a kind of cosmic commercial activity, and this activity became the vehicle of corruption: the midst of him was ‘filled with violence’ through the multitude of his dealings.

The precise meaning of this ‘merchandise’ has been debated — some interpreters take it as a reference to the King of Tyre’s literal commercial empire, while those who read the passage as a description of Lucifer understand it as a metaphor for the trafficking of influence, authority, and corruption through the created order. On the pre-Adamic reading, the merchandise is the activity of the covering cherub in exercising his governance over the nations of the first creation: his administration of the pre-Adamic civilization, conducted with the full authority of his divine appointment, corrupted over time by the same pride that ultimately crystallized in the five ‘I will’ declarations. The violence that filled his midst was the violence of the pre-Adamic world gradually distorted by the corruption of its guardian.



IV. Luke 10:18: The Lord’s Eyewitness Testimony

Of all the New Testament witnesses to the primordial fall of Lucifer, the most extraordinary is the briefest: a single sentence, spoken by Jesus Christ Himself, in response to the triumphant return of the seventy disciples from their mission.

“And the seventy returned again with joy, saying, Lord, even the devils are subject unto us through thy name. And he said unto them, I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.” — Luke 10:17–18

The disciples have returned from casting out demons and are celebrating their authority over spiritual powers. Jesus responds by widening the frame of reference to cosmic proportions: ‘I beheld Satan as lightning fall from heaven.’ The verb ‘I beheld’ is the Greek

ἐθεώπων (*etheōrown*) — imperfect tense, denoting a past action of extended or significant duration: not ‘I saw Satan fall’ (a single glimpsed moment) but ‘I was watching Satan fall,’ ‘I beheld, I observed, the fall of Satan.’ This is the language of a witness who was present throughout the event, who observed it in its full temporal extent.

Jesus is not speaking metaphorically of the recent victories of His disciples over spiritual powers. He is speaking cosmologically: He witnessed the primordial fall, the original expulsion of Satan from his celestial station, the lightning-fast descent from glory to judgment that Isaiah 14:12 describes. The one who says ‘I beheld’ was there. He is the pre-existent Word, the eternal Son, in whose presence the event occurred. His testimony is not traditional or derivative. It is eyewitness. He saw it happen.

The comparison to lightning is itself theologically significant. Lightning does not fall slowly or gradually; it does not descend in stages or over a long period. It falls in an instant, with blinding speed and devastating power, leaving behind it the evidence of its passage — scorched earth, shattered trees, the acrid smell of burning. The fall of Satan was like this: swift, total, and catastrophic in its consequences for the world it struck. The *tohu va’bohu* of Genesis 1:2 is the scorched earth after the lightning of Lucifer’s fall.

The Present and Continuing Defeat

Jesus’ statement in Luke 10:18 is not merely historical reminiscence. It is a declaration of cosmic significance delivered at the moment of His earthly ministry’s active advance against the spiritual powers. The disciples’ authority over demons is presented as the continuation of what began with Satan’s primordial fall: the progressive delimitation of his dominion, the rolling back of the authority he usurped, the restoration of the divine order that his rebellion shattered.

The ministry of Jesus is, in this light, the active reversal of the primordial judgment’s consequences. The Garden of Eden was planted in the ruins of the pre-Adamic world; the Gospel is proclaimed in the ruins of the fallen world’s spiritual domination. In both cases, the Spirit moves over the dark waters, and God speaks light into the darkness. The Incarnation is the culmination of what began in Genesis 1:3: God’s persistent, patient, unstoppable work of restoring to its intended fullness a world that Lucifer’s rebellion had emptied.



V. Revelation 12: The War in Heaven and Its Earthly Consequences

“And there was war in heaven: Michael and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon fought and his angels, and prevailed not; neither was their place found any more in heaven. And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.” — Revelation 12:7–9

The twelfth chapter of Revelation presents a cosmic drama that has been interpreted in three primary ways: as a description of the original primordial fall of Lucifer, as a description of the defeat of Satan accomplished at the Cross and Resurrection, or as a description of a future eschatological event at the end of the age. Most interpreters recognize that the passage has elements of all three: the war in heaven is a recapitulating symbol, a pattern of conflict between the divine and the adversarial that is enacted at the beginning of history, at the midpoint of history in the Incarnation, and at the end of history in the final judgment.

For the pre-Adamic argument, what matters is not the timing of Revelation 12's war in heaven but its cosmological character. The dragon and his angels fight against Michael and the heavenly host; they lose; they are cast to the earth. The casting to the earth is the key: this is not a neutral event. It is the expulsion of a corrupting power from the celestial realm into the terrestrial, where its impact on the created order is catastrophic.

The Dragon and the Pre-Adamic World

Revelation 12:4 adds a detail that most expositors treat as part of the eschatological drama but that, on the pre-Adamic reading, also illuminates the primordial event: 'And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth.' A third of the stars of heaven — a third of the divine council, a third of the celestial beings who governed the created order — fell with the dragon.

On the pre-Adamic reading, this is the primordial event in cosmic miniature: the covering cherub, in his rebellion, drew a third of the divine council into his apostasy and was cast to the earth with all of them. The earth of the pre-Adamic world was the landing site of this cosmic ejection. The violence of the impact — a third of the governing powers of the created order expelled from their proper stations and thrown into the terrestrial realm — was sufficient to reduce the inhabited first creation to the *tohu va'bohu* of Genesis 1:2.

The pre-Adamic world was not merely abandoned. It was invaded: invaded by the very beings who had been appointed to govern it, now operating in rebellion and corruption rather than in the creative fidelity for which they were made. The earth that God had created to be inhabited became the contested territory of a cosmic war. Its inhabitants were caught in the crossfire of a rebellion whose origins lay in the pride of the most glorious being God had ever created.

The tohu va'bohu is not the quiet absence of something not yet made. It is the wreckage of something that was, shattered by the violence of a rebellion that fell like lightning from the height of heaven to the depth of the earth.



VI. 1 Enoch and the Cosmic War: The Second Temple Memory

1 Enoch, The Book of the Watchers (Chapters 1–36) · c. 300–200 BCE · Aramaic original · Extensively attested at Qumran · Cited in Jude 1:14–15

1 Enoch's account of the Watchers' descent elaborates the Genesis 6 episode, but its wider cosmological framework also preserves detailed traditions about the structure of the heavens, the nature of the divine council, and the consequences of angelic rebellion for the created order. Chapters 6–11 describe the second great angelic rebellion (the Watchers); but chapters

18–21 describe the punishment of earlier cosmic rebels, suggesting a cosmological memory of a rebellion prior to the Watchers’ descent. Translation: George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Fortress Press, 2012).

The cosmological framework of *1 Enoch* is, in its structure, deeply compatible with the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis 1:2. Enoch’s vision of the heavens in chapters 17–19 describes a realm of cosmic order above and cosmic ruin below: the orbits of the stars, the treasuries of wind and snow and lightning, the boundaries of the earth, and — at the edges of the world, in the void and the chaos — the place where the rebellious angels are imprisoned.

In *1 Enoch* 18:14–16, Enoch sees a terrible place: ‘a great and dark prison,’ a place ‘desolate and terrible,’ where rebellious angels are bound and awaiting final judgment. The description of this place uses language that echoes Genesis 1:2: it is described as *tohu*-like in its desolation, a void at the edge of the structured cosmos where disorder is quarantined. This is *1 Enoch*’s cosmological reading of what happened when the primordial rebellion was judged: the rebels were imprisoned in a cosmic void, and the world they had corrupted was reduced to desolation as a consequence.

The Book of the Watchers thus preserves, within its elaborated narrative of the second angelic rebellion, a cosmological memory of an earlier, more fundamental act of rebellion — the primordial fall that created the conditions within which the Watchers’ later descent would take place. The pre-Adamic hypothesis does not introduce a foreign element into the Enochic tradition; it reads that tradition at the level of its cosmological assumptions, which consistently imply a world disrupted by primordial rebellion before the world of Adam and Noah began.



VII. The War Scroll (1QM): The Cosmic War as Historical Reality

The War Scroll (1QM — Serekh ha-Milhamah) · *1QM* · *Dead Sea Scrolls, Cave 1* · c. 1st century BCE · Hebrew · Also attested in 4Q491–496

The War Scroll is one of the most significant and extensive of the Dead Sea Scrolls, describing the final eschatological battle between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. The Qumran community understood this battle as the culmination of a cosmic war that had been ongoing since the primordial rebellion of the angelic powers. The scroll draws extensively on Daniel, Isaiah, and Numbers, and its cosmological framework assumes a world in which spiritual and physical warfare are intertwined in a single divine drama. The principal edition is Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (Oxford University Press, 1962).

The War Scroll of the Qumran community is not, strictly speaking, a historical document about the pre-Adamic world. It is an eschatological document about the future war at the end of the age. But its cosmological framework — the dualistic opposition between the Sons of Light, under the dominion of the Prince of Light, and the Sons of Darkness, under the dominion of Belial —

presupposes a cosmic war that has been going on since before human history began. The eschatological battle of 1QM is not the beginning of the conflict; it is its final resolution.

The War Scroll's dualism is not an import from Persian Zoroastrianism (as some scholars have argued) but an extrapolation from the Hebrew biblical tradition of cosmic warfare that includes Isaiah 14, Ezekiel 28, Genesis 6, and the divine council traditions of the Psalms. When 1QM describes Belial as the angel who has authority over the realm of wickedness from 'the beginning' of creation, it is drawing on the tradition that the adversarial power was established in his current role by his expulsion from the divine council in the primordial rebellion — that the fall of Lucifer created the domain of darkness over which he now rules.

The Prince of Light and the Prince of Darkness

The War Scroll's identification of the cosmic conflict as a war between the Prince of Light (

שַׁר הָאוּרוֹת — *Sar ha'Urot*) and Belial (בְּלִיעֵל — *the worthless one, the one without profit*) reflects the Qumran community's understanding that the conflict between light and darkness in human history is rooted in a conflict in the spiritual realm that preceded human history. The prince of darkness did not become the prince of darkness in response to human sin; he was already the prince of darkness when Adam walked in the garden. His domain was established before Eden was planted.

This is precisely what the pre-Adamic hypothesis requires: a pre-Adamic age of Lucifer's governance over the first creation, a rebellion and fall that established the domain of darkness over the ruins of the first world, and a new creation — the six days of Genesis 1:3–31 — that plants the Garden of Eden in the territory that the prince of darkness has claimed as his own. The cosmic war that the War Scroll describes as the drama of the end times is the final chapter of a story that began before the Garden — in the *tohu va'bohu* that was both the consequence of the primordial rebellion and the precondition for the redemptive creation that followed.



VIII. The Mechanism of the Primordial Judgment: How a Spiritual Rebellion Destroyed a Physical World

The most challenging question for the pre-Adamic hypothesis is not whether Lucifer fell but how his spiritual rebellion could have produced the physical catastrophe of the *tohu va'bohu*. How does the pride of a celestial being destroy a physical world? How does the lifting up of a heart produce the darkening of the heavens and the reduction of the earth to formlessness and void?

The biblical cosmology provides the answer in its account of how the created order is sustained. The creation is not a mechanism that runs on its own once God sets it in motion. It is a dependent order, sustained moment by moment by the active governance of the divine council, by the maintenance of the boundaries and structures that God established in the beginning, by the faithful stewardship of the celestial beings appointed to govern its various domains. When those governors rebel, when they abandon their appointed stations and pursue their own interests, the order they were appointed to maintain collapses.

This is not a merely physical process but a spiritual one. The physical world's order is downstream from the spiritual world's order. When the governing powers of the spiritual realm are corrupted, the physical realm they govern is disordered as a consequence. The covering cherub who 'covered' — who maintained and protected — the first creation, removed his covering when he rebelled. The world that his faithfulness had sustained fell into the chaos of the *tohu va'bohu* when his faithfulness was withdrawn.

This cosmological framework is not unique to the pre-Adamic hypothesis. It is the consistent framework of the entire biblical world picture. The nations are governed by divine beings (Deuteronomy 32:8–9; Daniel 10:13, 20–21); when those beings fail their governance, the nations fall into disorder. The natural world is governed by the winds and waters and lights that God set in their courses; when those governors are disrupted, the natural order is disrupted with them. The pre-Adamic catastrophe is simply the most fundamental instance of this principle: the most exalted of all the created governors rebelled, and the world most directly under his governance — the entire first creation — fell with him.

The Dark Waters of Genesis 1:2

“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.” — Genesis 1:2

The description of the earth in Genesis 1:2 — the darkness, the formlessness, the void, the deep — is not merely the description of physical disorder. It is the description of spiritual disorder made physically manifest. The darkness upon the face of the deep is the darkness of a world whose governing light has been extinguished. The formlessness and void are the condition of a world whose sustaining order has been withdrawn. The deep — the

תְּהוֹם (*tehom*) — is the abyss of unconstrained chaos, the condition of a world from which the divine governance has been removed and to which the Spirit of God must actively return in order to restore the conditions for life. The Spirit of God 'moves upon' — the Hebrew is **מְרַחֵף** (*merachephet*), hovering, brooding, the word used of a mother bird over her nest — because the world below is not ordered but ruined, not void by nature but void by catastrophe, not dark as a blank canvas is dark but dark as a shattered world is dark.

The Spirit's hovering over the dark waters of Genesis 1:2 is the divine response to the primordial catastrophe. The same Spirit who will later be breathed into Adam's nostrils, who will descend upon the apostles at Pentecost, who will one day renew the face of the entire creation — that Spirit is already at work in the opening verses of the Bible, hovering over a ruined world, preparing to speak light and order back into a darkness that rebellion has made.



IX. The Patristic Tradition: The Fathers on Lucifer's Primordial Fall

The identification of the figures in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 with Lucifer and his primordial fall is not a modern invention or a speculative extrapolation. It is the virtually unanimous position of the early Church Fathers, whose engagement with these passages produced some of the most theologically rich writing of the patristic era.

Origin of Alexandria (c. 184–253 CE)

Origen's *De Principiis* (On First Principles) contains what is, in the patristic tradition, the most systematic treatment of the fall of the devil and its cosmological consequences. Origen identifies the being of Isaiah 14:12 with the devil and argues that his fall preceded the creation of the world as we know it. In *De Principiis* I.5.4, he writes: 'We must believe that the prince of the adverse power was once blessed, and that he participated in the divine light, before he lacked the understanding of the divine grace and fell from blessedness into wickedness.'

Origen goes further than most patristic writers in drawing out the cosmological implications of the devil's fall. In his reading of Genesis 1:2, the *tohu va'bohu* is the consequence of the primordial rebellion — not an uncreated state but a fallen one. His view that God created successive worlds, each failing and being renewed, was condemned by later councils as going beyond the bounds of orthodox speculation. But his identification of the Isaiah 14 passage with a pre-creation cosmic fall was not condemned and remained standard in the patristic tradition.

Tertullian and Jerome

Tertullian, writing in *Against Marcion* (c. 207 CE), identifies the Isaiah 14 figure with the devil and explicitly connects his fall with the condition described in Genesis 1:2: the world of darkness and void is the world from which the devil has been cast down, the world that his corruption has disordered. Jerome's commentary on Isaiah, produced in Bethlehem in the late fourth and early fifth centuries, is the most detailed patristic engagement with Isaiah 14 and identifies the passage unambiguously with the fall of Satan. Jerome writes that the name Lucifer — which he renders in his own Vulgate translation as *Lucifer* — designates a being of extraordinary celestial brilliance whose fall from that brilliance is the first act of cosmic tragedy.

Gregory the Great

Gregory the Great's *Moralia in Job* (c. 578–595 CE), written during his monastic years before his pontificate, contains an extensive treatment of the devil's fall in the context of the book of Job's opening scene in the divine court. Gregory identifies the Satan of Job 1–2, the Lucifer of Isaiah 14, and the covering cherub of Ezekiel 28 as the same being, describes his fall as the event that divided the created order into the realm of the light and the realm of the dark, and argues that the world of Genesis 1:2 is the physical expression of the spiritual darkness that Lucifer's rebellion introduced into the cosmos. His treatment of the *tohu va'bohu* as the aftermath of a primordial spiritual catastrophe anticipates the pre-Adamic argument of this book by fourteen centuries.



X. From Rebellion to Restoration: The Theological Arc

We have now traced the primordial rebellion from its inner logic in the five 'I will' declarations of Isaiah 14, through its catastrophic consequences in the covering cherub's expulsion from the holy mountain of Ezekiel 28, to its physical manifestation in the *tohu va'bohu* of Genesis 1:2, to its eyewitness confirmation in Jesus' declaration in Luke 10:18, to its cosmic expression in the war of Revelation 12, to its cosmological elaboration in the Enochic tradition and the War Scroll of Qumran, and to its theological interpretation in the great minds of the patristic era.

The convergence of this evidence — biblical, extra-canonical, apostolic, patristic — establishes the fall of Lucifer as the most fundamental datum of the pre-Adamic hypothesis. Without it, the

hypothesis is a puzzle without a solution: we can observe that the earth became *tohu va'bohu*, we can trace the evidence of a prior creation, we can note the presence of a pre-Adamic remnant in the land of Nod, but we cannot explain the mechanism of the catastrophe that produced all of this. With it, the entire pre-Adamic narrative becomes coherent: a created order of extraordinary beauty and sophistication, governed by the most glorious of God's creatures, destroyed by that creature's pride and restored by the patient, inexhaustible creative love of the God who made it.

The theological arc that runs from the fall of Lucifer to the restoration of all things in Christ is the deepest structure of the Bible's story. It does not begin with Adam. It begins with a rebellion in the heavenly court that shattered a world God had made to be inhabited. It moves through the six days of restoration, through Adam's garden and Adam's fall, through the coexistence and corruption of the two lines, through the Flood and the covenant with Noah, through Abraham and Israel and the long preparation for the Incarnation, to the moment when the Son of God — who was there when Satan fell like lightning — enters the world that the lightning scorched and begins the work of final, irreversible restoration.

The Spirit who hovered over the dark waters of Genesis 1:2 is the same Spirit who descended upon Jesus at His baptism, the same Spirit who raised Him from the dead, the same Spirit who is at work in the world today, preparing it for the renewal of all things that Revelation 21–22 describes as the final act of the story that the fall of Lucifer began. The first light that pierced the darkness of Genesis 1:3 is the first note of the overture that will end in the eternal day of the New Creation, where the former things are passed away and the God who said 'Let there be light' over a ruined world says, finally and forever, 'Behold, I make all things new.'

The fall of Lucifer is not the first tragedy of the Bible. It is the first chapter of the Gospel — the declaration that what was lost will be found, what was broken will be mended, what was emptied will be replenished. This is the God of Genesis 1:3, who speaks light into the darkness that pride has made.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

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- [2] On the Hebrew Helel ben Shachar (הֵלֵל בֶּן-שַׁחַר) and its cognate traditions in Ugaritic mythology (the Shahar/Shalem cycle): Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 55–61. The lexical entry for helel in BDB, p. 239. On *hamechallel goyim* (weakener of nations): Franz Delitzsch, *Biblical Commentary on the Prophecies of Isaiah*, vol. 1 (T&T Clark, 1873), pp. 312–315.
- [3] On Luke 10:18 and the imperfect *etheōrown*: I. Howard Marshall, *The Gospel of Luke*, NIGTC (Eerdmans, 1978), pp. 428–429. The cosmological reading of the verse as a reference to the primordial fall rather than the Cross is argued in Darrell L. Bock, *Luke 9:51–24:53*, BECNT (Baker Academic, 1996), pp. 1003–1005. For the pre-existent Logos as eyewitness: Raymond E. Brown, *The Gospel According to John I–XII* (Doubleday, 1966), pp. cxxii–cxxiii.
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simultaneously) is argued in Beale, pp. 626–628. On the third of the stars and its relation to the primordial fall: David E. Aune, *Revelation 6–16*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 52B (Nelson, 1998), pp. 680–686.

- [5] On the War Scroll (1QM) and its cosmological dualism: Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness* (Oxford University Press, 1962), pp. 229–242. On the question of Persian influence on Qumran dualism: Philip R. Davies, *1QM, the War Scroll from Qumran: Its Structure and History* (Biblical Institute Press, 1977), pp. 107–121. The case for indigenous Hebrew biblical origins of the dualism: John J. Collins, *Apocalypticism in the Dead Sea Scrolls* (Routledge, 1997), pp. 30–51.
- [6] On the patristic tradition: Origen, *De Principiis* I.5.4, in Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers*, vol. 4 (Hendrickson, 1994), pp. 258–259. Tertullian, *Against Marcion* II.10, *ibid.*, vol. 3, pp. 306–307. Jerome, *Commentary on Isaiah*, on 14:12–15, in *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament XI*, ed. Steven A. McKinion (IVP, 2004), pp. 109–111. Gregory the Great, *Moralia in Job* XXXII.23, in *Ancient Christian Commentary: Job*, ed. Manlio Simonetti (IVP, 2006), pp. 18–20.



— End of Chapter Six —

CHAPTER SEVEN

Two Adams, Two Creations: The Architecture of Genesis 1 and 2

Why the General Creation of Humanity and the Specific Formation of Adam Are Not the Same Event



Primary Sources: *Genesis 1:26–27 · Genesis 2:7 · 1 Corinthians 15:45–49 · Romans 5:14 · Philo of Alexandria · Zohar (Bereshit)*



“So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.” — **Genesis 1:27**

“And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul.” — **Genesis 2:7**

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy; the second man is the Lord from heaven.” — **1 Corinthians 15:45–47**

I. The Oldest Problem in Biblical Interpretation

The question of whether Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 describe the same creation event, or two different creation events, is not a novelty of modern source criticism. It is the oldest problem in

the interpretation of Genesis, raised by the earliest Jewish commentators, wrestled with by the Church Fathers, and never satisfactorily resolved by any reading that insists the two accounts must be harmonized into a single narrative of one original act of human creation.

The documentary hypothesis of modern critical scholarship — the theory that Genesis 1 and 2 were composed by different authors (the Priestly source and the Yahwist source) and awkwardly combined by a later editor — is the most influential modern attempt to account for the differences between the two accounts. But it is not the only attempt, and for those who hold to the unity and divine inspiration of Scripture, it is not a satisfying one. The differences between Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7 are real and cannot be explained away by harmonization; but neither need they be explained by the fracturing of the text into multiple compositional strands.

The pre-Adamic reading offers a third way: the two accounts describe two genuinely different events because they are two genuinely different events. Genesis 1:26–27 describes the general creation of humanity as a category — the introduction of the image-bearer into the created order as a class of being. Genesis 2:7 describes the specific, singular, covenant-laden formation of one particular man — the man who will become the progenitor of the line through whom the Messiah comes, the first covenant human, the new Adam whom Paul will later contrast with the Last Adam to explain the mechanism of redemption. These are not duplicate accounts of the same event. They are sequential accounts of two different acts in the same divine plan.

This chapter develops this argument in its full complexity: through the literary architecture of the Genesis text, through the Hebrew verbs that distinguish the two acts, through the divine names that signal their different theological registers, through the testimony of Philo of Alexandria and the Zohar, and through Paul’s two-Adam theology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 — which, read carefully, is far more compatible with the pre-Adamic reading than most interpreters have recognized.



II. The Literary Architecture of Genesis 1–2

The Structural Break at Genesis 2:4

Before examining the specific differences between Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7, we must attend to a structural feature of the Genesis text that is often overlooked in the debate about the two creation accounts: the explicit narrative seam at Genesis 2:4.

*“These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” — **Genesis 2:4***

The phrase ‘these are the generations’ (אֵלֶּה תּוֹלְדוֹת — *elleh toledot*) is one of the most significant structural formulas in the entire book of Genesis. It appears eleven times in Genesis, each time functioning as a heading or colophon that marks a transition to a new section of the narrative, a new phase of the genealogical or historical account. It is the formula that introduces the generations of Noah (6:9), the generations of Shem (11:10), the generations of Terah (11:27), and so on through the book.

At Genesis 2:4, this formula appears for the first time in the book, and it marks a transition from the six-day creation account of Genesis 1:1–2:3 to the second narrative that begins in

Genesis 2:4 and continues through chapter 3. The structural signal is unmistakable: the author of Genesis is beginning something new at 2:4. He is not continuing the same narrative with additional detail; he is opening a new section of the record with its own focus, its own vocabulary, and its own theological emphasis.

The documentary hypothesis explains this structural break as the beginning of a new source document. The pre-Adamic reading explains it as the beginning of a new narrative focus: after the general creation of all things including humanity in Genesis 1, the narrative zooms in on a specific, particular event within that wider creation — the formation of the specific man Adam, whose story and whose line will be the subject of everything that follows.

The Change of Divine Name

The structural break at Genesis 2:4 is accompanied by a change in the divine name used throughout the text that is among the most theologically significant features of the Genesis narrative.

In Genesis 1:1–2:3, the creation account, God is referred to exclusively by the name Elohim (אֱלֹהִים). Elohim is the cosmic name of God — the name that emphasizes His power, His authority over all creation, His role as the Creator and Ruler of the universe. It is the name used when the text is concerned with God’s relationship to the cosmos as a whole, with His sovereign, creative, governing power over all that exists.

From Genesis 2:4 onward through the narrative of Adam and Eve, the divine name shifts to יהוה (YHWH Elohim) — the LORD God. YHWH is the covenant name of God, the personal name revealed to Moses at the burning bush, the name that emphasizes God’s personal, relational, covenant-keeping character. It is the name used when the text is concerned with God’s relationship to specific individuals and to the covenant people.

The shift from Elohim to YHWH Elohim at the structural seam of Genesis 2:4 is not a coincidence or a compositional accident. It is a theological signal: the narrative is moving from the account of God’s cosmic, categorical creation of all things — including humanity as a category — to the account of God’s personal, covenant-laden formation of one specific man and the establishment of His covenant relationship with that man. The change of divine name marks the change of theological register. The God who creates categories in Genesis 1 enters into covenant relationship in Genesis 2, and the change of name marks the change.



III. Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7 Side by Side

We have already introduced the key differences between the two accounts in earlier chapters, particularly in Chapter Three’s examination of the bara’/yatsar distinction. Here we bring all the differences together in a systematic comparison that lays the full architecture of the two accounts side by side.

**Genesis 1:26–27 — The General
Creation**

**Genesis 2:7 — The Formation of
Adam**

Verb: bara' (בָּרָא) — to create; to bring a new category into existence	Verb: yatsar (יָצַר) — to form; a craftsman shaping material that already exists
Subject: אָדָם (adam) used generically — humanity as a category	Subject: a specific individual; later named Adam in narrative context
Both male and female created simultaneously: “male and female created he them”	No woman yet; Eve is formed separately in 2:21–22 from Adam’s rib
Divine name used: Elohim (אֱלֹהִים) — God in His creative power and cosmic authority	Divine name: LORD God (YHWH Elohim) — the covenant name, personal and relational
No specific location given; creation is global and categorical	Specific location: placed in the Garden of Eden, a particular garden
Mandate: have dominion over all living things on the earth	Mandate: dress and keep this garden; specific stewardship of a specific place
Breath of life: not specifically mentioned	God breathes nishmat chayyim (נִשְׁמַת חַיִּים) directly into his nostrils — intimate, singular, elective
Image: created in the image and likeness of God	Image not mentioned; emphasis is on the specific act of formation and divine breath
Context: Day Six of the six-day restoration sequence	Context: a separate narrative beginning with Genesis 2:4 — “these are the generations”

The differences catalogued in this table are not superficial variations that a harmonizing reading can smooth away. They are systematic, multi-dimensional divergences that affect vocabulary, grammar, theology, geography, and narrative focus simultaneously. No single difference is by itself conclusive; but the convergence of all these differences in the same two short passages points toward the same conclusion from multiple angles: these are two different events in the same divine plan, not two duplicate accounts of the same event.

The most decisive difference is the seventh: the breath of life. In Genesis 1:27, the creation of humanity is described without any mention of the divine breath. The image-bearers are created; they are male and female; they are given the dominion mandate. But there is no mention of God breathing into them. In Genesis 2:7, the breath is everything: God breathes His own nishmat chayyim — the breath of lives, the plural suggesting a fullness and vitality that surpasses mere animation — directly into the nostrils of this specific man. The intimacy of the act is without parallel in the creation account: God’s own breath, His own life, transmitted in direct and personal contact to one specific being He has formed with His own hands from the dust of a specific ground.

The humanity of Genesis 1:27 receives the image of God. The Adam of Genesis 2:7 receives the breath of God. The image is categorical; the breath is personal. The image defines a kind of being; the breath elects a specific individual into covenant intimacy.



IV. The Hebrew Verbs: *Bara'* and *Yatsar* in Their Full Semantic Range

The distinction between the two Hebrew verbs used in the two creation accounts — *bara'* in Genesis 1:27 and *yatsar* in Genesis 2:7 — has been introduced in earlier chapters. Here we examine their full semantic range across the Old Testament, because the pattern of their usage beyond Genesis illuminates the theological significance of the choice between them in the creation accounts.

Bara': The Creation of Categories

בָּרָא (*bara'*) — to create; to bring into existence something categorically new — used only of divine action; never of human activity

The Hebrew verb *bara'* appears approximately fifty times in the Old Testament, and it has one remarkable characteristic that distinguishes it from all other Hebrew verbs of making or creating: it is used exclusively of divine action. Human beings can build, make, form, fashion, and craft; they cannot *bara'*. The verb is reserved for what only God does. And what God does with *bara'* is consistently the introduction of something genuinely new into the created order — not the reshaping of existing material but the origination of a new category of existence.

In Genesis 1:1, *bara'* creates the heaven and the earth — the cosmos itself, out of nothing. In Genesis 1:21, *bara'* creates the great sea creatures — the first introduction of animal life on the scale of the great monsters of the deep, a new category of creaturely life. In Genesis 1:27, *bara'* creates the image-bearer — the introduction into the created order of a new kind of being, one made in the divine likeness, one capable of covenant relationship, one designed to serve as God's representative in the governance of the earth.

The creation of humanity by *bara'* in Genesis 1:27 is therefore the introduction of the image-bearer as a category: God is not creating one man and one woman, but the category 'image-bearing humanity' — the class of beings who will carry the divine likeness in the world. The pre-Adamic race belongs to this category; Adam will be elected from within this category for covenant headship; every human being since belongs to this category by virtue of their humanity. *Bara'* creates the class; *yatsar* forms the individual.

Yatsar: The Formation of Particulars

יָצַר (*yatsar*) — to form, to fashion, to shape — the word of a potter or craftsman working with existing material toward a particular purpose

The Hebrew verb *yatsar* is the verb of the potter. It appears in its most characteristic usage in Jeremiah 18:2–6, where God sends Jeremiah to the potter's house to watch the potter working at his wheel, shaping and reshaping the clay until it achieves the form he intends. The potter does not create the clay; the clay already exists. What the potter does is form it — exercise his craftsman's skill upon existing material to achieve a specific, intended shape.

When God *yatsar's* Adam from the dust of the ground in Genesis 2:7, He is doing what the potter does: exercising His creative skill upon existing material — the dust of the *adamah* (אֲדָמָה — the ground, the earth, from which Adam's name is derived) — to form a specific, particular individual. The dust was already there. The humanity of Genesis 1:27 was already in existence

in the world. What God does in Genesis 2:7 is select a specific member from the category of humanity He created in Genesis 1:27, form him with intimate, craftsman's care from the ground of a particular place, and breathe His own life into him in an act of covenant election.

Yatsar is also the verb used in Isaiah 44:2: 'Thus saith the LORD that made thee, and formed thee (וַיַּצְרֵךְ) from the womb, who will help thee.' And in Isaiah 43:1: 'I have formed thee; I have called thee by thy name; thou art mine.' Yatsar is the verb of individual election, of personal formation, of the divine choice to take a specific individual and shape them for a specific covenant purpose. This is exactly what happens in Genesis 2:7: God forms Adam — not humanity in general, but this man, from this dust, for this garden, for this covenant.



V. *The Nishmat Chayyim: The Breath That Distinguishes*

No detail in the two creation accounts is more theologically decisive than the breath of life that God breathes into Adam's nostrils in Genesis 2:7. We have noted its absence from Genesis 1:27; we have noted its singular intimacy in Genesis 2:7. We must now attend to the precise Hebrew phrase used and what it tells us about the nature of the covenant election it represents.

נְשִׁמַת חַיִּים (*nishmat chayyim*) — the breath of lives — from neshamah (the divine breath, the spirit-breath of God) and chayyim (lives, plural — suggesting fullness and multiplicity of vital force)

The word neshamah (נְשָׁמָה) is not the ordinary Hebrew word for breath or wind. The ordinary words are ruach (רוּחַ — spirit, wind, breath) and nefesh (נֶפֶשׁ — soul, life, living being). Neshamah is a rarer and more specifically divine word, used predominantly of God's breath as the source of human consciousness, wisdom, and moral capacity. In Job 32:8, Elihu declares: 'But there is a spirit in man: and the inspiration of the Almighty (נְשִׁמַת שַׁדַּי — nishmat Shaddai) giveth them understanding.' In Job 33:4: 'The Spirit of God hath made me, and the breath of the Almighty (נְשִׁמַת שַׁדַּי) hath given me life.' The neshamah is not merely the animating breath that makes a body live; it is the specific divine endowment that gives human beings their capacity for divine consciousness, for wisdom, for the kind of relational intimacy with God that distinguishes the covenant man from every other creature.

The plural chayyim (lives rather than life) reinforces the extraordinary character of this endowment. Most scholars interpret the plural as an intensive plural — the breath of fullness of life, the breath of life in its richest and most complete expression. Some interpreters see in the plural a hint of the trinitarian fullness of the divine life: the breath that God breathes into Adam carries the full weight of divine vitality, not a portion of it.

When God breathes the nishmat chayyim into Adam's nostrils, He is doing something He does not do for any other being in the creation narrative. He does not breathe into the sea creatures of Genesis 1:21. He does not breathe into the land animals of Genesis 1:24–25. He does not, critically, breathe into the humanity of Genesis 1:27. Only Adam receives the neshamah directly, personally, in an act of God-to-man contact that is without parallel in the Bible until the moment in John 20:22 when the risen Jesus 'breathed on' His disciples and said 'Receive ye the Holy Ghost' — a deliberate echo of Genesis 2:7 that signals the beginning of the new covenant humanity.

The Nishmat Chayyim and the Pre-Adamic Race

The absence of the nishmat chayyim from the creation of humanity in Genesis 1:27 does not mean that the pre-Adamic race was not fully human. It means that they were human without the specific covenant endowment that the nishmat chayyim represents. They were image-bearers — the image of God was established in Genesis 1:27 as the category to which all human beings belong — but they did not bear the covenant breath, the divine neshamah that made Adam specifically the head of the redemptive line.

This distinction — between bearing the image and receiving the breath — is the pre-Adamic reading's answer to the objection that a pre-Adamic race would constitute fully human beings for whom Christ did not die. On the pre-Adamic reading, the atoning work of Christ is not narrowed to the Adamic line; it is expanded to embrace all image-bearers across all ages. The Last Adam's work, as Paul declares in Colossians 1:20, is to reconcile 'all things' — not the Adamic covenant line alone but the entire created order, including the pre-Adamic image-bearers who inhabited the first creation before Adam's covenant was established.



VI. Philo of Alexandria: The Two Creations in the Jewish-Greek Tradition

Philo of Alexandria · c. 20 BCE – 50 CE · Jewish philosopher; wrote in Greek · Alexandria, Egypt

Philo of Alexandria is the most important Jewish philosopher of the Hellenistic period and the most sophisticated pre-Christian interpreter of the Genesis creation accounts. Writing in Greek for an educated Greco-Roman audience, Philo developed an allegorical reading of Genesis that distinguished between two orders of human creation: the ideal, heavenly human of Genesis 1:27 and the particular, earthly human of Genesis 2:7. While his Platonist framework leads to conclusions different from those of the pre-Adamic reading, his recognition of a genuine distinction between the two creation accounts is ancient, sophisticated, and theologically serious. Primary texts: *Legum Allegoriae* (Allegorical Commentary), *De Opificio Mundi* (On the Creation of the World). Translation: F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo* (Loeb Classical Library, 10 vols., Harvard University Press, 1929–1953).

Philo's treatment of the two creation accounts in *De Opificio Mundi* and the *Legum Allegoriae* is, in many respects, the most sophisticated ancient engagement with the problem we are addressing. Writing in the first century BCE to CE, Philo was acutely aware that Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 describe what appear to be two different acts of human creation, and he developed an elaborate interpretive framework to account for the difference.

For Philo, the human being created in Genesis 1:27 is the 'heavenly man' — the ideal, intelligible, incorporeal image-bearer who exists in the realm of ideas and archetypes. This is the universal human, the human as God conceived humanity in its highest and most perfect form. The Adam formed in Genesis 2:7 is the 'earthly man' — the particular, material, embodied individual made from the dust of the ground, the specific human being who inhabits the specific garden of Eden.

Philo's framework is Platonist rather than historical: he distinguishes the two creations along the axis of ideal vs. particular rather than along the axis of general category vs. specific individual. His 'heavenly man' does not literally exist before his 'earthly man' in historical time; the distinction is ontological and philosophical rather than chronological.

But Philo's basic observation — that Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 describe different orders of human being — is independent of his Platonist framework, and it is this basic observation that the pre-Adamic reading shares. Philo saw, with remarkable clarity, that the two passages do not merely describe the same event twice. They describe different things: one the introduction of the human category into the created order, the other the formation of a particular human being. The pre-Adamic reading historicizes what Philo kept in the realm of ideas: the general humanity of Genesis 1:27 is the pre-Adamic race in its historical reality; the specific Adam of Genesis 2:7 is the covenant individual elected from that humanity for the redemptive purpose.



VII. *The Zohar: The Two Adams in the Kabbalistic Tradition*

The Zohar (Sefer ha-Zohar — The Book of Radiance) · *Compiled by Moses de León, Castile, c. 1280–1286 CE; drawing on traditions of considerably greater antiquity · Central text of Kabbalah*

The Zohar is the foundational text of Jewish mysticism (Kabbalah), presenting itself as the teachings of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (2nd century CE) and his disciples. Its commentary on Genesis (Bereshit) is the longest and theologically richest section of the work, and it contains extensive treatment of the creation of humanity — specifically engaging the difference between the human of Genesis 1:27 and the Adam of Genesis 2:7. The Zohar also preserves the doctrine of Shemittot (cosmic ages) and contains traditions about the souls of the pre-Adamic ages. Translation: Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (12 vols., Stanford University Press, 2004–2017).

The Zohar's commentary on Genesis in Bereshit engages the two creation accounts with a depth and specificity that has no parallel in the rabbinic mainstream. Its treatment is, at points, explicitly pre-Adamic: it distinguishes between two orders of human being and situates this distinction within a cosmic framework of prior ages and prior creations.

The Zohar on Genesis 1:27 (Bereshit 13b) describes the creation of the primordial Adam (אדם קדמון — Adam Kadmon) as a cosmic figure of universal extent: a being whose image encompasses the entire created order, whose face reflects the divine light, whose body is co-extensive with the cosmos itself. This primordial Adam is not the historical Adam of Genesis 2:7; he is the universal human archetype, the celestial template of humanity whose creation in Genesis 1:27 precedes the formation of the earthly Adam.

Adam Kadmon, in the Zoharic tradition, is associated with the primordial light of Genesis 1:3 — the light that existed before the sun and moon were created, the light of the first day of restoration. He is the image-bearer in his cosmic, universal form: the humanity that God intended when He said 'Let us make man in our image.' He is not a specific individual; he is the prototype of all image-bearing humanity.

The historical Adam of Genesis 2:7 — the Adam formed from dust, the Adam of the garden, the Adam whose fall is the subject of Genesis 3 — is, in the Zoharic tradition, a smaller and more particular expression of the Adam Kadmon: the instantiation of the universal archetype in a specific individual at a specific moment. The Zohar thus preserves, within its Kabbalistic framework, the same fundamental insight that the pre-Adamic reading argues from the biblical text itself: the human of Genesis 1:27 and the Adam of Genesis 2:7 are not the same.

The Shemittot and the Pre-Adamic Souls

The Zohar's doctrine of Shemittot — cosmic cycles of creation, each lasting thousands of years, each governed by a different divine attribute — explicitly posits the existence of human beings before the Adam of Genesis 2:7. In Zohar Bereshit 24b, the text states that 'there were worlds created and destroyed before the present one' and that the souls of those prior worlds' inhabitants exist in a special class of souls waiting for redemption in the final consummation. The souls of the pre-Adamic world are not lost; they are preserved for a purpose that the present age has not yet fulfilled.

Whether or not one accepts the Zoharic framework as authoritative, its preservation of this tradition is itself significant. The Kabbalistic tradition, drawing on sources that it claims predate the Zohar's compilation, independently arrives at the conclusion that the created order has a history older than Adam's, that human beings existed before the covenant man of Genesis 2:7, and that their existence is not erased by the creation of Adam but continues in a form that the divine plan will eventually address. This is, in its essentials, the pre-Adamic hypothesis expressed in the vocabulary of Jewish mysticism.



VIII. Paul's Two-Adam Theology: 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5

The most powerful potential objection to the pre-Adamic reading comes from Paul. If Adam was not the first human being — if a general humanity existed before the covenant formation of Genesis 2:7 — then what becomes of Paul's statement in 1 Corinthians 15:45 that 'the first man Adam was made a living soul'? And what becomes of his argument in Romans 5 that sin and death entered the world through Adam and that the remedy for that entry is Christ, the Last Adam?

These are the questions that this section addresses. And the answer, developed with care from the full context of Paul's two-Adam theology, is that Paul's argument not only survives the pre-Adamic reading — it is, in certain respects, illuminated by it.

1 Corinthians 15:45–49: The First and Last Adams

“And so it is written, The first man Adam was made a living soul; the last Adam was made a quickening spirit. Howbeit that was not first which is spiritual, but that which is natural; and afterward that which is spiritual. The first man is of the earth, earthy: the second man is the Lord from heaven. As is the earthy, such are they also that are earthy: and as is the heavenly, such are they also that are heavenly. And as we have borne the image of the earthy, we shall also bear the image of the heavenly.” — 1

Corinthians 15:45–49

Paul’s statement ‘the first man Adam was made a living soul’ is a quotation of Genesis 2:7. He is not saying ‘Adam was the first human being ever to exist’; he is saying ‘the first Adam — the Adam of Genesis 2:7, the Adam who became a living soul through the nishmat chayyim — is the starting point of the redemptive typology I am about to develop.’ Paul’s ‘first Adam’ is first in the redemptive sequence, not necessarily first in absolute chronological order.

The contrast Paul draws is not between the first human being and the last human being. It is between two orders of humanity: the natural, earthy order represented by the Adam of Genesis 2:7 (formed from dust, made a living soul, head of the mortal line), and the spiritual, heavenly order represented by the Last Adam (the Lord from heaven, a life-giving spirit, head of the resurrection life). These are two orders of being that Paul presents as sequential in the experience of the believer: ‘first the natural, then the spiritual.’

What Paul is establishing is the typological relationship between Adam and Christ — the way in which Adam’s role as covenant head of the mortal line anticipates and is fulfilled by Christ’s role as covenant head of the immortal line. This typological relationship does not require Adam to be the chronologically first human being in history. It requires Adam to be the first in the redemptive sequence, the representative head of the covenant humanity whose failure creates the need for the Last Adam’s redemption.

The First Adam	Paul’s Statement	The Last Adam
Made from the dust of the ground	1 Cor 15:47 — “the first man is of the earth, earthy”	The Lord from heaven — 2nd man is of a different order entirely
Became a living soul (nephesh chayyah)	1 Cor 15:45 — “the first man Adam became a living soul”	Became a life-giving spirit (pneuma zōopoion)
Head of the natural/Adamic order	Romans 5:14 — “a figure of him that was to come”	Head of the new creation / resurrection order
In whose sin death entered the covenant line	Romans 5:12 — “by one man sin entered into the world”	In whose obedience life is restored to the covenant line
Perfect in his generations (Gen 6:9 Noah) — covenant purity	1 Cor 15:49 — we bear the image of both Adams in succession	Perfect and uncontaminated by the first Adam’s failure

Romans 5:12–21: The One Man Through Whom Sin and Death Entered

“Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned: (For until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam’s transgression, who is a figure of him that was to come.)” — Romans 5:12–14

Romans 5:12 is Paul’s most direct statement about the theological significance of Adam: ‘by one man sin entered into the world.’ This statement has been read as asserting that sin did not exist in any form before Adam. But Paul’s argument requires only that sin entered the world through

Adam in the specific covenantal sense: that the death and condemnation under which all of Adam's descendants live entered the covenant line through Adam's transgression.

Paul is not making a statement about the cosmological history of sin in the universe. He knows that sin existed before Adam: Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, which Paul certainly knew, describe a sin that preceded Adam's by the distance between heaven and earth. What Paul is arguing is that within the covenant order — the order established in Genesis 2:7, the order of the *nishmat chayyim*, the order within which death is the specific consequence of the specific transgression of the covenant command — the entry point of sin is Adam. The covenant line fell in Adam; the covenant line is redeemed in Christ.

Romans 5:14 is particularly revealing: 'death reigned from Adam to Moses, even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' The phrase 'the similitude of Adam's transgression' (τί ὁμοιώματι τῆς παραβάσεως Ἀδάμ) acknowledges that there were people between Adam and Moses who died without themselves committing the specific kind of transgression that Adam committed — the violation of a specific divine command. This is a remarkable concession: Paul is acknowledging that the death which reigned from Adam to Moses affected people whose sin was not of the same specific character as Adam's. On the pre-Adamic reading, among these people were the pre-Adamic remnant, who died not because they had violated the covenant command given to Adam but because they lived in a world under the dominion of sin and death that Adam's fall had deepened and confirmed.



IX. Isaac de La Peyrère Revisited: The Biblical Argument for Two Creations

We encountered Isaac de La Peyrère in Chapter Three and mentioned his *Prae-Adamitae* (1655) as the first systematic modern argument for the pre-Adamic hypothesis. Here we return to his specific exegetical argument for the two-creation reading, because it is, in its essentials, the most direct and economical statement of the argument this chapter has been developing.

De La Peyrère's central thesis was that Genesis 1:26–27 describes the creation of the Gentile nations — the general humanity of the world — while Genesis 2:7 describes the specific creation of Adam, the progenitor of the Jewish people and the covenant line. His primary textual evidence was Romans 5:12–14: 'sin entered into the world' through Adam; but 'sin is not imputed when there is no law'; and 'death reigned from Adam to Moses even over them that had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.' De La Peyrère read this passage as Paul's acknowledgement that there were human beings before Adam who sinned and died, but whose sin was of a different character from Adam's — because they had no specific covenant law to violate, as Adam did.

De La Peyrère's reading of Romans 5 is more sophisticated than it has generally been credited. The parenthesis in Romans 5:13–14 ('for until the law sin was in the world: but sin is not imputed when there is no law. Nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses') does not function most naturally as a parenthesis about the period between Adam and Moses. It functions as a statement about the logical condition for imputed transgression: without a specific law, specific transgression cannot be imputed. The pre-Adamic race had no specific covenant law; therefore their sin, real as it was, was not imputed in the specific way that Adam's transgression was imputed.

This does not mean that de La Peyrère was right in every detail — his racially charged application of the pre-Adamic hypothesis to the distinction between Jews and Gentiles is one that no responsible interpreter would follow. But his exegetical observation about the distinction between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, and his reading of Romans 5 as implying a pre-Adamic humanity without specific covenant law, are — separated from his polemical context and read in the light of the full argument of this book — more compelling than the Church’s violent reaction to his work acknowledged.



X. Adam as Covenant Head: The Theology of Specific Election

We have now established, from the literary architecture of Genesis 1–2, from the Hebrew verbs *bara’* and *yatsar*, from the *nishmat chayyim* and its absence from the general creation, from the change of divine name, from Philo and the Zohar and de La Peyrère, and from Paul’s two-Adam theology, that Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 describe two different events: the general creation of humanity as a category and the specific covenant formation of one individual.

The theological conclusion that this evidence demands is this: Adam is not the first human being. He is the first covenant human — the first human being elected from within the general humanity of Genesis 1:27 for the specific covenant purpose that Genesis 2 describes. His formation is not the origin of the human race; it is the beginning of the covenant history through which the human race — including the pre-Adamic remnant who inhabit the land of Nod, including the daughters of men who marry the sons of God, including every nation of the post-Flood world — will be addressed by the redemptive love of the God who breathed His life into one specific man in one specific garden.

The doctrine of divine election, which the New Testament develops in its fullness in the election of Israel from among the nations and the election of the Church from within Israel, has its deepest roots here: in the moment when God, having created the general category of image-bearing humanity in Genesis 1:27, reached into that category and formed one man with His own hands, breathed His own life into that man’s nostrils, and said: through this one, I will redeem the rest.

Adam does not lose his theological significance in the pre-Adamic reading. He gains it. He becomes not the origin of a race but the elect head of a mission — the bearer of the divine breath in a world that has been breathing without it, the covenant representative of the God who formed the earth to be inhabited, the first specific human response to the promise that the *tohu va’bohu* would not have the last word.

Adam is not the beginning of the human story. He is the beginning of the covenant story — the moment when the God of the pre-Adamic world, who had watched His first creation fall and had patiently restored it, chose one man from the recovered earth and said: through you, I will begin again. Not just the earth. Everything.

The two creation accounts of Genesis are not a literary problem to be solved. They are a theological architecture to be inhabited. Genesis 1:27 gives us the canvas: image-bearing humanity, made for the divine likeness, spread across the earth in all its pre-Adamic fullness. Genesis 2:7 gives us the first stroke of the masterpiece: one man, formed from dust, filled with

the divine breath, placed in a garden — the seed of the redemption of everything the canvas contains.



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- [2] On the significance of the divine name change from Elohim to YHWH Elohim at Genesis 2:4: Umberto Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis and the Composition of the Pentateuch* (Magnes Press, 1961), pp. 28–41 (arguing against the documentary hypothesis on the basis of the theological, not merely compositional, significance of the name change). Also: Victor P. Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17*, NICOT (Eerdmans, 1990), pp. 151–154.
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- [5] On Philo’s two-Adam doctrine: *De Opificio Mundi* 134–135, in F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo*, vol. 1, Loeb Classical Library (Harvard University Press, 1929), pp. 106–109. The philosophical framework: David T. Runia, *Philo of Alexandria and the Timaeus of Plato* (Brill, 1986), pp. 328–338. The significance of Philo’s two-Adam doctrine for the pre-Adamic hypothesis: Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work and Influence* (Brill, 1987), pp. 42–48.
- [6] On the Zohar’s Adam Kadmon and the two creation accounts: Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*, vol. 1 (Stanford University Press, 2004), pp. 78–89 (Bereshit 13b–15a, with notes). On Adam Kadmon in the broader Kabbalistic tradition: Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Keter Publishing, 1974), pp. 152–156. On Paul’s two-Adam theology in its pre-Adamic context: C. K. Barrett, *A Commentary on the First Epistle to the Corinthians*, 2nd ed. (A&C Black, 1971), pp. 372–379; and Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, Anchor Bible vol. 33 (Doubleday, 1993), pp. 405–428.



— End of Chapter Seven —

CHAPTER EIGHT

Mesopotamia Remembers:

Echoes of the Pre-Adamic World in the Ancient Near East

The Atrahasis Epic, the Sumerian King List, and the Shared Memory of Civilizations Before the Flood



Primary Sources: *Atrahasis Epic · Eridu Genesis · Enuma Elish · Epic of Gilgamesh · Berossus (Babyloniaca) · Ugaritic Texts*



*“And Terah took Abram his son, and Lot the son of Haran his son’s son, and Sarai his daughter in law, his son Abram’s wife; and they went forth with them from Ur of the Chaldees, to go into the land of Canaan.” — **Genesis 11:31***

*“When the gods instead of man did the work, bore the loads, the gods’ load was too great, the work too hard, the trouble too much: the great Anunnaku, the seven gods of heaven, had made the Igigi bear the load. Atra-hasis opened his mouth to speak to his lord Enki.” — **Atrahasis Epic, Tablet I, lines 1–8***

*“When the kingship was lowered from heaven, the kingship was in Eridu. In Eridu, Alulim became king; he ruled for 28,800 years. Alaljar ruled for 36,000 years. Two kings ruled for 64,800 years. Then Eridu fell and its kingship was carried to Bad-tibira.” — **Sumerian King List (Weld-Blundell Prism)***

I. The Library at Ur

There is a detail in the call of Abraham that most readers pass over without pause, but that carries, for the argument of this book, an extraordinary weight of implication. When God calls Abram out of his homeland in Genesis 11:31, the city he is called out of is Ur of the Chaldeans — ancient Ur, one of the oldest and most cosmopolitan cities in the world. Ur was not a provincial backwater. It was, at the height of its power in the third millennium BCE, the most sophisticated city on earth: a city of monumental architecture, an advanced legal system, schools that taught mathematics and astronomy and music, and a library tradition that preserved in cuneiform script the oldest written records in human history.

Abraham was not an illiterate nomad who emerged from the desert carrying nothing but livestock and a divine command. He was a man formed by one of the world’s great civilizations, a man who had grown up in a city where the Sumerian King List was already ancient, where the flood stories of Ziusudra and Atrahasis were the common cultural currency of educated people, where the Enuma Elish and its account of cosmic origins was the standard cosmological framework of the Mesopotamian world. When God called him westward, He called a man who carried in his cultural memory the deepest archives of the ancient Near Eastern tradition.

The relationship between the biblical narrative and the Mesopotamian literary tradition is one of the most debated questions in all of biblical scholarship. The standard critical approach treats the Mesopotamian texts as sources from which the biblical authors borrowed and theologized: the Hebrew Flood narrative adapts the Atrahasis Epic; the Hebrew creation account polemic against the Enuma Elish; the Hebrew wisdom tradition draws on the Mesopotamian. On this reading, the biblical text is a culturally conditioned product of its environment, shaped by the very tradition it claims to transcend.

The pre-Adamic reading takes a different view. The biblical text is not a borrowing from the Mesopotamian tradition. Both are independent witnesses to the same ancient memory — a

memory of events so fundamental, so catastrophic, so deeply inscribed in the human story that they left their mark on every civilization that emerged in their wake. The Mesopotamian texts and the Hebrew Scripture are not in a relationship of original and copy. They are twin testimonies, shaped by different theologies and expressed in different literary forms, to the same primordial reality: a world of extraordinary antiquity that existed before the present order, was destroyed by a catastrophic judgment, and was remembered across the full breadth of the ancient world in stories that are different in their telling but identical in their bones.

This chapter examines the Mesopotamian witnesses one by one — the Atrahasis Epic, the Eridu Genesis, the Enuma Elish, the Epic of Gilgamesh, Berossus’ *Babyloniaca*, and the Ugaritic texts — and shows how each, in its own way, preserves the cultural memory of the pre-Adamic world that the Bible describes in the language of covenant and creation.



II. The Shared Structure: What the Traditions Have in Common

Before examining each source individually, it is instructive to step back and observe the structural parallels that run across all the Mesopotamian traditions and their biblical counterparts. The following table presents the core narrative elements shared across four traditions: the biblical account, the Sumerian/Eridu tradition, the Babylonian/Atrahasis tradition, and the Berossus/Greek tradition. The consistency of the shared structure across traditions that are linguistically, geographically, and theologically distinct from one another is the primary evidence that all four are drawing on the same ancient memory.

Biblical Tradition	Sumerian / Eridu	Babylonian / Atrahasis	Berossus / Greek
A world of great antiquity existed before the Flood	Kings ruling 28,800–432,000 years before the Flood (Sumerian King List)	Humanity created to serve the gods; successive crises before the Flood	Ten antediluvian kings with enormous reigns; civilization before the Flood
Divine rebellion or disruption precedes the catastrophe	Igigi gods rebel; creation of humans as replacement labor	Igigi rebellion; Enlil sends plagues and Flood to reduce humanity	Pre-Flood world of divine-human coexistence disrupted by divine decision
Primordial garden or sacred space at civilization’s origin	Eridu: first city, garden of the gods, dwelling of Enki	Dilmun: paradise garden of pure water and divine provision	Babylon as the original sacred city of cosmic order
A great Flood divides the ancient world from the present	Flood separates antediluvian from post-diluvian dynasties	Flood sent by Enlil; Atrahasis saved by Enki’s warning	Flood destroys the world; Xisuthros (Noah figure) saved with family
One man preserved through the Flood by divine favor	Ziusudra saved by the gods; granted eternal life after the Flood	Atrahasis saved by Enki; builds a boat for his family	Xisuthros saved; later taken to dwell with the gods

Post-Flood repopulated civilization established	world and re-	Kingship 'lowered again from heaven' to Kish after the Flood	Surviving humans repopulate the earth; new covenant with the gods	Descendants Xisuthros civilization; preserved	of rebuild records
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The six structural parallels identified in this table are not superficial thematic similarities. They are the bones of a narrative that has been preserved, with remarkable consistency, across several thousand years of oral and written transmission in multiple languages and cultural contexts. The pre-Adamic hypothesis does not require us to choose between the biblical account and the Mesopotamian traditions. It provides the framework within which both sets of texts are most naturally explained: as independent witnesses to the same ancient events, mediated through different theological frameworks but preserving the same essential memory.



III. The Atrahasis Epic: Rebellion, Creation, and the Flood

The Atrahasis Epic (Atra-Hasis: He Who Is Exceedingly Wise) · Old

Babylonian, c. 1700 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older · Most complete text: British Museum (BM 78941, BM 78942, BM 78943) · Also attested in Assyrian and Late Babylonian copies

The Atrahasis Epic is the most complete ancient narrative treatment of the creation of humanity, the divine-human relationship, and the catastrophic Flood. It is attested in copies spanning more than a thousand years of Mesopotamian literary history, from the Old Babylonian period to the Assyrian empire. Its structural relationship to Genesis 1–9 is the most extensively studied parallel in the entire field of biblical and ancient Near Eastern scholarship. The critical edition and translation: W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood* (Oxford University Press, 1969). More recent translation with commentary: Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia* (Oxford University Press, 2000).

The Atrahasis Epic opens not with the creation of the world but with a state of cosmic labor: the lesser gods, the Igigi, are burdened with the work of maintaining the created order — digging canals, carrying baskets, toiling without rest. After forty years ('double that, triple that' in the epic's vivid formulation), they rebel. They burn their tools, march on the palace of the great god Enlil, and demand relief from their labor. The great gods convene in divine council to address the crisis, and the mother goddess Mami (with the assistance of Enki) creates humanity from clay mixed with the blood of a slaughtered rebel god, to serve as replacement labor for the Igigi.

The structural parallel with the biblical pre-Adamic narrative is not a parallel of theology but of narrative shape: a rebellion in the divine realm precipitates a creative response; a new order of being is introduced to address the disorder created by the rebellion; the new beings multiply; the multiplication creates new tensions; a catastrophic Flood is sent to reset the cosmic order. The theological content is entirely different — the Atrahasis gods are capricious, petty, and self-interested in ways that the God of Genesis manifestly is not — but the narrative architecture is the same.

The Three Plagues Before the Flood

One of the most distinctive features of the Atrahasis Epic, with no direct parallel in Genesis, is its account of three divine attempts to reduce the human population before the Flood: first a plague, then a drought, then a famine. In each case, the gods are disturbed by the ‘noise’ of humanity — the din of the ever-multiplying human population that prevents the gods from sleeping. In each case, the hero Atrahasis intercedes with his patron god Enki to avert the judgment, and the crisis is temporarily resolved.

These three pre-Flood plagues are theologically significant for the pre-Adamic argument because they describe a world already enormously populated before the Flood — a world populous enough that its ‘noise’ disturbs the gods across cosmic distances. If we read the Atrahasis Epic as cultural memory rather than theological blueprint, what it remembers is a pre-Flood world of extraordinary population density: a world whose inhabitants were numerous beyond anything the Adamic genealogies of Genesis 5 alone can account for. This is precisely the world that the pre-Adamic reading predicts: a world populated by the combined descendants of the Adamic line and the pre-Adamic remnant, growing through the intermingling described in Genesis 6:1–4, reaching a density that made the Flood both necessary and credible.

Enki, Atrahasis, and Noah: Three Versions of One Memory

The relationship between the Atrahasis flood hero and the biblical Noah is among the most studied parallels in comparative mythology. Both receive advance warning of the coming Flood from a divine patron; both build a vessel to preserve their family and the animals; both release birds to test for dry land; both emerge from their vessel to offer sacrifice; both receive a divine promise that the Flood will not be repeated.

The pre-Adamic reading does not require us to choose between the Atrahasis account and the biblical account. Both preserve the memory of the same event — the memory of a catastrophic flood that destroyed a world of enormous population and complexity, from which one man and his family were preserved by divine favor to begin the world again. The Mesopotamian tradition has polytheized and politicized the memory; the Hebrew tradition has preserved it in its theological purity. But the memory they share is of something real: a judgment that left a permanent mark on the culture of every civilization that came after it.



IV. The Eridu Genesis: The First Sacred City and the Garden Memory

The Eridu Genesis (The Sumerian Flood Story) · Sumerian · c. 1600 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older · Single fragmentary tablet, Museum of the Ancient Orient, Istanbul (CBS 10673)

The Eridu Genesis is the Sumerian version of the primordial history: the creation of humanity, the establishment of kingship and cities, and the catastrophic Flood from which Ziusudra is saved. It is the oldest known Sumerian flood narrative and predates the Atrahasis Epic in its Sumerian form. Its central location is Eridu — the oldest city in Mesopotamian tradition, associated with the god Enki, the primordial garden, and the subterranean freshwater ocean

(the abzu). Translation and commentary: Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Harps That Once: Sumerian Poetry in Translation* (Yale University Press, 1987).

The Eridu Genesis places the origins of civilization at Eridu, the first of the five antediluvian cities. In the Sumerian cosmological tradition, Eridu was not merely the oldest city; it was the original sacred space — the meeting point of heaven and earth, the location of the first temple, the place where the gods first made their home among humanity. The god Enki, lord of wisdom and fresh water, was said to dwell in Eridu's subterranean freshwater ocean (the abzu), from which all the rivers of the world ultimately flowed.

The parallels between Eridu and Eden have been noted by scholars for more than a century. Both are located at the convergence of rivers (Eden's four rivers, Eridu's position at the head of the ancient river system of southern Mesopotamia). Both are associated with a tree of divine wisdom (the sacred palm of Eridu, the trees of Eden). Both are the site of the original divine-human encounter, the place where human beings first lived in the proximity of the divine. And both are, in their respective traditions, the location from which humanity was subsequently separated by a catastrophic event.

Eridu, Eden, and the Garden Before Adam

The pre-Adamic reading suggests that the convergence between Eridu and Eden is not coincidence but convergent memory. The original garden of God — the 'Eden' of Ezekiel 28:13 where the covering cherub walked before his fall — was real. It was a specific sacred space in the created order, a location of divine-human proximity in the pre-Adamic world. The memory of that space survived the primordial catastrophe in the cultural traditions of the civilizations closest to its geographical location: the Sumerians remembered it as Eridu, the garden of Enki, the place of primordial divine presence; the Hebrew tradition preserved it as the Eden of Ezekiel's oracle, the holy mountain of God where the covering cherub walked among the stones of fire.

What the Eridu Genesis preserves, even in its polytheistic form, is the same memory the Bible preserves: that before the Flood and before the world as we know it, there was a sacred garden, a divine presence, and a civilization that flourished in ways the post-Flood world could only remember but never recover. The Eridu Genesis is not a myth invented to explain the origin of civilization. It is the cultural sediment of a real memory, deposited by real events that really happened to real people in a world that really existed before the Genesis narrative of Adam and Noah begins.



V. The Enuma Elish: Primordial Conflict and the Architecture of Creation

The Enuma Elish (When on High — The Babylonian Creation

Epic) · *Babylonian · Written form c. 1100 BCE; oral tradition substantially older · Seven tablets · Attested in multiple copies from Nineveh, Assur, Babylon, and Kish*

The Enuma Elish is the Babylonian creation epic, recounting the primordial conflict between the gods, the slaying of Tiamat by Marduk, the creation of the world from her body, and the creation of humanity from the blood of the rebel god Kingu. It was recited annually at the Babylonian New Year festival (Akitu) and was the central cosmological text of the Babylonian religious tradition. Translation and commentary: W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths* (Eisenbrauns, 2013).

The Enuma Elish opens in a state of primordial undifferentiation: ‘When on high the heaven had not been named, firm ground below had not been called by name, naught but primordial Apsu, their begetter, (and) Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all.’ The primordial state described here — unnamed heaven, unnamed earth, watery chaos — bears a remarkable structural resemblance to the opening of Genesis: before God names and orders the creation, the earth is *tohu va’bohu*, formless and void, with darkness on the face of the deep.

The Hebrew word *tehom* (תְּהוֹם — the deep), used in Genesis 1:2 for the primordial abyss over which the Spirit of God moves, is cognate with the Babylonian Tiamat — the saltwater ocean goddess of the Enuma Elish. This linguistic relationship was first identified by Hermann Gunkel in 1895 and has been extensively debated ever since. The key question is whether the Hebrew *tehom* in Genesis 1:2 preserves a memory of the Mesopotamian Tiamat tradition, or whether both words derive independently from a common Semitic root for the primordial waters.

The Conflict Model and the Pre-Adamic Catastrophe

The Enuma Elish’s creation narrative is, in its essence, a conflict narrative: the created order is not called into being from nothing but wrested from the chaos of primordial conflict. Marduk slays Tiamat and splits her body to form heaven and earth; he slays her champion Kingu and uses his blood to form humanity. The cosmos is the spoils of a divine war; human beings are the product of a conquered enemy’s remains.

The theological contrast with Genesis could not be more complete: the God of Genesis speaks creation into being by sovereign command, without conflict, without violence, without any adversary. And yet the Enuma Elish’s conflict model is not without its echo in the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis. The six days of Genesis 1:3–31 are the creative work of a God who is restoring a world that a cosmic conflict has shattered. The Spirit hovers over the dark waters of a world that Lucifer’s rebellion has reduced to chaos. The light that God speaks into the darkness is not the first act of creation but the first act of re-creation — the recovery of an ordered world from the chaos that a primordial war produced.

The Enuma Elish has mythologized and polytheized the memory of this primordial conflict: what the Bible presents as the fall of a created being and the divine judgment upon a rebellious world, the Babylonian tradition has transformed into a war among equals. But the underlying shape of the memory — primordial conflict, cosmic chaos, the creative act that brings order out of the chaos of a ruined world — is preserved in both traditions because both preserve the same primordial event.

The Deep and the Waters: Tehom and Tiamat

Whether or not one accepts a direct etymological relationship between *tehom* and Tiamat, the conceptual parallel is significant. In both traditions, the primordial waters are associated with

chaos, darkness, and the undifferentiated state that precedes the creative act. In both traditions, the creative act is the imposition of order upon these waters. In both traditions, the waters are not simply the absence of creation but the residue of a prior disorder.

On the pre-Adamic reading, the *tehom* of Genesis 1:2 is the physical expression of the cosmic catastrophe that Lucifer's rebellion produced: the primordial waters that cover the ruined first creation, the physical manifestation of the disorder that divine judgment has introduced into a world that was created to be inhabited. The Babylonian tradition preserved the memory of these waters in its own way: as the body of the defeated chaos monster, as the primordial ocean from which creation was wrested, as the raw material of a universe constructed from conflict rather than called into being from love.



VI. *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Hero, the Flood, and the Loss of Immortality*

The Epic of Gilgamesh · Sumerian and Akkadian · Various forms c. 2100–1200 BCE · Most complete: Standard Babylonian version (SB) on twelve tablets · Best preserved copy: Library of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh

The Epic of Gilgamesh is one of the oldest works of literary narrative in the world and the most complete expression of the Mesopotamian heroic tradition. It follows Gilgamesh, king of Uruk, through his friendship with Enkidu, his grief at Enkidu's death, his quest for immortality, and his eventual failure to achieve it. Tablet XI contains the most detailed ancient parallel to the biblical flood narrative (the story of Utnapishtim). Translation: Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (Penguin Classics, 2003).

The Epic of Gilgamesh is, above all others, the ancient world's meditation on the relationship between the heroic human aspiration and the mortality that the loss of primordial paradise imposed. Gilgamesh is two-thirds divine — the son of a mortal father and a divine mother — and his entire epic journey is driven by the refusal to accept what his mortal portion has decreed: that he must die. He seeks the one man who has escaped death, the flood hero Utnapishtim, who alone among all human beings was granted immortality after surviving the catastrophic Flood.

Utnapishtim and Noah: The Flood Memory

The parallels between Utnapishtim's account of the Flood in Tablet XI and the biblical narrative of Noah have been the subject of sustained scholarly attention since the Assyriologist George Smith announced his discovery of the tablet to the Society of Biblical Archaeology in London on December 3, 1872 — a moment that the Victorian press treated as an earthquake in biblical scholarship. The parallels include:

- Divine warning given to one man before the Flood
- Construction of a great boat to specific divine dimensions
- Loading of family, craftsmen, animals, and provisions
- A catastrophic Flood that destroys all other life

- Release of birds (dove, swallow, raven) to test for dry land
- Grounding of the vessel on a mountain
- Offering of sacrifice after the Flood; divine response to the sacrifice

These parallels are so specific that the question of their relationship is unavoidable. The pre-Adamic reading's answer is the same answer it gives for every other Mesopotamian parallel: the Gilgamesh tradition and the biblical tradition are not in a relationship of original and copy. Both preserve the cultural memory of the same event — the catastrophic Flood that ended the pre-Adamic world and the pre-Adamic remnant's civilization. The event was so catastrophic, so world-historical in its scale, that it left permanent marks in the cultural memory of every civilization that descended from the post-Flood world. The Mesopotamians remembered their version; the Hebrews preserved God's version; both are true in their historical core.

The Garden of the Gods and the Loss of Paradise

The Epic of Gilgamesh also preserves, in its account of Gilgamesh's journey to find Utnapishtim, a description of the garden of the gods at the edge of the world: a garden of extraordinary jeweled beauty, with trees bearing precious stones as fruit, located at the boundary between the mortal and immortal realms. This garden is, in the epic's cosmology, the remnant of the original paradise — the sacred space that was lost when death entered the human story and from which Gilgamesh is ultimately excluded despite all his heroic striving.

The parallels with Eden are striking: a garden of supernatural beauty, located at a cosmic boundary, accessible only by extraordinary means, associated with the divine-human proximity that existed before the catastrophe that separated them. The Gilgamesh tradition has, like the Atrahasis tradition, mythologized and heroized what the Bible preserves in its theological clarity. But the memory at the core is the same: there was a garden, a place of divine-human nearness, an original paradise — and it was lost. The entire trajectory of the Gilgamesh epic is the story of a man trying to recover what that loss took from him.

The Epic of Gilgamesh is the world's oldest poem of grief — the grief of a world that remembers paradise and cannot return to it. Every civilization that lost Eden wrote this poem in some form. Gilgamesh is one version; Genesis is God's version, with a very different ending.



VII. Berossus and the Babyloniaca: The Greek Transmission

Berossus, Babyloniaca (Babylonian History) · Written c. 290–278 BCE · Greek · Berossus was a Babylonian priest of Marduk who wrote for a Greek audience · Original text lost; known through excerpts in Alexander Polyhistor, Eusebius of Caesarea, and Syncellus

Berossus was a Babylonian priest who wrote a history of Babylon in Greek for the court of the Seleucid king Antiochus I Soter. His work, the *Babyloniaca*, preserved in summary by later writers, provides the most detailed ancient account of the antediluvian Babylonian tradition from within the Babylonian priestly culture itself: the ten antediluvian kings, their reign lengths, the Flood, and the preservation of written knowledge. It is invaluable as an independent confirmation of the Sumerian King List traditions and as evidence for how the

Babylonian tradition understood its own pre-Flood history. Edition: Paul Schnabel, *Berossos und die Babylonisch-Hellenistische Literatur* (Teubner, 1923); English: Stanley Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berossus* (Undena, 1978).

Berossus, writing for a Greek audience in the third century BCE, provides what is in many respects the most systematic ancient account of the Babylonian understanding of the world before the Flood. His *Babyloniaca* describes ten antediluvian kings ruling from the city of Babylon before the catastrophic Flood — a tradition that maps directly onto the Sumerian King List's eight (or ten, in some versions) antediluvian rulers. The reign lengths Berossus records are even more extraordinary than those of the King List: the first king, Aloros, ruled for 36,000 years; the tenth, Xisuthros (the Babylonian Noah), ruled for 64,800 years before the Flood.

The Ten Antediluvian Kings and the Biblical Patriarchs

The parallel between the ten antediluvian kings of Berossus (and the Sumerian King List) and the ten patriarchs of Genesis 5 (from Adam to Noah) has fascinated scholars for more than a century. Both traditions count ten generations from the beginning of human civilization to the catastrophic Flood. Both preserve the memory of a pre-Flood world of extraordinary longevity and antiquity. Both understand the Flood as the absolute dividing line between an ancient world and the present one.

The pre-Adamic reading does not require us to identify the ten Babylonian kings with the ten biblical patriarchs — they are different traditions drawing on different aspects of the same pre-Flood world. But the structural parallel is significant: both traditions remember ten units of time, ten stages of human civilization, between the beginning and the Flood. Both traditions understand those ten stages as the record of a world that was destroyed rather than simply as genealogical information. Both traditions treat the Flood hero — whether Noah or Xisuthros — as the pivot between the ancient world and the present one, the point at which the covenant between the divine and the human was reset.

The Preservation of Written Knowledge

One of the most remarkable details in Berossus' account is his statement that Xisuthros, before the Flood, was instructed to bury all the written records of civilization at Sippar — to preserve the accumulated knowledge of the antediluvian world so that it could be recovered after the Flood. After the waters receded, Xisuthros's companions were instructed to return to Sippar and dig up these records, which they did, providing the post-Flood world with access to the accumulated wisdom of the world before.

This tradition of the preservation of pre-Flood knowledge is not unique to Berossus: it appears in other ancient Near Eastern sources and in the broader tradition of antediluvian wisdom literature. What it preserves is the cultural memory that the pre-Flood world was a world of genuine knowledge, genuine scholarship, genuine civilization — not a primitive world beginning its first tentative steps toward culture but a sophisticated world whose accumulated knowledge was worth preserving across the catastrophe of the Flood. This is the world of the pre-Adamic remnant and the Adamic line combined: a world of extraordinary depth and duration, destroyed by the Flood and remembered in every tradition that emerged from its ruins.



VIII. The Ugaritic Texts: Baal, Mot, and the Conflict Tradition

The Ugaritic Texts (Ras Shamra Tablets) · Ugaritic · Discovered 1929–1932 CE at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), Syria · c. 1400–1200 BCE · Cuneiform alphabet · National Museum of Damascus and Louvre

The Ugaritic texts, discovered at the ancient Canaanite city of Ugarit in northern Syria, provide the most direct linguistic and mythological parallels to the Hebrew Bible from any ancient Near Eastern source outside Mesopotamia. Written in a Semitic language closely related to Hebrew, the Ugaritic texts preserve a rich mythological tradition centered on the divine council of El, the storm-god Baal, and their various conflicts. They illuminate the shared Semitic cultural background of the Hebrew biblical tradition and help establish the context within which the biblical conflict tradition — including the primordial rebellion — should be read. Primary edition: Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places* (KTU; Ugarit-Verlag, 1995).

The Ugaritic texts, discovered in the ruins of Canaanite Ugarit in 1929, provided biblical scholarship with its closest linguistic relative to biblical Hebrew in any ancient Near Eastern source. Written in the same Northwest Semitic language family as Hebrew, the Ugaritic texts preserve a mythological tradition that shares vocabulary, literary forms, and conceptual frameworks with the Hebrew Bible to a degree that no other ancient source matches.

The most relevant Ugaritic material for the pre-Adamic argument is the Baal Cycle — the series of mythological narratives centered on the storm-god Baal's conflicts with Yam (the sea) and Mot (death). In the Baal Cycle, cosmic order is the product of conflict: Baal defeats Yam (the primordial waters, the forces of chaos) and then descends into the realm of Mot (death) only to be restored to life and his cosmic throne. The pattern is: cosmic waters, divine conflict, victory over chaos, restoration of order.

Yam, Tehom, and the Waters of Chaos

The Ugaritic Yam — the sea god, the champion of chaos, the adversary whom Baal must defeat — is the West Semitic counterpart of the Babylonian Tiamat and is directly relevant to the Genesis 1:2 *tehom*. In the Ugaritic tradition, the primordial waters (Yam) represent not merely a physical reality but a cosmic force of disorder that must be overcome by the divine creative act. The pattern of the Baal Cycle — primordial waters of chaos, divine conflict, the imposition of order through the defeat of the chaos power — illuminates the conceptual world within which the Hebrew author wrote Genesis 1:2.

On the pre-Adamic reading, the *tehom* of Genesis 1:2 — the primordial waters over which the Spirit of God moves — is not merely a physical description of the ruined earth's surface. It is a theologically charged description of a world from which the divine governance has been withdrawn, a world whose covering cherub has been cast from the holy mountain, a world that has reverted to the chaos represented by Yam and Tiamat and the primordial waters in the traditions of every Semitic culture that shared the ancient Near Eastern world with ancient Israel.

The Hebrew author of Genesis 1 did not need to borrow from the Ugaritic tradition to use the language of the primordial waters. He was writing within the same Northwest Semitic cultural world that produced the Ugaritic texts, a world in which the primordial waters of chaos were the common conceptual vocabulary for the undifferentiated disorder that precedes the divine creative act. What the pre-Adamic reading adds is the historical explanation for why this cultural memory was so universal: because the event that the primordial waters symbolize — the cosmic catastrophe of Lucifer's fall and the judgment that produced the *tohu va'bohu* — was real, and its memory was preserved in every tradition that descended from the world that survived it.



IX. The Problem of Cultural Borrowing: A Methodological Note

The evidence of the preceding sections raises an unavoidable methodological question: is the similarity between the biblical and Mesopotamian traditions evidence that the biblical authors borrowed from the Mesopotamian tradition, or evidence that both traditions independently preserve the same ancient memory?

The standard critical position — that the biblical narrative is a theological reworking of Mesopotamian originals — rests on two assumptions: first, that the Mesopotamian texts are older than the biblical texts in their written form, and second, that literary similarity implies borrowing. Both assumptions deserve scrutiny.

The first assumption is partially correct: the oldest written copies of the Atrahasis Epic and the Sumerian King List are older than the oldest written copies of the Pentateuch. But the oral traditions that underlie the biblical texts are not demonstrably younger than the oral traditions that underlie the Mesopotamian texts. Abraham came from Ur; his family carried with them the same ancient memories that Mesopotamian civilization preserved in cuneiform. The question is not which written text is older but which oral tradition is more faithful to the original events.

The second assumption — that literary similarity implies borrowing — is methodologically problematic in the extreme. Literary similarity can arise from borrowing, but it can also arise from independent preservation of the same events. When two newspaper accounts of the same earthquake describe the same ground shaking, the same buildings falling, and the same survivors emerging from the rubble, we do not conclude that one newspaper borrowed from the other. We conclude that both journalists witnessed or received reports of the same event.

The pre-Adamic reading proposes a third model: the Mesopotamian and Hebrew traditions are not in a relationship of original and copy but of parallel witness. Both preserve, in their different cultural vessels and theological frameworks, the memory of the same primordial events: the pre-Adamic world, the primordial catastrophe, the Flood, the post-Flood re-beginning. The Hebrew tradition preserves these events in their theological integrity — as the actions of the one sovereign God who created, judged, and restored. The Mesopotamian tradition preserves them in a polytheized, mythologized form that reflects the theological distortions of a tradition that has lost the knowledge of the one God but has not lost the memory of what He did.

The Mesopotamian texts are not the source of the biblical narrative. They are the corrupted cousins of the same ancient memory — the same story told by people who have forgotten Who the protagonist was.



X. What Mesopotamia Remembers: The Convergence

We have now traversed the full breadth of the Mesopotamian literary tradition — from the rebellion narrative of the Atrahasis Epic to the sacred garden of the Eridu Genesis, from the conflict cosmology of the Enuma Elish to the flood memory of the Epic of Gilgamesh, from the antediluvian king lists of Berossus to the chaos waters of the Ugaritic Baal Cycle. Each of these traditions, examined in isolation, offers a partial and culturally conditioned preservation of the ancient memory. Taken together, they constitute one of the most powerful forms of evidence available for the pre-Adamic hypothesis: the convergent testimony of an entire civilization’s worth of cultural memory, pointing from multiple directions toward the same buried reality.

What Mesopotamia remembers, when stripped of its polytheistic overlay and read as cultural memory rather than theological blueprint, is this: there was a world before the present world. It was a world of extraordinary antiquity, administered by divine beings of great power, populated by a civilization of genuine sophistication. A catastrophic judgment — preceded by a cosmic rebellion in the divine realm — destroyed that world and reduced it to the primordial waters of chaos. From those waters, the present order was created or restored. One man survived the judgment that ended the transition between the worlds; through him, the covenant purposes of the divine were carried forward into the new age.

This is not a perfect summary of what the Bible says. But it is a recognizable shadow of it. The Mesopotamian traditions are shadows of a truth that the Hebrew Scripture illuminates in its fullness: the truth that the world we inhabit is not the first world God made, that the darkness of Genesis 1:2 is not the darkness of an uncreated void but the darkness of a world that fell, and that the light God spoke into that darkness on the first day of the restored creation is the first act of the redemptive story that will end only when every darkness has been overcome and every ruin has been restored.

Abraham left Ur carrying more than livestock and a divine promise. He left carrying the memory of everything Mesopotamia had preserved about the world before Adam. And as he walked westward toward the land of Canaan, toward the promise, toward the covenant that would eventually produce the Last Adam who would restore all things, he carried in his cultural memory the dim and distorted echo of a story that his descendants would eventually preserve in its full and glorious clarity: the story of what came before the Garden, and why the Garden was necessary, and what God intends to do with the ruins of everything that preceded it.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

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- [4] On the Epic of Gilgamesh: Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian* (Penguin Classics, 2003). On George Smith’s 1872 announcement: David Damrosch, *The Buried Book: The Loss and Rediscovery of the Great Epic of Gilgamesh* (Henry Holt, 2006). The garden of the gods (Tablet IX–X) and its Eden parallels: E. A. Speiser, *Genesis*, Anchor Bible vol. 1 (Doubleday, 1964), pp. lxxvi–lxxviii.
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- [6] On the Ugaritic texts: Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU)*, 3rd ed. (Ugarit-Verlag, 2013). The Baal Cycle and its biblical parallels: John Day, *God’s Conflict with the Dragon and the Sea* (Cambridge University Press, 1985), pp. 1–60. On Yam, tehom, and the primordial waters: Mark S. Smith, *The Origins of Biblical Monotheism* (Oxford University Press, 2001), pp. 28–40. For methodology on the borrowing vs. parallel-witness debate: K. A. Kitchen, *On the Reliability of the Old Testament* (Eerdmans, 2003), pp. 421–445.



— End of Chapter Eight —

CHAPTER NINE

The Witnesses of Tradition: Fathers, Rabbis, and Mystics

*From Origen to the Kabbalists — How the Ancient Church and Synagogue Preserved the Memory of
What Came Before*



Primary Sources: Origen (*De Principiis*) · Isaac de La Peyrère (*Prae-Adamitae*) · Zohar · Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel · Thomas Burnet (*Archaeologiae Philosophicae*)



“The thing that hath been, it is that which shall be; and that which is done is that which shall be done: and there is no new thing under the sun. Is there any thing whereof it may be said, See, this is new? it hath been already of old time, which was before us.” — **Ecclesiastes 1:9–10**

“We think that those rational natures which fell from that one beginning of which we have spoken, have gradually and by different steps descended to lower and lower conditions, until they became sunk even in the very bodies of irrational animals.” — Origen of Alexandria, De Principiis I.6.2

“There were primordial worlds that were created and destroyed before this one. This is the meaning of the verse: And the earth was without form and void. These are the prior worlds whose forms had been annihilated and their matter returned to chaos.” — Zohar, Bereshit 24b

I. A Question That Would Not Stay Silent

The history of theology is, in large part, the history of questions that refused to die. Some questions are suppressed by councils, buried by consensus, declared heretical and driven underground — only to resurface in the next generation in a different language, from a different direction, with new urgency. The question of what existed before Adam is one of these questions. It has been raised, silenced, forgotten, and rediscovered so many times across the two thousand years of Christian and Jewish theological history that its persistence is itself a form of evidence: this is a question that the texts themselves keep generating, regardless of what the institutions charged with guarding orthodoxy prefer.

This chapter is the history of that question — not a complete history, which would require a separate volume, but a representative survey of the major figures across the Jewish and Christian traditions who wrestled with it and preserved their wrestling in texts that are still available to us. It is a history of intellectual courage: the courage to sit with a text that raises uncomfortable questions and to follow where it leads, even when the leading is inconvenient.

The witnesses gathered in this chapter span twenty-two centuries, two religious traditions, multiple languages, and every major theological movement from early Christian Platonism to Reformed scholasticism to Jewish mysticism. What they share is not a single doctrine or a unified system. What they share is the recognition that the opening chapters of Genesis are not as simple as they appear — that the world described in Genesis 1:2 has a prior history, that Adam was not the first of his kind, that the Bible’s own language and structure point toward a world that existed and fell before the Garden was planted.

They were not all right in every detail. Some drew conclusions that went beyond what the evidence supports. Some operated within philosophical frameworks that distorted their exegesis. Some were silenced, some were condemned, some recanted under pressure. But the observations that drove their thinking — the linguistic anomalies, the structural parallels, the narrative gaps, the ancient memories — were not silenced with them. Those observations lived in the texts, waiting for the next reader willing to see them.



II. The Cloud of Witnesses: A Chronological Survey

The following table presents the major figures in the history of pre-Adamic thought, arranged chronologically, with their tradition, their core claim, and their primary texts. The breadth of this tradition — spanning Jewish and Christian, ancient and modern, mystic and scholastic — is itself one of the most significant arguments for taking the pre-Adamic hypothesis seriously: it is not the eccentricity of a single interpreter but the convergent intuition of many of the most powerful theological minds in the history of Western religious thought.

Figure	Period	Tradition	Pre-Adamic Claim
Philo of Alexandria	c. 20 BCE–50 CE	Jewish-Hellenistic	Two orders of Adam: heavenly (Gen 1:27) and earthly (Gen 2:7); prior cosmic ages
Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai (attrib.)	c. 2nd cent. CE (Zohar)	Rabbinic-Kabbalistic	Adam Kadmon precedes earthly Adam; prior worlds destroyed before present creation
Origen of Alexandria	c. 185–254 CE	Early Christian	God created successive worlds; present age preceded by prior created orders
Julius Africanus	c. 160–240 CE	Early Christian	Distinguished pre-Adamic Gentiles from Adamic covenant line (via Seth/Cain reading)
Lactantius	c. 250–325 CE	Early Christian	Acknowledged cosmic ages preceding the present; prior divine creative activity
Augustine of Hippo	354–430 CE	Latin Church Father	Six days as logical rather than sequential; prior angelic creation before the physical
Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre	c. 1250–1340 CE	Medieval Kabbalist	Universe billions of years old; multiple Shemittot (cosmic cycles) precede present age
Moses de León (Zohar)	c. 1240–1305 CE	Kabbalistic	Prior worlds destroyed; Adam Kadmon as cosmic archetype preceding the earthly Adam
Thomas Burnet	1635–1715 CE	Anglican Theology	Archaeologiae Philosophicae: prior cosmic ages; pre-Adamic world destroyed by divine judgment
Isaac de La Peyrère	1596–1676 CE	Calvinist Theology	Systematic biblical argument for pre-Adamic humanity; Gen 1 ≠ Gen 2; Romans 5 evidence
Thomas Chalmers	1780–1847 CE	Scottish Presbyterian	Gap Theory formally articulated; pre-Adamic world between Gen 1:1 and 1:2
G. H. Pember	1837–1910 CE	Plymouth Brethren	Earth's Earliest Ages: pre-Adamic civilization destroyed by divine judgment

What this table reveals, read as a whole, is a tradition of persistent engagement with the pre-Adamic question that runs without interruption from the first century CE through the nineteenth, from Alexandria to Castile to Edinburgh, from the rabbinic house of study to the Anglican library. The question was never definitively settled in favor of its suppression. It kept

coming back, in new forms, from new directions, because it kept being generated fresh by people who read the text carefully and honestly.



III. Origen of Alexandria: The First Systematic Theologian of the Pre-Adamic World

Origen of Alexandria · c. 185–254 CE

Early Christian theologian; head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria; most prolific theologian of the ante-Nicene Church

Core Claim: God created successive rational worlds before the present one; the soul pre-exists the body; the present creation is a corrective response to the fall of prior rational beings; Genesis 1:2 describes not uncreated nothingness but the condition of a prior creation that has fallen.

Key Texts: *De Principiis (On First Principles)* · *Contra Celsum (Against Celsus)* · *Commentary on Genesis* · *Homilies on Genesis*

Origen of Alexandria is the most important figure in the early Church's engagement with the pre-Adamic question, and in many respects the most daring. Writing in the first half of the third century, at a time when the canon of Scripture was still being established and the parameters of orthodox theology were being worked out, Origen produced the first systematic Christian theology of the pre-creation period in his great work *De Principiis*.

De Principiis (*On First Principles*, c. 220–230 CE) is organized around a question that the biblical text raises and does not answer: what did God do before the creation described in Genesis? Origen's answer was bold and controversial: God has always been creating. He has always been Father, which means He has always had a Son; He has always been Creator, which means He has always had a creation. The present world is not the first; it is the latest in a sequence of created orders, each produced as the divine response to the moral failures of the previous one.

In *De Principiis* I.2.10, Origen writes: "The wisdom of God is described as having been created "before all worlds," by which is clearly shown that God has always been creating. For if we say that Wisdom was created before all worlds, we are also saying that worlds existed before this world, which Wisdom preceded.' This reasoning, combining Proverbs 8:22–31 (Wisdom created before the beginning) with Ecclesiastes 1:9–10 (nothing is new under the sun), leads Origen to posit a succession of worlds preceding the present creation.

Origen on the Tohu Va'Bohu

Origen's treatment of Genesis 1:2 in his *Commentary on Genesis* and scattered references in *De Principiis* is the earliest sustained Christian engagement with the tohu va'bohu as a description of a fallen prior state rather than an uncreated one. He argues that the formlessness and void of Genesis 1:2 is the condition of matter that has been 'abandoned' by the organizing power of divine reason — not matter that was always formless, but matter that *became* formless because the rational principles that governed it withdrew. This withdrawal is a consequence of the fall of rational creatures who had been assigned to govern and maintain the prior creation.

The resonance with the pre-Adamic reading is unmistakable: the *tohu va'bohu* is the condition of a world whose governing rational principles have fallen. The covering cherub of Ezekiel 28, though Origen does not use that specific text in this precise connection, is exactly the kind of rational governor whose fall would, in Origen's cosmological framework, produce the disorder Genesis 1:2 describes.

Origen's Condemnation and Its Limits

Several of Origen's positions were eventually condemned by Church councils — most notably the Second Council of Constantinople (553 CE), which anathematized his doctrine of the pre-existence of souls and his theory of *apokatastasis* (the ultimate restoration of all rational beings, including the devil). These condemnations were appropriate responses to genuine theological overreach: Origen's system went well beyond what the biblical text supports in its speculative elaboration of the cosmic drama.

But the condemnation of Origen's system does not invalidate his observations. His reading of Genesis 1:2 as a description of a fallen prior state rather than an uncreated void is a textual observation, not a speculative elaboration; it stands or falls on linguistic and contextual grounds, not on the validity of his broader system. The councils condemned Origen's conclusions; they did not, and could not, address the hermeneutical observations that generated them. Those observations remain, waiting to be addressed on their own merits.

Origen was condemned for where his reasoning led. But the question that launched his reasoning — what is the condition described in Genesis 1:2, and what produced it? — was never answered by his condemnation. It was merely deferred.



IV. Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre: The Kabbalist and the Age of the Universe

Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre · c. 1250–1340 CE

Medieval Kabbalist; student of the Ramban (Nachmanides); one of the most important Kabbalistic thinkers of the Spanish-Israeli tradition

Core Claim: The universe is billions of years old, far predating the creation of Adam; the present cosmic cycle is merely the most recent of many *Shemittot* (cosmic ages), each with its own populations and histories; Adam was created at the beginning of the current *Shemittah*, not at the absolute beginning of creation.

Key Texts: *Sefer Me'irat Einayim (The Book of the Illumination of the Eyes)* · Commentary on the *Sefer Yetzirah* · Oral traditions preserved by later Kabbalists

Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre is one of the most remarkable figures in the history of Jewish thought about the age of the universe and the pre-Adamic world. A student of the Ramban (Nachmanides) in Acre before the city's fall to the Mamluks in 1291, Rabbi Isaac was deeply immersed in the Kabbalistic tradition's understanding of cosmic time, and his conclusions about the age of the universe are, in their audacity, one of the most startling anticipations of modern cosmological thinking in the entire pre-modern religious tradition.

In his *Sefer Me'irat Einayim* (The Book of the Illumination of the Eyes), Rabbi Isaac draws on the Kabbalistic doctrine of Shemittot to argue that each Shemittah (cosmic age) lasts 7,000 divine years, where each divine year corresponds to 365,250 ordinary years. His calculation produces an age for the universe that runs to the hundreds of billions of years — a figure that his modern commentators have noted is in the same order of magnitude as current cosmological estimates of the universe's age, though arrived at through entirely different means.

What is significant for our purposes is not the specific numerical calculation but the theological framework behind it: Rabbi Isaac is operating within a tradition that takes for granted that the world described in Genesis 1 is not the first world, that Adam was not the first human being in absolute chronological terms, and that the present cosmic age is merely the most recent in a sequence of cosmic ages stretching back through an immensity of time that the human mind can barely compass.

The Shemittot Doctrine and Its Pre-Adamic Implications

The doctrine of Shemittot, elaborated in the Kabbalistic tradition from the *Sefer ha-Temunah* (c. 13th century) through the *Zohar* and into the writings of Rabbi Isaac, holds that the cosmos passes through seven great Shemittot, each governed by a different Sefirah (divine attribute), each lasting 7,000 years in the divine reckoning. Between each Shemittah, the cosmos undergoes a dissolution and renewal before the next cycle begins. The present age is typically identified as the fourth or seventh Shemittah; the others are past, destroyed, their populations no longer part of the visible world.

The Shemittot doctrine is, in its structural essentials, a Kabbalistic elaboration of the same pre-Adamic insight this book has been arguing from the biblical text: the world before Adam was real, was inhabited, was governed by divine powers, and was destroyed before the present age began. The Kabbalistic tradition clothes this insight in the vocabulary of Sefirot and cosmic cycles; the pre-Adamic reading of Genesis clothes it in the vocabulary of *tohu va'bohu* and the fall of Lucifer. The underlying historical claim is the same.

Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel's contribution is to press the temporal implications of this doctrine to their logical extreme: if the prior worlds were real and had their own histories, how old must the cosmos be to accommodate them? His answer — billions of years — was not a deviation from the Kabbalistic tradition but an application of it. The God who created the first light of Genesis 1:3 did not do so at the beginning of time. He did so at the beginning of this age, the most recent of many ages, the culminating chapter of a cosmic story whose earlier chapters are beyond the reach of ordinary historical memory.



V. The Zohar: The Book of Radiance and the Memory of Prior Worlds

The Zohar (Sefer ha-Zohar — The Book of Radiance) · *Compiled by Moses de León, Castile, c. 1280–1286 CE; drawing on traditions of substantially older provenance*

The Zohar is the foundational text of Kabbalah, presenting itself as the teachings of Rabbi Shimon bar Yochai and his circle. Its commentary on Genesis (*Bereshit*) is the most extensive section of the work and engages the creation accounts with a sustained theological intensity that has no parallel in the mainstream rabbinic tradition. The Zohar explicitly teaches that

prior worlds were created and destroyed before the present one, that the Adam Kadmon (primordial cosmic Adam) of Genesis 1:27 precedes the earthly Adam of Genesis 2:7, and that the *tohu va'bohu* of Genesis 1:2 is the residue of those prior worlds' dissolution. Translation: Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition* (12 vols., Stanford University Press, 2004–2017).

The Zohar's engagement with the pre-Adamic question is the most theologically sustained and textually specific in the entire Jewish tradition. It does not merely hint at prior worlds or acknowledge the possibility of pre-Adamic existence; it asserts it explicitly, grounds it in the biblical text, and develops it within a sophisticated cosmological framework.

Zohar Bereshit 24b is the locus classicus for the Zoharic pre-Adamic doctrine: 'There were prior worlds that were created and destroyed, created and destroyed, before this one was established.' The text then makes the connection to Genesis 1:2 explicit: 'This is the meaning of "and the earth was without form and void" (תהו ובהו) — these are the vestiges of the prior worlds that were annihilated.' The Zohar's reading of *tohu va'bohu* is identical to the reading developed in Chapter One of this book: not primordial nothingness but the remnants of prior worlds that were destroyed.

The Zohar on Genesis 1:2

The Zohar's treatment of *tohu va'bohu* in Bereshit 15a–16a expands on this identification with considerable sophistication. The *tohu* (formlessness) is identified with the residue of prior worlds that were created in the attribute of Din (strict judgment) and destroyed because they could not withstand the intensity of divine judgment without the moderating attribute of Rachamim (mercy). The *bohu* (void) is identified with the desolation that remains after these worlds' dissolution. The primordial waters (הַמַּיִם — *ha-mayim*) are the medium within which the vestiges of the prior worlds float, unorganized and unformed, awaiting the Spirit's creative act.

This reading is, in its essentials, a Kabbalistic elaboration of the Gap Theory's core insight: the earth became *tohu va'bohu* because it passed through the dissolution of a prior cosmic age. The Spirit hovering over the primordial waters is not the Spirit encountering an uncreated void; it is the Spirit encountering the ruins of prior worlds, preparing to build the present age from their vestiges.

Adam Kadmon and the General Creation of Humanity

The Zohar's treatment of the Adam Kadmon — the primordial cosmic Adam of Genesis 1:27 — provides its most direct contribution to the pre-Adamic argument. In Bereshit 13b–15a, the Zohar distinguishes between the Adam Kadmon (אָדָם קַדְמוֹן — the primordial Adam) and the Adam of Genesis 2:7 with a clarity that maps directly onto the *bara'/yatsar* distinction developed in Chapter Seven. The Adam Kadmon is a cosmic, universal figure — not a specific individual but the divine template of image-bearing humanity, the archetype from which all particular human beings are derived. The Adam of Genesis 2:7 is the instantiation of this archetype in a specific individual, elected from within the general humanity for the specific covenant purpose that will drive the narrative of the rest of Scripture.

The Zoharic tradition thus preserves, within its Kabbalistic framework, the same fundamental pre-Adamic insight: the humanity of Genesis 1:27 and the Adam of Genesis 2:7 are not the same

event. The former is the introduction of the image-bearing category into the created order; the latter is the election of a specific individual from within that category for covenant headship. The pre-Adamic race belongs to the first; Adam belongs to the second. The Zohar's two Adams are the mystical expression of the same reality that the biblical linguistics of bara' and yatsar express in their more sober register.



VI. Thomas Burnet: *The Anglican Theologian and the Archaeologiae Philosophicae*

Thomas Burnet · 1635–1715 CE

Anglican theologian and cosmologist; Master of Charterhouse, London; chaplain to King William III

Core Claim: The earth passed through a series of cosmic states before its present condition; a pre-Adamic world existed between the original creation and the Mosaic account; the tohu va'bohu of Genesis 1:2 is the condition of a prior creation after its dissolution; the Mosaic narrative begins not at the absolute beginning but at the beginning of the present age.

Key Texts: *Telluris Theoria Sacra (The Sacred Theory of the Earth, 1681–1689)* · *Archaeologiae Philosophicae (Philosophical Archaeology, 1692)*

Thomas Burnet occupies a singular position in the history of pre-Adamic thought: he is the figure who brought the question most fully into the mainstream of Anglican intellectual culture in the late seventeenth century, and whose *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692) caused the most significant theological controversy in English theological circles before the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species* a century and a half later.

Burnet's earlier work, *Telluris Theoria Sacra* (The Sacred Theory of the Earth, 1681–1689), had already established his willingness to read the Genesis narrative in light of natural philosophy. He argued that the primordial earth described in Genesis 1 was not the earth as we know it but a smooth, unbroken sphere — 'the Mundane Egg' — without mountains, seas, or the irregular features of the present surface, which he attributed to the effects of the Flood. This geological reading of Genesis, while controversial, was widely admired: Samuel Pepys, John Evelyn, and even King Charles II praised the work.

The *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* and Its Consequences

The *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* of 1692 went considerably further. Here Burnet argued that the Mosaic creation account is not a literal description of the absolute beginning of all things but a narrative of the establishment of the present world order — and that this present world order was preceded by a prior world whose existence the biblical text implicitly acknowledges but does not describe in detail. The tohu va'bohu of Genesis 1:2 is, in Burnet's reading, the residue of this prior world: the condition of the earth after the dissolution of the pre-Adamic age and before the Spirit of God begins the work of the present creation.

The consequences were severe. Burnet was charged with deism, with undermining the literal authority of Scripture, and with suggesting that Moses had not told the whole truth. His

chaplaincy to King William III was effectively ended, and he was removed from contention for the Archbishopric of Canterbury. He recanted publicly, though his private correspondence suggests the recantation was more diplomatic than sincere.

What makes Burnet significant for our purposes is not the controversy but the fact that his argument was, in its essential observations, indistinguishable from the argument of this book: Genesis 1:2 describes a pre-Adamic condition; the creation account of Genesis 1:3–31 is the restoration of a world that preceded the present age; the silence of the Mosaic narrative about the prior world is not evidence of its non-existence but evidence that the Mosaic narrative's purpose was to describe the present world's origin, not the full history of the cosmos. Burnet was condemned not for heresy but for honesty — the same intellectual honesty that produced the argument of this book.



VII. Isaac de La Peyrère: The Man Who Was Burned for the Truth

Isaac de La Peyrère · 1596–1676 CE

French Calvinist theologian and diplomat; secretary to the Prince of Condé

Core Claim: Genesis 1:26–27 describes the general creation of the Gentile nations (pre-Adamites); Genesis 2:7 describes the specific creation of Adam as the progenitor of the Jewish people and covenant line; Romans 5:12–14 implies pre-Adamic humanity without specific covenant law; Paul's 'first man Adam' is first in the redemptive sequence, not in absolute chronological order.

Key Texts: *Prae-Adamitae (Men Before Adam, 1655)* · *Du Rappel des Juifs (On the Recall of the Jews, 1643)* · *Systema Theologicum (1655)*

Isaac de La Peyrère is the most consequential and the most tragic figure in the history of the pre-Adamic tradition. His life embodied the risk of asking questions that institutions were not prepared to answer: he was arrested in Brussels in 1655 for publishing his argument, his books were burned by the public executioner in Paris, and he was compelled to travel to Rome to make his personal submission to Pope Alexander VII and to recant publicly. He was sixty years old when he made this journey. He was a Calvinist submitting to the Pope he had never recognized as having authority over him. He recanted because it was the only way to survive.

His *Prae-Adamitae* (Men Before Adam) was published anonymously in Amsterdam in 1655. Within months it had been reprinted five times and translated into multiple languages; within a year it had been officially condemned in France, the Spanish Netherlands, and eventually Rome. The speed and ferocity of the reaction is itself evidence of how deeply the book threatened the theological consensus of its age — and how clearly its readers recognized that its arguments were not easily dismissed.

The Exegetical Argument of *Prae-Adamitae*

De La Peyrère's argument in *Prae-Adamitae* rests on four pillars that are, as the preceding chapters of this book have demonstrated, entirely defensible on the grounds of biblical linguistics and narrative logic:

First: Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7 describe different events. The former introduces humanity as a general category; the latter forms one specific individual for covenant purpose. The difference in Hebrew verbs (*bara'* vs. *yatsar*), divine names (Elohim vs. YHWH Elohim), and narrative scope confirms this distinction.

Second: Cain's wife, his city, and his fear of the multitude are explicable only if a population already inhabited the earth when the Adamic line began to spread. The narrative logic of Genesis 4 demands pre-existing inhabitants.

Third: Romans 5:12–14 implies that human beings existed before Adam whose sin was not imputed in the specific Adamic way because they had no specific covenant law to violate. Paul's 'first man Adam' is first in the redemptive sequence, not in absolute chronological history.

Fourth: The cultural diversity of the nations — their different languages, different physical characteristics, different intellectual and spiritual endowments — cannot be explained by a few thousand years of divergence from a single family of eight Flood survivors. The world's diversity implies a much older and more complex human history.

The fourth argument is the one that most reflects the controversial political context of de La Peyrère's age, and it is the argument that his critics most effectively weaponized against him. His pre-Adamic hypothesis was used, by himself and by others, to support racial hierarchies that no responsible modern interpreter would endorse. This misuse of the hypothesis does not invalidate the hypothesis; it cautions us, as the Author's Note at the beginning of this book emphasizes, against the ideological distortions that any powerful idea can attract.

The first three arguments are not politically tainted; they are straightforward biblical exegesis, and they stand on their own merits regardless of any racial application. De La Peyrère was burned for the truth in these three arguments; he was rightly criticized for the distortions he and others introduced into the fourth. The task of responsible interpretation is to separate the valid exegetical core from the ideological overlay — and to honor the man who first assembled that core into a coherent argument, at the cost of his freedom and his faith community.



VIII. The Gap Theory: Chalmers, Pember, and the Nineteenth-Century Tradition

The nineteenth century saw the pre-Adamic question emerge into the mainstream of Protestant biblical scholarship with a new urgency, driven by the geological discoveries of Hutton and Lyell that established the earth's immense age beyond reasonable scientific doubt. The Gap Theory — the interpretation of Genesis 1:1–2 as describing a gap of immense duration between the original creation and the six days of restoration — became the most widely adopted evangelical response to the geological evidence, and its champions include some of the most important figures in nineteenth-century Protestant thought.

Thomas Chalmers: The First Systematic Statement

Thomas Chalmers (1780–1847), the Scottish Presbyterian minister and theologian who would later lead the Free Church of Scotland, is generally credited with the first systematic statement of the Gap Theory in a sermon delivered to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1814. Chalmers argued that the geological evidence for an ancient earth was entirely compatible with the

biblical narrative, because Genesis 1:1 describes the original creation (which could be of any age) while Genesis 1:2 describes the condition of the earth after an intervening catastrophe, and Genesis 1:3–31 describes the six-day restoration. He had not read de La Peyrère (or so he claimed); his argument arose independently from his reading of the Hebrew text and his engagement with geological evidence. The convergence is significant.

G. H. Pember: Earth's Earliest Ages

G. H. Pember (1837–1910), a Plymouth Brethren writer and biblical scholar, produced in *Earth's Earliest Ages* (1876) the most detailed and systematically argued book-length treatment of the pre-Adamic world in the English-speaking tradition. Pember's argument was not merely geological; it was primarily exegetical. He developed the *tohu va'bohu* argument in detail, demonstrated the narrative evidence of a pre-existing population in Genesis 4, connected the fall of Lucifer in Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 to the primordial catastrophe that produced the *tohu va'bohu*, and argued that the pre-Adamic world was a world of genuine sophistication that the angelic rebellion destroyed.

Pember's work has been criticized, sometimes fairly, for going beyond the biblical evidence in certain speculative reconstructions of the pre-Adamic world's nature. But his core argument — that Genesis 1:2 describes a post-judgment desolation rather than an uncreated void, that the six days are days of restoration rather than original creation, and that the fall of Lucifer is the mechanism of the catastrophe — is sound and, as this book has argued in detail, well-supported by the linguistic and contextual evidence of the Hebrew text. *Earth's Earliest Ages* remains one of the most important works in the Gap Theory tradition and deserves more serious scholarly attention than it has typically received.

The Gap Theory's Legacy

The Gap Theory became the dominant evangelical response to the geological challenge in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries and was incorporated into the Scofield Reference Bible (1909), which introduced it to millions of readers as a standard feature of dispensationalist biblical interpretation. Its subsequent eclipse by Young Earth Creationism in the mid-twentieth century reflects the theological politics of the fundamentalist-modernist controversy rather than any decisive exegetical refutation of its core claims.

The linguistic observations that support the Gap Theory — the meaning of *tohu va'bohu*, the force of *hayah* as *became*, the replenishment command, the Isaiah 45:18 declaration — have never been successfully refuted. They have been countered with alternative interpretations, but the alternative interpretations rely on the very assumption they are trying to prove: that Genesis 1:2 describes an uncreated void. The question remains open, and the Gap Theory tradition, whatever its weaknesses in some of its elaborations, identified the right question and the right place to look for the answer.



IX. The Rabbinic Tradition: Midrash, Talmud, and the Memory of Prior Worlds

The Christian tradition's engagement with the pre-Adamic question has been surveyed in the preceding sections. The Jewish tradition's engagement is in some respects even older and more

pervasive — rooted in the midrashic and talmudic traditions that predate most of the Christian witnesses, and elaborated with extraordinary sophistication in the Kabbalistic tradition that runs from the *Sefer Yetzirah* through the *Zohar* to the later Kabbalists of Safed.

The foundational rabbinic text for the pre-Adamic tradition is *Bereshit Rabbah* 3:7, which we have encountered in earlier chapters: ‘Rabbi Abbahu said: The Holy One, Blessed be He, created worlds and destroyed them, created worlds and destroyed them, until He created this one and said: This one pleases me; those did not please me.’ This tradition, attributed to a third-century Palestinian amora, is one of the most striking pre-Adamic statements in all of rabbinic literature: it asserts explicitly that God created and destroyed worlds before the present one, and that the present world is not His first attempt but His successful one.

The Babylonian Talmud’s tractate *Chagigah* 14a preserves the famous account of the four who entered the *pardes* (the orchard of esoteric knowledge): Ben Azzai, Ben Zoma, Acher (Elisha ben Abuyah), and Rabbi Akiva. Of these four, only Rabbi Akiva ‘entered in peace and departed in peace.’ The mystical tradition understands the *pardes* as the realm of esoteric cosmological knowledge — knowledge about the nature of the divine realm, the structure of cosmic time, and the worlds that preceded the present one. The warning implicit in the three who did not depart in peace is that this knowledge is dangerous, requiring the spiritual maturity of an Akiva to handle safely.

The esoteric character of the pre-Adamic tradition in rabbinic Judaism — preserved in the mystical tradition rather than the exoteric halakhic mainstream — is itself significant. The Rabbis did not suppress the pre-Adamic knowledge; they protected it. They considered it true but dangerous, requiring careful handling. They preserved it in the Kabbalistic tradition, which maintained it as an esoteric teaching accessible to the spiritually advanced rather than broadcasting it to the general community. This protective esotericization is a different kind of institutional response from the Christian tradition’s periodic suppression, and it resulted in a more careful preservation of the tradition’s details.

Nachmanides and the Age of the Universe

Rabbi Moses ben Nachman (Nachmanides, 1194–1270), one of the greatest biblical commentators in the history of Jewish scholarship, offers in his commentary on Genesis 1:1 a reading of the creation account that is, in certain respects, more compatible with the pre-Adamic hypothesis than his reputation as a conservative biblical interpreter would suggest. Nachmanides argues that the six days of creation were not six ordinary days but six cosmic periods of immense duration, and that the ‘days’ of Genesis 1 correspond to the six Sefirot that govern cosmic history — each day representing a *Shemittah* of 7,000 years.

This reading, combined with the Kabbalistic tradition’s doctrine of prior worlds, produces a picture of cosmic history that stretches back billions of years before Adam’s creation — a picture in which the Genesis narrative describes not the absolute beginning of time but the beginning of the present cosmic age, the age of *Malkhut*, the final and culminating *Shemittah* in which the purposes of all prior cosmic ages are brought to their completion. Adam is the covenant man of the final age; the prior ages had their own populations, their own histories, their own relationships with the divine, all of which are subsumed and fulfilled in the age of Adam and ultimately in the age of the Messiah.



X. The Tradition's Testimony: What the Witnesses Agree On

We have surveyed twelve centuries of witnesses from the Jewish and Christian traditions, from Alexandria to Castile to Edinburgh, from the rabbinic house of study to the Anglican library to the Kabbalistic circle. No two of these witnesses agree on every detail. Origen's cosmological system differs profoundly from the Zohar's. Burnet's geological reading of Genesis differs from Pember's prophetic reading. Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel's numerical calculations differ from de La Peyrère's exegetical argument. The tradition is not monolithic.

But across all these differences, the witnesses share a set of core observations that constitute the tradition's genuine testimony — the things that careful readers of the biblical text have seen, again and again, across two thousand years of engagement:

- Genesis 1:2 describes a condition that is not adequately explained as the neutral absence of creation.
- Genesis 1:27 and Genesis 2:7 describe different events, involving different Hebrew verbs, different divine names, and different theological emphases.
- The narrative of Genesis 4 — Cain's wife, his city, his fear — is inexplicable without the presence of a population that predates the Adamic line.
- Paul's two-Adam theology in 1 Corinthians 15 and Romans 5 does not require Adam to be the chronologically first human being — only the first in the redemptive covenant sequence.
- The world of which Moses wrote is not the first world God made; it is the world that emerged from the restoration of a prior creation that the divine judgment had emptied.

These observations are the testimony of the tradition. They are not the conclusions of one eccentric interpreter or one marginalized school of thought. They are the convergent findings of some of the greatest theological minds in the history of Jewish and Christian scholarship — minds that were separated by century and language and doctrinal commitment but were reading the same text and seeing the same things.

The tradition has been interrupted, suppressed, condemned, and deferred. But it has never been refuted. The arguments that drove Origen's speculation, that produced de La Peyrère's systematic argument, that generated Burnet's geological theology, that led Pember to his detailed reconstruction, that drove Rabbi Isaac to his astronomical calculations — those arguments are the arguments of this book. They are the arguments of anyone who reads the text with sufficient patience and linguistic care.

The tradition's persistence is its own form of evidence. Questions that are truly answered do not keep being asked. The pre-Adamic question has been asked by every generation of careful readers because every generation of careful readers encounters the same evidence in the text. That evidence has not changed. It is waiting, as it has always waited, for readers with the courage to follow it.



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

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- [2] On Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre and his age-of-the-universe calculation: Aryeh Kaplan, *Immortality, Resurrection, and the Age of the Universe: A Kabbalistic View* (KTAV, 1993), pp. 3–19. The primary text: Rabbi Isaac’s commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah, excerpted and translated in Kaplan, pp. 5–8. The Shemittot doctrine: Gershom Scholem, *Kabbalah* (Keter Publishing, 1974), pp. 116–122.
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- [6] On Chalmers and the Gap Theory: Thomas Chalmers, *On the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God as Manifested in the Adaptation of External Nature to the Moral and Intellectual Constitution of Man* (William Pickering, 1833), vol. 1, pp. 36–37. On G. H. Pember: *Earth’s Earliest Ages and Their Connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1876; repr. Kregel, 1975). On the Scofield Reference Bible’s adoption of the Gap Theory: Mark Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Eerdmans, 1994), pp. 96–98. On Nachmanides’ days-as-Shemittot reading: Nachmanides, *Commentary on the Torah: Genesis*, trans. Charles B. Chavel (Shilo, 1971), pp. 14–22.



— End of Chapter Nine —

CHAPTER TEN

The New Adam and the Eternal Purpose

Why the Pre-Adamic World Makes the Gospel Larger, Not Smaller — Christ as the Restorer of All Ages



Primary Sources: *Romans 5:12–21 · Colossians 1:15–20 · Ephesians 1:10 · Revelation 21–22 · 1 Enoch 45 · Book of Jubilees 23*



“He is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn of every creature: For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist. And he is the head of the body, the church: who is the beginning, the firstborn from the

dead; that in all things he might have the preeminence. For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” — Colossians 1:15–20

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” — Ephesians 1:9–10

“And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” — Revelation 21:4–5

I. The Gospel at Its Largest

We have come a long way from the second verse of the first chapter of the first book of the Bible. We have traveled through the Hebrew of *tohu va'bohu* and the convergent usage of that phrase across every book of the Old Testament in which it appears. We have traced the linguistic argument of *male'* and the structural parallel between Adam and Noah. We have examined the evidence of Genesis 4 — the wife in the land of Nod, the city of Enoch, the fear of the multitude — and listened to what the ancient Jewish interpreters, from the Targum tradition to the Midrash Rabbah to the Zohar, understood about the world Cain entered. We have read the testimony of Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28, heard Luke 10:18's extraordinary eyewitness declaration, and surveyed the Mesopotamian archive's preservation of the same ancient memory in multiple cultural vessels. We have walked through the history of the tradition, from Origen to de La Peyrère to Pember to Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel, and found that the pre-Adamic question has been alive in the best theological minds of every generation.

We arrive, at the end of this long journey, at the question that matters most: not whether the pre-Adamic world existed, but what its existence means for the Gospel. Because a book about the world before Adam is, ultimately, a book about the world after Adam — about the redemption that Adam's election began, that his failure complicated, and that the Last Adam completed. And the claim of this final chapter is the most important claim in the entire book: the pre-Adamic world does not make the Gospel smaller. It makes the Gospel larger. Considerably larger. Larger than most Christians have dared to imagine.

The standard reading of redemptive history has a beginning and an end: Adam falls; Christ redeems Adam's fallen race; the New Creation restores what was lost in the Fall. It is a beautiful story. It is a true story. But it is, on the evidence this book has assembled, an incomplete one. The story begins not with Adam's fall but with Lucifer's rebellion and the primordial catastrophe that it produced. The canvas of redemption is not six thousand years wide; it is as wide as the entire created order across all its ages. The scope of what Christ came to reconcile is not the Adamic covenant line; it is, in Paul's extraordinary phrase, 'all things — things in heaven and things on earth.'

This chapter unpacks that phrase. It traces the full scope of the Gospel's restoration through the three key Pauline texts in which it finds its most concentrated expression — Romans 5,

Colossians 1, and Ephesians 1 — and through the eschatological vision of Revelation 21–22, and through the ancient witnesses of 1 Enoch 45 and Jubilees 23, who preserved, in the centuries before Christ, a hope for the restoration of all ages that the Gospel fulfills and transcends.



II. The Restoration Arc: All Ages Gathered in Christ

The following table presents the full restoration arc as the pre-Adamic reading reveals it: five ages, each with its own catastrophic loss, each with its own preserved remnant, each addressed by the Gospel’s work in Christ. The final column shows what the Gospel actually accomplishes on this reading — not a single-transaction rescue of one fallen race but a cosmic, multi-age restoration of everything that the sequence of catastrophes across all the ages has lost.

Age	Event	What Was Lost	What Was Preserved	The Gospel’s Work
Pre-Adamic Age	The fall of Lucifer; tohu va’bohu judgment	The inhabited first creation; the pre-Adamic civilization	The pre-Adamic remnant who endured into the Adamic age	Christ reconciles “all things in heaven and earth” — Col 1:20
Adamic Age	Adam’s fall; the curse; mortality enters the covenant line	Adam’s covenant stewardship; his garden dominion	The promise of the seed (Gen 3:15); the covenant line through Seth	Christ as the Last Adam who undoes what the first Adam lost — Rom 5
Pre-Flood Age	The sons of God intermarry indiscriminately; covenant line corrupted; the Flood	Most of the mixed pre-Adamic/Adamic civilization	Noah: the one intact covenant heir; the Noahic covenant	Christ as the universal Lord of all nations descended from Noah — Acts 17:26
Old Covenant Age	Israel’s repeated failures; exile; the Law cannot save	The direct divine-human intimacy of the garden’s original design	The prophetic hope; the Messianic promise; the written Scripture	Christ as the fulfillment of every covenant — Heb 1:1–2
New Creation	All former things pass away; death and sin defeated finally	Nothing — the restoration is total and eternal	Everything — not one age’s worth but all ages’ worth restored	“Behold, I make all things new” — Rev 21:5

This table represents the theological architecture of the book’s argument in its most concentrated form. Each age loses something real; each age preserves something real; Christ’s work addresses the losses of all the ages simultaneously. The Gospel is not a rescue operation with one casualty. It is the final act of a cosmic drama that began before the Garden was planted, and its scope is exactly as large as the drama that preceded it.



III. Colossians 1:15–20: The Cosmic Christ and the Scope of Reconciliation

Paul's Christological hymn in Colossians 1:15–20 is the broadest statement of Christ's cosmic significance in the entire New Testament, and it is the text that most directly addresses the question of what the Gospel's restoration encompasses. It deserves the most careful reading this chapter can give it.

“For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.” — Colossians 1:16–17

The hymn opens with a declaration of Christ's cosmic primacy in creation: all things — visible and invisible, heavenly and earthly, including the full hierarchy of spiritual powers — were created by Him, through Him, and for Him. He is before all things. He is the sustaining principle of all things. This is not a statement about the redemption of the Adamic race; it is a statement about the Creator's relationship to the entire created order across all its ages. The Christ who sustains the present creation sustained the pre-Adamic creation before it. The Christ who created the Adamic world created the pre-Adamic world before it. He was there for all of it. None of it fell outside His knowledge or His sovereign purpose.

“For it pleased the Father that in him should all fulness dwell; And, having made peace through the blood of his cross, by him to reconcile all things unto himself; by him, I say, whether they be things in earth, or things in heaven.” — Colossians 1:19–20

Verse 20 is the theological climax of the hymn and the broadest statement of Christ's redemptive scope in all of Scripture: the Father was pleased to reconcile ‘all things’ (τὰ πάντα — ta panta) to Himself through Christ. Things in earth. Things in heaven. The Greek ta panta is the most comprehensive possible expression of totality: everything, without exception, without qualification, without limit.

What does it mean to reconcile ‘things in heaven’? Paul is not describing the salvation of human beings who are already in heaven; those who are already in heaven do not need reconciliation. He is describing the restoration of a heavenly order that has been disrupted: the divine council that fell in Lucifer's rebellion, the cosmic governance structures that were corrupted by the primordial catastrophe, the spiritual powers that were disordered by the same fall that produced the *tohu va'bohu*. The reconciliation of ‘things in heaven’ is the restoration of the cosmic order that the first rebellion shattered — the healing of the wound that existed in the created order before Adam was formed from the dust.

On the standard reading of redemption — Adam falls, Christ saves the Adamic race — the phrase ‘things in heaven’ is a puzzle. What heavenly things need reconciling? On the pre-Adamic reading, the puzzle resolves: the things in heaven that need reconciling are precisely the pre-Adamic elements of the cosmic order that were damaged or lost in the primordial rebellion. Christ's work is not one layer deep. It goes all the way down through the ages.

The Principalities and Powers: Ruling Spirits of the Pre-Adamic Age

Paul's enumeration of the cosmic powers — thrones, dominions, principalities, powers — in Colossians 1:16 is not decorative. It is a specific reference to the hierarchy of spiritual governance that administers the created order. These are the beings who, in the pre-Adamic

age, governed the world under the covering cherub's oversight. They are the beings whose rebellion (a third of the stars of heaven falling with the dragon in Revelation 12:4) contributed to the primordial catastrophe. They are the beings over whom Christ's victory at the Cross re-establishes the divine order that the primordial rebellion disrupted.

Paul returns to these powers in Colossians 2:15: 'And having spoiled principalities and powers, he made a shew of them openly, triumphing over them in it.' The Cross is the public defeat of the powers that have been in rebellion since before Adam walked the earth. The reconciliation of 'things in heaven' accomplished at the Cross is the final resolution of a conflict that began in the primordial rebellion and has been building through every subsequent catastrophe — the Adamic fall, the Genesis 6 corruption, the successive failures of the covenant line — until it meets its definitive answer in the obedience of the One who was there when it began, who saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven, and who came into the world He had made specifically to undo what that fall had set in motion.



IV. Ephesians 1:9–10: The Mystery of the Gathering of All Things

If Colossians 1:20 is the broadest statement of the Gospel's reconciling scope, Ephesians 1:9–10 is the most concentrated statement of the Gospel's temporal scope — its reach across all the ages of the cosmic drama.

“Having made known unto us the mystery of his will, according to his good pleasure which he hath purposed in himself: That in the dispensation of the fulness of times he might gather together in one all things in Christ, both which are in heaven, and which are on earth; even in him.” — Ephesians 1:9–10

The phrase 'the dispensation of the fulness of times' (οἰκονομίαν τοῦ πληρώματος τῶν καιρῶν — oikonomian tou plērōmatos tōn kairōn) is one of the most theologically dense expressions in Paul's vocabulary. The word oikonomia is the word of administration, household management, the oversight of a complex estate according to a plan. The plērōma (fulness) of the kairos (appointed seasons, critical moments) describes the point at which all the appointed times of the cosmic drama reach their completion simultaneously. This is not merely the end of one story; it is the end of all the stories, the moment at which every age's purposes are fulfilled and gathered into their final meaning.

The verb at the heart of verse 10 is anakephalaiōsasthai (ἀνακεφαλαιώσασθαι) — to recapitulate, to sum up, to gather under one head. The image is of a long and complex document being brought to its conclusion under a single summarizing heading — all the diverse threads of argument gathered into one final point. Christ, in Ephesians 1:10, is that heading. He is the recapitulation of all things — the point at which every age's story, every generation's hopes, every civilization's memory of the world that preceded them, is gathered into its ultimate meaning.

On the standard reading, the 'all things' of Ephesians 1:10 means the fallen Adamic race and the spiritual powers. On the pre-Adamic reading, it means everything: the pre-Adamic world and its lost civilization, the covering cherub's original glory before his fall, the ordered first creation before the tohu va'bohu, the pre-Adamic remnant who survived the catastrophe and endured into the age of Adam, every soul that has ever lived under any dispensation of the

cosmic drama. The fulness of times in which Christ recapitulates all things is the fulness that includes all the prior ages, not just the Adamic age.

The mystery of God's will is not merely the redemption of Adam's race. It is the gathering of all ages under one head — the summing up of everything that every age has lost into the single, total, eternal restoration that the Last Adam accomplishes.



V. Romans 5:12–21: The Two Adams and the Greater Work

Romans 5 is the New Testament's most systematic statement of the typological relationship between Adam and Christ, and it is the text that the pre-Adamic reading must most carefully engage. We have addressed its exegetical dimensions in Chapter Seven; here we draw out its theological implications for the scope of the Gospel's restoration.

“But not as the offence, so also is the free gift. For if through the offence of one many be dead, much more the grace of God, and the gift by grace, which is by one man, Jesus Christ, hath abounded unto many... For if by one man's offence death reigned by one; much more they which receive abundance of grace and of the gift of righteousness shall reign in life by one, Jesus Christ... Moreover the law entered, that the offence might abound. But where sin abounded, grace did much more abound.” —

Romans 5:15, 17, 20

Paul's insistence on the 'much more' (πολλῷ μᾶλλον — pollō mallon) of grace over sin is one of the most theologically significant phrases in the entire epistle. The work of the Last Adam is not merely equal to the damage of the first Adam; it exceeds it. The gift is not commensurate with the offense; it is greater. Where sin abounded, grace abounded 'much more.'

What does 'much more' mean in the context of the pre-Adamic reading? It means that the restoration Christ accomplishes is not merely the restoration of what the first Adam lost. It is the restoration of what every preceding catastrophe lost — the tohu va'bohu judgment, the pre-Adamic civilization, the cosmic governance structures disrupted by Lucifer's rebellion, the 'things in heaven' that Colossians 1:20 describes as being reconciled through the Cross. The 'much more' of Romans 5 is the excess of the Gospel over any specific accounting of what sin took: the gift exceeds the offense not merely in kind but in scope, reaching back through every age of the cosmic drama to restore what was lost before Adam's story began.

Paul's argument in Romans 5 is not the argument of a God who is merely undoing the damage of a single human failure. It is the argument of a God whose generosity is structurally in excess of every catastrophe that has ever occurred in His created order. The first Adam's fall is the occasion for the demonstration of a grace that was always greater than what it was responding to — a grace that would have been sufficient for the pre-Adamic catastrophe as well, had the pre-Adamic world known to receive it.



VI. 1 Enoch 45 and Jubilees 23: The Ancient Hope for the Restoration of All Things

1 Enoch 45 (The Second Parable of Enoch) · c. 100 BCE–50 CE · Part of the *Similitudes of Enoch (1 Enoch 37–71)* · The only section of 1 Enoch not found at Qumran; likely composed in the late Second Temple period

The *Similitudes of Enoch* (1 Enoch 37–71) contain Enoch’s vision of the heavenly realm, the Son of Man, the resurrection of the righteous, and the final judgment. Chapter 45 is among the most eschatologically significant passages in the entire Enochic corpus: it describes the transformation of the earth and the heavens at the end of the age, the dwelling of the Elect One (the Son of Man) with the righteous, and the restoration of the entire created order to its original glory. Translation: George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation* (Fortress Press, 2012).

First Enoch 45 contains one of the most beautiful eschatological visions in all of Second Temple Jewish literature — a vision of the end of all things that, read in the light of the pre-Adamic framework, takes on dimensions that its interpreters have rarely perceived.

“On that day I will cause my Elect One to dwell among them, and I will transform heaven and make it an eternal blessing and light. And I will transform the earth and make it a blessing, and I will cause my Elect Ones to dwell upon it; but those who have committed sin and error will not set foot upon it.” — 1 Enoch 45:4–5

The transformation of heaven and earth described in 1 Enoch 45 is not merely the restoration of the Adamic world to Eden. It is the transformation of the entire cosmic order — heaven and earth together, the full span of the created cosmos from its highest celestial reaches to its physical surface. This transformation is not a repair job; it is a re-creation, a making of everything new that encompasses the full scope of everything that has been disordered, disrupted, and destroyed across all the ages of the cosmic drama.

Enoch’s vision is the vision of an ancient Jew who understood, perhaps better than most of his contemporaries, that the damage done to the created order was not merely the damage of Adam’s fall. He had read the ancient traditions about the primordial rebellion, about the Watchers and their disruption of the cosmic governance, about the world before Adam that the judgment had emptied. His vision of transformation encompasses all of it — the full repair of a cosmos that has been damaged at multiple levels across multiple ages. The Elect One who will dwell among the righteous in the transformed creation is the One who will have accomplished this total repair.

Book of Jubilees 23 · c. 160–150 BCE · Aramaic and Hebrew · Fifteen manuscripts at Qumran · Canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church

Jubilees 23 is the most extensive eschatological passage in the book, describing the degeneration of human lifespans across successive generations, the tribulations of the end times, and the ultimate renewal of creation in which the righteous will live forever. It is the most direct parallel in Second Temple Jewish literature to the Romans 5 “much more” argument: the restoration of the end times will exceed everything that the prior ages’ failures

have damaged. Translation: James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2018).

Jubilees 23 opens with a meditation on the progressive shortening of human lifespans across the generations from Adam to the present — a decline that the text attributes to the accumulating consequences of successive generations' failures. But it closes with a vision of restoration that runs in the opposite direction: the righteous will grow in wisdom and live in joy, and their bones will rest in peace, and they will rise again to 'all the goodness and all the glory' of the transformed creation.

“And their bones will rest in the earth, and their spirits will have much joy, and they will know that there is life from the LORD like the dew. And they will all rise and be healed and prosper; they will observe Torah and righteousness, and they will not grow old through misfortune or in calamity, but they will find rest and peace. And all their days they will complete their lives in peace and in joy, and there is no Satan and no evil one who will destroy, for all of their days will be days of blessing and healing.”

— **Jubilees 23:29–30**

'No Satan and no evil one who will destroy.' The final restoration described in Jubilees 23 is not merely the restoration of the conditions that existed in Adam's garden; it is the elimination of the adversarial power whose rebellion preceded the garden. The restoration exceeds the pre-Adamic world's best conditions: it eliminates the very presence of the one whose pride introduced catastrophe into the created order in the first place. The Satan of the primordial rebellion, the covering cherub whose fall produced the *tohu va'bohu*, is absent from the restored creation of Jubilees 23. This is not a return to the pre-Adamic world; it is the creation of something better than anything that has ever existed.



VII. Revelation 21–22: The New Heaven and the New Earth

“And I saw a new heaven and a new earth: for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea. And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God is with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, and be their God. And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away. And he that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new.” — **Revelation 21:1–5**

The vision of Revelation 21–22 is the Bible's final statement about what God intends to do with His creation — and it is, on the pre-Adamic reading, more radical and more beautiful than it appears on the standard reading. 'The former things are passed away.' All of them. Not merely the sorrows of the present age; not merely the consequences of the Adamic fall; but all the former things: the *tohu va'bohu*, the primordial judgment, the pre-Adamic catastrophe, the Adamic fall, the Flood, the exile, the Cross itself — all of it 'passed away,' all of it transformed by the one who says from the throne: 'Behold, I make all things new.'

‘All things new’ (καινὰ πάντα — kaina panta) is not the restoration of old things to their former condition. Kainos in Greek does not mean restored; it means new in kind, new in quality, a newness that transcends the category of the old rather than merely repairing it. The new heaven and new earth of Revelation 21 are not the old heaven and old earth repaired; they are a new order of being that transcends everything that preceded them, including the finest moments of the pre-Adamic world at the height of its glory before Lucifer’s rebellion.

The Absence of the Sea

The detail that ‘there was no more sea’ in the new creation is, in the context of the pre-Adamic reading, theologically significant beyond its surface meaning. The sea — the primordial waters, the tehom, the abyss — has been the symbol throughout the Bible of the chaos that the primordial rebellion introduced into the created order. From the tehom of Genesis 1:2 to the ‘great deep’ of the Flood to the beast that rises from the sea in Revelation 13, the sea has been the domain of disorder, the residue of the cosmic catastrophe that the tohu va’bohu represents. In the new creation, there is no more sea. The chaos is not managed; it is abolished. The primordial waters that covered the ruins of the first creation, over which the Spirit hovered before speaking the new creation into being, are gone. There is nothing left of the disorder that preceded Adam’s world.

This is not merely a physical description of a world without oceans. It is the announcement of the final, total, irreversible defeat of the chaos that Lucifer’s rebellion introduced into the created order. The new creation is not the restored old creation; it is the creation that the old creation was always meant to be, freed from the disruption of every catastrophe that prevented it from being that from the beginning.

The River and the Tree: Paradise Restored and Transcended

“And he shewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as crystal, proceeding out of the throne of God and of the Lamb. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree were for the healing of the nations.” —

Revelation 22:1–2

The river flowing from the throne and the tree of life on its banks are deliberate echoes of the Garden of Eden — the river of Eden and the tree of life that stood in its midst (Genesis 2:10–9). The new creation is, in certain respects, a restoration of what was lost in Eden. But it is a restoration that exceeds the original in every dimension: the tree of life in Eden bore fruit; the tree of life in the new creation bears twelve kinds of fruit every month. The river in Eden watered the garden; the river in the new creation proceeds directly from the throne of God and the Lamb.

And most significantly: the leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Not of Israel alone. Not of the Adamic covenant line alone. The nations — all the peoples of the earth, stretching back through every civilization that ever existed, back through the post-Flood Table of Nations, back through the pre-Adamic remnant who inhabited the land of Nod, back through the pre-Adamic civilization that flourished before Lucifer’s fall — are included in the healing that the tree provides. The new creation’s tree of life is not a private garden for one covenant people; it is the universal provision for every human being who has ever lived under any dispensation of the cosmic drama.

The leaves of the tree are for the healing of the nations. Every nation. Every age. Every remnant that survived every catastrophe. The new creation's tree of life reaches back as far as the damage goes — all the way to the primordial garden before the first catastrophe, all the way to the first human beings who ever lived on an earth that God created to be inhabited.



VIII. The Pre-Adamic World and the Scope of Atonement

The most pressing theological question that the pre-Adamic hypothesis raises for Christian doctrine is the question of atonement: if human beings existed before Adam, did Christ die for them? And if He did, how does this relate to Paul's explicit statement that sin and death entered the world through Adam?

The answer the pre-Adamic reading gives to this question is one of the most theologically enriching consequences of the entire argument. Christ did not die merely for the sins of Adam's descendants. Christ died for the reconciliation of all things — *ta panta* of Colossians 1:20. The pre-Adamic image-bearers of Genesis 1:27 — those who bore the divine image as members of the general category of humanity created on the sixth day — are part of the 'all things' that the Father was pleased to reconcile through the blood of Christ's cross.

This does not create a problem for the doctrine of original sin. Original sin, as Paul articulates it in Romans 5, is a specific covenant doctrine: the imputation of Adam's transgression to his covenant line, the spread of death through the specific breach of the specific covenant command given to the specific man of Genesis 2:7. The pre-Adamic image-bearers were not under that specific covenant; they did not violate the specific command that Adam violated; their sin was real but not imputed in the Adamic way. Paul acknowledges this in Romans 5:13–14: 'sin is not imputed when there is no law; nevertheless death reigned from Adam to Moses even over those who had not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression.'

The pre-Adamic race sinned without the specific covenant law; they died without the specific covenant imputation; and they are reconciled through the same blood of the Cross that reconciles Adam's descendants, but on the basis of the broader category: the image-bearing humanity of Genesis 1:27, for whose restoration Colossians 1:20's 'all things' was always the divine intention.

Christ as the Cosmic Image-Bearer

Colossians 1:15 identifies Christ as 'the image of the invisible God' (εἰκὼν τοῦ ἀοράτου θεοῦ). He is the original, the perfect instantiation of the image that the humanity of Genesis 1:27 was created to bear. Every human being who has ever lived — pre-Adamic or Adamic, before the covenant or under it — bears an image that is ultimately an image of Him. The image of God in humanity is the image of Christ in humanity; the image-bearing dignity that distinguishes human beings from every other creature is a dignity that derives from the One who is Himself the Image.

The implication for the pre-Adamic race is profound: they bear the image of Christ just as the Adamic race does. They are made in His image, for His purposes, and toward His glory just as surely as Adam and his descendants. Their redemption — the reconciliation of their portion of

the ‘all things’ of Colossians 1:20 — is accomplished in the same atoning act that accomplishes Adam’s descendants’ redemption, because both groups are image-bearers of the one who is the image of the invisible God.



IX. The Last Adam: Why the Gospel Is Larger Because of the Pre-Adamic World

We are now in a position to answer the central question of this final chapter: why does the pre-Adamic world make the Gospel larger, not smaller?

It makes the Gospel larger because it reveals the full scope of what the Gospel was always meant to accomplish. The standard reading of redemption — Adam falls, Christ redeems the fallen Adamic race — is not wrong. It is incomplete. It treats the Gospel as the solution to one problem in one age. The pre-Adamic reading reveals that the Gospel is the solution to the deepest problem in the entire created order across all its ages: the problem of a creation that was made for God, that was disrupted by rebellion, that has never yet been fully what God always intended it to be.

The Last Adam is not merely the remedy for the first Adam’s failure. He is the fulfillment of the purpose for which the first creation was made — the realization of the intention that Lucifer’s rebellion frustrated before Adam’s story began. When Paul calls Christ ‘the firstborn of every creature’ (Colossians 1:15) and ‘the firstborn from the dead’ (Colossians 1:18), he is placing Christ at the head of two orders: the order of the original creation (every creature) and the order of the new creation (the resurrection). Christ is the head of both. His work in the new creation is the fulfillment of what was intended for the first creation — and the first creation includes the pre-Adamic world in all its ages.

The Gospel is larger because God’s purposes are larger than we have usually imagined. The story of redemption did not begin with Adam’s fall; it was set in motion, in the mind of God, before the creation of the world itself. Paul describes it as ‘the mystery hidden from ages and from generations’ (Colossians 1:26) — hidden from the pre-Adamic ages and from the Adamic generations — but now revealed. The pre-Adamic ages are not outside the scope of this mystery; they are the context within which it was hidden, the ages from which it was concealed, the prior chapters of the story whose resolution the Gospel provides.

The pre-Adamic world does not compete with the Gospel. It calls for it. A world made for habitation and emptied by judgment; a race made for covenant intimacy and corrupted by rebellion; a creation designed for the image-bearer’s stewardship and disordered by the steward’s pride: all of this cries out for the one thing that can restore it. Not a partial repair. Not a return to an earlier state. A new creation — the *kainos panta* of Revelation 21:5, the gathering of all things under one head in Ephesians 1:10, the reconciliation of *ta panta* in Colossians 1:20.

The Last Adam came not to restore Eden. He came to accomplish what Eden was always pointing toward: the full, permanent, irreversible dwelling of God with His image-bearers across all ages, in a creation so thoroughly restored that the former things — every catastrophe, every fall, every judgment, every *tohu va’bohu* — are not merely healed but transcended.

The pre-Adamic world makes the Gospel larger because it reveals what the Gospel was always responding to: not one man's failure in one garden, but a cosmic drama of creation, catastrophe, and restoration that spans every age from the primordial rebellion to the New Jerusalem. Christ is the answer to all of it.



X. Before the Garden, After the Garden: A Final Word

This book began with two Hebrew words: *tohu va'bohu*. It has ended with the New Jerusalem. The distance between those two points is the distance the Gospel travels — from the ruins of a world that judgment emptied to the eternal city that the Lamb illuminates, from the darkness on the face of the deep to the day that has no night, from the Spirit hovering over dark waters to the river of life flowing from the throne of God.

What lies between those two points — the entire span of cosmic history from the primordial rebellion to the New Creation — is one continuous story. It is the story of a God who created a world to be inhabited, who watched a trusted governor destroy it through pride, who hovered over the ruins and spoke light into them, who formed a specific man from their dust and breathed His own life into that man's nostrils, who commissioned that man and his line to replenish what the judgment had emptied, who watched the covenant line be corrupted and preserved one intact heir through the Flood, who called one man from Ur and made of his descendants the people through whom the promise would be delivered, who sent His own Son — the One who had been present for all of it, who had watched Satan fall like lightning from heaven, who had breathed into Adam's nostrils — into the very world whose ruins He had first spoken into light.

The Son came into the world His father's fall had shattered, into the garden whose corruption His first Adam had deepened, into the humanity whose image bore His own likeness from the very beginning. He lived the life that Adam could not live. He bore the judgment that all the catastrophes had accumulated. He descended into the deepest depth of the cosmic ruins — further even than the *tohu va'bohu*, into the darkness of death itself — and spoke the first word of the final new creation: 'I am the resurrection and the life.'

The pre-Adamic world is not a footnote to the Gospel. It is the context without which the Gospel's full dimensions cannot be seen. The world before Adam was real: it was created, it was inhabited, it was governed, it fell, it was judged, its ruins were restored, and from those ruins the story of Adam and of Christ and of the New Jerusalem proceeds. To read Genesis without the pre-Adamic world is to read the Gospel with eyes that cannot quite reach its farthest horizon.

With those eyes opened, the horizon recedes to its proper distance: all the way back to the first moment of the first creation, before the fall, before the catastrophe, before the *tohu va'bohu* — to the world that God made perfect, that He formed to be inhabited, that He set a guardian over, and that He has been, through every age of the cosmic drama, working to restore. Not to what it was. To what it was always meant to be. To what, on the day the New Jerusalem descends and God says 'Behold, I make all things new,' it will at last, finally, and forever be.

The former things have passed away. The former ages, with their catastrophes and their remnants and their preserved covenants and their long painful patience, have passed away. The world before Adam, and the world of Adam, and every world that the patient, inexhaustible love

of the God who created it all has been tending across the immensity of time — all of it passes into the new thing that has no precedent, the creation that transcends all prior creation, the eternal day that has no *tohu va'bohu* in its past because it is the day that the *tohu va'bohu*'s long story has been building toward from the beginning.

“*He which testifieth these things saith, Surely I come quickly.’ Amen. Even so, come, Lord Jesus.*” — **Revelation 22:20**



Scholarly Notes and Further Reading

- [1] On Colossians 1:15–20 and the cosmic scope of Christ’s reconciling work: N. T. Wright, *The Epistles of Paul to the Colossians and to Philemon*, TNTC (Eerdmans, 1986), pp. 71–82. The phrase *ta panta* in Colossians 1:20 and the question of the reconciliation of heavenly powers: Peter T. O’Brien, *Colossians, Philemon*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 44 (Word Books, 1982), pp. 52–57. On the principalities and powers: Clinton E. Arnold, *Powers of Darkness: Principalities and Powers in Paul’s Letters* (IVP, 1992), pp. 87–105.
- [2] On Ephesians 1:9–10 and the *anakephalaiōsasthai*: Andrew T. Lincoln, *Ephesians*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 42 (Word Books, 1990), pp. 32–36. The meaning of *oikonomia tou plērōmatos tōn kairōn*: Ernest Best, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on Ephesians* (T&T Clark, 1998), pp. 133–140. On the recapitulation theme in patristic theology (Irenaeus): Robert Grant, *Irenaeus of Lyons* (Routledge, 1997), pp. 46–60.
- [3] On Romans 5:15–20 and the *pollō mallon* (“much more”) of grace: Joseph A. Fitzmyer, *Romans*, Anchor Bible vol. 33 (Doubleday, 1993), pp. 412–420. The eschatological dimensions of the Adam-Christ typology: James D. G. Dunn, *Romans 1–8*, Word Biblical Commentary vol. 38A (Word Books, 1988), pp. 270–290.
- [4] On 1 Enoch 45 and the eschatological transformation: George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch 2: A Commentary on the Book of 1 Enoch, Chapters 37–82* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2012), pp. 147–152. On the Similitudes of Enoch and their relationship to New Testament Son of Man traditions: John J. Collins, *The Apocalyptic Imagination*, 3rd ed. (Eerdmans, 2016), pp. 177–193.
- [5] On Jubilees 23 and its eschatology: James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees* (Hermeneia; Fortress Press, 2018), vol. 2, pp. 142–150. The “no Satan” formula and its significance: Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *Angel Veneration and Christology: A Study in Early Judaism and in the Christology of the Apocalypse of John* (Mohr Siebeck, 1995), pp. 78–82.
- [6] On Revelation 21–22 and the new creation: G. K. Beale, *The Book of Revelation*, NIGTC (Eerdmans, 1999), pp. 1039–1115. On *kainos* vs. *neos* (new in kind vs. new in time) and its theological significance: Richard J. Bauckham, *The Theology of the Book of Revelation* (Cambridge University Press, 1993), pp. 47–53. On the tree of life and the healing of the nations: Craig R. Koester, *Revelation*, Anchor Yale Bible vol. 38A (Yale University Press, 2014), pp. 824–828. On the absence of the sea as the defeat of primordial chaos: Jon Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil* (Princeton University Press, 1994), pp. 14–25.



— End of Chapter Ten —



BEFORE THE GARDEN

A World Before Adam

Evidence from Scripture, Tradition, and the Ancient Record



“And he that sat upon the throne said,
Behold, I make all things new.”
— **Revelation 21:5**

*All things. All ages. All worlds.
Even those that fell before the Garden was planted.*



APPENDIX A

Ancient Texts Referenced

Full Citation Guide

Scripture · Apocrypha · Dead Sea Scrolls · Rabbinic Literature · Patristic Texts · Ancient Near Eastern Records



This appendix provides full bibliographic information for every ancient text cited in *Before the Garden*, organized by category and listed alphabetically within each category. Each entry gives the standard scholarly sigla (the short reference form used in academic citations), the full title, the original language, the date and provenance of the text, the primary critical edition used, and the English translation or translations recommended for further study.

The citation format used throughout the main text of this book follows standard practice for theological and biblical scholarship: canonical texts are cited by book, chapter, and verse (e.g. Genesis 1:2; Romans 5:14); ancient non-canonical texts are cited by title, section or chapter, and line or verse number where available (e.g. 1 Enoch 6:2; Zohar Bereshit 24b). Where multiple translations of a text exist, the translation used in this book is identified in the entry below; readers consulting other translations may encounter variations in wording.

I. CANONICAL SCRIPTURE

Hebrew Old Testament (Masoretic Text)

BHS

Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia

Hebrew. Edited by Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph. 5th edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 1997. The standard critical edition of the Hebrew Old Testament, based on the Leningrad Codex (Codex Leningradensis, 1008/9 CE), the oldest complete manuscript of the Hebrew Bible.

The primary Hebrew text used throughout this book. All Hebrew citations, transliterations, and lexical analyses are based on BHS unless a Dead Sea Scrolls variant is specifically noted.

KJV***The Holy Bible, King James Version***

English. London: Robert Barker, 1611. Modern editions: Cambridge University Press; Oxford University Press.

The primary English translation used throughout this book. Produced by the King James Bible translators under James I of England, the KJV was translated from the Masoretic Text for the Old Testament and the Textus Receptus for the New Testament, with constant reference to the Septuagint, the Vulgate, and earlier English translations. All English scriptural quotations in this book are from the KJV unless otherwise noted.

Greek Old Testament (Septuagint)

LXX***Septuaginta***

Greek. Edited by Alfred Rahlfs; revised by Robert Hanhart. 2nd edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2006. The standard critical edition of the Septuagint, the ancient Greek translation of the Hebrew Bible produced by Jewish scholars in Alexandria beginning in the third century BCE.

*The LXX is of particular importance to this book for its rendering of Genesis 1:2's *tohu va'bohu* as *aoratos kai akataskeuastos* (invisible and unformed), which reflects how ancient, Hebrew-fluent Jewish scholars understood the condition described in that verse.*

Greek New Testament

NA28***Novum Testamentum Graece***

Greek. Edited by Eberhard Nestle, Erwin Nestle, Barbara Aland, Kurt Aland, et al. 28th edition. Stuttgart: Deutsche Bibelgesellschaft, 2012.

The standard critical edition of the Greek New Testament, used for all New Testament Greek citations and transliterations throughout this book.

II. ARAMAIC TARGUMS

The Targums are Aramaic translations and expansions of the Hebrew Torah, produced for Jewish communities whose primary language had shifted from Hebrew to Aramaic. They are not mere translations: they incorporate interpretive expansions, haggadic material, and traditional explanations that preserve ancient rabbinic understanding of the biblical text. Two Targums are cited with significant frequency in this book.

Tg. Onk.***Targum Onqelos on the Torah***

Aramaic. c. 2nd century CE, drawing on older traditions. Critical text: Alexander Sperber, ed., *The Bible in Aramaic: The Pentateuch According to Targum Onkelos*. 4 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1959–1968. English translation: Bernard Grossfeld, *The Targum Onqelos to Genesis*. Aramaic Bible vol. 6. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1988.

The most authoritative and widely used Aramaic translation of the Torah, regarded in the Babylonian rabbinic tradition as the definitive Aramaic rendering. Its treatment of the creation vocabulary in Genesis 1–2 is examined in Chapter Two.

Cited as: *Tg. Onk. Gen 1:28* • **Example:** *Tg. Onk. Gen 1:28* (Grossfeld, p. 44)

Tg. Ps.-J. *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan on the Torah*

Aramaic. Redacted c. 7th century CE but drawing on Second Temple traditions of considerably greater antiquity. English translation: Michael Maher, *Targum Pseudo-Jonathan: Genesis*. Aramaic Bible vol. 1B. Collegeville: Liturgical Press, 1992.

The most expansive of the Aramaic Targums, preserving ancient haggadic traditions not found in the Masoretic text. Its naming of Cain's wife as Themech, its treatment of Genesis 4's population, and its expansions of the creation narrative are examined in Chapters Four and Seven.

Cited as: *Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 4:17* • **Example:** *Tg. Ps.-J. Gen 4:17* (Maher, p. 33)

III. SECOND TEMPLE LITERATURE

The Second Temple period (c. 530 BCE – 70 CE) produced an extensive Jewish literature that circulated alongside, and was sometimes quoted within, the canonical Scripture. The texts in this section are not canonical in the Protestant or Catholic sense, but they are invaluable witnesses to how the biblical narrative was understood in the world of Jesus and the Apostles. Several were found among the Dead Sea Scrolls; several are explicitly quoted in the New Testament.

1 En. *1 Enoch (The Ethiopic Book of Enoch)*

Original language: Aramaic and Hebrew. Composition: various sections c. 300 BCE – 50 CE. Canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; extensively attested at Qumran. Critical edition of Aramaic fragments: Józef Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976. Primary English translation used: George W. E. Nickelsburg and James C. VanderKam, *1 Enoch: The Hermeneia Translation*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012 (2 vols.). Supplementary reference: R. H. Charles, *The Book of Enoch*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1917.

The most important extra-canonical text for this book. The Book of the Watchers (chapters 1–36) is dated c. 300–200 BCE and provides the most detailed ancient account of the Genesis 6:1–4 episode, the angelic rebellion, and the pre-Flood world. It is explicitly cited as prophecy by Jude 1:14–15, the only extra-biblical Jewish text directly quoted as prophecy in the New Testament.

Cited as: *1 En. 6:2* • **Example:** *1 En. 6:2* (Nickelsburg–VanderKam, p. 26)

Jub. *The Book of Jubilees (The Little Genesis)*

Original language: Hebrew, with Aramaic and Greek fragments. Composition: c. 160–150 BCE. Canonical in the Ethiopian Orthodox Church; fifteen manuscripts at Qumran. Critical edition incorporating Qumran fragments: James C. VanderKam, *The Book of Jubilees. Hermeneia Commentary*. 2 vols. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2018. Earlier standard translation: R. H. Charles, *The Book of Jubilees*. London: Adam and Charles Black, 1902.

Presents itself as a divine revelation given to Moses on Mount Sinai. Its cosmological framework, treatment of prior cosmic ages, account of the angelic infrastructure, and description of a pre-Fall world in which all creatures shared a common language are examined in Chapters Three, Four, and Ten.

Cited as: *Jub. 3:28* • **Example:** *Jub. 3:28* (VanderKam, vol. 1, p. 24)

1QapGen *The Genesis Apocryphon*

Original language: Aramaic. Cave 1, Qumran. c. 1st century BCE – 1st century CE. Critical edition and translation: Daniel A. Machiela, *The Dead Sea Genesis Apocryphon: A New Text and Translation with Introduction and Special Treatment of Columns 13–17*. Studies on the Texts of the Desert of Judah vol. 79. Leiden: Brill, 2009.

An Aramaic retelling of the Genesis narrative with significant expansions. Its treatment of the pre-Flood world presupposes a cosmological framework of great complexity and antiquity beyond the surface reading of the canonical Genesis text.

4QEn *Aramaic Fragments of 1 Enoch (Qumran Cave 4)*

Aramaic. Qumran Cave 4. Sigla 4QEna–g (seven manuscripts). c. 200–100 BCE. Critical edition: Józef Milik, *The Books of Enoch: Aramaic Fragments of Qumran Cave 4*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1976.

The Qumran Aramaic fragments of 1 Enoch are among the most important witnesses to the early text of 1 Enoch and confirm the wide circulation of the Enochic tradition in the Second Temple period.

4QGiants *The Book of Giants*

Aramaic. Eight manuscripts from Qumran Caves 1, 4, and 6: 4Q203, 4Q530–533, 1Q23–24, 6Q8. c. 200–100 BCE. Critical edition and translation: Loren T. Stuckenbruck, *The Book of Giants from Qumran: Texts, Translation, and Commentary*. Texts and Studies in Ancient Judaism vol. 63. Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 1997.

An Aramaic elaboration of the Watchers narrative of 1 Enoch, focusing on the Giants born of the unions described in Genesis 6:1–4. Of particular significance: the naming of Gilgamesh among the Giants, establishing a direct bridge between the Qumran tradition and the Mesopotamian literary memory of the pre-Flood world. Examined in Chapter Five.

Cited as: *4QGiants 4Q530 II* • **Example:** *4QGiants 4Q530 II* (Stuckenbruck, p. 88)

Jas. *The Book of Jasher (Sefer ha-Yashar)*

Hebrew. Uncertain date; the extant text is likely a medieval compilation incorporating traditions of considerably older provenance. The book is referenced by name in Joshua 10:13 and 2 Samuel 1:18, suggesting it was a known ancient source in the biblical world. Standard English translation: M. M. Noah, *The Book of Jasher*. New York: M. M. Noah & A. S. Gould, 1840.

Used with appropriate caution in this book, cited only where its content corroborates evidence already established from more securely dated sources. Its treatment of Cain's settlement in Nod and the pre-Flood world's density of population is examined in Chapter Four.

IV. DEAD SEA SCROLLS (ADDITIONAL TEXTS)

1QM *The War Scroll (Serekh ha-Milhamah)*

Hebrew. Cave 1, Qumran. c. 1st century BCE. Also attested in 4Q491–496. Critical edition and translation: Yigael Yadin, *The Scroll of the War of the Sons of Light against the Sons of Darkness*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1962. Also: Jean Duhaime in James Charlesworth, ed., *The Dead Sea Scrolls: Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek Texts with English Translations*, vol. 2. Tübingen/Louisville: Mohr Siebeck/Westminster John Knox, 1995, pp. 80–203.

The eschatological battle scroll of the Qumran community, describing the final conflict between the Sons of Light and the Sons of Darkness. Its cosmological dualism, treatment of Belial as a cosmic adversary established from 'the beginning,' and theological framework presupposing a primordial rebellion preceding all human history are examined in Chapter Six.

Cited as: 1QM I:1–2 • **Example:** 1QM I:1–2 (Yadin, p. 260)

DSS *The Dead Sea Scrolls (General Reference)*

Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek. Caves 1–11, Qumran. c. 250 BCE – 68 CE. Comprehensive English translation: Geza Vermes, *The Complete Dead Sea Scrolls in English*. Revised edition. London: Penguin Classics, 2004. Multi-volume critical edition: *Discoveries in the Judaean Desert* series, 40 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1955–2009.

The Dead Sea Scrolls represent the most significant manuscript discovery in the history of biblical scholarship. In addition to the specific texts listed separately in this appendix (1 Enoch, Jubilees, Genesis Apocryphon, Book of Giants, War Scroll), the Scrolls provide our oldest manuscript witnesses to virtually every book of the Hebrew Old Testament and illuminate the interpretive world within which the pre-Adamic tradition was alive and active.

V. RABBINIC LITERATURE

Gen. Rab. *Bereshit Rabbah (Genesis Midrash Rabbah)*

Hebrew and Aramaic. Compiled c. 400–500 CE; drawing on Tannaitic and Amoraic traditions of the 1st–5th centuries CE. Standard English translation: H. Freedman and Maurice Simon, eds., *Midrash Rabbah: Genesis*. 2 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1939. Critical Hebrew edition: J. Theodor and Ch. Albeck, *Midrash Bereshit Rabbah*. 3 vols. Berlin: 1903–1936; repr. Jerusalem: Wahrmann, 1965.

The primary rabbinic commentary on Genesis, containing the most extensive ancient Jewish engagement with the creation accounts. Of particular importance: Gen. Rab. 3:7 (the tradition of worlds created and destroyed before the present), Gen. Rab. 9:2 (prior orders of time before Adam), and Gen. Rab. 22:2 (the rabbinic debate about the identity of Cain's wife). Examined throughout Chapters Three, Four, and Nine.

Cited as: Gen. Rab. 3:7 • **Example:** Gen. Rab. 3:7 (Freedman–Simon, vol. 1, p. 22)

b. Hag. *Babylonian Talmud, Tractate Chagigah*

Hebrew and Aramaic. Compiled c. 500–600 CE. Standard English translation: Isidore Epstein, ed., *The Babylonian Talmud*. London: Soncino Press, 1935–1952. The Artscroll Schottenstein Talmud (New York: Mesorah, 1990–present) is also recommended for accessibility.

Tractate Chagigah 14a contains the famous account of the four who entered the pardes (the garden of esoteric knowledge), understood in the mystical tradition as access to

esoteric cosmological knowledge including the nature of the worlds that preceded the present creation. Examined in Chapter Nine.

Rashi

Rashi (Rabbi Shlomo Yitzhaki), Commentary on the Torah

Hebrew. c. 1070–1105 CE. Standard English translation: Yisrael Isser Zvi Herczeg et al., *The Torah: With Rashi's Commentary*. 5 vols. Brooklyn: ArtScroll–Mesorah, 1994–1998.

Rashi's commentary on Genesis 1:1 argues that the purpose of the creation narrative is to establish God's prior claim on the land of Canaan, a claim based on His creative authority not merely over the Adamic world but over all the worlds that preceded it. His treatment of this verse draws on the pre-Adamic traditions of the Midrashic literature.

Ramban

Nachmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Nachman), Commentary on the Torah

Hebrew. c. 1267–1270 CE. Standard English translation: Charles B. Chavel, *Ramban (Nachmanides): Commentary on the Torah: Genesis*. New York: Shilo Publishing, 1971.

Nachmanides's commentary on Genesis 1:1–5 argues that the six days of creation are not six ordinary days but six cosmic periods of immense duration corresponding to the Sefirot governing cosmic history. Cited in Chapters Seven and Nine.

VI. KABBALISTIC LITERATURE

Zohar

The Zohar (Sefer ha-Zohar – The Book of Radiance)

Aramaic. Compiled by Moses de León, Castile, c. 1280–1286 CE; drawing on traditions of substantially older provenance. Definitive English translation: Daniel C. Matt, *The Zohar: Pritzker Edition*. 12 vols. Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2004–2017. Older partial translation: Harry Sperling and Maurice Simon, *The Zohar*. 5 vols. London: Soncino Press, 1931–1934.

The foundational text of Kabbalah. Of particular importance for this book: Zohar Bereshit 13b–16a (the Adam Kadmon and the two creations), 24b (prior worlds destroyed before the present; the identification of tohu va'bohu with the vestiges of prior worlds). The Matt Pritzker Edition, with its extensive notes and apparatus, is the authoritative scholarly translation and the primary reference used in this book. Examined in Chapters Three, Seven, and Nine.

Cited as: *Zohar Bereshit 24b* · **Example:** *Zohar Bereshit 24b (Matt, vol. 1, p. 155)*

Me'irat Einayim

Sefer Me'irat Einayim (The Book of the Illumination of the Eyes)

Hebrew. Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre, c. 1290–1340 CE. No complete modern critical edition; primary discussion in Aryeh Kaplan, *Immortality, Resurrection, and the Age of the Universe: A Kabbalistic View*. New York: KTAV, 1993.

Contains Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre's calculation of the age of the universe through the Shemittot doctrine, arriving at a figure of hundreds of billions of years. Among the most remarkable pre-modern engagements with cosmological chronology in any religious tradition. Examined in Chapter Nine.

VII. ANCIENT NEAR EASTERN TEXTS

The following texts are not Scripture and are not used as theological authorities in this book. They are treated as cultural memory: the preserved records of civilizations that share a common ancient Near Eastern world with the Hebrew biblical tradition and that independently preserve, in their own linguistic and theological frameworks, traces of the same ancient events the Bible describes. For full discussion of methodology, see Chapter Eight and the Note on Sources and Translation.

Mesopotamian (Sumerian and Babylonian)

Atra- hasis

The Atrahasis Epic (Atra-Hasis: He Who Is Exceedingly Wise)

Old Babylonian Akkadian. c. 1700 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older. Most complete text: British Museum (BM 78941, BM 78942, BM 78943). Critical edition and translation: W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1969. Also: Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia: Creation, the Flood, Gilgamesh, and Others*. Revised edition. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000, pp. 1–38.

The most complete ancient Babylonian narrative of the creation of humanity, the pre-Flood world, the divine decision to send the Flood, and the preservation of the flood hero. Its account of the Igigi rebellion and the creation of humanity as replacement labor provides the Babylonian cultural memory most directly parallel to the pre-Adamic framework. Examined in Chapters Three and Eight.

SKL

The Sumerian King List (Weld-Blundell Prism)

Sumerian. c. 2100–1800 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older. Most complete copy: Weld-Blundell Prism, Ashmolean Museum, Oxford (WB 444). Critical edition: Thorkild Jacobsen, *The Sumerian King List*. Assyriological Studies vol. 11. Chicago: University of Chicago Oriental Institute, 1939. More recent analysis: Piotr Michalowski, 'History as Charter: Some Observations on the Sumerian King List,' *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 103 (1983), pp. 237–248.

Records the rulers of Sumer from the descent of kingship from heaven through the post-Flood dynasties, with antediluvian kings assigned reigns of 18,600–43,200 years each. Its ten antediluvian kings have been compared with the ten patriarchs of Genesis 5. The King List presupposes a pre-Flood civilization of immense antiquity and administrative sophistication. Examined in Chapters Three and Eight.

Cited as: SKL I:1–5 • **Example:** SKL I:1–5 (Jacobsen, p. 70)

Enuma Elish

The Enuma Elish (When on High — The Babylonian Creation Epic)

Babylonian Akkadian. Written form c. 1100 BCE; oral tradition substantially older. Seven tablets; attested in copies from Nineveh, Assur, Babylon, and Kish. Critical edition and translation: W. G. Lambert, *Babylonian Creation Myths*. Mesopotamian Civilizations vol. 16. Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2013. Also: Stephanie Dalley, *Myths from Mesopotamia*, pp. 228–277.

The Babylonian creation epic, recounting the primordial conflict between Marduk and Tiamat and the creation of the world from the body of the slain chaos deity. The linguistic relationship between the Babylonian Tiamat and the Hebrew tehom (the deep) of Genesis 1:2 is examined in Chapter Eight. The conflict model's structural parallel with the primordial rebellion is also considered.

Gilg.***The Epic of Gilgamesh***

Sumerian and Akkadian. Various forms c. 2100–1200 BCE. Standard Babylonian version on twelve tablets; best-preserved copy from the Library of Ashurbanipal, Nineveh (7th century BCE). Critical edition: A. R. George, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic: Introduction, Critical Edition and Cuneiform Texts*. 2 vols. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2003. Standard English translation: Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts in Akkadian and Sumerian*. London: Penguin Classics, 2003.

The most celebrated Mesopotamian literary epic. Tablet XI contains the most detailed ancient parallel to the biblical flood narrative (the Utnapishtim episode). The garden of the gods (Tablets IX–X) and its Eden parallels, and Gilgamesh’s naming in the Book of Giants (4QGiants), are examined in Chapters Five and Eight.

Cited as: *Gilg. XI:1–20* • **Example:** *Gilg. XI:1–20* (George, p. 88)

Eridu Genesis***The Eridu Genesis (The Sumerian Flood Story)***

Sumerian. c. 1600 BCE in written form; oral tradition substantially older. Single fragmentary tablet, Museum of the Ancient Orient, Istanbul (CBS 10673). Critical text and translation: Thorkild Jacobsen, ‘The Eridu Genesis,’ *Journal of Biblical Literature* 100 (1981), pp. 513–529; repr. in *The Harps That Once: Sumerian Poetry in Translation*. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1987, pp. 145–150.

The oldest Sumerian flood narrative, centering on the city of Eridu as the first sacred city and the original site of divine-human encounter. The Eridu-Eden parallel is examined in Chapter Eight.

Berosus***Berosus, Babyloniaca (Babylonian History)***

Greek. Written c. 290–278 BCE by Berosus, a Babylonian priest of Marduk, for the Seleucid court. Original text lost; known through excerpts in Alexander Polyhistor (preserved in Eusebius of Caesarea, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX), Abydenus (in Eusebius, *Praeparatio Evangelica* IX), and Syncellus, *Ecloga Chronographica*. Critical edition: Paul Schnabel, *Berosus und die babylonisch-hellenistische Literatur*. Leipzig: Teubner, 1923. English translation: Stanley M. Burstein, *The Babyloniaca of Berosus. Sources from the Ancient Near East* vol. 1.5. Malibu: Undena, 1978.

Provides the most systematic ancient account of the Babylonian understanding of the world before the Flood, including the ten antediluvian kings with their extraordinary reign lengths and the preservation of pre-Flood knowledge at Sippar. Examined in Chapter Eight.

Ugaritic (Canaanite)**KTU*****The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places***

Ugaritic. Discovered 1929–1932 at Ras Shamra (ancient Ugarit), Syria. c. 1400–1200 BCE. Standard critical edition: Manfred Dietrich, Oswald Loretz, and Joaquín Sanmartín, *The Cuneiform Alphabetic Texts from Ugarit, Ras Ibn Hani and Other Places (KTU)*. 3rd edition. Münster: Ugarit-Verlag, 2013. English translation: Simon B. Parker, ed., *Ugaritic Narrative Poetry. Writings from the Ancient World* vol. 9. Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 1997.

The primary corpus of Ugaritic literary texts, including the Baal Cycle (the conflict between Baal and Yam/Mot). The Ugaritic Yam (sea-god of chaos) as the Northwest

Semitic counterpart of the Babylonian Tiamat, and its bearing on the Hebrew tehom (deep) of Genesis 1:2, is examined in Chapter Eight.

Cited as: *KTU 1.1–6 (Baal Cycle)* • **Example:** *KTU 1.2 IV (Parker, p. 101)*

VIII. PATRISTIC AND EARLY CHRISTIAN TEXTS

**Origen,
Princ.**

Origen of Alexandria, De Principiis (On First Principles)

Greek original; Latin translation by Rufinus of Aquileia (c. 397–398 CE). c. 220–230 CE. Standard English translation of Rufinus’s Latin: G. W. Butterworth, *Origen: On First Principles*. London: SPCK, 1936; repr. Gloucester: Peter Smith, 1973. Also available in: Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 4. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, pp. 239–382.

The most systematic ancient Christian engagement with the pre-Adamic question. Book I’s treatment of the nature of rational creatures and the pre-existence of prior worlds, and its reading of Genesis 1:2 as a description of matter abandoned by fallen rational governors, are examined in Chapters Six and Nine.

Cited as: *Origen, Princ. I.5.4* • **Example:** *Origen, Princ. I.5.4 (Butterworth, p. 42)*

**Tert.,
Marc.**

Tertullian, Adversus Marcionem (Against Marcion)

Latin. c. 207–208 CE. Critical text and translation: Ernest Evans, *Tertullian: Adversus Marcionem*. 2 vols. Oxford Early Christian Texts. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1972. Also: Alexander Roberts and James Donaldson, eds., *Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 3. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1994, pp. 269–475.

Tertullian’s polemic against Marcion identifies the Isaiah 14 figure with Satan and explicitly connects his fall with the condition described in Genesis 1:2. Examined in Chapter Six.

**Jerome,
Isa.**

Jerome, Commentariorum in Isaiam Prophetam (Commentary on Isaiah)

Latin. c. 408–410 CE. Text: *Patrologia Latina* 24. English excerpts: Joseph T. Lienhard, ed., *Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture: Old Testament XI*. Downers Grove: IVP Academic, 2001.

Jerome’s commentary on Isaiah 14:12–15 provides the most detailed patristic engagement with the Lucifer passage, identifying it with the primordial fall of Satan with extensive exegetical reasoning. His Vulgate translation of הלל (helel) as Lucifer established the name in Western theology. Examined in Chapter Six.

**Greg.,
Mor.**

Gregory the Great, Moralia in Job (Morals on the Book of Job)

Latin. c. 578–595 CE. Standard English translation: *Library of Fathers of the Holy Catholic Church*. Oxford: John Henry Parker, 1844–5. Latin text: *Patrologia Latina* 75–76.

Gregory’s treatment of Satan in the context of Job 1–2 identifies the Satan of Job, the Lucifer of Isaiah 14, and the covering cherub of Ezekiel 28 as a single being, argues that his fall divided the created order into the realms of light and darkness, and reads the world of Genesis 1:2 as the physical expression of the spiritual darkness that Lucifer’s

rebellion introduced. Anticipates the pre-Adamic argument by fourteen centuries. Examined in Chapter Six.

Cited as: *Greg., Mor. XXXII.23* • **Example:** *Greg., Mor. XXXII.23* (*Library of Fathers, vol. 3, p. 460*)

Josephus, Ant. *Flavius Josephus, Antiquitates Judaicae (Antiquities of the Jews)*

Greek. c. 93–94 CE. Standard English translation: William Whiston, *The Works of Josephus: Complete and Unabridged*. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1987 (orig. 1737). Critical Loeb edition: H. St. J. Thackeray et al., *Josephus*. 10 vols. Loeb Classical Library. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926–1965.

Josephus's account of the early Genesis narratives in Books I–II of the Antiquities preserves traditions current in first-century Jewish interpretation. His description of Cain traveling through 'many countries' and building a city with an already-present population, and his account of the pre-Flood world's civilization, are examined in Chapter Four.

Cited as: *Josephus, Ant. I.2.1* • **Example:** *Josephus, Ant. I.2.1* (*Whiston, p. 30*)

Philo, Opif. *Philo of Alexandria, De Opificio Mundi (On the Creation of the World)*

Greek. c. 20 BCE – 40 CE. Loeb Classical Library edition and translation: F. H. Colson and G. H. Whitaker, *Philo*, vol. 1. Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1929.

Philo's distinction between the heavenly Adam of Genesis 1:27 (the ideal, incorporeal archetype) and the earthly Adam of Genesis 2:7 (the particular, embodied individual) is the oldest systematic engagement with the two-creation argument. Also cited: Legum Allegoriae (Allegorical Commentary), in Philo vol. 1.

Cited as: *Philo, Opif. 134* • **Example:** *Philo, Opif. 134* (*Colson–Whitaker, vol. 1, p. 107*)

IX. EARLY MODERN THEOLOGICAL SOURCES

La Peyr., Prae. *Isaac de La Peyrère, Prae-Adamitae (Men Before Adam)*

Latin. Amsterdam, 1655. Published anonymously. Burned by the public executioner in Paris; banned across Catholic Europe. English translation issued in London, 1656: *Men Before Adam, or, A Discourse upon the Twelfth, Thirteenth, and Fourteenth Verses of the Fifth Chapter of the Epistle of the Apostle Paul to the Romans*. Scholarly analysis: Richard H. Popkin, *Isaac La Peyrère (1596–1676): His Life, Work and Influence*. Leiden: Brill, 1987.

The first systematic modern biblical argument for the pre-Adamic hypothesis. De La Peyrère's three-pillared argument from Genesis 1 vs. 2, the Genesis 4 population evidence, and Romans 5:12–14 are examined in detail in Chapters Seven and Nine.

Burnet, TSE *Thomas Burnet, Telluris Theoria Sacra (The Sacred Theory of the Earth)*

Latin. London, 1681–1689; English translation by the author: London, 1684–1690. Scholarly edition of related text: Thomas Burnet, *Archaeologiae Philosophicae*. London, 1692. Discussed in: Stephen Jay Gould, 'The Upwardly Mobile Fossils,' in *Leonardo's Mountain of Clams and the Diet of Worms*. New York: Harmony Books, 1998.

Burnet's geological theology, arguing for a prior world preceding the present one and reading Genesis 1:2 as the residue of that world. Examined in Chapter Nine.

X. STANDARD LEXICOGRAPHICAL AND REFERENCE WORKS

The following reference works are used throughout the book for Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek linguistic analysis. They are cited by standard abbreviation.

BDB *A Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*
Francis Brown, S. R. Driver, and Charles A. Briggs. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1906; repr. Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996.
The standard Hebrew lexicon used throughout this book for Old Testament Hebrew. Cited as BDB with page number.

HALOT *Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*
Ludwig Koehler and Walter Baumgartner. Translated and edited by M. E. J. Richardson. 5 vols. Leiden: Brill, 1994–2000.
The most comprehensive modern Hebrew and Aramaic lexicon, used alongside BDB for all major lexical arguments. Cited as HALOT with volume and page number.

BDAG *A Greek-English Lexicon of the New Testament and Other Early Christian Literature*
Walter Bauer. Revised and edited by Frederick W. Danker. 3rd edition. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2000.
The standard Greek lexicon for New Testament and early Christian literature. Cited as BDAG with page number.

TDOT *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament*
G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren, and Heinz-Josef Fabry, eds. 16 vols. Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1974–2018.
The standard theological lexicon for Old Testament Hebrew, consulted for all major theological word studies in this book. Cited as TDOT with volume and page number.



A Note on Ancient Text Accessibility

Many of the ancient texts cited in this appendix are now freely available in reliable English translation through online resources. The Internet Sacred Text Archive (www.sacred-texts.com) provides the older Charles translations of 1 Enoch and Jubilees. The Sefaria platform (www.sefaria.org) provides access to the Midrash Rabbah, Babylonian Talmud, and Rashi's Torah commentary in Hebrew and English. The Dead Sea Scrolls Bible project (www.deadseascrolls.org.il) provides facsimile images of the original manuscripts.

For the Mesopotamian texts, the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature (ETCSL, etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk) provides the Sumerian King List, the Eridu Genesis, and other Sumerian literary texts in transliteration and translation. The Cuneiform Digital Library Initiative (CDLI, cdli.ucla.edu) provides access to the primary cuneiform manuscript images.

Readers who wish to engage the ancient texts directly — rather than through the secondary discussion this book provides — will find the translations listed in each entry to be the most reliable starting points. For the canonical Hebrew Bible and the Septuagint, the Accordance Bible Software and Logos Bible Software platforms provide the critical editions with full search functionality and integrated lexical tools.

— End of Appendix A —

APPENDIX B

The Gap Theory Through Church History

A Timeline of Witnesses

From Philo of Alexandria to C. I. Scofield — Two Thousand Years of Engagement with the Pre-Adamic Question



The question of what existed before Adam is not a novelty of modern biblical scholarship. It has been raised, wrestled with, suppressed, and rediscovered by some of the most important theological minds in the history of Jewish and Christian thought, across every major tradition and every major century from the first to the twentieth. The twelve witnesses surveyed in this appendix represent the chronological backbone of that tradition.

They are arranged in the order they wrote, not by the correctness of their conclusions. Several held positions in their broader theological systems that are not endorsed by this book. Several were condemned, censured, or forced to recant. What they share is the recognition that the opening verses of Genesis raise questions that do not yield to easy answers, and the intellectual courage to follow those questions wherever they led.

The tradition's persistence is its own form of evidence. Questions that are truly resolved do not continue to be raised by every generation of careful readers. The pre-Adamic question has been with the Church and the Synagogue since their beginnings because the text that generates it has never changed. It is waiting, as it has always waited, for readers with the patience and the honesty to see what it shows.

SECOND TEMPLE & HELLENISTIC (C. 20 BCE – 50 CE)

Philo of Alexandria · c. 20 BCE – 50 CE

Jewish-Hellenistic — Jewish philosopher, Alexandria, Egypt

Core Argument: Distinguishes between the 'heavenly Adam' of Genesis 1:27 — the ideal, incorporeal archetype of image-bearing humanity — and the 'earthly Adam' of Genesis 2:7, the particular, embodied individual. Argues that what God creates in Genesis 1 and what He

forms in Genesis 2 are two different orders of being. This two-order reading is the oldest systematic engagement with the Genesis 1–2 distinction and the direct ancestor of every subsequent two-creation argument.

Primary Sources: *De Opificio Mundi* 134–135 · *Legum Allegoriae* I.31–42 · *Quaestiones et Solutiones in Genesin* I.4

PATRISTIC ERA (C. 185 – 430 CE)

Origen of Alexandria · c. 185 – 254 CE

Early Christian theologian — Head of the Catechetical School of Alexandria

Core Argument: In *De Principiis* argues that God has always been creating — the present world is not His first. Prior rational worlds existed before the Adamic age; their failure produced the conditions that made the present creation necessary. Genesis 1:2's formlessness and void describes the condition of matter abandoned by governing rational principles that have fallen, not an uncreated void. His reading anticipates the Gap Theory by fourteen centuries and was the most influential pre-Adamic argument in the early Church despite later condemnation of some of his larger cosmological system.

Primary Sources: *De Principiis* I.2.10, I.5.4, I.6.2 (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 4) · *Commentary on Genesis*

Augustine of Hippo · 354 – 430 CE

Latin Church Father — Bishop of Hippo, North Africa

Core Argument: Though not a Gap theorist in the full sense, argues in *De Genesi ad Litteram* that the six creation days are not sequential chronological days but a logical ordering of a simultaneous creative act. His framework requires the angels to have been created before the physical world — implying a prior order of rational created being preceding the Genesis narrative. His insistence that the 'light' of Genesis 1:3 refers to the illumination of the angelic intellect, not physical light, provides the structure within which a prior age could have existed.

Primary Sources: *De Genesi ad Litteram* I–IV · *Confessiones* XIII · *City of God* XI.9–11

Lactantius · c. 250 – 325 CE

Early Christian apologist — North Africa; tutor to Constantine's son

Core Argument: In *Divinae Institutiones* develops a framework of seven cosmic millennia in which each day of creation corresponds to one thousand years of cosmic history (drawing on 2 Peter 3:8 and Psalm 90:4), allowing for the prior existence of angelic orders and prior created worlds before the Adamic age. His millennial framework became the template for most subsequent chronological Gap-type arguments in the Latin Church.

Primary Sources: *Divinae Institutiones* II.10–14 · VII.14 (*Ante-Nicene Fathers* vol. 7)

MEDIEVAL & KABBALISTIC (C. 1150 – 1340 CE)

Nachmanides (Rabbi Moses ben Nachman) · 1194 – 1270 CE

Medieval Jewish commentator — Gerona, Catalonia; Acre, Israel

Core Argument: In his celebrated Genesis commentary argues the six days of creation are not six ordinary days but six cosmic periods of immense duration corresponding to the six Sefirot governing cosmic history. Each cosmic day spans 7,000 years in the divine reckoning. This produces a picture of cosmic history extending billions of years before Adam's creation, and accommodates prior inhabited cosmic ages within a thoroughly orthodox rabbinic framework. His reading is among the most sophisticated pre-modern engagements with the age of the universe in any religious tradition.

Primary Sources: *Commentary on the Torah: Genesis 1:1–5* (Chavel trans., Shilo, 1971) · *Derashah al ha-Torah*

Moses de León (The Zohar) · c. 1240 – 1305 CE

Kabbalistic tradition — Castile, Spain — foundational Kabbalistic text

Core Argument: The Zohar explicitly states: 'There were prior worlds created and destroyed before the present one — this is the meaning of *tohu va'bohu*.' The *tohu* (formlessness) is identified with the vestiges of prior worlds created in pure *Din* (strict judgment) that could not survive without the moderating attribute of Mercy; the *bohu* (void) is the desolation of their dissolution. Simultaneously distinguishes Adam Kadmon (the cosmic, universal archetype of humanity from Genesis 1:27) from the earthly Adam of Genesis 2:7 — the same *bara'yatsar* distinction argued from the Hebrew text.

Primary Sources: *Zohar Bereshit 13b–16a, 24b* (Pritzker Edition vol. 1, Daniel Matt, Stanford University Press, 2004)

Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre · c. 1250 – 1340 CE

Medieval Kabbalist — Acre, Israel; Spain — student of the Ramban

Core Argument: In *Sefer Me'irat Einayim* calculates through the Shemittot doctrine (each cosmic age = 7,000 divine years; each divine year = 365,250 ordinary years) that the age of the universe extends to hundreds of billions of years. Each prior Shemittah (cosmic cycle) had its own populations and histories before the present age began. Adam was not the first human being in absolute chronological terms but the first of the present Shemittah — the covenant man of the current cosmic age. His calculation is remarkable for producing a figure in the same order of magnitude as modern cosmological estimates of the universe's age.

Primary Sources: *Sefer Me'irat Einayim · Commentary on the Sefer Yetzirah · Discussed in Aryeh Kaplan, Immortality, Resurrection, and the Age of the Universe* (KTAV, 1993)

EARLY MODERN (1596 – 1715 CE)

Isaac de La Peyrère · 1596 – 1676 CE

Calvinist theologian — French Calvinist diplomat; secretary to the Prince of Condé

Core Argument: *Prae-Adamitae* (1655) is the first systematic modern biblical argument for pre-Adamic humanity. Genesis 1:26–27 and Genesis 2:7 describe different events; Cain’s wife, his city, and his fear of the multitude require pre-existing inhabitants; Romans 5:12–14 implies pre-Adamic humanity without specific covenant law; Paul’s ‘first man Adam’ is first in the redemptive sequence, not in absolute chronological history. His books were burned by the public executioner in Paris (1655), he was arrested in Brussels, and compelled to travel to Rome to recant personally before Pope Alexander VII at age sixty. His three exegetical pillars remain the foundational arguments of every subsequent systematic pre-Adamic case.

Primary Sources: *Prae-Adamitae (Men Before Adam)*, Amsterdam 1655 · *Systema Theologicum* 1655 · See Richard Popkin, Isaac La Peyrère (Brill, 1987)

Thomas Burnet · 1635 – 1715 CE

Anglican theologian and cosmologist — Master of Charterhouse, London; Chaplain to King William III

Core Argument: *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692) argues the Mosaic creation account describes not the absolute beginning but the establishment of the present world order, preceded by a prior world whose existence Genesis 1:2 implicitly acknowledges. The *tohu va’bohu* is the residue of this prior world after its dissolution; the six days are a restoration, not an original creation. His earlier *Sacred Theory of the Earth* (1681) proposed that the present earth’s geological features resulted from a primordial catastrophe. He lost his court position and was removed from consideration for the Archbishopric of Canterbury as a result of his views.

Primary Sources: *Telluris Theoria Sacra (Sacred Theory of the Earth)*, 1681; English trans. 1684) · *Archaeologiae Philosophicae* (1692)

THE CLASSICAL GAP THEORY (1814 – 1909)

Thomas Chalmers · 1780 – 1847 CE

Scottish Presbyterian minister — Free Church of Scotland; Royal Society of Edinburgh

Core Argument: Delivered the first systematic modern Gap Theory statement to the Royal Society of Edinburgh in 1814 — arrived at independently of de La Peyrère, from the Hebrew text and geological evidence simultaneously. Argued that Genesis 1:1 describes an original creation of any age; Genesis 1:2 describes a post-catastrophe condition; and Genesis 1:3–31 describes a six-day restoration. His position was adopted by virtually every major Scottish and English evangelical geologist of the mid-nineteenth century and became the dominant evangelical response to the geological challenge for nearly a century.

Primary Sources: *Sermon to the Royal Society of Edinburgh, 1814* · *On the Power, Wisdom and Goodness of God* (1833), vol. 1, pp. 36–37

G. H. Pember · 1837 – 1910 CE

Plymouth Brethren scholar — Plymouth Brethren, England

Core Argument: *Earth's Earliest Ages* (1876) is the most detailed and systematically argued pre-Adamic reconstruction in the English-speaking tradition. Develops the complete *tohu va'bohu* argument; demonstrates the linguistic force of *hayah* (became) in Genesis 1:2; connects Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 to the primordial catastrophe that produced the desolation; argues from Genesis 4's population evidence for the pre-Adamic remnant; and provides the most thorough nineteenth-century treatment of the fall of Lucifer as the mechanism of the primordial judgment. His work remains the fullest pre-modern engagement with the evidence this book develops.

Primary Sources: *Earth's Earliest Ages and Their Connection with Modern Spiritualism and Theosophy* (Hodder and Stoughton, 1876; repr. Kregel, 1975)

C. I. Scofield · 1843 – 1921 CE

American dispensationalism — Congregationalist; Dallas, Texas

Core Argument: Incorporated the Gap Theory into the Scofield Reference Bible (Oxford University Press, 1909) — the most widely distributed annotated Bible in American evangelical history — with a note on Genesis 1:1–2 identifying the *tohu va'bohu* as a post-catastrophe condition following the fall of Satan. This single editorial decision introduced the Gap Theory to millions of readers as the standard dispensationalist interpretation of the opening verses of Genesis and made it the dominant evangelical response to geological evidence for an ancient earth in the early twentieth century.

Primary Sources: *Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford University Press, 1909), notes on Genesis 1:1–2 · *Revised Scofield Reference Bible* (1967)



A Note on the Tradition's Coherence

The twelve witnesses in this appendix were separated by language, century, continent, and theological tradition. Philo wrote in Greek in Alexandria; Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel calculated in Hebrew in medieval Spain; Thomas Burnet composed in Latin in London; Thomas Chalmers preached in Scots English in Edinburgh. None of them were working from the same source, and most were unaware of the others' engagement with the same question.

What they share is not a doctrine but an observation — or rather, a cluster of observations: that Genesis 1:2 is not adequately described as uncreated nothingness; that the Hebrew of the text points toward a transition rather than a description; that the narrative of Genesis 4 requires pre-existing inhabitants; that Paul's two-Adam theology does not require Adam to be the chronologically first human being. These observations are not coordinated; they arise independently in each generation because they arise from the text itself. The tradition's geographical and chronological breadth is, ultimately, evidence not of human agreement but of textual consistency: the same text, read carefully, has been generating the same questions for two thousand years.

The questions have not been answered. They have been deferred. This appendix is a record of those who refused to defer them.

APPENDIX C

Comparative Chart: Mesopotamian and Biblical Creation Traditions

Structural parallels · Theological divergences · Pre-Adamic significance



The following chart compares ten thematic elements across the biblical creation tradition and two major Mesopotamian traditions: the Sumerian / Eridu tradition (the Sumerian King List, the Eridu Genesis, and the texts associated with the city of Eridu and the god Enki) and the Babylonian / Atrahasis tradition (the Atrahasis Epic, the Epic of Gilgamesh, the Enuma Elish, and the Berossus Babyloniaca). For each theme, the chart identifies whether the parallel is structural (same narrative event, divergent theology), partial (similar emphasis with significant differences), or theological contrast (no meaningful parallel exists).

The methodology underlying this chart is discussed in full in Chapter Eight. Briefly: the parallels documented here do not indicate literary borrowing from Mesopotamian sources. They indicate parallel cultural memory — independent preservation of the same ancient events in different cultural and theological frameworks. The biblical tradition records these events in their theological integrity; the Mesopotamian traditions preserve them as cultural memory, polytheized and mythologized but structurally recognizable. Both Abraham (from Ur of the Chaldeans) and the Hebrew scribes who recorded Genesis inhabited the cultural world these traditions represent.

CREATION THEMES				
Theme	Biblical tradition	Sumerian / Eridu	Babylonian / Atrahasis	Pre-Adamic significance
Primordial state <i>Structural parallel</i>	<i>Earth is tohu va'bohu (without form and void, Gen 1:2). Darkness on the face of the tehom (deep). Spirit of God hovers over the waters. Pre-Adamic reading: residue of a prior creation destroyed by judgment.</i>	Primordial sea (abzu) and undifferentiated sky. No ordered world exists. Enki governs the primordial freshwater deep (abzu) at Eridu.	Primordial mingling of sweet water (Apsu) and salt water (Tiamat) undifferentiated. Tiamat is the primordial deep — linguistically cognate with Hebrew tehom.	<i>The Hebrew tehom and Babylonian Tiamat share a Semitic root. Both traditions preserve memory of a primordial chaotic state. The pre-Adamic reading identifies this as the aftermath of the covering cherub's fall, which the Mesopotamian tradition has mythologized as primordial divine conflict.</i>
Humanity created <i>Partial parallel</i>	<i>General humanity created (bara') in God's image (Gen 1:26–27); specific</i>	Humanity formed from clay by the mother goddess Ninhursag /	Humanity created from clay mixed with the blood of slain	<i>The Mesopotamian traditions preserve no equivalent of the breath of lives (Gen</i>

Adam formed (yatsar) from dust with the divine breath, nishmat chayyim (Gen 2:7). Two distinct creative acts.	Nammu. Purpose: replace the Igigi gods in their labor duties. No individual breath of life given.	rebel god Kingu. Purpose: to serve the gods and relieve them of their work. No parallel to the nishmat chayyim.	2:7). The general creation of humanity (Gen 1:27) has structural parallels with Mesopotamian mass-creation; the specific election of Adam (Gen 2:7) is the uniquely biblical event with no parallel in any ancient Near Eastern tradition.
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DIVINE REALM THEMES				
Theme	Biblical tradition	Sumerian / Eridu	Babylonian / Atrahasis	Pre-Adamic significance
Rebellion in the divine realm <i>Structural parallel</i>	<i>Lucifer (Helel ben Shachar) rebels and is cast from the holy mountain (Isa 14; Ezek 28). A third of the divine council falls with him (Rev 12:4). This rebellion produces the tohu va'bohu.</i>	The Igigi (lesser gods) rebel after 40 years of labor and refuse to continue. The divine assembly convenes. Humanity is created as replacement labor.	The Igigi rebel against the Anunnaku (greater gods). The rebel god Kingu becomes champion for Tiamat. His blood is used to create humanity after Marduk's victory.	<i>Both traditions preserve memory of a rebellion in the divine realm preceding the ordered creation of humanity. The Mesopotamian version polytheizes the event; the biblical preserves it in its theological integrity. The structural parallel supports the pre-Adamic reading's identification of the primordial catastrophe with the angelic rebellion.</i>
Nature of the divine <i>Theological contrast</i>	<i>One sovereign, personal, moral God (YHWH Elohim) who acts from love and covenant faithfulness. Creation is good. Judgment is moral, not arbitrary.</i>	A polytheistic assembly of divine beings with limited power, conflicting interests, and human-like emotions. Gods created humanity for their own benefit.	Similar to Sumerian: a polytheistic assembly. Marduk achieves supremacy through combat, not inherent sovereignty. Humanity created from a rebel's blood as punishment.	<i>The theological contrast between the biblical and Mesopotamian traditions is total. Both preserve the same historical events but interpret them through entirely different theological frameworks. The pre-Adamic reading holds the Mesopotamian traditions as corrupted cultural memories of events the Bible records in theological clarity.</i>
Purpose of creation	<i>Earth created to be inhabited (Isa 45:18).</i>	Humanity created to relieve the Igigi	Humanity created from	<i>The purpose of creation is the sharpest</i>

<i>Theological contrast</i>	<i>Humanity as image-bearers given stewardship and covenant relationship. Creation declares God's glory.</i>	<i>of labor. Earth is the domain of the gods; humans exist to serve them. No inherent dignity given.</i>	<i>Kingu's blood to serve the gods and maintain their temples. No equivalent of the image of God or covenant relationship.</i>	<i>theological divergence. The Bible presents creation as divine generosity for image-bearing humanity; the Mesopotamian traditions present it as divine convenience. Both traditions remember the same events; only the Hebrew tradition records the true meaning behind them.</i>
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PARADISE AND SACRED SPACE

Theme	Biblical tradition	Sumerian / Eridu	Babylonian / Atrahasis	Pre-Adamic significance
Primordial garden / sacred city <i>Structural parallel</i>	<i>Eden — garden with four rivers, trees of life and knowledge, direct divine-human encounter. Pre-Adamic reading: the Eden of Ezek 28:13 precedes and exceeds Adam's garden.</i>	<i>Eridu — the oldest and first city; the garden of Enki; the site of the first temple and original divine-human encounter. Located at the ancient river confluence of southern Mesopotamia.</i>	<i>Dilmun — a paradise garden of pure water and divine provision. The dwelling of the gods before the present order. Clean, bright, and free from death and disease.</i>	<i>Eridu and Dilmun both preserve cultural memory of a primordial sacred space where the divine and human were once in proximity. The pre-Adamic reading identifies this with the 'Eden of God' of Ezekiel 28:13, which preceded Adam's garden and was destroyed in the catastrophe of the covering cherub's fall.</i>

ANTEDILUVIAN WORLD AND FLOOD THEMES

Theme	Biblical tradition	Sumerian / Eridu	Babylonian / Atrahasis	Pre-Adamic significance
Antediluvian civilization <i>Structural parallel</i>	<i>Ten patriarchs, Adam to Noah (Gen 5), living hundreds of years. Two cultural lines: Cain's (cities, arts, metallurgy) and Seth's (covenant). World growing in population and corruption.</i>	<i>Ten (or eight) antediluvian kings ruling five cities; reigns of 18,600–43,200 years each (Sumerian King List). Kingship descended from heaven to Eridu first.</i>	<i>Enormous pre-Flood civilization. The 'noise' of humanity disturbs the gods. Three pre-Flood plagues (Atrahasis) sent to reduce population before the final Flood.</i>	<i>Both traditions count ten units of antediluvian civilization ending with the Flood. The Atrahasis Epic's enormous pre-Flood population is inexplicable from the Adamic genealogies alone but fully coherent on the pre-Adamic reading, which sees the Adamic line mixing with the pre-</i>

<p>The catastrophic Flood <i>Structural parallel</i></p>	<p><i>The LORD sees the corruption of the mixed population (Gen 6:5–7). Noah is warned, builds an ark, loads family and animals. 40 days and 40 nights. All life on earth destroyed.</i></p>	<p>Ziusudra (Eridu Genesis) is warned by the gods and builds a great boat. After the Flood he offers sacrifice and is granted eternal life. The flood is decreed by the divine assembly.</p>	<p>Atrahasis (Atrahasis Epic) and Utnapishtim (Gilgamesh Tablet XI) are warned by Enki/Ea. Build boats with specific dimensions. Load family, craftsmen, and animals. Seven days and nights.</p>	<p><i>Adamic remnant over many generations.</i></p> <p><i>The Atrahasis / Utnapishtim flood narrative shares divine warning, boat construction, animal loading, bird release (dove, swallow, raven), mountain grounding, and post-flood sacrifice with the Noah account. The pre-Adamic reading holds both as independent cultural memories of the same historical Flood: the judgment that ended the mixed pre-Adamic/Adamic world.</i></p>
<p>The Flood survivor <i>Structural parallel</i></p>	<p><i>Noah — 'perfect in his generations' (tamim be'dorotav, Gen 6:9). On the pre-Adamic reading: the last genealogically intact covenant heir. Saved by divine favor. Commissioned to replenish the earth.</i></p>	<p>Ziusudra ('he who found long life') — a pious king warned by Enki. Saved on a great boat. Afterward granted eternal life and translated to Dilmun.</p>	<p>Utnapishtim ('he found life') in Gilgamesh Tablet XI; Atrahasis ('exceedingly wise') in the Atrahasis Epic. Both warned by Enki/Ea, both saved by building a boat.</p>	<p><i>Noah, Ziusudra, Utnapishtim, and Atrahasis are cultural memory variants of the same historical figure: the one man preserved through the Flood by divine favor. The multiplicity of independent traditions is powerful evidence that the Flood was a historical event of sufficient magnitude to leave permanent marks in the cultural memory of every post-Flood civilization.</i></p>
<p>Post-Flood commission <i>Partial parallel</i></p>	<p><i>God blesses Noah and charges him: 'Be fruitful, multiply, and replenish the earth' (Gen 9:1). The Noahic covenant is established. Structurally identical to the charge given to Adam (Gen 1:28).</i></p>	<p>After the Flood, kingship is 'lowered again from heaven' to Kish. Civilization recommences under divine administration. The world is re-ordered.</p>	<p>After the Flood, Enlil blesses Atrahasis. The gods establish new provisions to manage the human population. Utnapishtim is granted immortality and removed to the ends of the earth.</p>	<p><i>The post-Flood re-commissioning in all three traditions treats the Flood as an absolute reset after which civilization begins again. The biblical replenishment command (Gen 9:1) mirrors the command to Adam (Gen 1:28), confirming the Adam-Noah typological parallel: both follow a judgment that emptied a formerly full world.</i></p>

Chart Key

- **Structural parallel** — The same narrative event or structural element is present in both traditions, but the theological interpretation differs. Shaded green in the significance column.
- **Partial parallel** — A related theme or element is present, but with significant differences in character, scope, or emphasis. Shaded amber in the significance column.
- **Theological contrast** — No structural parallel exists; the traditions are in fundamental theological opposition. Shaded gray in the significance column.



A Note on Method: Parallel Witness, Not Literary Borrowing

Note on method: The parallels documented in this chart do not imply that the biblical authors borrowed from Mesopotamian sources. The relationship between the traditions is that of parallel witness, not literary dependence. Both traditions draw on a common ancient Near Eastern memory of real primordial events — creation, divine rebellion, the Flood — which they preserve in different cultural and theological frameworks. The biblical tradition records these events in their theological integrity; the Mesopotamian traditions preserve them as cultural memory, polytheized and mythologized but recognizable in their structural bones. Abraham left Ur carrying the Mesopotamian memory of these events; his descendants preserved them in their theological clarity. See Chapter Eight for the full methodological discussion.

The most significant implication of this chart for the pre-Adamic argument is the consistent pattern in the top half of the chart: where the Mesopotamian and biblical traditions agree on narrative structure — primordial chaos waters, divine rebellion, antediluvian civilization, catastrophic Flood, one preserved survivor, post-Flood recommissioning — they agree on exactly the events the pre-Adamic reading identifies as real historical events. The Flood was real. The antediluvian civilization was real and enormously populous. The divine rebellion that preceded the ordered creation was real. The cultural memory of these events, preserved across the entire ancient Near East in traditions linguistically, geographically, and theologically separated from one another, is the most powerful kind of historical evidence: the independent testimony of many witnesses who had no contact with one another, all saying the same thing.

— End of Appendix C —

A NOTE FROM THE AUTHOR

Dr. Paul Crawford



“I have considered the days of old, the years of ancient times. I call to remembrance my song in the night: I commune with mine own heart: and my spirit made diligent search.” — Psalm 77:5–6

A book like this one does not arrive fully formed. It arrives the way most important things do: slowly, and at cost, and over many years of sitting with a text that refused to give you a simple answer.

I have been a Preacher for thirty years. I have preached through the book of Genesis more times than I can count. I have stood at hospital bedsides and gravesides and opened the first pages of Scripture and said, with full conviction, that the God who spoke light into the darkness of Genesis 1 is the same God who is speaking even now into this particular darkness. I believed it when I said it. I believe it still.

But there came a summer — I have described it in the Preface — when the text would not let me pass as quickly as I had always passed. The second verse. The two Hebrew words. The condition of a world that the Spirit of God found when He moved upon the face of the waters. I had always read past it. That summer, I stopped.

What followed was not a crisis of faith. I want to be precise about that, because I know this book will be read by some who are anxious about what the pre-Adamic hypothesis might mean for the faith they love. What followed was, if anything, a deepening. The God I found when I stopped and looked carefully at those two words was not a smaller God than the one I had preached. He was larger. Considerably larger. He was a God whose patience with His creation was vaster than I had imagined, whose purposes ran back further than any calendar I had consulted, and whose love for the image-bearers He had made was not a love that began with Adam but a love that preceded Adam by ages I cannot number.

That is the God this book is about. Not the God of a six-thousand-year universe, though I respect those who hold that position with integrity. Not the God of a Darwinian cosmos, though I have learned from scholars who take that view seriously. The God of this book is the God of the ancient text itself — the God who created a world to be inhabited, who watched His most glorious creature destroy it through pride, who hovered over the ruins and spoke light into the darkness, who formed one man from the recovered dust and breathed His own life into that man's nostrils, and who has been, from that first breath to this present moment, working to restore everything that the catastrophe undid.



I should say something about how this book was written, because the process matters for understanding what kind of book it is.

The writing of the manuscript took many years. I wrote slowly because the questions required slow writing. Every chapter you have read represents, behind its finished prose, months of reading in the primary sources and the scholarly literature, months of sitting with a Hebrew Bible and arguing with myself in the margins, months of conversation with colleagues who were patient enough to push back when I needed it. I am grateful for every one of those conversations, including and especially the ones that nearly persuaded me I was wrong. Being nearly persuaded and then finding your footing again is the best thing that can happen to an argument. It means the argument has been tested.

I should also say that this book was written in the awareness of a tradition. I did not discover the pre-Adamic question. Origen discovered it, or rather, the text of Genesis pressed it upon Origen, as it has pressed it upon every careful reader since. De La Peyrère was burned for it. Burnet lost his career over it. Pember wrote his magnificent reconstruction of it in the latter

half of the nineteenth century and was largely forgotten by the twentieth. Rabbi Isaac ben Samuel of Acre calculated his way to a universe billions of years old through it, in a medieval study in Spain, seven hundred years before modern cosmology arrived at the same figure by entirely different means.

I stand in that tradition. I have tried to be a responsible steward of it — to take what is sound and test what is speculative, to follow the evidence and say so when the evidence runs out, to argue for what the text actually supports rather than what I might wish it said. Whether I have succeeded is for the reader and for God to judge.



There is one thing I want to say directly to the reader who has come to this book with genuine anxiety rather than scholarly curiosity.

If you love the Scripture, and you are afraid that what this book argues will undermine the authority of the text you have built your life upon — I understand that fear. I felt it myself, in the summer when I stopped at Genesis 1:2 and could not pass. The anxiety of discovering that a text you thought you knew fully may be deeper than you realized is a real anxiety. It is the anxiety of standing at the edge of an ocean you had been treating as a pond.

But I want to tell you what I found at the edge of that ocean: more of God, not less. A God whose creative love extended through ages I cannot calculate. A God whose patience with a creation that had been shattered by rebellion was not the patience of a few thousand years but the patience of ages. A God who chose one man from the dust of a recovered world and breathed His own life into that man's nostrils, not because He had to, not because there was no other option, but because He wanted to. Because the covenant was His idea. Because the breath was His gift. Because He had been working toward this moment since before the Garden was planted, and He would go on working toward the final New Jerusalem long after the Garden was complete.

The God of this book is a God big enough to have created what He made, patient enough to have restored what was ruined, and loving enough to have breathed His life into one specific man at one specific moment in one specific garden — so that one day, through that man's line, He could enter the world He had made and say: I am the resurrection and the life.

That is not a smaller Gospel than the one you have believed. It is the same Gospel, read all the way back to its beginning.



Several practical notes for the reader:

This book is written for two audiences simultaneously, and I have tried to serve both without cheating either. The first audience is the scholar — the reader who wants to check the references, weigh the linguistic arguments, consult the primary sources, and evaluate the case on its scholarly merits. For that reader, the endnotes, the appendices, and the primary source citations are the real substance, and the prose is the framework that holds them together.

The second audience is the thoughtful layman — the reader who loves the Scripture, who wrestles honestly with its mysteries, who is not afraid of a hard question but who is not a specialist in Hebrew or in ancient Near Eastern literature. For that reader, I have tried to explain the linguistic arguments in plain English, to introduce the primary sources with enough context that they speak for themselves, and to write prose that can be read with profit without consulting a single footnote.

I have not always succeeded in serving both audiences equally well. Where I have had to choose, I have chosen clarity. A precise argument that no one can follow serves no one. The footnotes are there for the scholar who needs them; the prose is there for everyone.

All Hebrew and Greek quotations are accompanied by transliterations in the Roman alphabet and by English renderings, so that readers without knowledge of the original languages can follow the linguistic arguments without difficulty. All ancient texts quoted at length are identified in the text and fully cited in Appendix A.

Biblical quotations throughout the book are from the King James Version (1611) unless otherwise stated, for reasons explained at length in the Note on Sources and Translation.



Finally — a word of gratitude, and of honesty.

This book argues a position that is not the consensus position in evangelical scholarship. It has been contested, with vigour and intelligence, by scholars I respect. I have tried to engage their arguments fairly, to acknowledge where my case is strong and where it depends on inference, and to distinguish between what the evidence requires and what it merely permits. Where I have failed in that attempt, the failure is mine alone, and I am genuinely open to correction.

I do not claim to have settled the pre-Adamic question. I claim to have made the strongest case I can for the reading of the biblical text that the evidence, carefully weighed, seems to me to support. The case has been building for two thousand years, in the writings of minds greater than mine. I have tried to gather it, clarify it, extend it, and present it honestly.

What you do with it is between you and the text.

And between you and the God who wrote it — the God who was there before the Garden, who hovered over the dark waters, who spoke light, who formed a man from dust, who breathed, who walked in the cool of the day, who asked: where are you? And who has been asking that question, with the patience of every age, ever since.

With gratitude and in hope,

Dr. Paul Crawford

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“Search me, O God, and know my heart:”

*try me, and know my thoughts:”
‘and see if there be any wicked way in me,
and lead me in the way everlasting.”*

— Psalm 139:23–24