

The *Framework* theme

that creates a Literary Structure for the whole Bible

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IS Introduction and Summary

IS.1 Since the 1960s, I have been tracing particular Bible themes (such as *Baptism, Communion, Creation, Law, Redemption*) through the Scriptures. In the beginning I had no idea that I was following a particular method of Biblical interpretation – the *thematic method* (see McGrath & Manser, 1996) – that, in those days, was not commonly followed.

Given the enormous number of Biblical themes and sub–themes – McGrath & Manser (1996) list over 2000 – I have recently considered if there is a unique *Core* theme, a theme, or story, which stands above all the others, and that provides the ultimate, or deepest context for the understanding of them all. A separate paper (Jones 2020) presents the evidence and arguments that there is indeed a *core* Bible theme, which I have entitled *Enlarging the Family of God*.

It might be expected that this core theme would provide a literary structure for the whole Bible. However, from the late 1960s, I had recognised that there is another (closely related) theme, which actually provides the literary structure for the whole Bible. I have entitled this theme *Born from Adam, begotten by Jesus Christ*¹ (hereafter shortened to the *Begetting/Begotten* theme) and have categorized it as a *Framework* theme. This theme is studied in detail in this paper.

IS.2 The opening words of the New Testament “This is the genealogy of Jesus the Messiah ...” (*Matthew* 1:1 NIV 2011)² have been seen as very disappointing – a genealogy of largely unfamiliar names hardly seems designed to invite engagement with the life and meaning of the greatest figure in human history!

The reality is that most, if not all modern English versions seriously misunderstand and mistranslate this verse. The true translation – “The Book of the one begotten by Jesus Christ” – immediately connects us to the core storyline of the Bible – that God created human beings that they might be adopted into God’s family as the Bride of God the Son, Jesus Christ. Jesus is the last Adam, the second man, the heavenly man³ and the church of the redeemed is His Bride, born/begotten of God, conformed to the image

¹ Clearly (*sic!*) that title is quite opaque, and calls for a thorough explanation and detailed exposition, which is, of course, the purpose of this paper.

² *Matthew* 1:1, NIV 2011. The NIV 1984 has “A record of the genealogy of Jesus Christ”. Thus NIV 2011 not only mistranslates the Greek *genesis* as ‘genealogy’, but omits any translation for the equally important Greek *biblos*, which means ‘special book/scroll’ – see Section **L.2**.

³ *1 Corinthians* 15:45-49

of Jesus, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, sharing God’s very nature.⁴

The phrase that is mistranslated in *Matthew* 1:1 is the last of fifteen occurrences⁵ that map the development of a major theme – ***Begetting/Begotten*** – that runs through the Bible, a theme that provides a literary framework for the whole of the Biblical revelation.

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⁴ This evidence for this core theme will be set out in this paper and especially in Jones 2020, but for now see *John* 1:12-13, *Romans* 8:9, 29, *2 Peter* 1:4, *1 John* 3:2 and *Revelation* 21:9.

⁵ See Section **B.2** and footnote **24**.

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Prologue Part 1: A Categorisation of Bible Themes

P.1 There are many themes (see **P.4**) that can be traced through the Bible. They bear witness that it is the same God and His same purposes throughout both Old and New Testaments. As McGrath and his colleagues note: “The essential unity of Scripture is best appreciated by understanding the great themes that bind it together” (McGrath & Manser, 1996: vii).

We can distinguish three main categories of Bible themes: *Core*, *Framework*, and *General*. The first two categories contain only one theme each and are straightforward and clear. The third category contains all the many other themes within many subcategories. The most thorough classification and exploration of Biblical themes is found in *The NIV Thematic Study Bible* (McGrath & Manser, 1996), which covers over 2,000 themes. The authors rightly warn their readers:

The categorisation is not intended to force a straitjacket upon the biblical material by placing any kind of arbitrary restrictions on it. Indeed in a number of instances, a theme could have been categorised differently. The classification is simply intended to make the identification and exploration of themes as simple as possible for the benefit of readers. (McGrath & Manser, 1996: xi)

P.2 CORE Theme

The Bible tells one story (see Jones, 2020, section **D**), but that one story subsumes many themes that are worked out consistently, but expansively through the Bible. Each theme provides a way of grasping the Bible whole⁶. All these themes have their strengths and weaknesses; all present opportunities to enlarge our understanding and threats to restrict it. To grasp Scripture in its fullness, we need them all.

The number and diversity of themes immediately prompts a key question: is there a *core* storyline, a core story? Is there a central, cardinal, primary, or fundamental

⁶ As well as McGrath & Manser, 1996, see Jones 2013 for a summary of many of these themes and references to the literature where they are examined in detail.

storyline, or plot, that grounds (incorporates, integrates) all the diversity of individual themes? Put another way, is there a theme or story, that stands above all the other themes and stories and that provides the ultimate, or deepest context for the understanding of them all? This paper, and especially Jones 2020, present the evidence and arguments that there is indeed a core Bible story which I have entitled ***Enlarging the Family of God***.

The NIV Thematic Study Bible does not present this as a single theme, but all the elements of it are found in the following sections: #5681 (page 1636) *Family, nature of*; #5682 (page 1637) *Family, significance of*; #6609 (pages 1723-4) *adoption, nature of*; #6610 (page 1724) *adoption, descriptions of*; #7027 (page 1748) *church, purpose and mission of*; and #7115 (page 1750) *children of God*.

P.3 FRAMEWORK Theme

Is there a theme that provides a grand literary structure for the Bible as a whole, for both Old and New Testaments, from the beginning of *Genesis* 1 through to the end of *Revelation* 22? We believe there is such an integral theme – and only one – which is the subject of this paper. This is the theme of *Begetting/Begotten*. Surprisingly (to many) it is not the traditional theme of *Creation-Fall-Redemption-Consummation*, which, while it is both true and very helpful in many contexts, it is significantly deficient compared to the core theme and does not create a clear and textually highlighted literary structure for the whole Bible (for further discussion see Jones 2020).

Surprisingly, *The NIV Thematic Study Bible* does not recognise this theme at all and its elements are not found in any of the themes it presents.

P.4 GENERAL Themes

The NIV Thematic Study Bible covers these themes extremely well and thoroughly. It presents them in nine main groups (pages xi & xii and pages 1343-1935):

- #1000 God (pages 1345-1384)
God's nature, titles, work, knowledge of, Trinity, word of God (Bible)
- #2000 Jesus Christ (pages 1384-1415)
qualities, titles, ministry & work, gospel of, history
- #3000 Holy Spirit (pages 1415-1426)
qualities, titles, ministry & work
- #4000 Creation (pages 1426-1493)
supernatural beings, places, metals & minerals, vegetation & food, living beings, natural & supernatural phenomena, time
- #5000 Humanity (pages 1493-1700)
individuals in OT & NT, parts of the body & clothing, human civilisation, human relationships, human attitudes & behaviour
- #6000 Sin and salvation (pages 1700-1745)
sin, aspects of sin, salvation, aspects of salvation

- #7000 God's people (pages 1745-1813)
the church as the people of God, titles, history in OT, institutions & culture, Jews & Gentiles, history in NT, leadership, life of the church
- #8000 The life of the believer (pages 1813-1921)
faith, life of faith, character of the believer, tasks, prayer & worship, threats to the life of faith.
- #9000 Last things (pages 1921-1935)
death, aspects of last things, judgment, resurrection, heaven, hell, hope
-

Prologue Part 2: Some Relevant History

P.5 In this paper I am exploring one of the most significant Bible themes – ‘Begetting and Being Begotten’ – but one that has rarely been given the attention it deserves, or even been properly understood. I was first alerted to it by a pastor/preacher who was influential in the early days of the Charismatic movement in the UK ⁷ and I have explored it ever since. Nevertheless there is doubtless little, if anything, here that is original with me. I have read widely in the Jewish commentaries, in the Church Fathers and Reformers and in numerous modern commentaries and handbooks. I have drunk deeply – and often excitedly – from the wisdom of forerunners in the faith and have sought to give them full credit for each matter of interpretation.⁸ I have wrestled with the *Begetting/Begotten* theme in dialogue with many Christian scholars for a very long time – 500 copies of a booklet containing the earliest version of this material (Jones 1969) was privately distributed in 1969!⁹ A copy was requested by the library of *Tyndale House*, Cambridge ¹⁰ and, for all I know, that copy may still be there. Yet new insights still come every time I return to the theme. In the expectation of still more to be learnt¹¹, I appeal to my readers to follow the scriptural injunction (*Galatians* 6:6) and share their insights and comments – whether affirming or corrective – with me.

P.6 After 50 years of wrestling with the *Begetting/Begotten* theme, I retain the conclusion I came to at the beginning. There are many Bible themes (see **P.2** & **P.4**) that are worked out through Scripture and each provides a way of grasping the Bible whole. The *Begetting/Begotten* theme is not the core, or primary theme of scripture (see Jones 2020), but it is closely allied to it, and I will argue that it is the most important of all the secondary themes, not only because of its substance, but because it provides a grand literary structure for the whole of the Biblical revelation.

⁷ See Section **B.1**.

⁸ If I have failed at any point to give due acknowledgment, or been unaware of where I should, I would greatly appreciate readers drawing my attention to those lapses (or ignorance).

⁹ They were produced by a Gestetner stencil duplicator – I wonder how many of my readers remember those laborious manual typewriter days before word processors and computers? Similarly when I produced the mandatory six copies of my PhD thesis in 1972, I had to type a top copy with 5 carbons and papers underneath. You can imagine the labour involved in correcting typing errors with Tipp-Ex correcting fluid!

¹⁰ <http://www.tyndale.cam.ac.uk/>.

¹¹ See *1 Corinthians* 13:13 in Section **A.1**.

Prologue Part 3: Some Critical Assumptions

P.7 At this point we must note that there are some critical assumptions behind the thematic study of Scripture.

The **first critical assumption** is that behind the many human authors of the Bible there stands one principal author – the triune God. The Bible is not just a library of books, but “a unified communication ... a book with many subdivisions but a central theme: the message of the gospel.” (Plantinga 2000: 384¹²) This assumption is the source and warrant for the proposal that we can “interpret scripture with scripture”; that, if we find a certain obscurity in one part, then we can look for light, not just in that particular writing, nor even just in other writings by that same human author, but throughout the Bible (Plantinga *ibid*). Furthermore, we should always ‘read backwards’ (see Hays 2014, also Hays 2005), *i.e.*, we will only truly understand the Bible story as a whole, and any particular theme within it, when we understand from the perspective of the end goal and the central focus in the Incarnation – in the story of Jesus as the ‘last Adam’, the ‘second man’, ‘the heavenly man’¹³

[God] made known to us the mystery of His will ... to bring unity to all things in heaven and on earth under Christ. (*Ephesians* 1:9-10 NIV, *cf.* *Colossians* 1:20)

We will only truly understand the Bible story as a whole, and any particular theme within it, when we understand from the perspective of the end goal and the central focus in the Incarnation.

This is, of course, a momentous assumption. The literature that we now know as the Christian Bible was written in three different languages (Hebrew, Aramaic, Greek), by around forty different human authors, of diverse backgrounds, on three different continents, over a period of over 1,500 years. The assumption that the Bible does indeed present a consistent, unitary story, could, at first, only be a faith assumption, but the pursuance of the task has uncovered abundant evidence for its truth. It is very remarkable indeed that the Bible is found to tell one self-consistent story, with a clear beginning, middle, and end (see, *e.g.* Gurtner & Gladd, 2013 and all the literature cited and referenced therein).

P.8 A second critical assumption (and corollary of the first) is that the meaning of a passage may not be what the original author had in mind, or, at least, may be more (even much more) than what they had in mind.¹⁴ Indeed, what the Lord intends to teach us in the 21st century from a given passage may not be the same as what he intended to teach 5th century Christians (so Plantinga 2000: 385).

This is certainly true of the *Begetting/Begotten* theme. The failure to understand this important principle of Biblical interpretation is probably the main reason why the theme

¹² For full discussion see Plantinga 1998A: 243-278; 1998B: 316-327; 2000: 374-421; 2011: 152-161.

¹³ *1 Corinthians* 15: 45-49.

¹⁴ As Jesus (*Matthew* 13:17), Paul (*Romans* 4:23-24; 15:4; *1 Corinthians* 10:1-11), the author of Hebrews (*Hebrews* 11:13) and Peter (*1 Peter* 1:10-12) all indicate.

has been so unrecognized, or neglected.¹⁵ So although we will begin exploring the *Begetting/Begotten* theme in *Genesis* and the Old Testament, it must be clearly understood that we are always doing so in the light of its New Testament fulfilment, as will become clear as we proceed.

P.9 In outline, the plan of this paper is as follows:

- to present an overview of the Bible story that shows the importance of the 'Begetting/Begotten' theme to our understanding of that story (Sections **A-K**);
 - to detail the meaning of the key phrase 'these are those begotten of ...' (Section **C**)
 - finally to draw the threads together into an overall understanding of the *Begetting/Begotten* theme and of the literary structure of the Bible as a whole (Sections **L-M**).
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A Introduction: An Overview of the Bible Story

A.1 The Bible tells a great story, a universal history. Everything in the world and life is located in that story. Nothing in life and the world in general, or in Christian discipleship in particular, stands outside that narrative context of meaning. As Lesslie Newbigin has written:

“the story ... begins before the creation of the [present] world,¹⁶ ends beyond the end of the world,¹⁷ and leads through the narrow road that is marked by the names of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, Moses, Amos, Paul, and, name above every name, Jesus.” (Newbiggin 1995:83).

In the first book of the Bible, the account begins with the Triune God of Love and all that He creates (*Genesis* 1:1-2:3) as the inheritance of those (human creatures) he forms in His image, that he might love them, betroth them, and adopt them into his family.¹⁸ But humans rebel against God and His purposes for them, falling into sin – spiritual *adultery*. The story then details the outworking of God's plan to deal with the sin problem and eventually centres (The four *Gospels* and *Acts*) in God coming into his creation as a human being, Jesus Christ. However the purpose of the incarnation was not just that, through Christ, human beings may be redeemed and cleansed from their sin, but that, through God becoming a human in Christ, redeemed humans may

¹⁵ For example, in his brilliant book *A New Heaven and a New Earth* (Middleton 2014), Richard Middleton completely misses the significance of the heaven and earth theme in the early chapters of *Genesis*, and especially in the title of first 'Begetting/Begotten' section, *Genesis* 2:4.

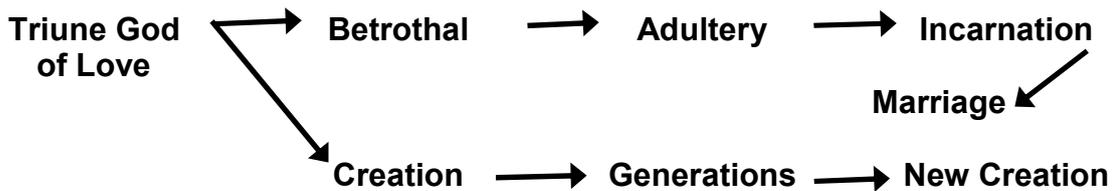
¹⁶ *E.g. John* 1:1-3, 17:5, 24; *Colossians* 1:15-17; *Hebrews* 1:2; *1 Peter* 1:20.

¹⁷ *Revelation* 21-22.

¹⁸ In *Genesis* 1 the plants and animals are created after their various *kinds* (Hebrew *miyn*, vv 11, 12, 21, 24, 25), but humans are created in *the image of the triune God* (vv 26-27), *i.e.*, that they might be adopted into the family of God. In other words, in the Biblical worldview there is no human *kind*, no *mankind*; humans are *Godkind*, created to become children of God (*John* 1:13), members of *God's* family (*Romans* 8:29; *Hebrews* 2:10-18.) Interestingly, it can be noted that in *Genesis* 8:19 the Hebrew *mishpaha* 'family' (strictly means clan, extended family) parallels *miyn* 'kind' in *Genesis* 7:14.

truly be adopted into God’s family. Finally the Biblical story closes (*Revelation 21-22*) with the renewed creation and the marriage of Jesus Christ and his bride, redeemed humanity (**Figure 1**). The Biblical account then closes, but the story doesn’t finish: it continues on as they reign over God’s kingdom forever. Nor does the story from that point remain unchanged. One of the three things that remains forever is *hope* (*1 Corinthians 13:13*) – in the amazing beneficence of God there will always be more to look forward to.

Figure 1 The Triune God, Creation and Marriage



A.2 God's purposes in creation are foundational to all else that is revealed. The story was planned, the world was made, fallen humans redeemed, for marriage to the Lord and King of creation.^{19 20}

B The Opening Verse of the New Testament is about US, as Those Begotten by Jesus Christ, and Adopted into the Family of God

B.1 In his otherwise wonderfully insightful little book, *The One True Story: Daily Readings for Advent from Genesis to Jesus*, Dr Tim Chester comes to *Matthew 1:1-17* as his very last (24th) reading. There he writes (page 148) that “the beginning is a bit of a disappointment” because it breaks “The No.1 rule for writers ... *open with a bang.*” Similarly Tom Wright (2004A:2) comments that “The average modern person who thinks ‘maybe I’ll read the New Testament’ is puzzled to find, on the very first page, a long list of names he or she has never heard of.”²¹

Whilst this is a very common perception, it is not universal. While not commenting directly on *Matthew*, or questioning the translation of 1v1, Selwyn Hughes and Trevor Partridge (2012: 1237) wrote:

“Many Christians skip over the genealogy of Christ because they find it dull and uninteresting. But how wonderfully it underlines the truth that, when Christ came to save, He did not just come *near* to the human race. He came *into* it. The Son

¹⁹ *Luke 22:28-30; 1 Corinthians 6:2-3; Revelation 2:7,26-28 (cf. 22:16-17), 3:5,12 (cf. 14:1;22:4),21.*

²⁰ See Hamilton 2010 on human marriage as restricted to this world order (*Matthew 22:29-30*), but pointing forward to the even more richly intimate and fulfilling relationship between Christ and His virgin bride, the church (*Ephesians 5:32; Revelation 19:7-9, 21:2-4, 9-14, 22:17*).

²¹ Of course, both Chester and Wright rightly note that the genealogy would be both impressive and compelling to a first-century Jew. This is certainly true, but we would expect something that also connects meaningfully to readers from other centuries and cultures.

of God became the Son of Man that the sons of men might become the sons of God.”

Others did recognise that **WE** are the ‘generation’ of Jesus Christ. G.W. North, a pastor whose life and preaching were very influential in the early days of the charismatic movement, wrote in reference to *Matthew* 1:1 that “the generation of Jesus Christ is a most vital, if not the most vital topic of all subjects a man could choose from the entire Bible for a theme of study” (North, 1971, page 10). I believe North’s assessment is a true one and this paper sets out the evidence for it.

B.2 The reason for Chester’s very different conclusion is a mistranslation of the key word in *Matthew* 1:1. It is not ‘genealogy’²², or similar,²³, as in all the modern translations I have checked. The phrase “the generation(s) of X” (KJV (AV) translation) occurs, as a title, 15 times in the Bible (from *Genesis* 2:4 to *Matthew* 1:1)²⁴ and **always** refers to the **offspring**, or **descendants**, of the ones named in the titles, NOT their ancestors. For reasons to be given below, I will refer to **those begotten** by the person named in the title (For discussion of this translation of *Matthew* 1:1, see Section **L.4**).

B.3 Today the English word ‘generation’ used by the AV (KJV) translators “is now limited almost entirely to two meanings:

- (1) the act of producing something, or the way it is produced;
- (2) an entire group of people living at the same period of time, or the average length of time such a group of people live.” (Harris *et al*, 1980: 380 *cf.* Soanes & Stevenson 2009: 593 ‘generation’).

Clearly, “Neither of these meanings fits the usage of [the Hebrew word] *toledot*.” (Harris *et al*, 1980: 380). Thus we have the remarkable fact that none of the English Bible

²² *Amplified Bible* (AMP) 1965, 1987, 2015; *English Standard Version* (ESV), 2001, 2007, 2011, 2016; *Holman Christian Standard Bible* (HCSB), 2004, 2009; *Jerusalem Bible*, 1966; *Lexham English Bible* (LEB), 2011; *Modern English Version* (MEV), 2014; *New American Standard Bible* (NASB), 1971, 1995; *New International Version* (NIV) 1984, 2011; *New King James Version* (NKJV), 1982; *New Revised Standard Version* (NSRV), 1989, *World English Bible* (WEB), 2000; *World Messianic Bible* (WMB), 2015.

²³ Alternative translations are:

‘**ancestry**’, *Amplified Bible* (AMP).

‘**ancestors**’, *Common English Bible* (CEB), 2011; *Contemporary English Version* (CEV), 1995; *GOD’S WORD* translation (GW), 1995; *Good News Bible, Today’s English Version* (GNB, GNT, TEV), 1976, *New Living Translation* (NLT), 1996, 2004, 2015.

‘**birth record**’, *Today’s English Version* (TEV), 1966.

‘**descent**’ *New English Bible* (NEB) 1970.

‘**family history**’ *New Century Bible* (NCV), 1987.

‘**family tree**’, *The Bible for Everyone*, 2017; *The Message* (MSG), 2002

‘**generation**’ *King James Version* (KJV, *Authorized Version*, AV), 1611; *American Standard Version* (ASV), 1901, *JN Darby* (DARBY), 1890; *Jubilee Bible* (JUB), 2000; *Revised Version* (RV), 1885

‘**record of the lineage**’, *DB Hart*, 2017.

‘**roll of the birth**’ *Young’s Literal Translation of the Holy Bible* (YLT98), 1862, 1888, 1898.

²⁴ *Genesis* 2:4; 5:1; 6:9; 10:1; 11:10; 11:27; 25:12; 25:19; 36:1; 36:9; 37:2; *Numbers* 3:1; *Ruth* 4:18; 1 *Chronicles* 1:29; *Matthew* 1:1

versions I have checked – ancient or modern, Old Testament or New Testament – provide translations that fit the usage of the [Hebrew] *toledot* phrase!

B.4 Significantly, *The New Testament in Hebrew and English* produced by *The Society for Distributing Hebrew Scriptures (SDHS)* (2nd ed, 1993, page 1) correctly translates the Greek into Hebrew to correspond with the Hebrew of *Genesis* 5:1:

NB: Following the practice of the *Newberry Bible*, I have used italics to indicate words that do not occur in the original Hebrew or Greek, but are required by the English idiom.

This *is the* book-of [*seper*] *the* begotten-of [*toledot*] the-Messiah Jesus, son-of David, son-of Abraham. *Matthew* 1:1 Hebrew [SDHS, 1993, page1]

This *is the* book-of [*seper*] *the* begotten-of [*toledot*] Adam *Genesis* 5:1 Hebrew [SDHS, n.d. (2004), page 8]

This is the *sefer toldot* of Rebbe, Melech HaMoshiach Yehoshua Ben Dovid Ben Avraham. *Mattityahu [Matthew]* 1:1, Orthodox Jewish Bible [*YouVersion Bible App*]

This is the *Sefer Toldot* Adam. *Bereshis [Genesis]* 5:1, (This is the Book-of the begotten-ones of-Adam), Orthodox Jewish Bible [*YouVersion Bible App*]

Aute he biblos geneseos anthropon. Genesis 5:1 (This *is the* book of-the-begotten-ones of-Men), Greek [Septuagint, Samuel Bagster, n.d., page 6]

Biblos geneseos Iesou Christou, huiou David, huiou Abraam.” This *is the* book of-the begotten-one of-Jesus, Messiah, son-of David, son-of Abraham. *Matthew* 1:1, Greek [Schwandt & Collins, 2006, page 1]

C Meaning and Structure of the Hebrew *toledot* (‘those begotten of’) Phrase

C.1 Beget and Begat

[The word counts in the following sections were taken by the author from Wigram’s lists of the stems of *yalad* in Wigram, 1963, pages 527-530]

The Hebrew word *toledot* is a crucially important word. It derives from the Hebrew verb *yalad* ‘to bear, bring forth (in birth)’. Wigram lists 494 occurrences of *yalad* in the Old Testament. Two stems of Hebrew verbs are of particular importance in the Old Testament:

- the *Qal* stem is the simplest of all the Hebrew verbal stem formations in both form and function. All the other stem formations are derived from the *Qal* form. It is by far the most common form of verbs, and it almost always expresses either simple action in active voice (for dynamic verbs) or stative action in passive voice (for stative verbs, which do not have active voice). The *Qal* stem

of *yalad*, 'to have a child' (*yalad*) is the most common form used in the Old Testament of birth. Wigram lists 238 occurrences (48.2% of the forms of *yalad*) in the Old Testament and it is used for either parent.

- the *Hiphil* stem, *holid*, is generally used to express causative action in active voice. In many cases the noun derived from the same stem – *toledot* in the case of *yalad* – is the object or result of the *Hiphil* verb. In the AV the *Hiphil* verb 'to cause to have a child' was commonly translated as 'to beget', in which case *toledot* should be understood as 'those begotten of'. Wigram lists 176 occurrences (35.6%) in the Old Testament and it is used almost exclusively of fathers.

The verb 'to beget' has disappeared from modern English translations in the name of modernisation. This is actually a very significant loss, because there is no other English word which can be used to convey its Biblical meaning. However, we can re-introduce, it, but supersede its dictionary meaning ('to produce a child' – e.g. Soanes et al 2009:122) and use 'beget/begotten' to convey the full meaning of the Hebrew *Hiphil* verb as it is used in the Bible (see **Figure 2** and Section **C.2**).

Figure 2 Meaning and Significance of the Verb 'Beget'

- promise & blessing
- office/ministry/calling
- inheritance

Biblical critics (e.g. Hendel, 2000) explain the different usage of the *Qal* and *Hiphil* forms as reflecting different authorial sources, but this study will demonstrate that the different forms convey different meanings. When used in the *Hiphil* stem, (*holid*) *yalad* is almost exclusively used of those (usually, but not exclusively, fathers) who are heirs of promises made by God himself. The passages so headed are not primarily about the person(s) named in the heading, but about their *descendants* who are heirs, with them, of those Divine promises.²⁵

As we shall detail in due course, modern English translations such as 'to be/become the father of' (NIV) or 'to father' (ESV) are woefully inadequate. The fact that the *Hiphil* form of *yalad* occurs more frequently than might be expected, reflects the predominance of these important genealogies in the Old Testament record.

C.2 The phrase is used in a title or heading only when those begotten are the heirs

²⁵ E.g. the line of God's promise in *Genesis* and the royal and priestly lines in *1 Chronicles* (but never, e.g. of Israel's kings after the division of the kingdom - cf. *Hosea* 8:2-4). This usage, plus the clearly intentional distinction between the births of Ishmael and Isaac (Section **C.2**), confirms that the different usages of the *Qal* and *Hiphil* stems of *yalad* have primarily to do with different meanings, not different authorial sources. Further confirmation comes from the discussion of 'those begotten of Aaron and Moses' (*Numbers* 3:1) in Section **J.1-J.3**, where the focus is clearly on the inheritance of the shared priestly ministry of Aaron and Moses.

of promises made by God himself. The special meaning of the *Hiphil* verb is illustrated by the deliberate contrast between the descriptions of the births of Ishmael and Isaac in *Genesis* 25:12 and 25:19 (**Figure 3**).

Figure 3 The Births of Ishmael and Isaac

Genesis 25:12 These are those begotten of Ishmael whom Hagar *bore*²⁶ to Abraham.

Genesis 25:19 These are those begotten of Isaac. Abraham *begat*²⁷ Isaac.

Both Ishmael and Isaac were born to Abraham, but only Isaac belonged to the line of messianic promise and only he inherited.²⁸ In other words, only Isaac was *begotten* by Abraham..²⁹

C.3 God did make other promises concerning Ishmael³⁰ and, later, concerning Esau.³¹ Hence Ishmael and Esau do have *toledot* sections in *Genesis*³², but they are never described as *begotten* by Abraham or Isaac.

C.4 The phrase 'These are those begotten of...' typically heads a section which commences with the death of the begetter's father and closes with the begetter's own death.³³ The title covers the period when the begetter was head of the patriarchal extended family.

C.5 There are particular literary features of a *toledot* section which they all exemplify in whole or in part (**Figure 4**):

²⁶ *Qal* form of the verb *yalad* (*yalad*) which means 'bear', 'bring forth'.

²⁷ *Hiphil* form of the verb *yalad* (*holid*) which means 'beget'.

²⁸ *Genesis* 25:5-6.

²⁹ See *1 Chronicles* 1:28-29,34, *Matthew* 1:2 and Paul's commentary in *Romans* 9:7-13 and *Galatians* 3:29; 4:21-31.

³⁰ *Genesis* 16:10-12; 17:20.

³¹ *Genesis* 27:39-40.

³² *Genesis* 25:12-18; 36:1-8 & 36:9-37:1

³³ See, e.g., *Genesis* 25:(11)12-18 (Ishmael) and *Genesis* 25:(11)19 - 35:29 (Isaac)

Figure 4 Literary Structure of a *toledot* ('those begotten of') Section

- (1) **Title** – the father(s) who beget(s).
 - (2) **Time reference** – the time when the sons are begotten.³⁴
 - (3) **Background** – information on the ancestry of the begetter³⁵ and/or his life and character (e.g. *Genesis* 6:9).
 - (4) **History** – a genealogical framework with narrative portions inserted at appropriate points. The genealogy (long or short) traces descent from the begetter named in the title. Hence the focus of each section is on the one(s) begotten.
 - (5) **Commentary** – usually comments interspersed in the narrative (e.g. *Genesis* 2:24)
-

D Literary Structure of *Genesis*

D.1 *Genesis* and the 'Begetting/Begotten' Sections

The book of *Genesis* comprises two great parts (**Figure 5**):

Figure 5 Literary Structure of *Genesis*

- A 1:1 – 2:3** Creation (or 'genesis') of the heavens and the earth.
- B 2:4 – 50:26** 'Begetting/Begotten' ³⁶ Sections
-

D.2 'Begetting/Begotten' Sections and the Unity of *Genesis*

The larger part of the book (**B** in **Figure 5**) consists of 11 sections, all of which are introduced by the phrase 'These are those begotten of...' ³⁷ In *Genesis* the 11 sections give a clear-cut and beautiful genealogical unity to the whole book. They display a simple *chiastic* (reverse or crosswise) arrangement (**Figure 6**):

³⁴ *Genesis* 2:4; *Numbers* 3:1.

³⁵ *Genesis* 5:1-2; 25:19.

³⁶ The Hebrew for Gk *genesis* in the Septuagint!

³⁷ The phrase occurs 15 times in all, the other 4 being *Numbers* 3:1; *Ruth* 4:18; *1Chronicles* 1:29 and *Matthew* 1:1.

Figure 6 Literary Structure in *Genesis* of the ‘Begetting/Begotten’ Sections

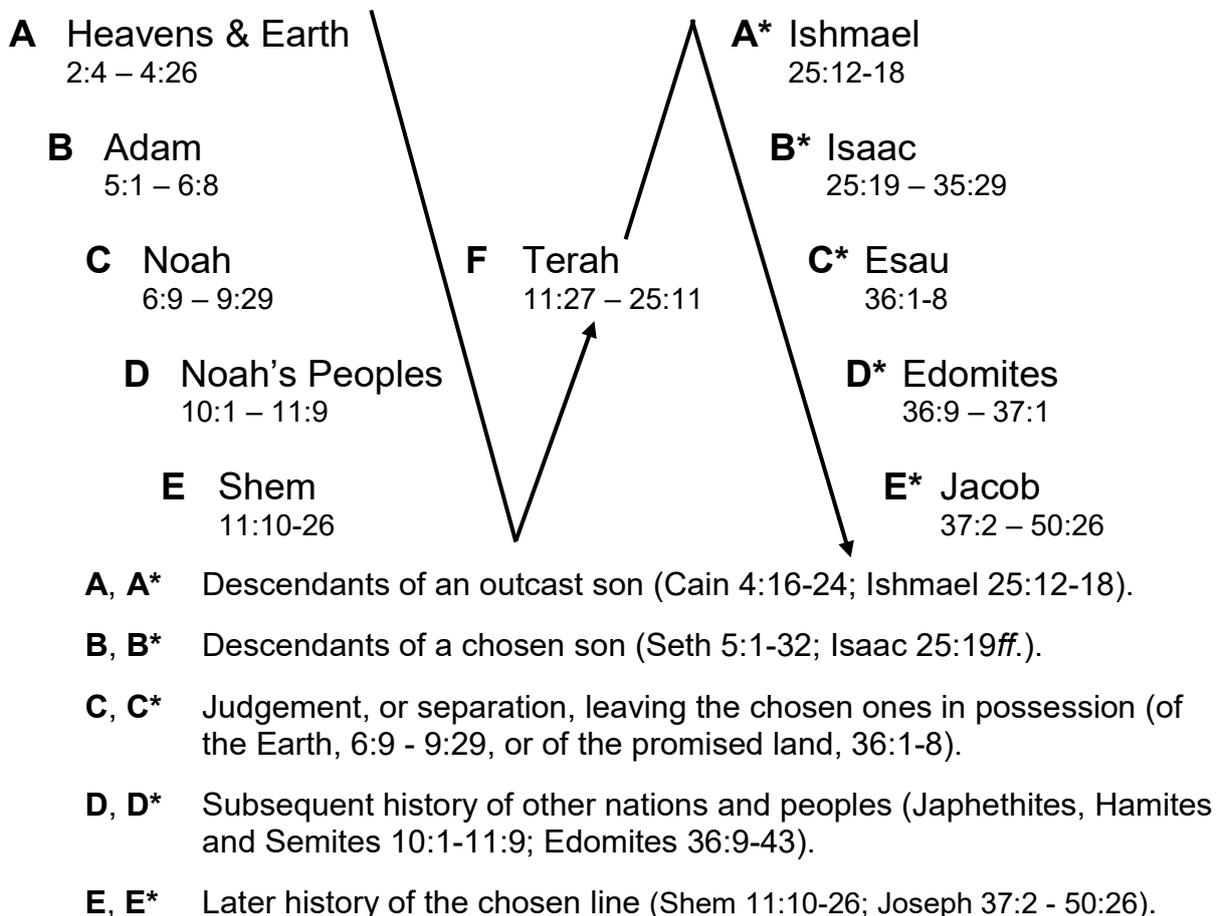
A Five sections (2:4 - 11:26)

B Those begotten of Terah (11:27 - 25:11)

A* Five sections (25:12 - 50:26)

The last five sections parallel the first five (**Figure 7**)³⁸

Figure 7 Parallels in *Genesis* between the ‘Begetting/Begotten’ Sections



³⁸ I first described this literary structure in 1969 (Jones 1969:34), but without any reference. It is set forth by Charles Ozanne in 2009 in his book on Bible chronology (Ozanne, 2009: 11-12), but he also gives no reference. It isn’t in his earlier book on Bible chronology (Ozanne 1970), but he does confirm that it was his idea (pers. comm., 19/02/2020). However, we would both be surprised if it had not been noticed by others long before us! If you, dear reader, know of earlier references then please do let me know so I can revise and update this footnote.

D.3 The central (sixth) section is thus set forth as the focal section of the whole book. This is 'Those begotten of Terah' (11:27 - 25:11). It should be no surprise that the key figure of this section – the longest in *Genesis* – who is thus high-lighted, is not Terah, but his most famous begotten son, *Abraham*.

D.4 In the first half of *Genesis* (2:4-11:26) the blessings given to all humanity and the struggle between blessing and curse are a key motif. The second half (11:27-50:26) is structured by the theme of 'blessing promised, sought after, imperiled, sacrificed, bought and sold, fought over, but always vouchsafed and, at least in part, actually experienced.'³⁹

D.5 How ironic it is that the book, so often paraded as the clearest example of a 'cut-and-paste' compilation of contradictory accounts by an unknown editor, actually reveals in its structure a most amazing unity. This intrinsic unity demonstrates – what detailed exegesis only confirms – that any attempt to abstract *Genesis* 1-3 (or 1-11) from the historical record of the rest of the book, as a different kind of account (*i.e.* non-historical), is quite arbitrary and has no basis in the text. *Genesis* 1-3 and 1-11 do not even match with the book's actual literary units. The only chapter which apparently stands outside the genealogical framework is chapter 1 (strictly 1:1-2:3). But, as we shall see, any basis for exempting even it from the book's historical record is removed by its deliberately genealogical format, (see **Sections H.3-H.4**), the clear links between the contents of chapter 1 and chapters 2-3, and by the verse (*Genesis* 2:4) which links it inextricably to the 'Begetting/Begotten' sections. (see **Section G**)

E Three Key Periods in Old Testament History

E.1 There are three key periods in Old Testament History (**Figure 8**).

Figure 8 Three Key Periods in Old Testament History

- 1) The call and subsequent life of Abraham
 - 2) The deliverance (Exodus) from Egypt with the giving of the Law at Sinai
 - 3) The establishment of David's kingdom
-

These three form the most important parts of the public framework of Old Testament history within which God's work is to be understood. They all concern the calling of a people to be God's witness in the earth – His pattern for true human life. The structure of the 'begetting/begotten' sections maps and highlights these events. Outside of *Genesis*, the 'these are those begotten' title occurs four more times. One (*I Chronicles* 1:29) simply repeats key information recorded in *Genesis* (The sons of Abraham - on

³⁹ Goldingay, 1987, pp 205-6.

which see section **C.2**); the other OT 'begetting/begotten' sections concern the Exodus – Sinai, the Law and the priesthood (*Numbers 3:1ff.*) – and King David (*Ruth 4:18ff.*). In the New Testament 'the one begotten of Jesus Christ' (*Matthew 1:1ff.*) brings these events to a final fruition in the incarnation of the Son of God – the virgin birth, life, death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ. In Christ, we are Abraham's children. In Christ we are God's children and heirs. In Christ we are God's kingdom people and subjects. A central element of the newness of the New Covenant is that at last a human (Jesus, and us, as His Bride, in Him) receives the kingdom and the originally intended order for the earth is reinstated. Humans are again properly installed as God's vice-regents.⁴⁰ The Bible's plot or storyline concerns the whole universe and human inheritance of it. God has such a wonderful Son that He wants many to be like Him, adopted into His Family, called to share with Him in His wonderful inheritance: a universe full of the glory of God.⁴¹

E.2 Was Moses, or the human author of *Ruth*, aware of the key significance of their use of the *begetting/begotten* theme? Very possibly not. It is likely that these are examples of the concurrency of human and Divine authorship.⁴²

E.3 We have now seen how the significance of the Exodus and king David periods are highlighted by the 'begetting/begotten' theme. To see how the call of Abraham is highlighted in this theme in *Genesis*, refer back to section **D**.

F The 'Begetting/Begotten' Sections and the Ancestry of King David and Jesus

F.1 God's word of blessing or curse will always be fulfilled,⁴³ but the *timing* and *manner* of that fulfilment depend on the response of the people to whom it comes.⁴⁴ In the case of a word of judgement, the fulfilment also depends on God's mercy.⁴⁵ God may defer judgement until there is no alternative.⁴⁶ We have a fascinating example with the final 'begetting/begotten' section in *Genesis* (37:2-50:26).

F.2 Jacob (Israel) begot 12 sons (*Acts 7:8*) – the ancestors of the twelve tribes of Israel (**Figure 9**). Reuben, as the firstborn (*Genesis 29:32*), had the birthright and should have been *the* begotten, the inheritor of the messianic promise. However, by his disreputable behaviour, he forfeited the birthright,⁴⁷ as did the 2nd son, Simeon, and also the 3rd, Levi,⁴⁸ The begotten must reflect the overriding character of the

⁴⁰ *Genesis 1:27-30* with *Psalms 8:4-8* and *Hebrews 2:5ff.*

⁴¹ *Isaiah 11:6; Habakkuk 2:14; Romans 8:19-21.*

⁴² See Section **P.4** and fn11, page 4.

⁴³ *Numbers 23:19; 1 Samuel 15:29; Isaiah 40:8; 55:11; Matthew 5:18; 24:35; Hebrews 4:1,6,9.*

⁴⁴ *2 Kings 13:14-19; Jeremiah 18:7-10; 23:22; Hebrews 3:19; 4:2,6; cf. 1 Samuel 2:27-36.*

⁴⁵ *2 Kings 13:23; 2 Peter 3:9.*

⁴⁶ *Genesis 15:16; 2 Chronicles 36:13-16.*

⁴⁷ *Genesis 35:22; 49:4; 1 Chronicles 5:1.*

⁴⁸ *Genesis 34; 49:5-7.*

begetter.

Figure 9 Sons of Jacob (Israel) in Birth Order

by Leah	by Leah's Maid	by Rachel's Maid	by Rachel
(1) Reuben			
(2) Simeon			
(3) Levi			
(4) Judah			
		(5) Dan	
		(6) Naphtali	
	(7) Gad		
	(8) Asher		
(9) Issachar			
(10) Zebulun			
Dinah (daughter)			
			(11) Joseph
			(12) Benjamin

F.3 At this point the birth order was put aside. Near the end of his life, Jacob adopted Joseph's two sons to be as Reuben and Simeon (*Genesis* 48:5-6). In this way Joseph was given the firstborn's double portion (*Deuteronomy* 21:15-17) and the birthright became his.⁴⁹ For although Joseph was only the 11th son, he was the firstborn of Rachel (*Genesis* 30:22-24), Jacob's first-chosen and best-beloved wife (*Genesis* 29:18,30). The primacy of Joseph is clearly evident in the following history. Joshua was from Ephraim (*Numbers* 13:8), and Gideon (*Judges* 6:15) and Jephthah (*Judges* 11:1) from Manasseh (*Numbers* 26:29). The Tabernacle was set up in Ephraim, at Shiloh (*Joshua* 18:1), and Shiloh became the national centre during the time of the Judges.⁵⁰

F.4 But Joseph's line, too, was eventually found wanting, and rejected.⁵¹ The transfer of the birthright now returned to birth order, passing to Judah, the fourth son.⁵² Jerusalem (nominally Benjamin, but politically Judah) became the new capital.⁵³ David of Judah became God's chosen king and the human ancestor of Jesus Christ. This was foretold in *Genesis* (49:10) and anticipated in *Numbers* (2:3-9) and *Judges* (1:1-2 and 20:18).

⁴⁹ *Genesis* 49:22-26; *Deuteronomy* 33:13-17; *1 Chronicles* 5:1-2.

⁵⁰ *Joshua* 18:1-10; 19:51; *Judges* 18:31; *1 Samuel* 1:3; 3:21.

⁵¹ *Psalms* 78:60, 67; *Jeremiah* 7:12-15; 26:6,9.

⁵² *Genesis* 29:35; *1 Chronicles* 28:4; *Psalms* 78:67-72; 108:8.

⁵³ *Psalms* 78:68.

G *Genesis* 2:4 - A Key to *Genesis* – and to the Whole Bible

G.1 Before we look at this first – but highly unusual – ‘begetting/begotten’ section (*Genesis* 2:4ff), there is one important matter we must discuss, which, we believe, leads many to misinterpret the significance of the ‘begetting/begotten’ theme.

Today, many charge that the Bible is *patriarchal* – reflecting exclusively male authority – and *androcentric* – written from an exclusively male perspective. A prime item of evidence for this charge is that the Biblical genealogies trace descent exclusively through the male line. We shall see that this is not always true, especially with regard to the first (*Genesis* 2:4ff) and last (*Matthew* 1:1ff) ‘begetting/begotten’ sections in the Bible. We shall also see that it is not true of the Creation section of the Bible (*Genesis* 1-2, 5:1-2) before the Fall, nor of the New Creation section (*Revelation* 21-22) after sin and death have passed away for ever. Once we recognize that most of Scripture is dealing with life in a fallen world, we will remember (**Prologue P.8-P.9**) that we must always read the Bible backwards, *i.e.*, every passage must be understood in the light of the end goal of the Bible Story and its central focus in the Incarnation – the story of Jesus as the ‘last Adam’, the ‘second man’ (*1 Corinthians* 15: 45, 47).

We can also note that the Bible contains many passages that are clearly intended to offset or correct the male emphasis. One of the most obvious is the book of Ruth (Bauckham 1996). The book closes with a short exclusively male genealogy leading to King David (*Ruth* 4:18-22), yet the key players in the whole of the rest of the book are two women, Naomi and her daughter-in-law, the Moabite Ruth. Matthew includes Ruth in his genealogy of Jesus (*Matthew* 1:5) and also records that the mother of Boaz was the Jericho Canaanite and former prostitute, Rahab (*Matthew* 1:5)!

G.2 *Genesis* 2:4 is the title of the first ‘begetting/begotten’ section (*Genesis* 2:4 - 4:26). In that kind of Biblical scholarship that Plantinga (1998A, 2000 ch 12) calls “Historical Biblical Criticism”, the two halves of this verse are attributed to different textual traditions (*i.e.* different authorial sources) and are supposed to have been placed together by an unknown editor. This reconstruction of the text's history is not only totally without any independent historical evidence, but it also flies in the face of the exegetical evidence from the text itself.

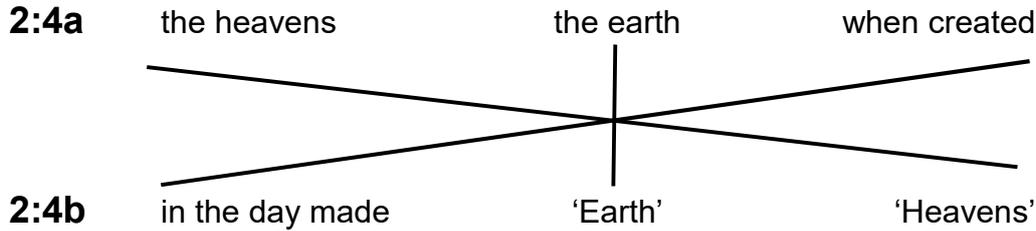
G.3 The whole verse forms one title, the halves belonging inseparably together. Indeed, it is a classic example of Hebrew parallelism:

These *are* those-begotten-of
the-heavens and-the-earth
when-they-were-created,
in-*the*-day *that the* LORD God made
‘Earth’ and-‘Heavens’.

The parallel halves correspond in chiasmic (crosswise or inverted) order (**Figure 10**):⁵⁴

⁵⁴ The only other occurrence of the reversed order ('Earth and Heaven') is in *Psalms* 148 (v13) which alludes to this passage.

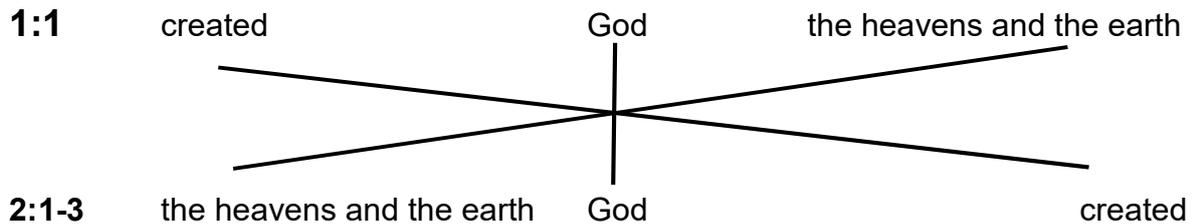
Figure 10 Literary Structure of *Genesis* 2:4



G.4 Chiasmus

Chiasmus is used to express unity, *i.e.* that the items it includes are distinct, but belong together.⁵⁵ In this case the chiastic structure is elaborate, going beyond the verse itself. The great prologue (1:1 - 2:3) is enclosed by a chiasmus with the key words of 1:1 (created, God, the heavens and the earth) appearing in reverse order in 2:1-3 (**Figure 11**). This is reinforced by the inclusion of 'God created' in both 1:1 and 2:3.

Figure 11 Literary Structure of the Prologue of *Genesis* (1:1 – 2:3)



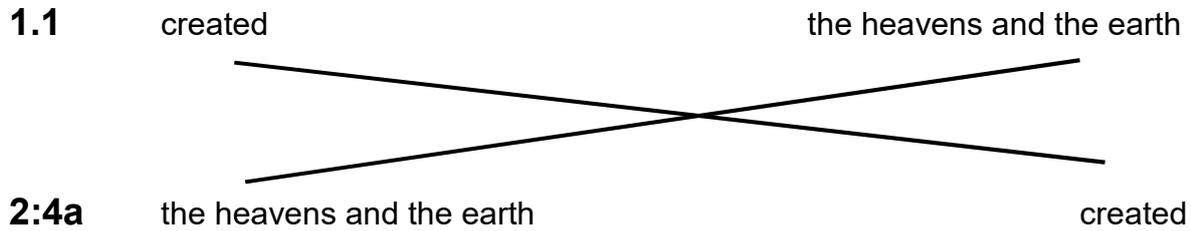
G.5 If this is not enough, a final chiasmus links the prologue of *Genesis* (1:1 - 2:3) to *Genesis* 2:4ff.: “the heaven and the earth ... created” of 2:4a forming a looser chiastic inclusion with 1:1 (**Figure 12**). This is further emphasised by the pairing of 'create' and 'make' in both 2:4 and in 1:1 - 2:3 (*esp.* 2:3 'creatively made').

G.6 The terms used in 2:4a (the heavens, the earth, created) refer us back to the very beginning of *Genesis*. The presence of the article (*the* heavens, *the* earth) indicates common nouns as in *Genesis* 1:1.

The terms used in 2:4b (made 'Earth' 'Heavens') refer us back to the six days of creation of *Genesis* 1. The absence of the article indicates proper names ('Earth', 'Heaven') as in 1:10 ('Earth') and 1:8 ('Heavens')

⁵⁵ In the immediate context we have the examples of chiasmus in 1:5 (called light // darkness called) and 1:10 (called dry land // gathered waters called) where in each case it expresses the unity of two acts of naming; in 1:20 (let swarm swarms // birds let fly about) where it expresses concomitant acts; in 1:14-18 and 24-25 where it expresses the immediacy of command and fulfilment; and in 2:23 (This called woman // man taken this) where it emphasises that the creating and naming belong together.

Figure 12 Literary Linkage between the Prologue (1:1 – 2:3) and Genesis 2:4ff.



The time statement in 2:4a (*lit.* 'in their being created') is an adverbial phrase that denotes a period of time (long or short) by reference to its opening and formative event).⁵⁶ It tells us that the begetting occurred in the period beginning with God's first act of creation (*Genesis* 1:1).

The time statement in 2:4b (*lit.* 'in (the) day of') is another adverbial phrase, but with a different idiomatic use. It denotes a period of time (long or short) comprehensively and inclusively, indicating either simultaneity⁵⁷ or, with a sequence of actions, promptness.⁵⁸ It is telling us that the begetting occurred within the six days period of *Genesis* One.⁵⁹

In its intricate and amazing construction, this verse binds together in unity the opening chapters of Genesis and stands as one of the strongest indications in the text itself of the falsity of the Documentary Hypothesis, and the idea of irreconcilable conflicts between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2.

In its intricate and amazing construction, *Genesis* 2:4 binds together in unity the opening chapters of *Genesis*

⁵⁶ See *Deuteronomy* 4:45 'These are the stipulations, decrees and laws Moses gave them *in their going out* from Egypt', *i.e.* *in the period beginning with* the Exodus from Egypt. Other examples are *Genesis* 4:8 ('in their becoming in the field'); *Genesis* 33:18, 35:9 ('in his coming out from Paddan Aram', *cf.* 31:17); *Deuteronomy* 23:4 ('in your going out from Egypt'); *Deuteronomy* 27:4,12 ('in your crossing the Jordan', *cf.* *Joshua* 8:30-35) and *Joshua* 5:4 ('in their going out from Egypt').

⁵⁷ See *Exodus* 6:28 '*in the day of* Yahweh speaking to Moses in Egypt...He said...', *ie.* at that very time; *Genesis* 5:1 '*In the day of* God creating man, in the likeness of God He made him'.

⁵⁸ See *Numbers* 30:8 'If her husband forbids her [vow], *in the day of* his hearing about it'; *2 Samuel* 22:1 'David sang...this song *in the day of* Yahweh delivering him...'; *Exodus* 10:28 '*In the day of* your seeing my [Pharaoh's] face, you will die'; *1 Kings* 2:37 '*In the day of* your leaving [Jerusalem]...you can be sure you will die' (see v 41ff. and *cf.* *Genesis* 2:17; 3:5); *Genesis* 5:2 'He called their name 'Adam' *in the day of* their being created.'

⁵⁹ *Numbers* 7 provides a very close parallel to *Genesis* 1. The 12 Israelite leaders gave offerings for the dedication of the altar *in the day of* (vv 1, 10, 84) its being anointed. In fact, the dedication lasted 12 days and on each day one leader brought his offering (v 11). We have 'the first day...the second day...' as in *Genesis* 1. In each case '*in the day of*' then denotes the period of creating, or of anointing/dedicating, comprehensively and inclusively.

H The Relationship between *Genesis* Chapters 1 and 2

H.1 The historical inter-linking of the Creation account with that of the 'begetting/begotten' sections is made quite clear by the structure of *Genesis* 2:4 and by the chiasmic linkage of chapters 1 and 2 (section **G**). There is no basis for regarding *Genesis* 1 as a different kind of account which is not, amongst its other purposes, recording real events in a real history.

H.2 One common argument against this conclusion – adopted even by evangelical Christian scholars – is the already discussed claim that *Genesis* begins with two contradictory creation accounts that supposedly came from different sources and were then placed together by a later (and unknown) editor. This supposedly shows that the editor did not intend that we should take them literally, *i.e.* that the editor's purpose was 'religious' (or 'theological'), not the making of historical claims. Leaving aside the arbitrary nature of this argument, we need only point to the unity of the text as we have it. The detailed exegesis given above (Section **G**) confirms that claim to unity.

H.3 Another common argument is that, despite the fact that the Hebrew grammar of *Genesis* 1 is that of normal narrative prose, the text is more poetic in style and should not be interpreted as an account of a sequence of historical events. The basis for this argument is that the text is a prime example of *panel-writing* (Baker, 1980). Panel-writing is where there is a structured set of component statements that is repeated in the same form a number of times. Baker refers to *Genesis* 1 as an example. The common pattern in *Genesis* 1 (**Figure 13**), with minor variations, is that of Command, Fulfilment, Assessment, and Closure (Sarfati, 2015:51).

Figure 13 Panel-Writing in *Genesis* 1

1. God's command: "And God said, 'Let there be ...'"
 2. Fulfilment: "And it was so."
 3. Assessment: "And God saw that it was good."
 4. Closure of the day: "And evening came and morning came. Day X."
(The reference is to the coming of the night that closes the current daytime (period of light) and leads us forward to the beginning of the next daytime.⁶⁰)
-

In itself, panel-writing indicates neither poetry nor prose, neither historical nor non-historical.⁶¹ But why is *Genesis* 1 a species of panel-writing? Why is *Genesis* 1

⁶⁰ Hence there is no *Transition* ending the seventh day (*Genesis* 2:3), not because the day has no end, but simply because that sequence of days has been completed and there is now no following day in the account. God had completed his work of creation, everything was 'very good', so God just 'stopped' (שבת *Genesis* 2:2-3).

⁶¹ See, e.g., *Numbers* 7:1-88 which is remarkably similar to *Genesis* 1 (also **G.6**, fn **57**).

structured like that? The answer is, in fact, obvious (at least as soon as it is pointed out, as it was for me!): to complete the genealogical emphasis of the book of *Genesis* as a whole, chapter 1 is written like a genealogy:

The pattern of the days in *Genesis* 1, with its recurrent formula, corresponds to the pattern of the generations in the genealogies. (Hess 1990: 151; see also Hess 2009).

Outside of *Genesis* 1, the major examples of panel-writing in *Genesis* are the genealogies of *Genesis* 5:1-32, 9:28-29 and 11:10-26 (**Figure 14**).

Figure 14 Panel-Writing: *Genesis* 1 compared to *Genesis* 5

Genesis 1:3-5

And God said, 'Let there be ...'
And it was so.
And God saw that it was good.
And God called ...
And evening came, and morning
came, the first day

Genesis 5:6-8

And Seth lived 105 years and begat Enosh
After he begat Enosh he lived 807 years
And had other sons and daughters
And Seth lived 912 years
and he died

H.4 The various mismatches in supposed parallels in *Genesis* 1 – e.g. between days 1-3 and days 4-6 – are a clear indication that the literary structure has been governed by the *true* historical sequence and not by any *arbitrary* literary pattern. *Genesis* 1 records the actual sequence of God's acts of creation over 6 days, but set down in the literary pattern of a genealogy.

H.5 The literary structure of the first 'begetting/begotten' section (*Genesis* 2:4 – 4:26) – another chiasmus – is both clear and simple (**Figure 15**)

Figure 15 Literary Structure of the first 'Begetting/Begotten' Section (*Genesis* 2:4 – 4:26)

A People before the Fall into Sin

B The Fall into Sin

A* People after the Fall into Sin

Genesis 1 recounts, in brief outline, all of creation and focuses on the creation of humans and on the sabbath. *Genesis* 2:4ff is not a rival account, but focuses on part of the sixth day of the preceding overview (*Genesis* 1: 26-30), providing the extra information we need in order to understand the unfolding story of the later chapters.

Genesis 2 details the order and manner of human creation (*Genesis* 2:7,21-22) and describes the relationships of human beings, to God (*Genesis* 2:16-17), each other (*Genesis* 2:18,21-24), the animals (*Genesis* 2:18-20), and the rest of the earthly creation (*Genesis* 2:5-6,8,15), which would be shattered by the Fall into sin in *Genesis* 3. We are told that there was originally no evil in the man and his wife (*Genesis* 2:25).

J What Was Begotten of the Heavens and the Earth (*Genesis* 2:4)?

J.1 What, then, was the 'begetting' referred to in *Genesis* 2:4? The first puzzle is the fact that we have *two* metaphorical begetters ('the heavens' and 'the earth'). How can *two* 'begetters' be involved in a (single) begetting? Thankfully the problem is resolved for us by the one parallel passage, *Numbers* ch 3:1-4. That heading, *Numbers* 3:1, (**Figure 16**) reads, 'These are those begotten of Aaron and Moses', even though the following passage mentions only the sons of Aaron. There are two fathers because the passage is dealing with the inheritance of the *priestly ministry*⁶² which Moses and Aaron had fulfilled in Israel together.⁶³

Figure 16 *Numbers* 3:1 – Inheritance of Priestly Ministry

These are those begotten of Aaron and Moses,
in the day that the Lord spoke with Moses on Mount Sinai.

J.2 The ministry relationship between Moses and Aaron was exceptionally close. Aaron was Moses' spokesman, Moses' mouth. Moses was as God to Aaron (and to Pharaoh) and Aaron was Moses' prophet.⁶⁴ It is often unclear as to which of the two actually spoke or acted.⁶⁵ Moses' shepherd's staff became Aaron's staff⁶⁶ and it is this staff that became a snake;⁶⁷ budded, blossomed and bore almonds (*Numbers* 17); was placed with the Ark (*Numbers* 17:10-11); and then taken from there to smite the rock.⁶⁸ The priests came solely from the line of Aaron, but inherited the priestly ministry that had been exercised indivisibly by Moses and Aaron together.

⁶² See section **C.1** and fn **25**.

⁶³ See *Psalms* 99:6. Moses and Aaron are frequently mentioned together as leaders, e.g. *1 Samuel* 12:6,8; *Psalms* 77:20; 105: 26-27; 106:16,23; *Micah* 6:4. Moses' sons were reckoned as ordinary Levites (*1 Chronicles* 23:13-17; cf. *Genesis* 48:5-6); in David's day some of Moses' descendants were listed as officers in charge of the temple treasuries (*1 Chronicles* 26:24-28).

⁶⁴ *Exodus* 4:10-17; 7:1-2. Cf. 11:3.

⁶⁵ Sometimes Scripture states that God told Moses to tell Aaron to do something (e.g. *Exodus* 4:14-16; 7:1-2; 8:5) and that is duly recorded (e.g. *Exodus* 4:30; 7:19-20; 8:6). Sometimes God told them both and both acted (e.g. *Exodus* 5:1; 6:13,26-27; 16:6; *Leviticus* 11:1-2). Sometimes God told Moses and Moses acted (e.g. *Exodus* 6:9; 8:20; 10: 1, 29 (but see v 3)). Presumably Aaron was always actually the spokesman, but they so acted together that all these descriptions are correct.

⁶⁶ *Exodus* 4:2,17, 20 ('staff of God'); 7:19-20; 17:5,9; *Numbers* 20:8-9.

⁶⁷ *Exodus* 4:3-4; 7:9-10. After this it is generally called Aaron's staff (but see *Exodus* 14:16, *Numbers* 20:11).

⁶⁸ *Numbers* 20:7-11. Moses changed God's command (spoke 'rash words' *Psalms* 106:33) and Aaron concurred in doing it, so they were both punished (*Numbers* 20:12,24; 27:14; *Deuteronomy* 32:50-51).

J.3 Before leaving *Numbers* 3, we must note that this passage contains two other clear allusions to *Genesis* 2. First, verse 1 contains one of the same time phrases as *Genesis* 2:4. *Numbers* 3:1-4 lists only the priestly sons who had been begotten 'in the day that (= at the time) Yahweh talked with Moses on Mount Sinai'. Second, the passage juxtaposes the same two words that are used of man's duties in the Garden of Eden (*Genesis* 2:15): '*abad* ('serve/work') and *shamar* ('keep/exercise care'). Both words are commonly used of serving God and, especially, as here (vv 7,8,10), of the work (*abad*) of the Levites and priests, and of their duty to fulfil God's commands (*shamar*). The garden was a holy place and man's position in it involved priestly (*Genesis* 2:15) and prophetic (*Genesis* 2:20) vocations as well as the royal calling of *Genesis* 1 (vv 26,28). The priesthood is primary: in original intention, kingship and prophetic ministry belong to it.⁶⁹

J.4 So what/who was begotten in *Genesis* 2? As in every 'begetting/begotten' section, the first one begotten is mentioned immediately (cf. *Genesis* 37:2!). Verses 5-6 are circumstantial (descriptive) clauses (cf. *Genesis* 1:2 and *Genesis* 6:9), so that takes us to verse 7: 'Yahweh God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.' Those begotten of the heavens and the earth are people: the first man, Adam, and, from him, Eve. Adam came, by creation, from the earth,⁷⁰ but with a divine calling as the beneficiary of all God's promises and purposes concerning the heavens and the earth.⁷¹ To fulfil that calling, the first couple entered a probationary discipleship. But it was a heavenly calling⁷² that was meant to lead to a transformation into the likeness of Christ.⁷³ The allusion to *Numbers* 3:1 shows (**J.2** & **J.3**) – as is confirmed by the development of the 'Heaven and Earth' theme through the Bible (Section **K**) – that the original disjunction of the heavenly and earthly realms will be overcome by their coming together in the new creation and in the new humanity in Christ.

J.5 What did Moses intend when he used the 'begetting/begotten' formula in *Genesis* 2:4? We do not know how far his understanding went, but almost certainly not as far as the understanding we have today by being able to read *Genesis* 2 in the light of all that the Divine Author has subsequently revealed in the Old and New Testaments.

K Heaven and Earth Theme through the Bible

K.1 In the Hebrew phrase 'the heavens and the earth', the term 'heaven' can mean that part of the visible (or, we might say, 'scientifically knowable') creation that is 'above' the surface of the earth. For example, commonly in Scripture, heaven is the

⁶⁹ *Exodus* 19:5-6; *Isaiah* 61:6; *1 Peter* 2:5,9; *Revelation* 1:6, 5:10, 20:6; cf. (Moses) *Numbers* 12:6-8; *Deuteronomy* 18:15,18; 33:5.

⁷⁰ *Genesis* 2:7; 3:19; *Psalms* 10:18; *John* 3:31; *1 Corinthians* 15:47.

⁷¹ *Genesis* 1:26,28; *Matthew* 5:3,5,10; 19:14 [*Luke* 18:16]; 25:34; *Luke* 12:32; *Romans* 4:13; **8:32**; **1 Corinthians** 3:21-23; 6:1-3; 15:20; *Galatians* 5:21; **Ephesians** 1:22-23; 5:5; *Colossians* 1:12; **2:9-10**; *Hebrews* 12:28; *James* 2:5; *1 Peter* 2:9; *Revelation* 1:6; 21:7; 22:3.

⁷² *2 Corinthians* 5:2; *Ephesians* 1:3; 2:19; *Philippians* 3:20; *2 Timothy* 4:18; *Hebrews* 3:1; 12:22; *Revelation* 21.

⁷³ *Romans* 8:29; *1 Corinthians* 15: 35-56; *2 Corinthians* 3:18; *Philippians* 3:20-21; *Colossians* 3:1-4,9-10; *2 Peter* 1:4; *1 John* 3:2.

sky, on which the earth (as land) daily depends for sun and rain. We can describe this as a *complementary* or mutually enhancing use of the two terms – ‘heaven and earth’ summing up the whole of the visible creation by reference to its two main aspects. Hereafter we will refer to this as the **H&E1** meaning

‘Heaven’ can also mean the invisible, transcendent reality that is inaccessible to purely human investigation and unknowable by it. In the latter meaning, ‘heaven’ is the ‘place’ of God's throne and indwelling glory, and of the angels.⁷⁴ The *earth* is then God's finite and transitory creation – the visible, scientifically knowable reality accessible to human investigation. This meaning allows a *contrasting*, or opposing use of the ‘heaven and earth’ phrase that is particularly prominent in *Daniel* (especially chs 2-7) and *Matthew* (Pennington 2009: 27-30, 46-48 and chs 8 and 12).⁷⁵ We will refer to this as the **H&E2** meaning.

However, the *contrasting* use (**H&E2**) never replaces the *complementary* use (**H&E1**). With the second meaning of ‘heaven’, the phrase ‘heaven and earth’ stills sums up the whole of creation by reference to its two main aspects (in this case, the visible and the invisible).

Since the first meaning of ‘heaven’ acts as a symbol of the latter, ‘heaven’ may also encompass both meanings at once, or sometimes simply be ambiguous.

Whether *complementary* (**H&E1**) or *contrasting* (**H&E2**), heaven and earth are always relative to each other; neither can be adequately understood without the other and both are created by God and always under his authority. Unsurprisingly, therefore, *Scripture never sums up the world, or indeed a human being, in a unifying concept.*⁷⁶ In all cases the only source of meaning and unity is God Himself.

K.2 When we follow the ‘heaven and earth’ theme through from *Genesis* to *Revelation* and then back again (See Section **P.7**), it becomes clear, as we shall shortly see, that the *contrasting* meaning (**H&E2**) is primary. Pennington's summary of his analysis of Matthew's use of the heaven and earth theme lays out well what we shall show is present in seed form from the very beginning of the Bible in *Genesis*:

“[Matthew's uses of heaven] emphasize a very important theological point: the tension that currently exists between heaven and earth, between God's realm and ways and humanity's, especially as it relates to God's kingdom (“the kingdom of heaven”) versus humanity's kingdoms. This tension will be resolved at the eschaton – in the new genesis (παλιγγενεσία, 19:28) – that has been inaugurated through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ. In fact, only by recognizing the intensity of the tension that currently exists between heaven and earth can we fully appreciate the significance of the eschaton in which the kingdom of heaven will come to earth (6:9-10).” (Pennington 2009: 7)

⁷⁴ *Deuteronomy* 10:14; *1 Kings* 8:27; *Nehemiah* 9:6; *Matthew* 3:2; *2 Corinthians* 12:2; *2 Timothy* 4:18.

⁷⁵ Pennington (2009) uses the terms ‘merismatic’ and ‘antithetic’, but I prefer to use the simpler terms ‘complementary’ and ‘contrasting’.

⁷⁶ The term ‘universe’ expresses a pagan faith. It is always – as creation – a multiverse. In either meaning of ‘heaven’, the phrase ‘heaven and earth’ signifies the fact that nothing in creation is autonomous or self-sustaining, but that everything points to and is dependent on God.

“*Matthew* 6:9-10 and 28:18-20 are especially important in showing that the goal of God’s redemptive plan in Jesus is not the removal of the earth in the sense of being replaced with a kingdom *in* heaven, but is instead the eschatological reuniting of the heavenly and earthly realms according to the heavenly pattern (6:9-10). ... Significantly, it is through Jesus’ resurrection that he stands as the One now with authority in heaven and on earth (28:18) who will, at his Second Coming, consummate the heaven and earth relationship: the kingdom of heaven will come to earth.” (Pennington 2009: 210-211)

Surprisingly, while arguing that Matthew’s use of the heaven and earth theme has “a biblical-theological purpose: to clearly connect his Gospel with the book of *Genesis*, showing Jesus to be the culmination of God’s redemptive purposes.” (2009: 211), Pennington does not see the theme at work in *Genesis* (particularly in *Genesis* 1 & 2) in the way he has described above. He apparently doesn’t consider ‘reading backwards’ (Section **P.7**) to see if there is warrant for seeing Matthew’s *contrasting* theme rooting back to *Genesis*. But, in fact while categorising the use of the heaven and earth theme in *Genesis* 1:1, 2:1 and 2:4 as *complementary* (2009: 167,342) his description is perfectly compatible with a *contrasting* understanding:

Matthew prefers to emphasize a distinction or tension between the two realms. In fact this serves as a “turn of the screw” allusion to *Genesis* 1:1 – while using the same phraseology. Matthew emphasizes the current disjunction rather than the conjunction of heaven and earth, all the while looking forward to the future reuniting of the two realms (6:9-10; 19:28; 28:18).” (Pennington 2009: 342)

Pennington does reference Meredith Kline’s paper (Kline, 1996) in which he strongly argues for the *contrasting* meaning in *Genesis* 1 and 2. Kline’s arguments are cogent⁷⁷, but I shall argue that the most persuasive warrant comes from the ‘begetting/begotten’ theme.

K.3 The demonstration in section **J** of the *contrasting* meaning of ‘heaven and earth’ (**H&E2**) in *Genesis* 2:4 also demonstrates that the same *contrasting* meaning applies in *Genesis* 1:1 and 2:1. The relationship of heaven and earth in the period between the original creation and the *Eschaton* is *contrasting*, but in the new creation it is *complementary* in an overall unity (reunification), as noted by Pennington above.⁷⁸

K.4 One final point to note about heaven and earth is that, in both Hebrew and Greek, ‘heaven’ is masculine and ‘earth’ is feminine⁷⁹. Of course these are *grammatical* genders and do not necessarily tell us anything about their nature, or anything else. Nevertheless it does correspond to the reality of the eschatological (End Times) reunion of heaven and earth which centres in the marriage of the Divine Son, Jesus Christ, with His bride, the Church of redeemed humanity.

⁷⁷ While commending Kline’s categorisation of the contrasting meaning (**H&E2**) of the heaven and earth pairing in *Genesis* 1 and 2, I must add that I found much else in Kline’s paper unconvincing.

⁷⁸ Of course, see *also Revelation* 21-22.

⁷⁹ In Hebrew, ‘heaven’ (*shamayim*) is also plural (dual) in form.

L Adam and Christ

L.1 The detailed analysis above is confirmed and extended by the Bible itself. Following the creation passages and the fall into sin (*Genesis* 1-4) the Bible divides itself into two books (**Figure 17**):

Figure 17 Bible's Two Books

Genesis 5:1 'the book of the ones begotten (plural) of Adam'

Matthew 1:1 'the book of the one begotten (singular) of Jesus Christ'⁸⁰

L.2 In the Old Testament the Hebrew *seper* (book, scroll)⁸¹ is generally used of important writings, such as legal documents,⁸² official letters,⁸³ source books with more details of relevant Old Testament history,⁸⁴ and especially for the Book of the Covenant and the Book of the Law of God/Yahweh/Moses⁸⁵.

In the New Testament, the Greek *biblos* (LXX, NT) is not the common word for a written document or book.⁸⁶ It is used of Scripture,⁸⁷ royal archives (*Ezra* 4:15), God's archives (e.g., the Book of Life),⁸⁸ and of the books of the Ephesian magicians (*Acts* 19:19). It carries a strong connotation of sacredness and veneration.

L.3 **Genesis 5:1** is God's title for the rest of the Old Testament. **Matthew 1:1** is commonly regarded as Matthew's title for the genealogy which follows, but it is much more likely that he penned it as the title of his whole Gospel. However, whatever Matthew intended, it is clear that God had planned for it to become the title of the whole New Testament. The two verses are particularly striking examples of the point made by Alvin Plantinga,⁸⁹ among others, that the full meaning of a Biblical text may sometimes go well beyond the original human author's intent and understanding.

⁸⁰ *Aute he biblos genéseos anthropon* (LXX *Genesis* 5:1); *Biblos geneseos Iesou Christou* (*Matthew* 1:1).

⁸¹ Harris et al, 1981, vol 2, pages 632-663; Wigram, n.d., pages 883-884.

⁸² E.g. *Deuteronomy* 24:1,3; *Isaiah* 50:1; *Jeremiah* 3:8.

⁸³ E.g. *1 Kings* 21:8ff; *2 Kings* 19:14; *Esther* 1:22; *Jeremiah* 29:1ff.

⁸⁴ E.g. *Numbers* 21:14; *Joshua* 10:13; *2 Samuel* 1:18; *1 Kings* 11:41, 14:19,29; *2 Kings* 1:18.

⁸⁵ E.g. *Exodus* 24:7; *2 Kings* 23:2; *Deuteronomy* 31:24; *Joshua* 8:31, 24:26; *2 Chronicles* 17:9.

⁸⁶ The common word in Greek for a written document or book is *biblion* which occurs 155 times in the LXX and 32 times in the NT, as compared with 15 and 13 times respectively for *biblos*.

⁸⁷ E.g. *Joshua* 1:8; *2 Chronicles* 17:9; 35:12; *Ezra* 6:18; *Jeremiah* 36:1; *Daniel* 9:2; *Mark* 12:26; *Luke* 3:4; 20:42; *Acts* 1:20; 7:42.

⁸⁸ E.g. *Exodus* 32:32,33; *Psalms* 68:28; *Daniel* 7:10; 12:1; *Philippians* 4:3; *Revelation* 3:5; 20:15.

⁸⁹ Section P.8.

L.4 The title in *Matthew* 1:1 “The book of the one begotten of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham” refers to the New Testament church as the Bride of Christ, *i.e.* to believers, who have become adopted sons of God (see **L.13-14**), true spiritual offspring of David and of Abraham. As noted at the beginning of this paper (**B.2**, with footnotes **20 & 21**) this verse is mistranslated in most, if not all, modern translations. If the alternative translation I am defending is correct, and its significance was fully understood by Matthew, then we might expect it to be reflected in both the general literary structure of Matthew's Gospel (see Sections **L.5-L.13**) and in specific matters that he includes in his Gospel (Section **L.14**).

L.5 Matthew (also known as Levi) was a Jew, writing his Gospel for new believers, many of whom at that time would have been converted Jews.⁹⁰ Matthew provides a manual of discipleship for those learning how to live as citizens of the kingdom of heaven⁹¹ on earth and as those who know the king as their heavenly Father.⁹² He begins with a genealogy, of little interest to Gentiles, but both fascinating and compelling for Jews keen to know about Jesus' ancestry. Mathew begins the genealogy with Abraham, who was the founding father of the Israelite (and later and now Jewish) nation, to whom God had made great promises of land, and of nations that would be blessed through his family. But then the genealogy focuses on the great King David,⁹³ to whom God made promises of future rule over the whole world.

The genealogy is arranged in three groups of 14, the first group ending with David. Pawson (2017: 497) comments:

The significance of the three groups may be lost until we realize that every Jewish name has a numeric value, with each letter assigned a number and the total forming the number of the name. David in Hebrew (which has no vowels) is DVD and comes to 14. So immediately we see Matthew's concern to convey a pattern: Christ's ancestry is Davidic, and he has come at just the right time.

Others reject or ignore the name numerology, and see a different significance. For example, Tom Wright (2004:3-4) writes:

[Matthew] arranges the genealogy into three groups of 14 names – or, perhaps we should say, into six groups of seven names. The number seven was and is

⁹⁰ “Matthew refers to the Old Testament more than any of the other Gospels. ... [Matthew] provides continuity with the Old Testament better than all the others. Altogether there are 29 direct quotations from the Old Testament and an additional 121 indirect references or allusions.” (Pawson 2017: 497)

⁹¹ Matthew usually refers to ‘kingdom of **heaven**’ (31 times) rather than ‘kingdom of **God**’ (5 times) as in all the other Gospels, not because Jews would avoid using God's name in speech (Pawson 2017:497 – ‘God’ isn't a name!), but because Matthew is developing the ‘heaven and earth’ theme from *Genesis* 2:4 – see section **K**).

⁹² “Matthew mentions ‘Father’ 44 times altogether, compared to just 4 times in Mark and 17 times in Luke.” (Pawson, 2017: 502; Jones 2020).

⁹³ “From the very beginning Matthew focuses his readers' attention on Christ's ancestry in the royal line of David, describing how his birth fulfils prophecy and has the marks of God's involvement, heralded by archangels and welcomed by an angelic choir. While Luke includes the shepherds, it is Matthew who records the worship of the child by wise men from the east. This theme of Jesus as the King of the Jews is also seen in his passion, as Matthew records the crown of thorns, the ‘scepter’ and the title given to Jesus, all mocking his pretensions – but to Matthew appropriate for a royal person.” (Pawson 2017: 494; see also Gandhi, 2017)

one of the most powerful symbolic numbers, and to be born at the beginning of the seventh seven in the sequence is clearly to be the climax of the whole list, ... This, Matthew is saying, is *both* the fulfilment of two millennia of God's promises and purposes *and* something quite new and different.

Martin Goldsmith (2001: 2-3) also mentions this suggestion:

So perhaps the three fourteens are also aimed at showing Jesus to be the absolutely perfect son of Abraham, son of David and judge of Israel in the exile. And as seven represents perfect fullness, twice seven means that Jesus is doubly perfect; and three times twice seven underlines his absolute glory and splendour. So from the outset of his Gospel Matthew underlines the incomparable pre-eminence and awesome glory of Jesus the Messiah.

Jesus came as the new man, who would be all that humans were intended to be.

L.6 In the modern era, two commentators in particular have sought to understand the literary structure of *Mathew* – Benjamin Bacon (Bacon 1930) and Jack Kingsbury (Kingsbury, 1975).

Bacon argued for seven 'rather clearly marked parts' to *Matthew: a Preamble* (chs 1-2 on the birth and childhood of Jesus) followed by five *Books* (chs 3-7, 8-10, 11-13, 14-18 and 19-25), each with narrative and discourse sections, and ending with an Epilogue (chs 16-28, including the last week of Jesus' life, his death and resurrection)

Each of the five discourses ends with the phrase "when Jesus finished" (7:28; 11:1; 13:53; 19:1; 26:1). For Bacon these five *Books* emphasize the Law and he asserts that the fivefold structure is parallel to the five books of the *Torah* (*Genesis* to *Deuteronomy*). Donald A. Carson (1984) accepted Bacon's structure, but regarded the evidence for the *Torah* parallel as questionable. David Pawson (2017: 495-496) also accepted five blocks of Christ's teaching (chs 5-7, 10, 13, 18 and 24-25), but followed by just 4 blocks of His deeds (chs 8-9, 11-12, 14-17 and 19-23). He accepted a parallel with the five books of Moses. For further discussion see Gandi, 2017.

L.7 Kingsbury proposed a three-fold structure where the phrase "From that time" (4:17; 16:21) begins a new emphasis. He criticizes Bacon's structure as wrongly emphasizing the Law and instead notes that each section of his (Kingsbury's) structure ends with a question, or confession, regarding Jesus's nature as God's son (4:3, 6; 16:16; 27:54). He regards the title 'Son of God' as the dominant theme in *Matthew* but as a statement of divinity. However, Carson points out that the phrase "From that time" is more common than the two occurrences Kingsbury notes and so the significance attributed by Kingsbury is debatable. Carson also doesn't consider the Son of God theme as primary in *Matthew*. While promoting a five-fold structure, Pawson (2017: 495) accepted Kingsbury's emphasis on 'From that time':

The first appearance of the phrase captures the sense of his ministry in the north, and the second the inevitability of his death in the south.

L.8 In contrast to the work of all the above scholars, it is Adam Pohlman (Pohlman, 2016) who shows that the literary structure of *Matthew* does indeed reflect that Jesus is the Son of God who made it possible for ordinary humans to achieve eternal sonship in the family of God, as Jesus's begotten sons / adopted brothers. His paper is truly ground-breaking. He begins by critically surveying the usage of the phrase "son of God" in the Bible. In the first place, he notes that the phrase "son of God" is nearly absent from the Old Testament and is certainly not a common expression for the Messiah. The more common expression, "son of man", usually refers to an ordinary human, until the prophet Daniel uses the phrase to describe a coming one, who would be more than a human, though in human form (*Daniel* 7:13-14). It is this phrase, "son of man", that Jesus takes up to refer to himself,⁹⁴

L.9 Whilst the phrase "son of God" can be used to refer to Jesus's divinity⁹⁵, the phrase is often used of ordinary humans, for example, of Adam (*Luke* 3:38), Israel (*Exodus* 4:22, cf. *Hosea* 11:1), David (*Psalms* 2:7), Solomon (*2 Samuel* 7:12-14), peacemakers (*Matthew* 5: 9) and Christian believers (*Romans* 8:14-15). But there are clues in the Old Testament pointing to much more. God promises David that one day one of his sons will be a son of God whom God will punish for iniquity (*2 Samuel* 7:14), yet he will rule from David's throne forever (*ibid* 7:16). *Psalms* 2 expands on this eternal king as God's son (*Psalms* 2:7) and *Isaiah* adds more showing that this servant king will please his heavenly Father (*Isaiah* 42:1-7⁹⁶

Thus both phrases – "son of man" and "son of God" are commonly used of ordinary humans, but point forward to one particular human who will also be divine.

L.10 But before Christians could dispassionately reflect on this Old Testament material, early church history introduced a distraction. Battles raged over the nature of Christ – was Jesus simply a super human (Arians), only an illusion of a human (Docetists), or, truly and fully, both human and divine (Trinitarians)? Bible verses could be, and were used to support all positions. Because the issue was so sensitive, once Trinitarian orthodoxy was established (and enshrined in the Nicene Creed in AD 325), Christian scholars were pre-disposed to interpret statements that Jesus was God's son as solely affirming his divinity. But laying aside that confusing history, our question must be: "Given the Old Testament background that we have surveyed, what would *Mathew* have intended us to understand about Jesus as God's son?"

L.11 Pohlman contends that *Matthew's* own heading (1:1) establishes that he will portray Jesus as the seed of the woman (*Genesis* 3:15)⁹⁷, Abraham's offspring

⁹⁴ In *Matthew* at 8:20, 9:6, 10:23, 11:19, 12:8,32,40, 13:37,41, 16:13,27,28, 17:9,12,22, 18:11, 19:28, 20:18,28, 24:27,30,30,37,39,44,25:13,31, 26:2,24,24,45,64.

⁹⁵ For example in *Matthew* at 4:3,6, 8:29, 14:33,, 16:16, 27:54 (and see also 3:17, 11:27,27, 17:5, 26:63, 27:40,43, 28:19).

⁹⁶ *Isaiah* 42:1-7 is cited or alluded to in *Matthew* 3:16-17, 12:18-21, *Luke* 2:32, 4:19, 9:35, *John* 3:34, *Acts* 13:47, 17:25, *2 Timothy* 2:26, *Hebrews* 2:14-15, *1 Peter* 2:4,6.

⁹⁷ Pohlman (2016:5) notes that the phrase "book of the genealogy" is only found elsewhere in *Genesis* 2:4 (Greek Septuagint text, LXX) and *Genesis* 5:1 (LXX and Hebrew Masoretic text, MT). This, presumably, is his basis for the reference to Adam and *Genesis* 3:15.

(*Genesis* 12:7)⁹⁸ and David's royal son [whose kingdom will endure forever] (*2 Samuel* 7:12-16)⁹⁹. Yet none of these titles are prominent in *Matthew*. Rather it is the "phrase "Son of God" [that] highlights key points in the Gospel"¹⁰⁰, not to emphasize a divine Christology, but, argues Pohlman, to clarify what sons of David, sons of Abraham, and sons of Adam were created to be and what kind of relationship true humanity was meant to have with God (Pohlman 2016:5-6)

L.12 Pohlman endorses Benjamin Bacon's five-fold structure of *Matthew*, but argues that Bacon's five books parallel not the Torah, but the story of Israel in the Law, Prophets and Writings. In this way Jesus is shown to represent true Israel, true humanity. Interestingly, the phrase "Son of God" only appears in the narrative portions of *Matthew* (for these see Section **L.6**). Each of these narratives gives a glimpse into the image-bearing life of the Son of God as the truly faithful man. The discourse sections then explain in parallel to the Law, Prophets and Writings the counterintuitive nature of the Messiah's coming kingdom. In the following sections of his paper (Pohlman 2016: 7-13) Pohlman briefly discusses these "Son of God" narrative sections and the corresponding discourses.

L.13 Pohlman's arguments certainly support his conclusion, but are hardly conclusive. However, I can add two further lines of evidence which were unrecognised by Pohlman. Firstly, misled by the consensus of modern translations, Pohlman was unaware of the true meaning of *Matthew* 1:1, which, of course, strongly corroborates his interpretation of *Matthew's* Gospel (see Section **L.4** and Jones 2020, sections **E.6-E.7**).

Secondly, besides the use of the titles, 'son of man' and 'son of God', there is a third title – namely, reference to God as 'Father', the usage of which is highly illuminating. (For details see Jones 2020, section **E.8**) The great majority of references (84%) are to God, as the Father of Jesus (157 of 186). Of the references to God, as also the Father of the disciples, 76% (22 of 29) are in *Matthew's* Gospel, more than three times as many as in all of the other Gospels.

Taken together, these arguments provide overwhelming evidence for Pohlman's contention that, in his Gospel, *Matthew* is presenting Jesus as not only Divine, but as the true human person – the Spirit-empowered Son of God – that Adam, Abraham, David and Israel had failed to be. Through His life and ministry, death, resurrection and ascension, Jesus made it possible for us to enter eternal life in the family of God, as Jesus's begotten children and adopted brothers and sisters (see also Gandhi 2017).

L.14 As regards specific matters, *Matthew* is the only Gospel writer who records Christ's Great Commission to go and disciple all nations (*Matthew* 28:18-20). He is also the only one to refer to the church (*Matthew* 16:18; 18:17; cf *Ephesians* 2:20 and *1 Corinthians* 6:1-6 – see, especially Pawson 2017:499-500).

⁹⁸ through Abraham all nations of the earth will be blessed (*Genesis* 12:3, 22:17-18)

⁹⁹ *Isaiah* 11:1-5, *Jeremiah* 23:5, 30:9, *Ezekiel* 34:22-24.

¹⁰⁰ 4:3,6; 8:29; 14:33; 16:16; 26:63; 27:40,43,54

When Jesus was asked why, in contrast to John's disciples, His disciples did not fast, he replied by referring to himself as a **bridegroom** and to his disciples as the **wedding** guests (*Matthew* 9:15,15) – “How can the guests of the **bridegroom** mourn [fast] while he is with them?” This is also recorded in *Mark* (2:19-20) and *Luke* (5:34-35). *Matthew* records Jesus' teaching that, at the Resurrection, there will be no marriage (*Matthew* 22:23-32), that human, earthly marriage – one man and one woman, uniting in a one-flesh covenant union – was established by God “so that the world would have a category for understanding the relationship between Christ and the church.” (Hamilton 2010: 268). This major teaching is also found in *Mark* (12:18-27) and *Luke* (20:27-40). But it is only *Matthew* who records a parable about a King's wedding banquet for his son (*Matthew* 22:1-14) and only *Matthew* records the parable of the ten virgins waiting to meet the **bridegroom** and join him in the wedding banquet (*Matthew* 25:1-13). Reading backwards from *Revelation* 19:7-19, 21:9ff and 22:17, the reader can hardly miss the connection!

L.15 Adam

In *Genesis* 5:1-2 we have a description of the begetting. In reality they are two of the saddest verses in the Bible. There could have been a wonderful record of the character of a son of God (*Luke* 3:38), but instead the verses simply repeat the words spoken at creation (*Genesis* 1:26-28). God graciously leaves it at that.

The following history tells us that Adam begot 'in his (own) likeness, as his (own) image' (*Genesis* 5:3), *i.e.*, whatever their individual names, Adam's descendants were simply more 'Adams' and each generation was a propagation and expansion of fallenness and sin until Christ came as the last Adam (*1 Corinthians* 15:45) and brought the line to an end.

A final, but important point to note here is one which is frequently overlooked by commentators – *Genesis* 5:2 tells us that God “created them male and female and blessed them and called **their** name 'Adam' in the day (= 'when') they were created.” Here we are told something that is not mentioned in either *Genesis* 1 or 2 – that God, their heavenly Father, named his newly begotten children. He called them both, singularly and together, 'Adam'.¹⁰¹ For Eve, created out of Adam, prefigures the Church – the virgin bride – begotten of Christ.

L.16 Christ

The general structure of a 'begetting/begotten' section (see Section **C.5**, Figure 4) is developed through the New Testament in a remarkable way by its Divine Author (Figure 18).

Romans is the one best book to read as a commentary on Genesis!

¹⁰¹ Not 'Adam' and 'Eve' – 'Eve' was the name given by Adam after the Fall into sin when their pure relationship had been marred by the presence of evil.

Matthew 1:2-17 is the first part of 'Background'. The verses are a parenthesis ¹⁰² that provide two vital pieces of information concerning the ancestry of Christ.

First, we are shown that, through Joseph, Christ inherited the promises made to David ¹⁰³ and to Abraham.¹⁰⁴ He is the King, and the heir of the world (*Romans* 4:13), through whom all peoples will be blessed.¹⁰⁵

Second, we learn that Christ was not fathered by Joseph, but was the seed of the woman ¹⁰⁶ begotten ¹⁰⁷ of the Holy Spirit (*Matthew* 1:20).

Figure 18 Literary Structure of the New Testament

Title:	<i>Matthew</i> 1:1
Background of the begetter	
– ancestry:	<i>Matthew</i> 1:2-17
– life and character:	<i>Matthew</i> 1:18 – <i>John</i> 21:25
History:	<i>Acts</i>
Commentary:	<i>Romans</i> – <i>Revelation</i>

Thus, as with Adam (section **J** above), Christ was doubly begotten. Adam was wholly of the Earth, but heir to heavenly promises; so Christ was wholly of heaven, but inherited the Earthly promises passed down from Abraham and David (*Romans* 1:2-4).

L.17 In a remarkable reflection of the OT prologue (see Section **G.4**, Figure 11), this opening passage of the NT is also enclosed in a chiasmus (**Figure 19**).

Similarly, another chiasmus links the prologue to *Matthew* 1:18ff. (**Figure 20**).

¹⁰² As in *Genesis* 25:19 ('Abraham begot Isaac').

¹⁰³ *2 Samuel* 7:12-16; *Psalms* 89:29,36-37; 132:11; *Isaiah* 9:6-7; *Luke* 1:32; *Acts* 13:23.

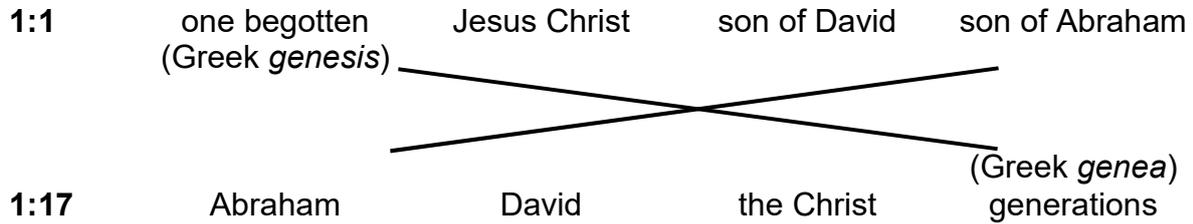
¹⁰⁴ *Genesis* 12:7; 13:15; 17:7; 22:18; *Galatians* 3:16.

¹⁰⁵ *Genesis* 12:3; 18:18; 22:18; 26:4; 28:14; *Psalms* 72:17; *Isaiah* 19:24-25; *Jeremiah* 4:2; *Acts* 3:25; *Galatians* 3:8-9.

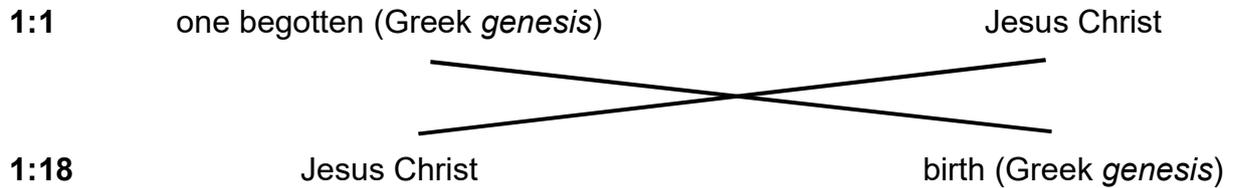
¹⁰⁶ *Matthew* 1:16; cf. *Genesis* 3:15; *Isaiah* 7:14; *Micah* 5:3; *Galatians* 4:4.

¹⁰⁷ Gk *gennao* 'to beget' as in 1-16; cf. in *John* 1:13; 3:3,5-8; *1 John* 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18. Two cognates also occur in *Matthew* 1. The key word *genesis* (v 1) recurs in verse 18 (see 7.3) and *genea* (generation) is found in verse 17.

**Figure 19 Literary Structure of the Mathew's Prologue
(*Matthew 1;1 – 1:17*)**



**Figure 20 Literary Structure Linking Mathew's Prologue to
*Matthew 1:18ff.***



This latter structure emphasises that the birth of Jesus was the beginning of one integral event that embraces His life, death and resurrection.

L.18 The second part of the **Background**, describing Jesus' life and character, begins at *Matthew 1:18*. God has so much to say about His Son that it extends through one third of the New Testament – the 89 chapters of the four Gospels. John has to finish by confessing that, 'Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.' (*John 21:25*). Where Adam failed, Jesus triumphed, and the God of heaven was revealed in flesh on Earth.¹⁰⁸

L.19 The **History** (Jesus' begetting) is recorded in the book of *Acts*. Through His own death and resurrection, Jesus came forth in second birth, begotten of His Father.¹⁰⁹ God the Father created humans that they might become the bride of God the Son, Jesus Christ – the bride begotten by Jesus, conformed to his image, empowered by God the Holy Spirit, sharing God's very nature.¹¹⁰

He is the 'firstborn from the dead',¹¹¹ the 'firstborn among many brethren' (*Romans*

¹⁰⁸ *John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16; 1 John 1:1-3.*

¹⁰⁹ *Acts 13:33; Hebrews 1:5; 5:5.*

¹¹⁰ See Jones 2019B

¹¹¹ *Colossians 1:18; Revelation 1:5; cf. John 19:34-35; 1 John 5:6; Acts 2:24 'the birth-pangs of death'; Romans 1:4; 1 Corinthians 15:45.*

8:29). In that birth, we, with Him, are begotten by God.¹¹² By first birth we are earthly, but by second birth we, too, are of heaven (*1 Corinthians* 15:48). In Christ we inherit all God's promises and purposes.¹¹³ We are already receiving that inheritance (see *Hebrews* 12-13). 'even as He is, so are we in this world' (*1 John* 4:17).

L.20 We can now understand why the great Christian scholar of the Trinity – Fred R. Sanders¹¹⁴ – insists that “the gospel is Trinitarian, and the Trinity is the gospel. Christian salvation comes from the Trinity, happens through the Trinity, and brings us home to the Trinity.” Consequently, a truly Christian worldview must be focused on the Triune God and that Triune God's Triune purpose (see Jones, 2020)

M Conclusion: The Literary Structure of the Bible

M.1 The structure of the whole Bible is now plain (**Figure 21**)

Figure 21 Literary Structure of the Bible

- A** Creation of the Heavens and the Earth
(*Genesis* 1-4)
- B** Book of the ones begotten of Adam, the Earthly Man
(*Genesis* 5 – *Malachi*)
- B*** Book of the one begotten of Jesus Christ, the Heavenly Man
(*Matthew* – *Revelation* 20)
- A*** Creation of the New Heavens and the New Earth
(*Revelation* 21-22)

M.2 The Bible is an amazing book. But it is not a book of religion. Of those the world has plenty. It is the book of God's story. It show us how to interpret everything in terms of His story. It sets the human story in the context of cosmic history. It has its centre and turning point, the life, death and resurrection of Jesus Christ. It looks forward to God's pre-determined end when all that has happened will be gathered up and fulfilled.

M.3 We have seen that the Bible story embraces everything that God has created. The world of nature and of human history and culture is not an incidental backcloth to a drama of the spiritual salvation of individual human souls. The world in its rich diversity is an integral part of the story. How relevant it all is! There are those today

¹¹² *John* 1:13; *James* 1:18; *1 Peter* 1:3,23; *1 John* 2:29; 3:9; 4:7; 5:1,4,18.

¹¹³ *Genesis* 1:26,28; *Matthew* 5:3,5,10; 19:14 [*Luke* 18:16]; 25:34; *Luke* 12:32; *Romans* 4:13; **8:32**; **1 Corinthians** 3:21-23; 6:1-3; 15:20; *Galatians* 5:21; **Ephesians** 1:22-23; 5:5; *Colossians* 1:12; **2:9-10**; *Hebrews* 12:28; *James* 2:5; *1 Peter* 2:9; *Revelation* 1:6; 21:7; 22:3.

¹¹⁴ See Sanders, 2010, 2016, 2017, 2019. The quotation comes from Sanders 2017:15.

who preach that it is our Christian duty to spend our lives 'saving souls', bringing individual sinners to Christ that they might be converted. Others emphasise the bringing of the world – the whole life of society – under the just rule of Christ. Truly it is an absurd choice! Since faith is foundational to everything, it is obvious that societies cannot be brought under the lordship of Christ unless individual people are converted Christians. Equally clearly there is no true conversion if the public realm is omitted from our obedience to Christ.¹¹⁵ The gospel is the truth about reality, both human and cosmic. It is the truth with which every human being and every human society will have to reckon. Christ is the Truth to whom all will give account.

M.4 Finally, this story is the true story of the ages. Its account of the beginning is an integral and unexceptional part of it. There is no room for any dismissal of *Genesis* 1-3 (or 1-11) as somehow non-historical, or for arbitrary interpretations of *Genesis* that bring it into conformity with secular science – science which includes only what can be interpreted in the terms of a materialist (naturalist) worldview. *Genesis* cannot be responsibly interpreted without the conclusion being reached that some of its statements do purport to be a true account of what the world is like and of how God brought it into being. Of course, *everyone* should reject secular materialism, because if materialism were true – and sadly it shapes most of the educational and media options available to most people – then it would undermine *every* liveable position, together with *all* of human rationality and science (see Jones 2019).

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¹¹⁵ See Goheen 2018. Goheen's book is about the ecclesiology of Lesslie Newbigin, but it is a terrific book on the theme of this paragraph. Lesslie Newbigin was truly a remarkable missionary bishop. It is always inadvisable to describe a book as a 'must-read' for Christian leaders, but several reviewers have written that of Goheen's book and I have to agree.

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