



Ronald V. Huggins

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.56315/PSCF12-24Huggins>

# Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)

Ronald V. Huggins

*In the literature of the ancient Near East, the number seven expresses the idea of fullness, completeness, consummation, and the carrying out of a matter to its fully sufficient or fitting length or extent. In connection with this idea, there arose an ancient Near Eastern sevenfold literary pattern that involved a building of dramatic tension over six units – often days – aided by repetitive language, a tension that is then resolved upon or immediately after the seventh unit. The use of this pattern is widely attested in Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Ugaritic texts. This article argues that it is also attested in a Hebrew text, namely the creation account of Genesis 1:1–2:3, this time framed in terms of six days of labor giving way to a seventh day of rest (cf. Exod. 20:8–11). This view is contrasted at certain points with the “temple-text” reading of Genesis 1:1–2:3, as represented especially in John H. Walton’s “cosmic temple inauguration” view.*

**Keywords:** Genesis 1, creation accounts, sevens in the Bible, sevens in the ancient Near East, ancient Near Eastern literary patterns, science and the Bible, creation and creationism, harmonizing Genesis 1 with current science, “framework hypothesis,” *Enuma Elish*, *Epic of Gilgamesh*, ancient Near Eastern temples, Baal’s palace, Temple of Ningirsu (the Eninnu), Gudea of Lagash, biblical temples, ancient Near Eastern views of the underworld.

“The number seven is, as I said, commonly used to express the whole, or the completeness of anything.”  
Augustine (*City of God* 11.31)

This article makes the case that the creation account of Genesis 1:1–2:3 is framed according to an ancient sevenfold dramatic literary pattern commonly used throughout the ancient Near East (ANE). What this means is that whatever else ancient readers might have thought when encountering the biblical account of the creation, they would have been well aware it was being presented in a form that, so far as they likely knew, had always been used by storytellers to unfold descriptions of things and events.

The unfolding occurred over a sequence of six units, during which dramatic tension builds, that then is relieved on, or immediately after, a seventh unit. This storytelling device was rooted, in turn, in the more basic ANE understanding that the number seven reflected the idea of fullness, completeness, consummation,

**Ronald V. Huggins** taught at Moody Bible Institute Northwest, Salt Lake Theological Seminary, and Midwestern Baptist Theological Seminary, where he was also managing editor of the *Midwestern Journal of Theology*. His writings appear in several academic journals. He and his wife are blessed with four children and ten grandchildren.

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

and/or carrying something out to its fully sufficient or fitting length or extent.

This connection between the seven days of the biblical creation story and this familiar ANE sevenfold literary pattern has been almost entirely overlooked, due to scholars casting the net of their search for ANE parallels to the Genesis creation story, primarily on other ancient creation stories, especially since the discovery and publication of the *Enuma Elish* in 1876.<sup>1</sup> Some scholars, failing to find other creation accounts that featured seven days, have cast their nets out a little further in the ANE literature and observed that sevens also sometimes figured into ANE accounts of the building of temples. This led to the explicit argument that the use of seven in Genesis 1:1–2:3 intentionally equates the creation of the cosmos with the building of a temple by, for example, Moshe Weinfeld (1981), Jon Levenson (1984), and Victor Hurowitz (1992).<sup>2</sup> John Walton's version of the thesis, articulated in his 2001 Genesis commentary in the popular NIV Application Commentary series, was subsequently endorsed by G.K. Beale (2004), Peter Enns (2012), and N.T. Wright (2013).<sup>3</sup> In the meantime, J. Richard Middleton (2005), following Levenson and others, adopted the cosmic temple view independent of Walton.<sup>4</sup> Then William Brown (2010), building on the views of Middleton, and S. Dean McBride (2000) developed the view further,<sup>5</sup> though again without reference to Walton. Walton himself followed with a full-blown popular defense of the cosmic temple view in his 2009 *The Lost World of Genesis One* as well as an academic defense in his 2011 *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*.<sup>6</sup>

The limited focus of these investigations seems to have caused not only the connection between the seven-day literary pattern and Genesis 1:1–2:3 but also the existence of the pattern itself to be overlooked. This, as we shall see, becomes most obvious in these scholars' treatments of the Ugaritic story of the emergence of Baal's Palace from fire in seven days. Nevertheless, insofar as the present article interacts with claims made in defense of Genesis 1:1–2:3 as temple text, it will focus primarily on the arguments set forth by Walton. However, it must be stressed that this article is not offered as a wholesale refutation of Walton or of the temple-text reading as such. It is interested in only those points where the evidence appealed to by the defenders of that view overlaps with what *it* appeals to in support of Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an example of an ANE sevenfold literary pattern: in other words, only those points in

which the evidence becomes, as it were, "disputed territory" at the boundaries of the two views. These consist primarily of two claims advanced by Walton and others, namely, (1) that the seven days in the passage point to an ANE temple-building project or inauguration,<sup>7</sup> and (2) that in the ANE "deity rests in a temple, and only in a temple."<sup>8</sup>

We encourage the reader to explore, for example, the question of whether the passage might represent *both* a temple text and an example of the ANE sevenfold literary pattern, or, more precisely, that the former is being expressed in the literary form of the latter. My own view, as expressed in parentheses in this article's title, is that such a double reading is implausible; the evidence will tend to support one or the other view rather than both. But, again, the primary focus is on defending and explicating Genesis 1 as an example of an ANE dramatic sevenfold pattern.

### Walton's Two Temples (Genesis 1–3)

Walton puts forward various arguments for his view but singles out "rest on the seventh day [Gen. 1:1–2:3] and the Garden of Eden [Gen. 2–3]," as the primary connecting points between the biblical creation story and the ANE idea of temple.<sup>9</sup> Walton, in other words, is proposing two temple texts instead of just one. Yet, viewing *both* the creation and Eden stories as temple texts unnaturally forces the two accounts into conflict with one another, in that the former would be presenting the *entire cosmos* as a temple, and the latter only the garden of Eden, a particular location *within the cosmos* as a temple. Our first parents then, would be expelled out of the one temple and *into* the other. If one wishes to make an argument for either of the stories representing a temple text, Eden would clearly fit the ANE pattern better, in which temples, although sometimes closely related to the creation of the cosmos, are nevertheless still seen as places *within* the cosmos rather than *as* the cosmos itself.

The idea of seeing the garden as a kind of temple, on the other hand, was already foreshadowed in modern times, for example, by Hermann Gunkel, when he described Eden in 1901 as *Gottes Wohnung*, "God's dwelling or house."<sup>10</sup> We also find the idea in ancient works, such as the intertestamental *Book of Jubilees* in which Eve is said to have been brought into Eden several weeks after Adam because women were "not to touch any sacred thing nor enter the sanctuary" until their time of purification was complete. Only after that was she brought "into the Garden of Eden

because it is the holiest in the entire earth, and every tree that is planted in it is holy."<sup>11</sup>

Less defensible is Walton's claim that the cosmos itself, in Genesis 1:1–2:3, is being depicted as a temple. It scarcely follows from the fact that a temple might have been considered a *microcosm* of the cosmos in the ANE, that the cosmos could also be seen as a *macrocosm* of a temple! Walton himself recognizes this when he admits that "despite the intrinsic relationship that existed between cosmos and temple in the ancient world, the concept never seems to have been extended so far as to consider the entire cosmos a temple."<sup>12</sup> He is also willing to grant that it is "uncertain that Genesis contains this picture."<sup>13</sup>

### Walton's First Temple (Genesis 1:1–2:3)

Walton's primary proof for a connection between Genesis 1:1–2:3 and an ANE temple, then, is "rest on the seventh day."<sup>14</sup> Thus his argument relies on two central pillars: (1) the seven days, and (2) God's rest. Concerning the first, Walton insists that "a reader from the ancient world would know immediately what was going on and recognize the role of day seven. Without hesitation the ancient reader would conclude that this [Gen. 1:1–2:3] is a temple text,"<sup>15</sup> and that "if Genesis 1 is a temple text, the seven days may be understood in relation to some aspect of temple inauguration."<sup>16</sup> Of his second pillar, Walton writes, "Deity rests in a temple, and only in a temple."<sup>17</sup> These two pillars, as we said, are the primary issues of disputed territory between temple-text reading and the one offered in this article.

To Walton's claim that the ANE gods rest only in temples, it is more accurate to say "yes, except when they do not!" Contra Walton, a conspicuous example stands right before us in Genesis 2:1–3, in which we find God taking his rest in a setting where, as Walton himself admits, "there is no *explicit* mention of a temple *per se*" (italics added).<sup>18</sup> The same is true of a passage Walton appeals to from the Egyptian "Memphite Theology" in which Ptah is said to rest after his acts of creation.<sup>19</sup> Again, contra Walton, there is no reference to a temple in that context either. In both cases, the term "rest" contrasts instead with the labor that preceded it. This is also true of the motivation behind the creation of humans in the *Enuma Elish*: "He [Marduk] imposed the work of the gods (on them [humans]) so that they [the gods] might rest."<sup>20</sup> Ironically, in their turn, humans rob the gods

of their rest by making noise.<sup>21</sup> The same issue arises in the *Atra-hasis Epic*; the conflict between the gods and humans that ultimately leads to the flood was initially sparked by noisy humanity disturbing the god Enlil's sleep.<sup>22</sup> In the *Enuma Elish*, trouble also began when noise made by the younger gods disturbed the rest of their parents Apsu and Tiamat.<sup>23</sup>

In addition to rest being hindered by noise, we also encounter an incident in the Baal Cycle in which the term rest is used to refer to relief from anxiety when the god El, hearing that Baal was alive, declares: "(Now) I can again get some rest, my innermost being can get some rest."<sup>24</sup> In another work, *Erra and Ishum*, Erra rests in his bed enjoying the company of his consort the goddess Mami.<sup>25</sup> This may have occurred in a temple, but it does not fit the larger pattern Walton describes of gods resting after establishing order. In one Sumerian story, the goddess Inana even rests in a garden plot under a tree, resulting in someone sexually molesting her.<sup>26</sup> In none of these cases do temples enter into it.

The same issue attends Walton's claim that "no other divine rest occurs in the Hebrew Bible than the rest that is associated with his presence in his temple."<sup>27</sup> There are indeed references to God resting in the temple, as is seen in a parallelism in Isaiah 66:1: "What is the house that you would build for me, and what is the place of my rest?"<sup>28</sup> However, in scripture, the rest of God is something larger than the temple. The familiar labor / rest contrast established in Genesis 2:2–3, "he rested from all his work ... from all the work of creating," is mirrored in the strict prohibition of labor on the Sabbath, the violation of which was punishable by death (e.g., Exod. 31:15; 35:2; Lev. 23:30). It is in this connection that Exodus 31:13 says: "Above all you shall keep *my* Sabbaths, for this is a sign between me and you." Notice that it is not simply the people's Sabbath (see, e.g., Lev. 23:42), or the Sabbath. Here and elsewhere God calls it "*my* Sabbath."<sup>29</sup> He did not merely institute it; he was the first to observe it, and then he invites (or rather commands) his people to observe it as well.

Another key passage dealing with divine rest that makes no reference to the temple is Psalm 95:11: "They shall not enter my rest." The rest in this verse is rest in the promised land as opposed to rest in the temple. The passage refers the reader back to the oath God swore concerning the generation that was not

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

permitted to enter the promised land (Num. 14:21–23, Deut. 2:14–15, and Josh. 5:6).

A final issue is the actual paucity of ANE evidence that Walton is able to muster in defense of his claim that the recognition that “deity rests in a temple, and only in a temple” provides the “interpretive key”<sup>30</sup> to the problem of understanding rest in Genesis 1:1–2:3. He provides only two extra-biblical ANE examples, neither of which involves a seven-day temple construction nor speaks of the temple’s god entering into rest at the time of its completion.<sup>31</sup>

### Sevens in the ANE

When one casts the net beyond creation accounts and temple texts to explore the use of sevens in the ANE texts more generally, the prominence and special use of the number becomes quickly obvious, as does the fact that their typical use is not *subject specific*, that is, not limited to particular settings, such as accounts of creation or of temple building, or to cultic and ritual texts as such. Rather, sevens appear functioning in more or less the same way everywhere, and, apart from their straightforward use for counting, sevens express the idea of completeness and full sufficiency. This can be seen, for example, when Jacob approaches his brother Esau and bows to the ground seven times (Gen. 33:3), an act that echoes the formulaic statements in the obsequious introductions of the governors of Syria-Palestine to the Pharaohs Amenophis III (1391–1353 BCE) and Amenophis IV (1353–1335 BCE): “At the feet of the king [lord, etc.] ... seven times, seven times I fall.”<sup>32</sup> Similar epistolary introductions were also used at Ugarit, as is seen, for example, in the letter of Talmiyānu to the Queen: “At the feet of my lady seven times and seven times (from) afar do I fall.”<sup>33</sup> These sevenfold actions/statements expressed the desire on the part of the ones making them to place themselves fully and entirely at the disposal of the persons they were approaching. We might say, using a current number-based idiom expressing a similar idea, that they *went the whole nine yards* in expressing their obsequia.

In the ANE, the fullness of trouble also comes in sevens. In the Gospels, there are seven demons cast out of Mary Magdalene (Mark 16:9; Luke 8:2) and the demon who, once expelled, returns with “seven other spirits more evil than itself” (Matt. 12:45). The vengeance threatened against any who might kill the wandering Cain is sevenfold (Gen. 4:15), a sevenfold discipline is promised the Israelites

(Lev. 26:18, 21, 24), and there is also the request for a sevenfold return of taunts to those who taunt the Lord (Ps. 79:12). Also fitting this theme of sevenfold trouble were two seven-year famines that were predicted: the first in Egypt by Joseph’s interpretation of Pharaoh’s dream (Gen. 41), and the second in Israel by Elisha (2 Kgs. 8:1). There is also the seven-year period during which Nebuchadnezzar II was driven out and given the mind of an ox after boasting of his own greatness (Dan. 4:28–33).

This same idea is shared with the literature of the ANE in general. As Wiggermann points out, “early demons ... usually operate in vaguely defined groups of seven.”<sup>34</sup> The seven Mesopotamian Utukki are featured in the expulsive spells and rituals of the series Utukki Limnūti (The Evil Spirits).<sup>35</sup> The Utukki are associated, individually or collectively, with evil and destructive winds.<sup>36</sup> The sevenfold groupings of personified trouble also go beyond contexts in which specific groups of known individuals are being referenced, as in the mention of the “machinations of the seven witches” in Abusch and Schwemer’s collection of anti-witchcraft rituals,<sup>37</sup> or the “seven evil and envious neighbors,” in the early Syriac incantation against the Evil Eye.<sup>38</sup> Sevens also figure quite prominently in rituals and incantations for warding off sickness and evil.<sup>39</sup>

The Jewish/Christian *Testament of Reuben* provides a sort of proto-edition of the traditional Seven Deadly Sins, when it speaks of “seven spirits of deceit ... appointed against man,” which serve as “leaders in the works of youth,” namely, (1) fornication (*porneia*), (2) insatiableness (*aplēstia*), (3) fighting (*machē*), (4) obsequiousness/chicanery (*areskeia/magganeia*), (5) pride (*hyperēphania*), (6) lying (*pseudos*), and (7) injustice (*adikia*) (T Reu 3:1–6).

Despite the number of these examples of the use of sevens in connection with fullness of trouble, one should not imagine that there is any unique connection between the number seven and trouble. I merely offer these as examples of the use of seven in a particular way because they parallel passages in the Bible that feature the same. When one provides only a narrow portion of the evidence, one can easily get a false impression of the whole. It may be worth noting, however, that there is a great deal more evidence for a connection between sevens and trouble than has so far been put forward for its connection with temple building and inauguration texts.

And so, we might go on with examples of the broader use of sevens to indicate fullness. Wisdom built her house on an abundantly sound foundation of seven pillars (Prov. 9:1). Naaman was healed of his leprosy after dipping himself in the Jordan seven times (2 Kgs. 5:14). Balaam ordered Balak King of Moab to sacrifice seven bulls and seven rams on seven altars three times (Num. 23:1–2, 14, 29–30), and God ordered Job’s three friends to offer the same numbers of the same animals but only once (Job 42:8). In the Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Anat sacrifices seventy buffalo, oxen, sheep, deer, mountain goats, and asses after burying Baal (*KTU* 1.6.1, ll.18–29). Uta-napishti, after the flood in the *Gilgamesh Epic*, sets up “seven flasks and seven,” underneath which he piled “reed, cedar and myrtle,” an offering that attracts the gods.<sup>40</sup>

### Seven Days in the ANE

Seven days are spoken of in scripture as an appropriate time for mourning the dead, as is seen in the seven-day period observed prior to the burial of Jacob (Gen. 50:10), the fast following the death of Saul and his sons (1 Sam. 31:13; 1 Chron. 10:12), and the mourning of Archelaus for his father Herod the Great, as reported by Josephus (*J.W.* 2.1.1). There is also the proverb “Mourning for the dead, seven days—but for the wicked fool, a whole lifetime” (Sir. 22:12). In the apocryphal *Life of Adam and Eve*, our first parents are said to have mourned seven days after being expelled from the Garden.<sup>41</sup> When Job’s three friends approach, weeping and crying out, rending their clothes, and sprinkling dust on their heads, they then sit “with him on the ground seven days and seven nights,” without speaking a word to him (Job 2:12–13). Each of their actions communicated to Job their comprehension of the seriousness of the misfortune that had befallen him. Their seven-day silence was as crucial a factor in communicating this as were their other actions.

We also read of the seven-day wedding celebrations of Samson (Judg. 14:8–20) and of Tobiah (Tob. 11:18). Then there is the seven-day feast that the Persian King Ahasuerus gave at the conclusion of a more extensive one (Esther 1:5). Thus, seven days were deemed the fully appropriate length both for feasting and mourning, and not just for festivals associated with temples.

Mark Smith, who inclines toward endorsing the idea that the Genesis creation account with its seven days is a temple text, nevertheless cautions that “it might

be questioned whether the motif of the seven-day period is too common.”<sup>42</sup> This is precisely what is being argued here. It is not at all surprising to find sevenfold celebrations occurring in ANE religious contexts of all types. We may think, for example, of the seven-day ritual from Larsa published by Edwin Kingsbury, with each day featuring a different god,<sup>43</sup> the seven-day *zukru* ritual from Emar in Syria, which was a new-year ritual held every seven years in which the gods are taken outside the city to a shrine of standing stones, anointed and brought back in procession,<sup>44</sup> the *Bît rimki* (house of ablutions) cycle, which was a cleansing ritual in which seven “houses” were built through which a person passed in the course of being purified and protected from malevolent powers,<sup>45</sup> and a “seven day offering cycle in some late Babylonian texts,” featuring sacrifices held on the 7th, 14th, 21st, and 28th days of the month.<sup>46</sup> There is also the *Akîtu* Festival, a twelve-day event that involved seven gods,<sup>47</sup> on the fourth day of which the *Enuma Elish* was read,<sup>48</sup> although, in this case, it is unclear how this might be connected with a sevenfold motif.

Walton appeals to most of the above texts in making his argument for his “cosmic temple inauguration” view,<sup>49</sup> and he wants to count them all as evidence for the special significance of sevens in temple inauguration texts. But what those texts actually show is that the use of sevens appears in a variety of festal and cultic contexts, and not just in temple inauguration texts nor, for that matter, in temple texts as such. This being the case, their collective witness to ANE practices actually works against Walton’s thesis, not for it. So, for example, we should understand the *Bît rimki* cycle, which Walton wants to count as a temple text, as more properly categorized with the previously mentioned exorcism rituals connected with the idea that the fullness of trouble comes in sevens.

Walton claims that “without hesitation the ancient reader would conclude that this [Gen. 1:1–2:3] is a temple text.”<sup>50</sup> But in order for that to be the case, sevens would need to be used consistently enough and exclusively enough in connection with temple texts that when ancient readers saw the seven days of the creation account, they would say to themselves, “Aha! the author has framed the creation account around the number seven, therefore he/she must be alluding to temples!” But that really is not the case.

Certainly, ancient readers would have recognized the significance of seven, but there is no reason to

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

suppose that they would have regarded it, in any sense, as exclusively attached to temple texts in particular. The mere mention of seven in Genesis 1:1–2:3 would not have been remarkable enough to cause the ancient Israelite to immediately think of the temple. It is far more likely that it would have called to mind the Sabbath. Sacred time itself was marked off in sevens: the seventh day for creatures to rest (Exod. 20:8–11), the seventh year for the land to rest (Exod. 23:11; Lev. 25:20) and for the freeing of Hebrew slaves (Exod. 21:2; Deut. 15:12), and the year of Jubilee, which began in the seventh month of the seventh year of the seventh week of years (Lev. 25:8–10). The three major feasts in which every male Israelite was required to appear before the Lord (Exod. 23:17) each featured significant sevens: Unleavened Bread and Tabernacles were both seven-day feasts (Exod. 12; Lev. 23); and the Feast of Weeks gets its name from the seven weeks that separate it from the time the sickle was first put to the standing grain (Deut. 16:9).<sup>51</sup>

To be sure, sevens figure into *some* temple texts, but not in the uniform way one might expect from reading Walton. There is the seven-day ordination of Aaron, his sons, and their priestly successors (Exod. 8:33–35; 29:30), and the seven-day consecration of the altar in Ezekiel's temple vision (Ezek. 43:26). Josephus (first century) reports that the tabernacle along with its furnishings took seven months to build (*Ant.* 3.8.4 [III. 201]). In the account of Solomon's temple, the Old Testament text Walton features in his argument, the temple took seven years to build (1 Kgs. 6:38) with its dedication taking place in the seventh month (1 Kgs. 8:2), which involved a seven-day altar dedication followed by a seven-day feast that concluded with a solemn assembly on an eighth day (2 Chron. 7:8–9, cf. 1 Kgs. 8:65–66).<sup>52</sup>

### Gudea's Eninnu

The primary extra-biblical ANE text Walton puts forth as a parallel to Solomon's temple is the Sumerian account of the building of the temple of Ningirsu (the Eninnu) by Gudea of Lagash (c. 2125 BCE), which concluded with a single seven-day feast.<sup>53</sup> Given the prominence of sevens in various feasts and rituals, it is not surprising to find two examples of temple texts that end with a seven-day feast. One might even have expected more.<sup>54</sup> And, as is also predictable given the ubiquity of sevens in all sorts of texts in all sorts of connections, the Solomon

and Gudea accounts both involve *other* significant sevens unique to themselves.

Hurowitz writes of the seven years it took to build Solomon's temple:

To the best of my knowledge, there are no attempts in Mesopotamian building stories to cast an entire building project into a seven-year, seven-month or seven-day mold, although certain individual events, such as the dedication of the Eninnu by Gudea, lasted seven days.<sup>55</sup>

For its part, the Gudea text includes sevens that are quite different from the Solomon account, such as the seven stones set up around the temple in seven days (Cyl. A. xxiii 4, cf. xxix 1) that are "there to take counsel with its owner" (Cyl. A. xxix 2), a seven-headed mace (Cyl. B. vii 12, xiii 21), and a seven-headed serpent (Cyl. A. xxv 28).

The seven-headed serpent takes us in a different direction by reminding us of other ANE seven-headed monsters,<sup>56</sup> including the seven-headed serpent Ninurta defeats in the Sumerian *Ninurta's Return to Nibru* (ll. 40 & 63) and *The Exploits of Ninurta* (l. 133).<sup>57</sup> There is as well Lotan (Shalyat [šlyt] of the seven heads) in the Baal Epic from Ugarit (KTU 1.5.i.1–8, cf. 1.3.iii.38–46).<sup>58</sup> We also find ANE pictorial depictions of seven-headed monsters battling gods.<sup>59</sup> Thus the seven-headed serpent in the Gudea text is of less interest to Genesis 1:1–2:3 than it is to Psalm 74:13–14: "You [the Lord] divided the sea by your might; you broke the heads of the sea monsters on the waters. You crushed the heads of Leviathan."<sup>60</sup> In this case, the number seven is not used, but Leviathan is said to have heads" (plural). There is also the seven-headed dragon of the Apocalypse (12:3) and the seven-headed demon who appeared to R. Aha bar Ya'akov in *b. Kiddushin* 29b.<sup>61</sup>

### Baal's Palace

The other extra-biblical ANE example Walton offers in support of his "cosmic temple inauguration" argument is the Baal Cycle's story of the seven-day fiery formation of Baal's palace. The Baal Cycle is a fourteenth-century BCE Western Semitic text from ancient Ugarit, a Canaanite city in northwest Syria. Unlike the Solomon and Gudea texts, this passage is not an account of the building of a temple followed by one or more seven-day inauguration feasts. It is a mythical tale of Baal's (Ba'lu's) palace being formed in flames over six days, and furnished on the sev-

enth. As Solomon's temple was completed in seven years, Baal's mythical house took only seven days:<sup>62</sup>

[Hurriedly] they build his house ...  
 Fire is placed in the house,  
 flames in the palace,  
 For a day, two (days),  
 the fire consumes (fuel) in the house,  
 the flames (consumed fuel) in the palace;  
 For a third, a fourth day,  
 the fire consumes (fuel) in the house,  
 the flames (consumed fuel) in the palace;  
 For a fifth, a sixth day,  
 the fire consumes (fuel) in the house,  
 the flames (consumed fuel) in the palace;  
 Then on the seventh day,  
 the fire is removed from the house,  
 the flames from the palace.  
 (Voila!) the silver had turned into plaques,  
 the gold is turned into bricks.  
 (This) brings joy to Mighty Ba'lu:  
 You have built my house of silver,  
 my palace of gold.  
 (Then) Ba'lu completes the furnishing of [his] house,  
 Haddu completes the furnishing of his palace.

Walton comments here that "seven days is an appropriate period of time for temple building."<sup>63</sup> Indeed, seven days is an appropriate period for many things, but, if Hurowitz is correct, this is the *only* ANE example of anything resembling a temple being built in seven days.<sup>64</sup> What we are actually looking at here is the story of the origin of Baal's temple being told, using a form of the very common ANE seven-fold literary pattern of which, as we shall argue, Genesis 1:1-2:3 is also an example—although a more expansive one. This widely used literary pattern has received scant attention, but was already noticed and briefly discussed more than a half century ago by Umberto Cassuto:

[E]xamples ... from Akkadian and Ugaritic literature ... prove that a series of *seven consecutive days* was considered a *perfect period* [unit of time] in which to develop an important work, the action lasting six days and reaching its conclusion and outcome on the seventh day.<sup>65</sup>

There is, however, more to the sevenfold literary pattern than Cassuto implies. Its use was more general in application: from the literary point of view, it involved a building of dramatic tension over six days, aided by repetitive phrases, that is resolved, sometimes quite dramatically, on or immediately

after the seventh. There is often not only a conclusion of action but also a reversal or marked shift of the narrative in a new direction. In the Baal text, the first six days are doubled and, except for the numbering of days, the language for the three pairs of days is identical. Several other examples of this same pattern can be found in texts having nothing to do with temples or temple inaugurations. The well-known eleventh tablet of the *Gilgamesh Epic*, which contains the famous flood narrative, uses it to describe the running aground of the flood hero Uta-napishti's boat on Mount Nimush:<sup>66</sup>

142 On the mountain of Nimush the boat ran  
 aground,  
 143 Mount Nimush held the boat fast,  
 allowed it no motion.  
 144 One day and a second,  
 Mount Nimush held the boat fast,  
 allowed it no motion,  
 145 a third day and a fourth,  
 Mount Nimush held the boat fast,  
 allowed it no motion,  
 146 a fifth day and a sixth,  
 Mount Nimush held the boat fast,  
 allowed it no motion.  
 147 The seventh day when it came,  
 148 I brought out a dove, I let it loose ...

As in the Baal Cycle, the first six days are doubled and, apart from the succession of numbers, the language is identical for each two-day unit. When the seventh day comes, there is a shift in the narrative *away from* the single event featured in the first six, namely, the running to ground of Uta-napishti's boat, *to* his sending out the dove.

The same pattern is used in the Babylonian version of *Nergal and Ereshkigal* to describe the passionate coupling of those two Mesopotamian deities:<sup>67</sup>

The two embraced each other  
 And went passionately to bed.  
 They lay there, queen Ereshkigal and Erra, for a  
 first day and a second day,  
 They lay there, queen Ereshkigal and Erra, for a  
 third day and a fourth day,  
 They lay there, queen Ereshkigal and Erra, for a  
 fifth day and a sixth day,  
 When the seventh day arrived,  
 Nergal, without [...]  
 Took away after him. [...].

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

Two more examples are found in the Ugaritic story of Aqht (table 1).<sup>68</sup>

This same pattern is sometimes abbreviated even further, as in this passage from the Ugaritic *Kirta Epic*:<sup>69</sup>

Then for a day, a second,  
 a third day, a fourth day,  
 a fifth day, a sixth day,  
 <They did not shoot their arrows at the city,  
 Their sling-stones at the towers.>  
 Then at sundown on the seventh (day)  
 Pabil the king (of that city could) not sleep ...

In addition to the examples already given, the Ugaritic story of Aqht uses a very abbreviated sevenfold literary pattern to describe the seven years of mourning after the murder of Dānī'ilu's son, Aqht:<sup>70</sup>

The wailing women entered <his house >,  
 the mourning women his palace, ...  
 For days, for months,  
 for months, for years,  
 even for seven years  
 Did they (all) weep for valiant 'Aqhatu ...  
 [Then] after seven years  
 [Dānī'ilu man of] Rapa'u spoke up,  
 The valiant [Hamamite] man responded.

He cried aloud:

Leave [my house], wailing women, my palace,  
 mourning women ...

The story of the emergence of Baal's temple from fire is framed using the *very same* literary pattern as the running aground of Uta-napishti's boat on Mount Nimush, Dānī'ilu's plea for a son, the lingering of the Kōtarātu in Dānī'ilu's house, and the delay of the attack on a city. This suggests that the reason we find the seven in the Baal story is that it is employing the same sevenfold literary pattern as these other texts, and not, as Walton argues, because of its being a temple text. This is particularly significant because the Baal text is one of the two key extra-biblical temple texts regularly appealed to in support of Walton's view.

Yet, so far as I am aware, none of the authors who appeal to it make mention of the use of the widely attested ANE sevenfold literary pattern in framing it. This lack of clarity leads to a bias in the lens through which the passage is viewed. Brown, for example, hints that Baal's palace, "not coincidentally, takes seven days to complete (cf. Gen. 1:1–2:3)."<sup>71</sup> While we agree that the appearance of the seven days in both

<i>Aqht 1 i 3–17 (CTA 17)</i>	<i>Aqht 2 ii 30–40 (CTA 17)</i>
<p>[Thereupon, as for Dānī'ilu the man of Rapa'u] ...            Girded, he gave the gods food,            [girded, he gave] the Holy Ones [drink].            He cast down [his cloak, went up], and lay down,            cast down [his girded garment] so as to pass the            night (there).            A day [even two,            girded,] Dānī'ilu (gave) the gods (food).            [girded,] he gave [the gods] food,            girded, [he gave] the Holy Ones [drink].            A third, even a fourth day,            [girded] Dānī'ilu (gave) the gods (food),            girded he gave [the gods] food            girded he gave the [Holy] Ones drink.            A fifth, even a sixth day,            girded, Dānī'ilu (gave) [the gods] (food),            girded, he gave the gods food,            [girded,] he gave the Holy Ones drink.            Dānī'ilu cast down his cloak, went up, and lay            down            [cast down] his girded garment so as to pass the            night (there).            Then on the seventh day,            Bal'u approached, having had mercy on            The lamenting of Dānī'ilu the man of Rapa'u.</p>	<p>A bull he slaughtered for the Kōtarātu,            he fed the Kōtarātu,            provided the daughters of brightness, the pure            ones, with drink.             A day, even two,            he fed the Kōtarātu,            provided the daughters of brightness, the pure            ones, with drink.            A third, even a fourth day,            he fed the Kōtarātu,            provided the daughters of brightness, the pure            ones, with drink.            A fifth, even a sixth day,            he fed the Kōtarātu,            provided the daughters of brightness, the pure            ones, with drink.             Then, on the seventh day,            the Kōtarātu left the house,            (as did) the daughters of brightness, the pure ones.</p>

**Table 1.** The left column tells of an appeal by a figure named Dānī'ilu for the boon of a son; the right column, of his entertaining the Kōtarātu goddesses.

the Baal passage and the biblical creation story is not coincidental, we do so for a very different reason. The meaning of the passage becomes more blurred, when Middleton speaks of “references to temple dedication ceremonies that took seven days, including Baal’s temple in the Ugaritic myth.”<sup>72</sup> But the seven days of the Baal passage had to do with the *building* of Baal’s palace, not its *dedication ceremonies* afterward. Middleton had stated the matter more accurately in an earlier work.<sup>73</sup>

Another consequence of not recognizing the Baal passage’s use of the ANE sevenfold literary pattern is the employment of overly ingenious explanations to account for its meaning. The best example I know is provided by Levenson:

The extinction of the flames on the seventh day of casting Baal’s temple is strangely reminiscent of the biblical prohibitions against kindling a fire, baking, or boiling on the Sabbath. It is possible, but far from demonstrable, that this Ugaritic passage witnesses to a Sabbath of sorts among the Canaanite antecedents of Israel.<sup>74</sup>

Once one becomes aware of the Baal passage’s formation using the very same sevenfold literary pattern as the running aground of Uta-napishti’s boat on Mount Nimush, Dānī’ilu’s plea for a son, and other similarly structured passages, then the suggested meaning Levenson offers seems strangely beside the point.

### Seven Days but No Rest in the Gudea and Baal Texts

Earlier we noted how the two sources Walton featured as examples of deity *resting* in temples did not involve significant *sevens*. So now we also see that, in the extra-biblical ANE examples he features as examples of *sevens* in temple texts, the deities—Ninġirsu on the one hand and Baal on the other—are not said to enter *rest!* In the Baal Cycle, there is simply no mention of it. In the Gudea text, a nonspecific resting *place* is mentioned as one of the items in the temple (Cyl. B. xiv 19–25). But when Ninġirsu arrives action is taken, not to establish him in a state of rest, but to wake him up:

Nin-dub caused the sanctuary to be full of clatter and noise (?) and with fresh bread and hind’s milk available day and night, he woke from sleep the noble one, the beloved son of Enlil, the warrior Nin-jirsu [=Ninġirsu]. Nin-jirsu raised his head with all the great powers, and ... rituals, ... for (?) the sanctuary E-ninnu. (Cyl. B. vi 3–9, cf. vii 7–8).<sup>75</sup>

The pattern of seven days followed by the god’s rest simply is not there in either case. Nor indeed can it be shown to be a clearly identifiable “pattern” in ANE temple texts at all.

### Further Examples of the ANE Sevenfold Literary Pattern

Many other examples of this sevenfold literary pattern may be cited, some abbreviated as in the ones above, and others considerably longer. Neither the doubling of the first six units, nor their identification as days, are essential elements in this ANE sevenfold literary pattern. There are examples using the same pattern of repetitive phrases for the first six days treated individually, and examples where the sevenfold units used to frame the literary pattern are something other than days. A text featuring the latter that also illustrates well the idea of the seventh representing a shift and reversal of action after the initial six can be seen in the Sumerian *Gilgamesh and Huwawa*:<sup>76</sup>

He [Gilgamesh] crossed the first mountain range,  
he did not find the cedar he wanted,  
he crossed the [second] mountain range,  
[he did not find] the cedar he [wanted,]  
he crossed the third mountain range,  
[he did not find] the cedar he wanted,  
he crossed the fourth mountain range,  
[he did not find] the cedar he wanted,  
he crossed the fifth mountain range,  
he did not [find] the cedar he wanted,  
he crossed the sixth mountain range,  
he did not find the cedar he wanted,  
but crossing the seventh mountain range,  
he found the cedar he wanted.

There is also an example of this in the account of the building of Gudea’s temple of Ninġirsu (the Eninnu) that Walton does not mention. In this case it involves the setting out of seven squares:<sup>77</sup>

He [Gudea] laid the foundation,  
set the walls on the ground.  
He marked out a square,  
aligned the bricks with a string.  
He marked out a second square  
on the site of the temple, saying,  
“It is the line-mark for a topped-off jar of  
1 *ban* capacity (?).”  
He marked out a third square  
on the site of the temple, saying,  
“It is the Anzud bird enveloping its fledgling  
with its wings.”

# Article

*Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

He marked out a fourth square  
on the site of the temple, saying,  
“It is a panther embracing a fierce lion.”  
He marked out a fifth square  
on the site of the temple, saying,  
“It is the blue sky in all its splendour.”  
He marked out a sixth square  
on the site of the temple, saying,  
“It is the day of supply, full of luxuriance.”  
He marked out a seventh square  
on the site of the temple, saying,  
“It is the E-ninnu bathing the Land  
with moonlight at dawn.”  
They inserted the wooden door frames,  
which were like a crown worn in the blue sky.  
As Gudea sat down at a wooden door frame,  
from there it was like a huge house  
embracing heaven.

The conclusion here represents a less dramatic shift, but it is the identification of the seventh square as the Eninnu, the temple of Ninĝirsu itself, that appears to be the point to which the first six items are building.

## The Seven Gates of the Underworld

In many ANE texts the underworld is understood to have seven gates. This made accounts of journeys there a natural occasion for treating the gates as units in the sevenfold literary pattern. There are several examples of this, but here we shall present only two. The first is a very abbreviated one from the standard Babylonian version of *Nergal and Ereshkigal* (7th century BCE), where Anu the sky god sends his messenger Kakka to Ereshkigal, goddess of the underworld.<sup>78</sup>

He let the god Kakka in through the first gate  
He let the god Kakka in through the second gate  
He let the god Kakka in through the third gate  
He let the god Kakka in through the fourth gate  
He let the god Kakka in through the fifth gate  
He let the god Kakka in through the sixth gate  
He let the god Kakka in through the seventh gate  
He entered into her [Ereshkigal’s] spacious  
courtyard,  
He knelt down and kissed the ground in front of her.  
He straightened up and addressed her ...

For the modern reader such repetitiveness seems tedious. Why not just say Kakka passed through the seven gates and entered Ereshkigal’s presence? The reason is that repetition is a common feature in most ANE texts, partly because of the use of numbers.

## *Inana’s Descent into the Nether World*

Two of the longest extra-biblical examples of the sevenfold literary pattern also involve journeys to the Underworld: the Sumerian *Inana’s Descent into the Nether World* and the Akkadian *Descent of Ishtar to the Underworld*.<sup>79</sup> The two works are related but the latter is not simply a translation or paraphrase of the former. We present here the earlier Sumerian version. In this work, the goddess Inana fortifies herself for the journey with the “seven divine powers,”<sup>80</sup> which seem to consist of items worn on her person. A sevenfold pattern is then used to describe how each of these is taken away from her as she passes through the underworld’s seven gates:<sup>81</sup>

He [Neti, the doorman of the underworld] said  
to holy Inana:

“Come on, Inana, and enter.”

And when Inana entered, (1 ms. adds 2 lines:  
the lapis-lazuli measuring rod and measuring  
line were removed from her hand,  
when she entered the first gate,  
the turban, headgear for the open country,  
was removed from her head.

“What is this?”

“Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
underworld has been fulfilled.

Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
the rites of the underworld.”

When she entered the second gate,  
the small lapis-lazuli beads were removed  
from her neck.

“What is this?”

“Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
underworld has been fulfilled.

Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
the rites of the underworld.”

When she entered the third gate,  
the twin egg-shaped beads were removed  
from her breast.

“What is this?”

“Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
underworld has been fulfilled.

Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
the rites of the underworld.”

When she entered the fourth gate,  
the “Come, man, come” pectoral was removed  
from her breast.

“What is this?”

“Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
underworld has been fulfilled.

Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
the rites of the underworld.”

When she entered the fifth gate,  
 the golden ring was removed from her hand.  
 “What is this?”  
 “Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
 underworld has been fulfilled.  
 Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
 the rites of the underworld.”

When she entered the sixth gate,  
 the lapis-lazuli measuring rod and measuring  
 line were removed from her hand.  
 “What is this?”  
 “Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
 underworld has been fulfilled.  
 Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
 the rites of the underworld.”

When she entered the seventh gate,  
 the *pala* dress, the garment of ladyship,  
 was removed from her body.  
 “What is this?”  
 “Be satisfied, Inana, a divine power of the  
 underworld has been fulfilled.  
 Inana, you must not open your mouth against  
 the rites of the underworld.”

Inana then crouches naked and powerless before  
 her sister Erec-ki-gala’s [=Ereshkigal’s] throne. The  
 Ananu (the seven judges) decide against her, and she  
 is turned into a corpse and hung on a hook as her  
 clothes are carried away.<sup>82</sup>

Longer versions of the seven-day patterns such as  
 this one, allow for more variation on the days, but  
 verbatim repetitive lines still provide the basic  
 structure of the pattern. The additional details here  
 increase the dramatic tension building as Inana  
 passes through the first six gates, which then comes  
 to a very dramatic climax following her passage  
 through the seventh.

### Genesis 1:1–2:3 As an Example of the Widely Used ANE Sevenfold Literary Pattern

Examples of this sevenfold literary pattern appear in  
 texts over a long period and throughout the ANE, in  
 Sumerian, Assyrian, Babylonian, and Ugaritic texts.  
 From these extra-biblical examples, we turn to the  
 sevenfold literary pattern in Hebrew with which the  
 Bible opens: Genesis 1:1–2:3. As we begin, we dis-  
 cover at once that the structure of the passage as an  
 ANE literary pattern is somewhat obscured by the  
 way the text is laid out in both the Hebrew manu-  
 scripts and modern editions and translations. In the  
 ANE texts, the parallel repetitive lines that made up  
 the sevenfold patterns tended to be laid out on the  
 tablets themselves in such a way as to support and  
 emphasize the repetitive literary structure. To see

Genesis 1:11	Genesis 1:12
<p>And God said,                      “Let the earth bring forth vegetation,                      plants yielding seed,                      and fruit trees bearing fruit                      each according to its kind,                      in which is their seed, on the earth.”</p> <p>And it was so.</p>	<p>The earth brought forth vegetation,                      plants yielding seed                      according to their own kinds,                      and trees bearing fruit</p> <p>in which is their seed,                      each according to its kind.                      And God saw that it was good.</p>
<p style="text-align: center;"><u>תדשא הארץ דשא</u>  <u>עשב מזריע זרע</u></p> <p style="text-align: center;"><u>עץ פרי עשה פרי</u>  <u>למינו</u>                      אשר זרעו בו על הארץ</p> <p style="text-align: center;">ויהי כן</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">ויאמר אלה                      ותוצא הארץ דשא  <u>עשב מזריע זרע</u>  <u>למינהו</u>                      ועץ עשה פרי</p> <p style="text-align: center;">אשר זרעו בו  <u>למינהו</u>                      וירא אלהים כי טוב</p>

Table 2. Verses 11–12 from day three side by side, underlining verbatim language in the Hebrew.

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

this, we refer the reader to the sevenfold pattern telling of Uta-napishti's boat being grounded on Mount Nimush (see above, p. 213) for which sequential line numbers are used for the first three pairs of days and for the seventh day.

Once we have the sevenfold literary pattern in mind, it is not hard to rearrange the biblical creation account along the lines of the other ANE examples surveyed above. To illustrate this in a way that allows us to see the less obvious, finer grain of the original repetitive structure, we can set verses 11–12 from day three side by side, underlining verbatim language in the Hebrew (table 2).

Having said this, the current formatting of Genesis 1:1–2:3 does highlight the most conspicuous repetitive features underpinning the seven-day literary structure. These include the beginning of each creation day with “and God said” + a divine fiat,<sup>83</sup> and its conclusion with “And there was evening and there was morning, the \_\_\_ day.” This is true as well of the phrases “and it was so” (with variation),<sup>84</sup> and “God saw that it was good” (with variation), the latter appearing on every day except the second.<sup>85</sup> Days three and six each have two creation innovations rather than one as on the other days, each of which is likewise introduced with “and God said” + fiat. Thus, although the author had in mind including eight acts of creation, they are presented in six creation days, which is consistent with the intentional employment of the sevenfold literary pattern.<sup>86</sup> Furthermore, as has long been recognized, days one–three are clearly intended to stand in parallel to days four–six (explained below).

### Additional Biblical Examples

Other biblical examples relevant to our study include a very abbreviated one of Moses's going up the mountain in Exodus 24:15–16:

Then Moses went up on the mountain, and the cloud covered the mountain. The glory of the LORD dwelt on Mount Sinai, and the cloud covered it six days. And on the seventh day he called to Moses out of the midst of the cloud.

Also, the fall of Jericho in Joshua 6 which, if not recounted using the sevenfold literary pattern, was nevertheless choreographed in a way very similar to it. There are arguably also Greek examples among the unfolding sevens of the last book of the Bible,<sup>87</sup> including especially Revelation 1:4–3:22. As Inana was first endowed with seven items which were then

removed as she passed through the seven gates to the underworld, the individual items mentioned in the vision of Jesus in Revelation 1 become the basis for how Jesus identifies himself in the introductions of the seven letters of Revelation 2–3,<sup>88</sup> with Jesus in the seventh letter calling himself also “the Amen.” Each of the seven letters opens with the identical formula in Greek: *Tō angelo tēs en \_\_\_\_\_ ekklēsiās grapson* / “To the angel of the church in \_\_\_\_\_ write,” (Rev. 2:1, 8, 12, 18; 3:1, 7, 14) and concludes with the identical phrase *Ho echōn ous akousatō ti to pneuma legei tais ekklesiāis* / “Whoever has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches,” followed or preceded by a promise to *ho nikrōn* / “whoever overcomes” (Rev. 2:7, 11, 17, 26, 29; 3:5–6, 12–13, 21–22).

### Fitting Genesis as a Sevenfold Literary Pattern into the Larger Picture

Finally, as mentioned earlier, the ANE sevenfold literary pattern dovetails with a familiar observation regarding the composition of Genesis 1:1–2:3, namely that it has been intelligently designed to make creation days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, and 3 and 6 mirror one another: Light is made on the first day, the sun and moon on the fourth. Sky and the sea are separated by the introduction of the firmament on the second day, and the two are filled with birds and sea creatures on the fifth. The land is separated from the water with food provided in the form of reproducing trees and plants on the third day, and land animals and humans are introduced on the sixth. This mirroring is usually associated with, or even identified as, the “framework hypothesis.”<sup>89</sup> But it is not, in itself, a separate hypothesis, but simply an observation about the structuring of the six days of Genesis 1 that has been noticed and endorsed by the advocates of several different hypotheses.<sup>90</sup>

The observation, though currently well known, is not new. It is often traced to the eighteenth–nineteenth-century German Romanticist Johann Gottfried Herder.<sup>91</sup> But it is already found in Thomas Aquinas (d. 1274), who wrote that the work of creation (*opus creationis*) in Genesis 1:1 was followed by the work of separation (*opus distinctionis*) in days 1–3 and by the work of adornment (*opus ornatus*) in days 4–6,<sup>92</sup> and a little later in the work of Nicholas of Lyra (d. 1349), who used the same terminology as Thomas.<sup>93</sup> This division was also clearly recognized by some in the nineteenth century, including Arnold Guyot, who called days 1–3 the “era of matter,” and 4–6 the “era of life.”<sup>94</sup> During the later twentieth century,

especially following the mid-1980s, the structural feature became widely accepted by interpreters of Genesis 1. This is exemplified, for example, in the rapid dissemination in more recent decades of a chart that sets days 1–3 and 4–6 in parallel columns.<sup>95</sup>

Notable exceptions to its acceptance include young-earth creationists such as E. J. Young, who insisted that the pattern “is not actually present” in Genesis 1,<sup>96</sup> and Todd S. Beall, who speaks of it as “the so-called pattern,” which “does not hold up well under scrutiny.”<sup>97</sup> Yet, ironically, it is precisely the failure to recognize this very intentional literary structuring that has caused Christian interpreters so much consternation and “enlightened” opponents of Christianity so much glee. The mirrored literary structure itself, when unrecognized, provokes questions such as how the sun, moon, and stars could take only one day to create, while making and fitting out our little planet took six?<sup>98</sup> And what about the sun and moon only appearing on the fourth day, after three “days” had already passed?

Already in the third century, Christian writer Origen of Alexandria wrote:

What man of intelligence will believe that the first and second and the third day, and the evening and morning, existed without the sun and moon and stars? And that the first day ... was even without a heaven?<sup>99</sup>

Indeed, even before Origen, Celsus, the second-century opponent of Christianity, had already raised the point:

By far the most silly thing [in Genesis 1] is the distribution of the creation of the world over certain days, before days existed: for, as the heaven was not yet created, nor the foundation of the earth yet laid, nor the sun yet revolving, how could there be days?<sup>100</sup>

Thomas Paine likewise featured this objection in the eighteenth century as proof that the “Bible-makers,” in writing the passage, “have demonstrated nothing but their ignorance,”<sup>101</sup> and Voltaire offered it up as proof that ancient people did not believe the sun was a source of light but that it only pushed light along ahead of itself.<sup>102</sup> It was criticisms like these that the Romanticist Herder sought to rebut when explaining the mirroring of the days in 1774. The cranky complaints of the Enlightenment rationalists, Herder argued, had simply missed the point due to their approaching the text with a clumsy intellectual apparatus that blinded them to its conspicuous and delightful compositional features.<sup>103</sup>

It is also this same mirrored literary arrangement that renders implausible some of the attempts at harmonizing Genesis 1:1–2:3 with the history of the cosmos. How can the gap theory work, for example, when there was no sky during the earliest ages, or the day-age theory with trees and plants growing for a vast age before the creation of the sun?<sup>104</sup> Unlike these approaches, the recognition of the mirroring of days arises from observing the actual structure of the text of Genesis 1 itself, rather than from an attempt to harmonize the biblical creation account with concerns that lie outside of the text.

What a familiarity with the ANE sevenfold literary pattern brings to the table in this connection is quite interesting. It provides not only further support for the mirroring of days 1–3 and 4–6, but also a larger context for understanding the *reason* the author of Genesis framed the passage as he did in the first place. The mirroring that has puzzled interpreters is now seen to have actually provided a partial glimpse into the bigger picture that we now observe when looking at Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an example of the ANE sevenfold literary pattern.

As mysterious as the choice of the author of Genesis to make the two halves of the chapter mirror one another might appear as a stand-alone phenomenon, it now reveals itself as yet another example of the verbatim and near-verbatim repetition that is typical for Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an example of an ANE sevenfold literary pattern. Here too is the explanation of the mirroring and repetitive language in each of the six days, as well as within the individual days in the mirroring of the commands and their fulfillments. From the perspective of the ANE sevenfold literary pattern, then, the mirroring of days is just the sort of compositional move one might expect the author of the biblical creation account to make.<sup>105</sup>

## Notes

<sup>1</sup>George Smith, *The Chaldean Account of Genesis* (New York: Scribner, Armstrong, 1876).

<sup>2</sup>Moshe Weinfeld, “Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord: The Problem of the *Sitz im Leben* of Genesis 1:1–2:3,” in *Mélanges bibliques et orientaux en l’honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, ed. Mathias Delcor and André Caquot (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1981), 512; Jon Levenson, “The Temple and the World,” *Journal of Religion* 64, no. 3 (1984): 288–89, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/1202664>. Levenson’s view would become more widely known through his *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 66–100. See also his notes on Genesis in *The Jewish Study Bible*, 2nd edition, ed.

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

Adele Berlin and Marc Zvi Brettler (New York: Oxford University Press, 2014), 11; and Victor Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House* (Sheffield, UK: JSOT Press, 1992), 260–61, 275–76.

<sup>3</sup>Peter Enns, *The Evolution of Adam: What the Bible Does and Doesn't Say about Human Origins* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2012), 39, 70–72, 154, n. 4; and N. T. Wright, *Paul and the Faithfulness of God* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress, 2013), 102–3.

<sup>4</sup>J. Richard Middleton, *The Liberating Image: The Imago Dei in Genesis 1* (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2005), 83–84, see esp. 84, n. 104 for his list of sources. Middleton was not aware of Walton's work when he initially wrote the material for this section in the early 1990s (Middleton to the author, May 19, 2024).

<sup>5</sup>William P. Brown, *The Seven Pillars of Creation: The Bible, Science, and the Ecology of Wonder* (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2010), 37–42. Brown (p. 254, n. 35) mentions his debt to, e.g., Middleton, *The Liberating Image*, 74–76; and S. Dean McBride Jr., "Divine Protocol: Genesis 1:1–2:3 as Prologue to the Pentateuch," in *God Who Creates: Essays in Honor of W. Sibley Towner*, ed. William P. Brown and S. Dean McBride Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 2000), 12–15.

<sup>6</sup>John H. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One* (Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009); and John H. Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology* (Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011).

<sup>7</sup>As Walton writes: "Without hesitation the ancient reader would conclude that this [Gen.1:1–2:3] is a temple text," *Lost World*, 71.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Walton, *Genesis 1*, 179.

<sup>10</sup>Hermann Gunkel, *Die Sagen der Genesis* (Göttingen, Germany: Vandenhoeck and Ruprecht, 1901), 6.

<sup>11</sup>*Jubilees* 2:10–12. English translation (ET): James C. VanderKam, *Jubilees: The Hermeneia Translation* (Minneapolis, MN: Fortress Press, 2020), 17.

<sup>12</sup>Walton, *Genesis 1*, 196. Walton still believes that the cosmos "can be viewed as a temple," citing Isaiah 66:1–2 as his "clearest text" (*Lost World*, 84). Similarly, Peter Enns states: "Even though Genesis 1 recounts the creation of the cosmos, at least one biblical writer suggests that the created world is God's temple" in *The Evolution of Adam*, 10th anniversary ed. (Grand Rapids, MI: Brazos, 2021), 104.

<sup>13</sup>Walton, *Genesis 1*, 196.

<sup>14</sup>*Ibid.*, 179.

<sup>15</sup>Walton, *Lost World*, 71.

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*, 86.

<sup>17</sup>*Ibid.*, 71.

<sup>18</sup>Walton, *Genesis 1*, 179.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*, 113–14.

<sup>20</sup>*Enuma Elish* VI 131; also VI 12, 34–36; and VII 29. The same motive for the creation of humans also appears, e.g., in *Erra and Ishum* I 83; *Atra-hasis Epic* 1 191–97; (K6634 [V] obverse), I 240–41; in a work Heidel called "Another Account of the Creation of Man" (obverse, ll. 26–27); and Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 1942), 57.

<sup>21</sup>*Erra and Ishum* I 83; and *Atra-hasis Epic* 1 191–97/K6634 (V) obverse, here and after the numbering given in W. G. Lambert and A. R. Millard, *Atra-hasis: The Babylonian Story of the Flood, with M. Civil, the Sumerian Story of the Flood* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1969).

<sup>22</sup>*Atra-hasis Epic* 1 358–59; 2 i 7–8.

<sup>23</sup>*Enuma Elish* I 38, 40, 50.

<sup>24</sup>*Baal Cycle* 6 iii 18–20; and *The Context of Scripture*, 3 vols., ed. William W. Hallo and K. Lawson Younger (Leiden, Netherlands; Boston, MA: Brill, 2003), 1:271 (ET: Dennis Pardee: Literally, "my gullet can rest in my chest," n. 261).

<sup>25</sup>*Erra and Ishum* I. 20.

<sup>26</sup>*Inana and Šu-kale-tuda*, 112–25, esp. 122–24. I am using the spelling "Inana" here and after that is used by the Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature rather than the familiar spelling "Inanna."

<sup>27</sup>Walton, *Genesis 1*, 180.

<sup>28</sup>The reference to the temple as God's resting place in Psalm 132 is problematic as a typical example of divine rest in temples, because the reference has to do with establishing a permanent resting place for the ark of the covenant after moving around from place to place in a portable shrine since the time of the Exodus; cf. 1 Chron. 6:41 (Walton, *Genesis 1*, 179; and Walton, *Lost World*, 72–73).

<sup>29</sup>Further examples: Lev. 19:3, 30; 26:2; Isa. 56:4; Ezek. 20:12, 13, 16, 20, 24; 22:8, 26; 23:38; and 44:24). See also "the Lord's Sabbaths" (Lev. 23:38).

<sup>30</sup>Walton, *Lost World*, 77.

<sup>31</sup>Walton, *Lost World*, 74–75. Walton's first example is the very ancient Sumerian *Temple Hymn of Keš*, which speaks only of the temple being a "reposeful dwelling" for its divine residents. The other example is the *Enuma Elish*, in which other gods are said to desire shines as resting places. However, the *Enuma Elish* says nothing of Marduk – whose temple it is – entering into rest there.

<sup>32</sup>EA, Nos. 234, 244, 245, 250, 254, 270, 271, 280, 286, 287, 288, 289, 290, 292, 297, 298, 320; RA, xix, 97, 106 in *Ancient Near Eastern Texts (ANET) Relating to the Old Testament*, 3rd edition with supplements, ed. James B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1969), 483–90 and in Hallo and Younger, eds., *Context of Scripture*, 2:237–42.

<sup>33</sup>RS 9.497A, ll. 6–11 in Hallo and Younger, eds., *Context of Scripture*, 89–90 (3.45B). See also RS 18.040, RS 18.113A+B, RS 94.2391, RS 20.199, RS 19.102, RS 29.093, RS 92.2012 in Hallo and Younger, eds., *Context of Scripture* 3:104–12.

<sup>34</sup>As F. A. M. Wiggermann, "Lamaštu Daughter of Anu: A Profile," in M. Stol, *Birth in Babylonia and the Bible: Its Mediterranean Setting*. Cuneiform Monograph 14 (Groningen: Styx, 2000), 226. This persists throughout the New Testament period and beyond as is seen, for example, in Hermann Gollancz, editor and translator, *The Book of Protection: Being a Collection of Syriac Charms* (1912; reprint, Amsterdam, Netherlands: APA-Philo Press, 1976), in which we find curses against the "seven accursed brothers, sons of the evil and accursed man" (A.39, p. xlviij / Syriac, pp. 38–39, cf. B.10, p. lxxi) / Syriac, pp. 38–39) and the "Evil and Envious Eye, and Eye of seven evil neighbors" (A.23, p. xi / Syriac, p. 16).

<sup>35</sup>See, especially, Utukki Limnūti V iii 10–25 and XVI 1–30, in *Devils and Evil Spirits of Babylonia*, trans. R. Campbell Thompson, Luzac's Semitic Texts & Translation Series 14–15; 2 vols. (London, UK: Luzac, 1903–1904), 1:62–65, 88–91. See also the discussion in Thompson's introduction of the seven demonic figures and their persistence (1:xljii–xlviij); and Thompson, *Semitic Magic: Its Origins and Development* (1908; reprint; New York: Ktav, 1971), 47–53.

<sup>36</sup>See, e.g., Utukki Limnūti V ii 65–iii 25 and XVI 35–45 (collectively), and XVI 25, where the seventh is referred to as an "evil wind."

- <sup>37</sup>Tzvi Abusch and Daniel Schwemer, *Corpus of Mesopotamian Anti-Witchcraft Rituals*, vol. 1 (Leiden, Netherlands; Boston, MA: Brill, 2010), 185 (l. 25).
- <sup>38</sup>Charm Codex C.19, "On the Evil Eye," in Gollancz, *Book of Protection*, lxxxii and 86–87; cf. Charm Codex 1.23, "The Anathema of the Angel Gabriel, Which Is of Avail for the Evil Eye," in *ibid.*, xl and 16–17.
- <sup>39</sup>E.g., as in the sevenfold, or twice sevenfold, knotting of strands accompanied by the sevenfold repetition of an incantation. See, e.g., the examples from the ušburruda texts in Abusch and Schwemer, *Corpus*, 185 (l. 13), 186 (l. 13), 187 (l. 32), 188 (l. 57), 189 (l. 34), 192 (l. 26). For a variation, see 188 (l. 43), RS 25.129 + 25.456B (reverse 1. 5, cf. obverse 1. 10) and RS 25.418 (obverse 1. 4/reverse 1. 5) from the House of Lamashtu tablets, in Ignacio Márquez Rowe, "The Babylonian Incantation Texts from Ugarit," in Giorgio del Olmo Lete, *Incantations and Anti-Witchcraft Texts from Ugarit* (Berlin, Germany; Boston, MA: De Gruyter, 2014), 66, 72. Cf. also Series Ti'i IX (ii) 75–80 in Thompson, *Devils and Evil Spirits*, 2.71. Various other sevens play into rituals and incantations, such as the making of sets of seven figurines – among other numbers – of clay or dough or wax (Abusch and Schwemer, *Corpus*, 1. 346), and the seven and seven times pouring out of libation of water (*ibid.*, 140, 185, 186). See, further, the possible amulet with seven lines, each consisting of "one sign repeated seven times," in James Buchanan Nies and Clarence E. Keiser, *Babylonian Inscriptions in the Collection of J. B. Nies*, vol. 2 (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 1920), 22, no. 16, plate 8.
- <sup>40</sup>*Epic of Gilgamesh* XI, ll. 159–60. ET: Andrew George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh: The Babylonian Epic Poem and Other Texts from Akkadian and Sumerian* (London, UK: Penguin, 1999), 94.
- <sup>41</sup>*Life of Adam and Eve* 1:1.
- <sup>42</sup>Mark Smith, *The Ugaritic Baal Cycle, Vol. 1: Introduction with Text, Translation and Commentary of KTU 1.1–1.2* (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill, 1994), 78; referring to Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 242.
- <sup>43</sup>Edwin C. Kingsbury, "A Seven Day Ritual in the Old Babylonian Cult at Larsa," *Hebrew Union College Annual* 34 (1963): 1–34, <http://www.jstor.org/stable/23506552>.
- <sup>44</sup>Daniel E. Fleming, "Emar: On the Road from Hurran to Hebron," in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, ed. Mark W. Chavalas and K. Lawson Younger Jr. (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Academic, 2002), 222–50, esp. 232–34.
- <sup>45</sup>Michaël Guichard and Lionel Marti, "Purity in Ancient Mesopotamia: The Paleo-Babylonian and Neo-Assyrian Periods," in *Purity and the Forming of Religious Traditions in the Ancient Mediterranean World and Ancient Judaism*, ed. Christian Freval and Christophe Nihan (Leiden, Netherlands; Boston, MA: Brill, 2013), 102. We should understand the *Bit rimki* cycle, e.g., as connected not with temple texts but with the previously mentioned exorcism rituals associated with the idea that the fullness of trouble comes in sevens.
- <sup>46</sup>Albert T. Clay, "The Babylonian Sabbath," in *Miscellaneous Inscriptions in the Yale Babylonian Collection* (New Haven, CT: Yale University, 2018), Nos. 46–51 (pp. 75–81).
- <sup>47</sup>See Walton, *Genesis 1*, 119, n. 356 and 181, n. 163.
- <sup>48</sup>Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), 69.
- <sup>49</sup>On the name, see Walton, *Lost World*, 162. The only one he does not mention is the seven-day *zukru* ritual from Emar.
- <sup>50</sup>Walton, *Lost World*, 71.
- <sup>51</sup>The seventh month features three feasts: Trumpets on the first day, the Day of Atonement on the tenth, and Tabernacles beginning on the fifteenth and lasting seven days (Exod. 23:33–36, 42).
- <sup>52</sup>The Hebrew text of both passages says that there were *two* seven-day feasts, but the Greek Septuagint in each case reports only *one*.
- <sup>53</sup>Gudea Cylinder B xvii 18–19. For an account of the history of the Eninnu, including the recent 2016–2022 British Museum excavations of the building, see Sébastien Rey, *The Temple of Ningirsu: The Culture of the Sacred in Mesopotamia* (University Park, PA: Eisenbrauns, 2024).
- <sup>54</sup>Walton gives the impression that there are more examples than there actually are. He writes: "Hurowitz lists other temple dedications, and the number seven is prevalent, though there are variations ... His appendix ... provides the entire list of more than 40 dedications." However, Hurowitz's appendix is simply a generic list of "Sources for Mesopotamian Dedication Ceremonies" without reference to numbers. My sampling of the texts listed, based on those available to me, did not turn up any sevens other than the handful Walton himself mentions: Walton, *Genesis 1*, 117, n. 348, see also *Lost World*, 181–82, n. 1. Cf. Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 280–83.
- <sup>55</sup>Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 227.
- <sup>56</sup>See the comparative monster lists in Graham Cunningham, *Deliver Me from Evil: Mesopotamian Incantations, 2500–1500 BC*, Studia Pohl: Series Maior 17 (Rome, Italy: Pontificio Istituto Biblico, 2007), 92.
- <sup>57</sup>The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature, ll. 562–90, <https://etcsl.orinst.ox.ac.uk>.
- <sup>58</sup>See Wayne T. Pitard, "Voices from the Dust: The Tablets from Ugarit to the Bible," in *Mesopotamia and the Bible: Comparative Explorations*, ed. Chavalas and Younger Jr., 260–63.
- <sup>59</sup>See, for example, the two depictions of gods battling seven-headed monsters, one on a shell plaque of unknown provenance in the Borowski collection with one of the seven heads hanging dead in *The Ancient Near East in Pictures Relating to the Old Testament*, ed. J. B. Pritchard (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1954), 218, 329, no. 671, and another from Tell Asmar with four of the seven heads hanging dead (*ibid.*, 221, 332, no. 691). On the latter see, Henri Frankfort, "Gods and Myths on Sargonid Seals," *Iraq* 1.1 (Apr. 1934), Plate Ia (following p. 8).
- <sup>60</sup>But compare Isa. 27:1.
- <sup>61</sup>For more references to seven-headed monsters, see, e.g., Odes of Solomon 22:5, [https://earlychristianwritings.com/text/odes2.html#google\\_vignette](https://earlychristianwritings.com/text/odes2.html#google_vignette); Pistis Sophia 2:136, 147, 156–57, 321, <http://gnosis.org/library/pistis-sophia/index.htm>; cf. *Secret Book of John* 11:30–31 in Michael Waldstein and Frederik Wisse, translators, *The Apocryphon of John: Synopsis of Nag Hammadi Codices II,1–III,1; and IV,1 with BG 8502,2*, ed. Lance Owens (Leiden, Netherlands: Brill Academic, 1995).
- <sup>62</sup>ET: Pardee, *Context of Scripture*, 1:86, p.261 / Baal Cycle 4 vi 22–35.
- <sup>63</sup>Walton, *Genesis 1*, 117. Dennis Pardee comes closer to the truth when he writes in a note to his translation of the passage: "The seven-day sequence is a common literary motif in Ug[arit] for expressing extended processes" (*Context of Scripture* 1:86, p. 261, n. 175).

# Article

## *Genesis 1:1–2:3 as an Example of an Ancient Near Eastern Dramatic Sevenfold Literary Pattern (Not a Temple Inauguration Text)*

<sup>64</sup>Hurowitz, *I Have Built You an Exalted House*, 227.

<sup>65</sup>Umberto Cassuto, *A Commentary on the Book of Genesis. Part 1: From Adam to Noah: Genesis I–VI*, vol. 8, trans. Israel Abrahams (Jerusalem: Magnes Press, Hebrew University, 1961), 13. Cassuto presented the evidence for this in his “Biblical and Canaanite Literature,” *Tarbiz* 13 (1942): 206–7, nn. 31–32. See further, Samuel E. Loewenstamm, “The Seven-Day-Unit in Ugaritic Literature,” in *Comparative Studies in Biblical and Ancient Oriental Literatures* (Neukirchen-Vluyn, Germany: Neukirchener Verlag, 1980), 192. M. L. West points out that the ANE “recurrent motif that something goes on for six days and on the seventh there is a new development” even extends to Homer’s *Odyssey*, which includes four instances of it: *The East Face of Helicon: West Asiatic Elements in Greek Poetry and Myth* (Oxford, UK: Clarendon, 1997), 175.

<sup>66</sup>*Gilgamesh Epic*, Tablet XI, ll. 142–48. ET: George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 93. Line numbers given in George’s critical edition, *The Babylonian Gilgamesh Epic*, 2 vols. (Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press, 2003), 1:713.

<sup>67</sup>ET: Stephanie Dalley, *Context of Scripture* 1:109, p. 386 (seventh century BCE).

<sup>68</sup>ET: Pardee, *Context of Scripture* 1:103, 343–45. Given the confusion caused by differing systems for referencing Ugaritic texts, I have adopted the following method throughout when discussing titled works: the name of the work followed by the tablet, column, and line numbers as presented in *Stories from Ancient Canaan*, 2nd edition, ed. and trans. Michael D. Coogan and Mark S. Smith (Louisville, KY: Westminster John Knox, 2012). So, e.g., *Aqht* 1 i 3–17 = *Aqht* (name of work), 1 (tablet number), i (column number), and 3–17 (line numbers).

<sup>69</sup>*Kirta* 1 iii 10–16 (CTA 14), ET: Pardee, *Context of Scripture* 1.102, p. 336. See also, *Kirta* 1 v 3–8, ET: Pardee, *Context of Scripture* 1.102, pp. 334–35.

<sup>70</sup>*Story of Aqht* 3 iv 10–22 (CTA 19), ET: Pardee, *Context of Scripture* 1.103, p. 354.

<sup>71</sup>Brown, *Seven Pillars*, 28, cf. 255, n. 42.

<sup>72</sup>J. Richard Middleton, “The Genesis Creation Accounts,” in *T&T Clark Handbook of Christian Theology and the Modern Sciences*, ed. John P. Slattery (New York: Bloomsbury, 2020), 20.

<sup>73</sup>Middleton, *Liberating Image*, 84.

<sup>74</sup>Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil*, 79.

<sup>75</sup>Though not giving an account of the Ningirsu entering into his rest in the temple, the text does include mention of rest in what is perhaps a description of the dispositions of the various images of the deities:

Its owner, warrior Nin-jirsu, stood like Utu in his most fascinating blue chariot. Its throne, standing in the *guena* hall, was An’s holy seat which is sat upon joyfully. Its bed, standing in the bedroom, was a young cow kneeling down in its sleeping place. On its quilt (?), strewn with fresh herbs, mother Bau was resting comfortably with lord Nin-jirsu. (Cyl. B. xvi 15–xvii 3)

<sup>76</sup>Version B, *Gilgamesh and Huwawa*, ll. 60–67. ET: George, *The Epic of Gilgamesh*, 153. See also version A, *Gilgamesh and Huwawa*, ll. 61–64.

<sup>77</sup>Cyl. A. xx 27–xxi 14. “The Building of Ningirsu’s Temple,” ET: The Electronic Text Corpus of Sumerian Literature.

<sup>78</sup>Lines 20–29. ET: Stephanie Dalley, *Context of Scripture* 1:109, pp. 384–85.

<sup>79</sup>For the latter, see *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, 108–9.

<sup>80</sup>*Inana’s Descent*, I. 14.

<sup>81</sup>*Inana’s Descent*, ll. 127–63.

<sup>82</sup>*Inana’s Descent*, ll. 164–72.

<sup>83</sup>Gen. 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 24, 26.

<sup>84</sup>So, “and there was light,” Gen. 1:3; or “and it was so,” 1:7 (day 2), 1:9, 11 (day 3), 1:15 (day 4), 1:24, 30 (day 6).

<sup>85</sup>Gen. 1:4 (day 1), 1:10, 12 (day 3), 1:18 (day 4), 1:21 (day 5), 1:25, 31 (day 6).

<sup>86</sup>There are other repetitive items that are not repeated throughout. So, for example, God names things in the first triad but not in the second (3x) and blesses things in the second triad but not in the first. God names the darkness and light (Gen. 1:5, day 1), the expanse (1:8, day 2), the dry land and the lower waters (1:10, day 3). God blesses the birds and sea creatures (1:22, day 5) and humans (1:28, day 6). Curiously, God does not bless the land creatures.

<sup>87</sup>Namely, the seals (Rev. 6:1–17), trumpets (8:2–11:19), and bowls (16:1–21).

<sup>88</sup>Ephesus (Rev. 2:1 = Gen. 1:13, 16); Smyrna (Rev. 2:8 = Gen. 1:17–18); Pergamum (Rev. 2:12 = Gen. 1:16); Thyatira (Rev. 2:18 = Gen. 1:14–15); Sardis (Rev. 3:1 = Gen. 1:4, 16, 20); Philadelphia (Rev. 3:7 = Gen. 1:18); and Laodicea (Rev. 3:14 = Gen. 1:5).

<sup>89</sup>A view introduced to the evangelical community by Meredith G. Kline. See his “Because It Had Not Rained,” *Westminster Journal of Theology* 20 (1958): 146–57, <https://meredithkline.com/klines-works/articles-and-essays/because-it-had-not-rained/>; and Lee Irons and Meredith Kline, “The Framework Hypothesis,” in *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, ed. David G. Hagopian, (Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, 2001), 227–30.

<sup>90</sup>Examples among older commentators include the vision hypothesist Franz Hummelauer, *Commentarius in Genesim* (Paris, France: P. Lethielleux, 1895), 71; the day-age hypothesist Arnold Guyot, *Creation; or the Biblical Cosmology in the Light of Modern Science* (New York: Charles Scribner’s Sons, 1884), 12; the gap-hypothesist Andrew Jukes, *The Six Days: Or, The Various Stages of the Work of God, Being Notes on Genesis I* (London, UK: William Yap, 1855), 5; the explanation hypothesist Hugh Capron, *The Conflict of Truth* (London, UK: Hodder & Stoughton, 1902), 193; and the six evenings of conversation with God hypothesist P. J. Wiseman, *Creation Revealed in Six Days: The Evidence of Scripture Confirmed by Archaeology* (London/Edinburgh, UK: Marshall, Morgan & Scott, 1948), 16.

<sup>91</sup>See J. G. Herder’s *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*, 2 vols. (Riga: Johann Friedrich Hartknoch, 1774, 1776), 1:128–31.

<sup>92</sup>Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* 1, Q. 65, and especially 1, Q. 70. Others have suggested the observation goes back to Augustine, citing *City of God* 11.6. See, e.g., Victor Hamilton, *The Book of Genesis: Chapters 1–17* (Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1990), 55. The chapter in question, however, makes no mention of this. In the following chapter (11.7), Augustine does mention the issue of light being made on the first day and the sun and moon only on the fourth day. But that had already been noted in the second century by Celsus (quoted in Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.60) and in the third by Origen (*On First Principles* 4.3.1), and it does not amount to a recognition of the mirroring of days 1–3 and 4–6.

<sup>93</sup>Nicholas of Lyra, *Biblia Sacra cum Glossa Ordinaria I* (London, UK: n.p., 1545), 23. Eugene H. Maly still used the terminology in his section on Genesis in *The Jerome Biblical Commentary*, ed. Raymond E. Brown, S.S.; Joseph A. Fitzmyer, S.J.; and Roland E. Murphy, O.Carm. (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1968), 11.

<sup>94</sup>Arnold Guyot, *Creation*, 12. Others who noted this include James Dwight Dana, "Creation; Or, the Biblical Cosmology in the Light of Modern Science," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 42, no. 166 (Apr. 1885): 207-8; and Franz Hummelauer, *Commentarius in Genesim* (Paris, France: P. Lethielleux, 1895), 71.

<sup>95</sup>As illustrated by the appearance of the charts in a number of study Bibles, including the *NIV Study Bible* (1985), the *Jewish Study Bible* (2004), the *Reformation Study Bible* (2005), the *ESV Study Bible* (2008), and the Roman Catholic *New American Bible*, which added it for the first time to its revised edition (2008). Numerous other examples could be cited from books and commentaries since 1980, but relatively few that I have seen before that. Exceptions would include the soft day-age theorist Derek Kidner, who includes the chart in *Genesis: An Introduction and Commentary* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity, 1967), 46. Kidner had gotten it from Anglican evangelical W. H. Griffith Thomas, *Genesis: A Devotional Commentary I-XXV.10*, 3rd edition (London, UK: Religious Tract Society, 1909), 21. There is also the third edition of the popular evangelical *New Bible Commentary* (1970), which presents the idea though not the chart. In that case, however, the section on Genesis was authored by Meredith G. Kline, a key figure in introducing the "framework hypothesis" to the evangelical community.

<sup>96</sup>E. J. Young, "The Days of Genesis," *Westminster Theological Journal* 25 (1962-1963): 27, <https://reformed.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/EdwardJYoungDaysGenesisPart1.pdf>.

<sup>97</sup>Todd S. Beall, "Response to Richard E. Averbeck," in *Reading Genesis 1-3: An Evangelical Conversation*, ed. J. Daryl Charles (Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 2013), 133.

<sup>98</sup>See, e.g., E. F. K. Rosenmüller, *Scholia in Vetus Testamentum in compendium redacta*, vol. 1 (Leipzig, Germany: Johann Ambrosius Barth, 1828), 26. Rosenmüller provides a typical list of such objections in this same place, as does, e.g., Dana, "Creation," 203.

<sup>99</sup>*On First Principles* 4.3.1 (ET: G. W. Butterworth).

<sup>100</sup>Quoted by Origen, *Against Celsus* 6.60 (ET: Frederick Crombie). The objection is also mentioned in Thomas Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* I, Q. 70, Art. 1, Obj. 2.

<sup>101</sup>Thomas Paine, *The Age of Reason, Part II* (1795) in *The Theological Works of Thomas Paine* (London: R. Carlisle, 1818), 89, n.

<sup>102</sup>Voltaire, *La Bible enfin expliquée*, vol. 1, 3rd edition (London, UK: n.p., 1777), 2: "Toute l'antiquité a cru que le soleil ne produit pas la lumière, qu'il ne sert qu'à la pousser, & qu'elle est répandue dans l'espace."

<sup>103</sup>Herder's *Älteste Urkunde des Menschengeschlechts*, 1.131: "Und wo bleiben jetzt die Spöttereien über die Mißproportionen der Tagwerke? was ist nicht überlegte Proportion im Stücke? kann eine vollere zusammenstimmendere Leyer erdacht werden? Und was sind nun die zerstückten Verse unseres Bibeltextes?"

<sup>104</sup>Granting that such difficulties might be treated in more-nuanced ways by defenders of these views. In any case, the problem was already noted by Aquinas, *Summa Theologiae* Q. 70, Art. 1, Obj. 4.

<sup>105</sup>Special thanks are due to the editor, Stephen Contakes, and to the anonymous reviewers for a number of valuable suggestions that have significantly strengthened this article.

**JOANNA NG**  
AI Technologist Founder & CEO  
Devarim Design  
Markham, Ontario

**ROSALIND PICARD**  
Director of Affective Computing Research  
MIT Media Lab  
Cambridge, MA

**WINTER SYMPOSIUM**  
"AI & Christianity"  
ONLINE EVENT  
Saturday  
January 25, 2025  
1 pm EST / 10 am PST

network.asa3.org/ws-25

THE AMERICAN SCIENTIFIC AFFILIATION