

The Bible Is a Parable: A Middle Ground Between Science and Religion

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## ***The Courage to Commit***

We are all related—by ink, if not blood—to Walter Mitty.

We all have dreams of glory:

Aspirations, plans, schemes, and designs.

Why then are so few of them executed

and why do only a small number

come to fruition?

It is because too many lack the nerve it takes

to step out of line—<sup>1</sup>

*It is toward the borrowing of “this brand of courage”*

*that I now take a hesitatingly*

*uncertain step forward.*

*Arise, shine, for your light has come*

*And the glory of the Lord is risen upon you.*

—Isa. 60:1, NKJV

Note: An Intimate Memoir by Garson Kanin

## **Overview**

You have studied my creation through your “Ignorance” and I have given you  
“Visions”

You have studied my creation through your “Wisdom” and I have given you  
“Insight”

You have studied my creation through your “Intellect” and I have given you  
“Theories”

Throughout all this time, you have quested for “Answers” and I have given you  
“Parables”

The opening quotation in this “Overview” is taken from one of the last chapters of this  
work titled simply “Dialogue.”

Against all the understanding derived from his senses that should convince Man of  
his singularity, somehow he could never feel totally alone in the world. Even considering  
his felt need to believe in something more able to control the raw forces of his  
environment, there were still those times when he felt led by something more than his  
own experience. Religion provided a form in which to enclose that something.

Many an original and seemingly logical interpretation of the world that he came into  
contact with has found its way into the memory of Man. Cherished to the point of  
worship, they have been recited across the centuries as valued articles of the *Wisdom of  
the Ancients*.

Out of this background, many stories have been told and retold until they gained  
ascendancy in the mind of Man. And then, after an uncertain interval or because of some

---

circumstance, disappeared into the fog of an unremembered past, leaving only bits and pieces to be borrowed anew by its inheritors.

The Bible appears to bear witness to this process. Its stories, some apparently ill-remembered borrowings, are accompanied by accounts of the following: the heroics of a people's champions, their genealogies identifying their uniqueness, a chronology of their special history, as well as time-tested *Words of Wisdom*.

All these, put together with a seemingly otherworldly vision, have allowed it a longevity rarely equaled by any other literary endeavor. The apparent skill with which these have been assembled lends to the assumption that they were meant to be seen as the parables that they appear to be to this author. The orders of succession in Genesis match rather well with the chronology of discoveries made throughout the nineteenth and twentieth centuries' scientific method.

My experience with the study of this method (science) convinces me that the constant testing of its answers, while aggravating when a favored one is overturned, is the surest method to keep the answers relevant with the most recent discoveries regarding the earth and the cosmos that the earth resides in.

Still, because of the uncertainty inherent within these testings, science offers no firm ground to build a system of belief upon, to explain those verities that seem not to have changed over the ages, as well as to satisfy the questions that still have no apparent answers.

Religion is the platform upon which those things can be contemplated; where surmise (supposition) can lead to a seemingly logical answer, the foundation of which lies far enough beyond generationally current ability to verify as to seem without resolution. Man's ability to extrapolate learned experience into a new but similar-appearing circumstance is a unique gift apparently offered to no other life-form. Because of this many things have been passed on through an understanding called belief, about things that work to Man's advantage, before any knowledge of why can even be contemplated.

Religion in today's world, when it offers answers that seemed to be complete hundreds of years ago, when it insists upon continued belief in the relevancy of the interpretations that provided them, and this in an ever-changing world, risks a certain loss of credibility.

Yet *religion*, systems of belief, exist primarily because Man has always felt that there was more to this world than the eye or mind alone can perceive.

Modern *experimental* science came about largely through the inquisitive efforts of clergy who attempted to understand the *Mind of God* through the study of the nature of His creation. When their answers began to diverge sharply from those of older more static belief systems whose ancient origins were partly "visionary," the stage was set for confrontation. *Authority* in the quest for stability stood in evermore-direct challenge to the answers of *intellect*.

History is replete with instances where differences of opinion within systems of belief have led to schismatic separation and, many times, disappearance of one or both contending opinions. From biology we learn that all living systems seek to maintain *stasis* an unchanging equilibrium. A limited life span seems to be nature's answer to the lack of ability or willingness to change in response to changing conditions.

We may be witnessing that very thing playing out today between *science* and *religion*. Each *contender* seems to be moving toward evermore-untenable extremes.

Some members of science now are in denial of that “Something” which lies just beyond the reach of their many answers. All the while, clerics, content to live off the myriad benefits of scientific discovery, continue a challenge that robs them of what is left of their credibility. This, while the clerics harbor the *Answer* that only their limited ability keeps them from understanding, has no need of their puny defenses.

It is theorized that science’s dinosaurs became victims of an environmental disaster. They did not survive it largely because of the slowness of biological change. Must we suffer a similar fate while we wait upon another external agent? Or will we be smart enough to exercise our unique gift to extrapolate the experience of the *old* into another *new* situation? My *mission*, as I see it, is to provide the vehicle as well as the roadmap that is meant to point us in that direction.

In this book I have sought to identify the real-world events with their biblical counterparts, when those portions of the Bible are viewed as parables. I posit these to be abbreviated accounts as might have been conveyed through the medium of *visions* etc. to a people ignorant of the kind of knowledge of the world common today through the scientific method. Within the body of this larger work there are several purely fictional stories meant to depict how real people might have reacted to the events that seem to be the *big picture* that these parables might be meant to point us toward.

The larger work also seeks to depict Man’s attempt to understand the nature of that *Something* which appears to have always lain just beyond his physical senses. An evermore-complicated *understanding* of this *Something*, this *Essence*, this *Spirit*, this *God* even, seems to have enlarged ever so slowly over that long, long journey to have become the singular power behind the whole created universe that we think that we know of today.

Some within Science deign to investigate what is perceived to be *provable* and then to consign all else into that realm they label *chance*. Yet *Creation* seems to expand before them more rapidly than the fineness of their ability to measure.

Religion, seeking the stability of stasis, seems unable to avoid the straitjacket of terminal rigidity. Seeking unchangeable *truth*, Religion mistakenly finds imperfect *belief* and sets it in the permanence of stone only to have belief weathered away by the sands of time or *circumstance* into something unrecognizable when compared with the original promulgation.

If each would remain cognizant of the limits of its ability to perceive and join in a respectfully cooperative, complementary effort, far more than the sum of each separate effort could be realized. May God forgive us for the result if we don’t.

*“If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all liberally and without reproach, and it will be given to him”* (James 1:5, NKJV).

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## Foreword

A **considerable** length of time ago, I was given the five-word phrase that is the title of this work, *The Bible is a Parable*, along with an inherent challenge: attempt to comprehend its meaning in the fullness of the knowledge available to the world of today and make a literary witness of that effort.

*Thinking* the thoughts that led to a very preliminary understanding of this phrase sent

me on a wonderful mental adventure into a view of the Bible much larger than I could have ever imagined possible; however, committing these thoughts to paper—the literary witness—I shied away from for too many of those years. My thinking, upon the impossibility that this part of the challenge presented, was fully as convincing as all previous thought had been productive.

**I** had never written anything lengthier than an essay. I had little scholastic background relating to literature or experience in journalism. I did not possess the arrogance that it must take to presuppose acceptance of an unknown author, in the presentation of a more than likely controversial subject.

**All** that I could muster on my behalf, in the most self-celebratory of moods, was that I always had been an avid reader on subjects as varied as from the A of Adam and anthropology to the Z of Zeus and zoology. And I seemed to have the ability to learn to understand enough of what might command my attention to at least follow the author to the conclusion offered and be able to present a point of disagreement, if so inclined.

**I have finally** set aside all further argument for caution in favor of presenting to you my understanding of the phrase that became the title of this work.

**I have had** a long, argumentative flirtation with the Bible, that has put me at various times on each side of the argument presented in the introduction that follows, that is, the doctrine of biblical inerrancy, and the Bible's historical authenticity, which if successfully challenged would seem to rob it of all but symbolic value.

**I had also** come to have a great respect for the conclusions of Modern Experimental Science. It came as a great surprise to me that it had risen largely from out of the fulsome bosom of established religion through the inquiring minds of those who sought to understand *The mind of God* through the study of the *natural world* of His creation.

**Until that moment**, I had always seen the two as standing at opposite extremes, offering competing answers to the inquiring mind of Man. With never a hope of finding a way to the commonality of a middle ground, the choice was stark. Either believe one or the other.

**Answers**, as found in the Bible, have always taken a *leap of faith* in order to benefit from the *Wisdom of the Ages* that it offers.

**On the other hand**, all progressive civilization seems to rest on the back of the answers that have come to us from the *scientific method*.

**Yet**, if my interpretation of this five-word phrase is correct, a door to a new understanding may be opened that will allow those extremes, that should have never divided, to converge.

**This then** is my challenge. I now set before you, the best of my thinking, in the terms of the layman that I am. I shall endeavor to convince you, as I have become convinced, that this five-word phrase can become the bridge to a new unity of thought concerning the world and how it got to be the way that it is.

But, one might ask, “How did the author himself come to be the way that he is, with the need to present to the world this understanding?”

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## Preamble

I have looked at *life* many times and wondered what it was all about.

When I was a child, I looked forward, trying to imagine what it would be like when I was *grown-up*. I dreamed great dreams about becoming rich and famous, by having accomplished some magnificent deed that would transform me into a real *somebody*.

**But**, because of the vagaries of my early life circumstances, I have at other times felt consigned to an also-ran status. Always trying, but never really succeeding.

**In** my early adulthood, all I had to look back upon was a very ordinary, even humble beginning, and looking forward through the limits that appeared to confine me seemed to confirm the latter of my earlier feelings.

**Many** things have happened since then have tended to confirm, at different times, my childhood dreams as well as the fears. I have led a rather ordinary real-world life on the outside, accomplishing many things, none of which have catapulted me into the stratosphere of my early dreams. But on the inside I have led a very active mental life, always questing for an understanding of that earliest of all questions. "What's it all about?"

**Now**, from the high hill of seventy-eight years (and now almost eighty-four, as this work has wended its way through writing, rewriting, the roadblock of the publishing world chaos that brought gridlock for too long, then eminently slowly toward publication), as I look back much further than I can see ahead, an answer of sorts has come to me. It has taken a long time in impinging itself upon my perception. I've cast first one way, then another for answers that satisfy my yearning and my capacity to understand what I see and see through. Each casting, while at first compelling, had in the end, led to an extreme that caused me to withdraw, not totally satisfied that it, of itself, was the answer that I sought.

**In** my early years *religion* made its overwhelming presence known to me. Its answer was *authority* without *permission* to inquire into its basis.

**Then** in my late teens and early adult life, science offered me the broad avenue of its many intriguing theories and seemingly continuous discoveries. I was led like a bloodhound hot on the many trails offered, but one by one they grew faint with the desired objective still not within sight. In the end I'm left with the impression that any final answer from science is still in the process of being endlessly revised, which for science is as it should be.

**From** the dusty bookshelf of *time*, religion again called. This time in a small quiet voice, it invited me to once more inquire. This time it seemed to offer the choice to believe and then seek, or seek in order to believe that it held the answers to all the questions that I have asked and the many things that Man has seemed to discover across the ages.

**But**, I told myself, I must remember this time, to proceed carefully and not to be drawn unmindfully toward either extreme.

**My** experience with the study of *science* still convinces me that the constant testing of its answers, while aggravating when a favored one is overturned, is the surest method to keep the answers relevant with the most recent discoveries regarding the earth and the cosmos that the earth resides in.

**Still**, *science* offers no firm ground to build a system of belief upon, to explain those things that seem not to have changed over the ages, as well as the questions that still have no apparent answers. *Science* seems at its best in providing the *how*, regarding things of the material world, but *science*, almost without exception, retreats from even attempting to postulate *why* the material world came into being from out of what *was* prior to the *big bang*.

**Religion**, when it offers answers that seemed to be complete hundreds of years ago, when it insists on continued belief in the relevancy of the interpretations that provided those answers, and this in the ever changing world of today, risks a certain loss of credibility. Yet “religion,” systems of belief, exists primarily because Man has always felt that there was more to this world than the eye or the mind alone can perceive.

**Against** all the understanding derived from his senses that should convince Man of his singularity, somehow, he could never *feel* totally alone in the world. Even understanding his felt need to believe in something more able to control the raw forces of his environment, there were still times when he felt led by something more than his own experience. Religion provided a form in which to enclose that something.

**I**, for some time, have felt a need to strike a balance between these two systems. One that conserves all that I see to be good in each, while deferring the felt need to choose between their apparent conflicts. I must somehow exercise the patience to await what future insight might reveal. I must not close the door to additional understanding prematurely.

**But** my curious mind has been asking for some time, could there be a kind of unity that exists beyond our current understanding that would make these systems but different emanations of a common denominator?

**Science** searches ever more deeply for that unity of forces. Religion claims that it has already found what science still searches so earnestly for.

**I've** always been reluctant, for reasons that should become or might already be apparent, to share with others the kind of questions that I've asked as well as the answers that have come. But, it has become increasingly imperative of late, that I cast aside all cautionary reticence.

**These** understandings, so privately arrived at, and then sequestered, must not disappear for the lack of a willing witness.

*“He had left me a word,  
tossed me a key to a door  
that I never knew was there,  
and had still to find.”*

Beryl Markham-- West with the Night

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## Introduction

**The Bible** is the word of God, according to its *adherents* who avidly seek to practice its tenets; *believers* who accept most of its propositions, with a tentative kind of reserve for some; and *supporters* who cannot imagine a more comprehensive alternative. Many, but not all of the first group characterize it as literally inerrant, without error. A majority of the middle group would wonder at the need of such a strict construction, while many

of the third group, the supporters, feel more comfortable seeing the Bible only as a kind of symbolic representation of an ideal life.

**It** is admittedly a work by many authors, brought to its present form over the centuries. There have been many efforts to categorize it as to what form of literature it was meant to be.

**It** has been put forth by some as the history of a people. But, there are points of disagreement with other historical accounts regarding names of people and places that should be common to both. Elam, a middle-eastern city that seemed to have been mentioned only in the Bible was long thought to be an artificial construct, or possibly a case of misidentification. Archaeologists recently discovered Elam and determined it to be a real entity. Archaeological and similar processes have substantiated many other items originally known only from the Bible as also having historical validity.

**Others** have seen the Bible as theology. To them it represents a statement of belief that includes an account of a people, their origins, and their practice of the moral requirements that it advocates.

**Within** the Bible appear to be many non-literal stories that were meant to portray the rewards of adherence or consequences of resistance to its precepts. The Bible appears to have all of these facets and more, but there is still much resistance to perceiving it as presented by some among the leadership of its adherents.

**The** Doctrine of Inerrancy is a manifestation of relatively recent origin regarding the Bible. It was put forth in the early to middle 1800s as a clarification of belief at about the time that the discoveries provided by the *scientific method* began to diverge sharply from the traditional biblical statements.

**This** doctrine declared, in short, that the Bible represented the *literal* “Word of God” and was therefore inerrant (without error) from its smallest part up to and including its entirety.

**I’m sure** adherents felt this clarification necessary because of the increasing popularity of these new answers. And so, they resorted to a time-tested biblical method of corroboration by looking back into the Bible for earlier references that the Word, as adherents declared it, had also been so declared by others of their faith from the past.

**Argument** was offered, as on many other occasions, that any attempt to prove a statement by references to the statement itself were circular in nature and proved nothing without outside sources. Those answers, it was further stated, were only convincing to those who already believed by faith alone.

**This** newly minted clarification of belief troubled the minds of many otherwise ardent followers, who had been willing, over a long period of time, to overlook the “apparent” contradictions found within this work. Also, many unbelievers, who seem to have always avidly looked for any and all possible objects of derision, delightedly heaped scorn upon the adherents.

**Among** the unbelievers were the following:

*Agnostics:* those who do not wish to debate the reality of a god-based system.

*Atheists:* those who actively contend against that possibility, and

*Converts to the Scientific Method:* those who avidly profess that its answers have superseded the old knowledge contained in the Bible and other religious works.

**Under** such a devastating assault, some (including many nominal believers) preferred to interpret the Bible as having symbolic value only. This rubric was largely designed to sidestep the majority of criticism by agreeing with its critics.

**There** would now, they claimed, be no need to argue for a foundation in the actual history of the world. Within it, converts to this new explanation saw biblical stories as selected by their authors and others of high religious station to impart a code of morals and the wisdom of ages past to its readers.

The value of these stories need not depend upon being factual accounts of real-world events, but upon being able to impart desirable behavior patterns to those who became convinced of their value.

**Into** this maelstrom of controversy enters a new author bearing a gift of great insight given to him, he feels, from the most original of all sources. Five words, if understood in the completeness of the context that they were given in, would make further argument about the Bible's validity unnecessary.

*“A word grows to a thought  
a thought to an idea  
an idea to an act.  
The change is slow,  
and the Present is a sluggish traveler  
loafing in the path  
Tomorrow wants to take.”*  
Beryl Markham--West with the Night

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## Chapter 1

### Toward a Middle Ground

#### A Choice Between Extremes Is Unnecessary

**This** new way of seeing the Bible as a parable gives me a measure of freedom that I was not aware of under any past circumstances. It need not pass the strict test of inerrancy, insisted upon by many adherents, to be what I claim it to be.

**Every** jot and tittle need not be seen as copied, as it were, from the *mouth of God* in order to support the claim that it represents the *word* of God.

**Translations** into most of the world's languages, along with the differing versions of the many Christian denominations, make some degree of errancy almost mandatory. Certainly within the Christian world, each version, in the newness of its presentation, has been open to challenge as to its authority.

**Arguments** that state that God would not allow this kind of error to occur under any circumstance is shortsighted and borders on totally unnecessary flights of fancy which tend to impugn the natural integrity of this work.

**If** the Bible is viewed as the parable that I claim it to be, then any error in translation, etc., that did not detract from one's ability to look toward the larger meaning—the true *Word of God*—would be irrelevant.

**The** Bible's message is large enough to accommodate that kind of error without diluting its meaning.

**The Bible** need not be reduced to the point of unrealistic symbolism in order to explain away its *apparent* conflicts, or to accommodate it to the newer answers of science. This testament, both old and new, needs no apologetics that sacrifices core principles of the message to curry the favor of worldly opinion and its attendant lack of real understanding.

**The argument** that many accounts of the people and places identified in the Bible have no historical basis has itself more recently been brought into question through the sciences of archaeology, linguistics, etc.

**Errors** of historical chronology, as might have been made by some of its many authors as they copied or filled in information from other more abbreviated literary accounts or traditional oral history recitations of events, need not be accepted as proofs that invalidate the entire physical reality of this great work. Neither extreme is necessary or even desirable.

**The** kind of total all-encompassing inerrancy, as earlier described, has been made increasingly more difficult to support, with the application of modern linguistic processes pointing toward many authors, whose contributions were made over a long period of time, with occasional *apparent* error.

**The** more recent attempt to retreat into symbolic unreality only removes from the Bible the very authority that it must have to allow a successful witness to it as representing the actual *Word of God*

**If** not totally one or the other, what then **is** the Bible?

**The Bible**, as I have claimed in the beginning of this chapter, is a **parable!**

### **So, What Is a Parable?**

*The American Collegiate Dictionary* defines a parable as “a short allegorical story, designed to convey some truth or moral lesson. A discourse or saying conveying the intended meaning by a comparison, or under the likeness of something comparable or analogous.”

*The Funk and Wagnalls Standard Dictionary*, International Edition, defines a parable as “a comparison: specifically, a short narrative making a moral or religious point by comparison with natural or homely things.”

(The definition of “homely” as used here is “ordinary, domestic, plain, unpretentious, not having elegance, refinement, or cultivation.”)

**The Ark of the Covenant** as described in Exodus 25:10–23 has been referred to as a *Type*, a *prefiguring symbol*. (An impression made by a stamp, as in coinage.) It is further defined as an “earthly example of a heavenly counterpart” that is impossible to accurately describe when limited by the linguistic symbols of Man, which appear to have been developed mainly to represent earthly reality.

**This type**, the Ark of the Covenant, is a simplified earthly example, a comparison made by using natural (homely) things to describe something of the nature of that which of itself is indescribable.

A **parable** is a word picture comparable to the physical structure of the Ark. As such it is another kind of *type*, very similar in its nature.

**I contend** that the Bible is also a kind of *type*, a complex word picture containing many other word pictures, a parable of parables, the most original of all simplified examples, the foundation from which all others derive their form. It is the quintessential narrative story told to convey a complicated message by using familiar things to illustrate

a communication many times too complicated for the limited understanding of Man! Because of this contention, my understanding of a parable as contained in the two foregoing paragraphs will be the basis used throughout the following chapters.

**In** the New Testament of the Christian Bible is the story of Jesus of Nazareth who sought to convey “my Father’s” message partly by the use of parables. Time after time his disciples heard the simplified example as the complete message. Jesus scolded them several times for arguing over the details instead of reaching for the greater meaning behind them. Finally, they pleaded with him to explain the meaning of the stories that he told.

**It** didn’t seem to do any good. How could they hope to digest the larger message if they couldn’t understand the story for the simplified example that it was? They never did seem to get it, until after being “touched by the spirit” after Jesus’ death and resurrection, which simply allowed them to accept his teachings by faith rather than by understanding.

**Even** after two millennia of having the parables that Jesus taught clarified as to what function they were meant to perform, arguing over the details still seems more popular than reaching for the fuller meaning.

**Today**, readers argue over the Bible just like people of old argued over the parables instead of reaching toward the deeper meaning intended. In this work I shall seek to grope toward that deeper meaning.

**If** the Bible *is* a parable, what is the larger meaning that it points us toward? If God is the *Omniscient Being* that the Bible announces and that all believers declare, is it possible that He has deigned to share a small portion of all knowledge, that He is the originator and keeper of, with us, apparently the highest or at least the most recent of all His creations?

**Could** this be a way of understanding the seemingly steady progress that has, as science extrapolates, raised Man from out of the ordinary world of nature, to become extraordinary? Or could it be, as the biblical story has it, from the “fall from grace” of Adam and Eve, through the stumbling lurch upward again, we have struggled toward what we have become today, the relative master of earth, sky and space?

Many other examples of parabolic language exist within the context of the Bible, but I do not intend to go any further than to state that they are all sub-units within the larger overriding parable that is the Bible.

My search (in chapter 3 of this work) must largely confine itself to an examination of the sub-units of the Bible, the Books, beginning with Genesis. But first, let’s look at the whole Bible in this new way.

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## Chapter 2

### The Bible as a Parable

**Granted**, the many books of the Old and New Testament would seem to be anything but a short narrative! But, let’s try a view of them in a different kind of context a much larger one, a much fuller one.

**We** might look at the Old Testament as being similar to the New Testament message that Jesus imparted to his disciples and through them to the world. The Torah’s five

books witness to the proposition that God created everything and chose a people. The remaining *Books of the Prophets* tell and foretell of the consequences of straying from the Torah's instructions.

**The** New Testament witnesses that God had fulfilled his people's desire for a Messiah and deliverance. We may now discern that Jesus' use of the many parables within the context of his whole message might be equated to at least the five books of the Torah in existence during his earthly lifetime. His claim to be the fulfillment of the "prophesies of old" drew deadly fire from the ruling priestly class who had grown tired of the *false* messianic declarations of anti-Roman zealots. But the *people* were purportedly amazed by his knowledge, wisdom, and miraculous acts.

**If** the Old Testament is but a parable of a larger message, what might that message be? If we accept this premise as a foundation upon which to build a new understanding, how then might we see the book of Genesis?

**Can** we see it as a complete account of the creation of our world? The universe? The cosmos? Should we construe it as a detailed description of the beginning and progression of all life down to and including the emergence of Man? Discoveries in the natural world and the study of astronomy seem to indicate something much larger actually occurred.

**The** answer then would seem obvious. The biblical story of Genesis does appear to take on the character of a "short narrative" meant to provide some small beginning familiarity concerning an extremely complex process.

**Were** the words actually spoken, "Let there be light!" eons before Man acquired language as postulated within scientific inquiry?

**Or**, does Genesis imply a *storyteller's* attempt to explain what might have come to him or to someone within his purview as an almost incomprehensibly complex *vision* of what we today understand as the hydrogen fusion ignition that gave light to our sun?

**Within** the *sub-parable* of Genesis are other *shorthand* references to complex processes such as, but certainly not limited to, the forming of the earth, the gathering of the waters, the coming into existence of all plant, and then animal life. Might these then be seen as other examples of a parable, within a parable called Genesis, within the parable called the Bible?

**One** may now view these narratives as overly simplified accounts of an interminably ancient *orderly progression of events* long within the purview of Man, since he has ascended from out of the world of all God's other creatures.

To gain some small familiarity, some meager understanding of the nature of these processes, Man has attempted to look back into the increasingly distant past, as well as the eternally unknowable future.

**Artifacts**, suddenly appearing at or near the surface of the earth, have persistently begged for an interpretation of what might have preceded its viewer. The myriad points of light in the heavenly canopy have long perplexed the mind of Man and tantalized the imagination to see some ordering in their distribution.

**Many** an original and seemingly logical interpretation has found its way into the memory of Man. Cherished to the point of worship, they have been recited across the centuries as valued articles of the *wisdom of the ancients*.

**Much** of present knowledge, built upon the verities of the past, has stood the test of time. Each generation has contributed some small portion to the larger whole, benefiting from that which it has heeded, learning anew from that which it has ignored or discarded.

**Out** of this background, many ancient epic tales, preceding the Genesis accounts, had gained ascendancy, and after an interval, disappeared into the fog of an unremembered past, leaving only bits and pieces to be borrowed anew and eventually inserted into literary tracts by its inheritors.

**The** Bible bears witness to this process. Its stories, some apparently ill-remembered borrowings, have been accompanied by the heroics of a people's champions, their genealogies identifying their uniqueness, a chronology of their particular history, and special words of wisdom. All these, put together with a seemingly otherworldly vision, have allowed it a longevity rarely equaled by any other literary endeavor.

**The** apparent skill with which these have been assembled lends to the assumption that they were meant to be seen as the parables that they appear to be to this author. The orders of succession match rather well with the chronology of discoveries made throughout the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries' scientific method.

**Some** of these discoveries, at first glance, seem at odds with a traditional interpretation gleaned by ardent and careful study conducted by the Christian Church's clergy and other religious leadership over centuries of apparently prayerful scholarship.

**But**, are these differences real? Or, do they only take on the appearance of reality due to a certain lack of understanding by adherents on both sides of this controversy?

**This** new approach is meant to move the discussion away from the entrenched extremes, while hopefully adding a bit of that otherworldly wisdom to help in a renewal of the search for a common ground of understanding, which will respect both the new knowledge of the present and the uncanny *wisdom of the ages*.

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## Chapter 3

### The Biblical Account of the Beginning

Vs.

### Science's Attempt to "see through" to how it all might have begun

*Then God said "Let there be light." And light appeared. And God was pleased with it, and divided the light from the darkness. So He let it shine for a while and then there was darkness again.*

—Gen. 1:3–5, TLB

(At this point I wish to reiterate: All my attempts to explain scientific discoveries, as earlier acknowledged, will be from a layman's perspective as gleaned from many primary and secondary sources.)

**William Hubble** theorized from his discoveries in the early thirties that the universe was expanding. Attempts by others within the scientific community to extrapolate a reversal of his proposed order of expansion brought them to a startling conclusion. The end result would leave them with a singularity, an extremely intense immeasurably small point of light. Beyond this, they felt that the scientific method could provide no provable precondition. Derisively inspired commentary brought forth the title, the *big bang theory*.

**So**, as close to the beginning that the scientific method was prepared to go, there was light whose brilliance would never again be matched by any heavenly display.

**Concerning** the closing phrase of the above quotation, “and then there was darkness again,” a follow-on theory of an initially rapid expansion, called inflation, caused the light to fade into an ever darkening soup of primordial particles from out of which the galaxies would form to bring a second order of light into the universe.

*“In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. The earth was without form, and [a] void; and darkness was on the face of the deep. And the spirit of God was hovering over the face of the waters [dark vapors]”* (Gen. 1:1–2 NKJV& TLB).

**This** opening paragraph of Genesis might be a statement that is only meant to introduce the more well-known second paragraph that contains the phrase,

*“Let there be light.”* Or it might, as it seems to me, speak of a time before the beginning, some kind of amorphous condition that preceded the *light* or *singularity*.

A very few physicists, among the most advanced in their field of science, are only now tentatively trying to contemplate what kind of condition might have preceded the appearance of this *singularity*, this “beginning light.”

**The** ramifications of this tentative probing are so vast, its implications so unknowable, as possibly to consign it to be forever beyond the grasp of mankind.

**This** may be implied by the rapidity with which the latest most tentative theories, (string and quantum loop) are knocked down by already known exceptions that challenge their completeness as these searchers go in quest of a basis to extrapolate a time before time.

**This** opening paragraph might also be seen as the first sub-parable in Genesis. But the second paragraph (vs. 3–5) that this chapter opens with is my choice of a first effort to identify a parable that might be able to enclose Man’s scientific effort to discover how everything came to be as we find it today.

*“In the beginning”* there was light. Both religion and science since the ’30s seem in agreement with this statement. The closing two sentences of the second paragraph conclude the thought of the selected parable. *“He called the light ‘daytime,’ and the darkness ‘nighttime.’ Together they formed the first day.”*

**Imagine**, if you will, a person (probably a man with some time on his hands) from a primitive society trying to envision how everything got to be the way that he could see it to be. Suddenly, an insight so vast in its implications that he finds it too difficult to assign to his thought processes alone, mentally lies before him.

A vast moving panorama spreads out before him. As surely as he could see the babies being born around him had a beginning, and childhood memories implied that there was also a time before those memories, even a time before his birth, there was also an end. The death of his elders confirmed that all things seemed to be limited to a span of time.

**Now**, a myriad of similar examples floods his mind. Days that turn into night that end in day again, that lead to seasons of birth, growth, death and rebirth. There must be a beginning to everything in the world around him, even time.

**Did** he belong to an epoch where the strength of animals was revered, or a time that the forces of nature spoke in a crescendo of frighteningly loud earth-shaking sound that testified to the greatness of a power unseen but always present? Did he have an understanding of the usual beneficence of this *Presence* that was also the giver of all the good things of the earth and hunt?

**Did** he understand that certain people seemed to possess a gift of communication whereby they could impart a kind of wisdom far beyond what any earthly hero could acquire through a life experience?

**Could** something convince him that some circumstance had somehow *selected* him to share a magnificent understanding that language alone was insufficient to describe? Would his language have a word to describe this experience? A word similar to *a vision*?

**Could** he convince those around him that words were spoken to his mind similar to that which commences with “*in the beginning*”?

**His** excitement, as well as agitation over his inability to adequately convey that which had been visited upon him, might have led to great fame and fortune, or to an untimely death due in part to a shallowness of intellect of those that he’d chosen to share this gift with. Thus it always seems to have been with these pioneers of discovery.

“*And God saw the light, that it was good and God divided the light from the darkness*” (Gen. 1:4, NKJV).

**Try** to describe a period of time of unknowable length divided as sharply as light or dark concerning a subject with which there are no words in your language to define the images set before you. Might an earthbound observer, viewing a maddeningly complex scene concerning time and light, be tempted to find a counterpart in his earthly experience and limited language to describe something akin to, even though vastly smaller and simpler than what he had seen?

“*So, He let it shine for a while and then there was darkness again*” (Gen. 1:5, TLB).

**Would** the fuller meaning, that this oversimplified example had substituted for in the ensuing centuries, be recognizably similar to the periods of time that science has identified as the time it took for the bright point of light to become smothered in the darkness of the inflationary expansion of the cosmos? How could mere earthbound linguistic symbols ever describe such an unearthly scene? Yet Man in the early twentieth century has been able to lay out that scene, using the tools inherited from the *scientific method* of his predecessors, in terms more surely provable than that early vision.

“*Together, they formed the first day.*”

**A vast** but discrete panorama had been set before this observer. It had begun with light and had ended with darkness. It had started with something being done and ended with nothingness. He was only faintly aware of an immeasurably great period of time in which this event had occurred. How could he ever hope to share this with only such inadequate linguistic tools as might be at his disposal? He would, I imagine, choose the closest thing within his own limited vocabulary no matter how inadequate. It came to be described as a day.

During the Common Era (0 to 2004), also described as *since the time of Christ*, many have attempted to reinterpret this *God’s Day* as being as different from our understanding of a day as we are different from God. A favorite comparison has that first day being equivalent to a thousand of our years, but even that seems inadequate in the light of today’s understanding of time through the discoveries of geology.

**If** the latest scientific theory concerning the passage of time can be relied upon, the cosmos came into being between 12 to 14 billion years ago, and the earth, between 4.5 to 7 billion. If we use the upper range of the latter time frame, then God’s day would seem approximately equivalent to one billion earth years.

**Based** on that interpretation, if God “*took his rest on the seventh day,*” He must have inserted everything that He created on the earth in the last billion years into some kind of Godly *software program* that has been running at least semi-automatically ever since. If so, science’s theory of evolution might not be so far off after all!

Lest that last statement misinform the reader, a clarification follows.

To this author, *science* is not a belief system! It is a tool! It is a process with which to investigate the *orderly progression of events* that this *creation* appears to represent, in order to reveal the intent of the *Creator* of all that exists.

The closer that science gets to the unification of the forces that it seeks to discover, the closer it seems to get to the nothingness from out of which all of *creation* appears to have arisen.

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## **Chapter 4**

### **Toward an Ordering of Events**

The “seven days” of creation imply the passage of discrete periods of time. How rock hard should we be in addressing that number? There are seven days assigned to the period of time that we call our week. This ordering seems to have emerged from out of the mists of time from as far back as Man felt the need to number things. Ten digits, the sum of both of our hands, would logically imply that all numbering systems should have been built upon the base-ten system common today, but there have been other orderings.

A **base-twelve system** is implicit in the manner that we number the discrete periods of time in our year called months. Historical evidence indicates that some societies used that system, while others, by implication, used differing methods, including a base-seven. The Bible and other literary works mention the number seven often as a number of great mystical, even magical significance.

The **original creation story** that we still have some small evidence of even today, carried within it a sense of several passages of time. Seven may have always been the number indicated, or it might have been insinuated into the generational retellings as a memory guide because it was a terminal number or because it was considered a *lucky* number and would enhance the *value* of stories reiterated across the myriad of centuries.

If this “seven days” is a parable, a simplified version of a grander communication, then the number of the periods might have less significance than that there *were* several periods of time in which particular things transpired.

In geology the longest unit of time is called an Eon which seems to be a very long but indefinite period. It appears to be made up of two or more Eras, the next lower order of time. There are five identifiable eras within the geologic time scale. That’s as far as Man has been able to probe back into geologic history with any certainty. These probings largely rely upon life-forms embedded within rock layers. Very possibly, the earliest life-forms have left insufficient evidence of their existence for undisputed discovery. Any formative processes that preceded the advent of life would also have gone largely undocumented.

*“Then God said, ‘Let there be a firmament—’ And God called the firmament Heaven. So the evening and morning were the second day”* (Gen. 1:6–8, NKJV).

A **current theory** in astronomy postulates that after the first light had been smothered in the dark soup of rapidly expanding primordial particles, some unevenness in that expansion began to form which coalesced into galaxies of stars which brought the second order of light into being.

*“Then God said, ‘Let the waters under the heavens be gathered together into one place, and let the dry land appear—’ So the evening and the morning were the third day”* (Gen. 1:9, 13).

Astronomers have postulated that our Milky Way galaxy exploded into star-birth light approximately 14 billion years ago, with our solar system in a second or third generation of star formation coming into existence about 8 billion years ago. After the planets coalesced, then solidified, they cooled rapidly, as geologic time is counted. As the gaseous envelope around our planet dispersed the heat, one of its heavier constituents descended toward the surface and began to precipitate.

**Our earth** has been called a water planet with two-thirds of its surface so covered. One theory states that at one time water, which may well have been hot enough to boil for a considerable length of time, completely covered the earth’s surface. This direct contact with the hot rocky crustal portion would have facilitated the even more rapid cooling of

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