

## **READING GENESIS 1:2**

**Rev. John Emory McKenna, PhD**  
**Professor of Theology, Grace Communion Seminary**  
**Adjunct Professor, Azuza Pacific University**  
**and World Mission University**  
*mickeyann7@sbcglobal.net*

*ABSTRACT: Genesis 1:2 needs to be read and understood as a part of the confession of the "very good," not evil, creation according to the witness of Moses to the Revelation of God with us. As such, the verse participates in the establishment of those primordial and constitutive principles we need to recover in our time, so that we may learn to articulate the justification and sanctification of God's beginning with the cosmologies of our modern sciences. Karl Barth's tryst with the consensus of modern scholarship on the significance of the verse thus requires a new and in-depth interpretation in the light of a cognitive relationship between biblical and scientific theology today, with which Professor Thomas F. Torrance has challenged the Church's proclamation of the Gospel of God in the World.*

Genesis 1:2 is to be heard in concert with Moses' confession of the work of the Creator in the whole of his Creation Week. The claims of Moses, the Prophet of Israel, depend upon his dialogue with the Great I-AM the Lord God, according to his revelation for his people among the nations, in the events of the Voice from the flames of a "Burning Bush" speaking with his chosen Servant at Horeb. The days and nights as the Time and times of God's Creation Week are what they are because the Creator is who he is as the Redeemer of Israel in his self-revelation with Moses. Genesis 1:2 is to be heard in resonance with the whole of this Week and especially in the whole of Genesis 1:1-5, the first day of the Week.



From the Beginning of this Time and times to the blessing of God with them, we are with Moses given to know that in the Beginning the whole of the creation, with humankind made in his image and likeness, was made "very good" and "blessed." We understand that any exegesis of Genesis 1:2 must be interpreted as resonating thus with this "very good" creation of God, even from its Beginning with God. I will argue that any abyss posited between Genesis 1:1 and Genesis 1:2 in which they may be interpreted in opposition to one another and the whole of the first day of the Creation Week is to be rejected. Moses' confession of the Week with its doctrines of *creation out of nothing*, *creation out of chaos*, and *creation as light* together provide the ground on which we may understand God's Beginning of his creation. The Voice of the "light" that we are given to hear in the Beginning is not another voice than the Voice that spoke with Moses from the Burning Bush beside the Mountain of God at Horeb. The "*chaos and emptiness, the darkness upon the faces of the deep, the cherishing of the Spirit of God over the (primordial) waters*" are the ground on which "Day One" of the confession is made. The Creation Week which the Prophet of Israel and the Servant of God proclaimed against all the idol and myth making prevalent among the nations of the Ancient Near East then, is entirely "very good" and "blessed" with and for God from beginning to its blessed formation as the creation of God.

The great Swiss theologian, Karl Barth, has commented on Genesis 1:2 with his interpretation of the text: "This verse has always constituted a particular *crux interpretum* — one of the most difficult in the whole Bible — and it is no small comfort to learn from Gunkel that it is a 'veritable mythological treasure chamber.'<sup>1</sup>

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1 Karl Barth, *Church Dogmatics*, III.1, 102. In 1946, the American scholar, Jack Finnegan, could compare Genesis 1 to Babylon's *Enumah Elish* and refer the terms of Genesis 1:2 as belonging to the *Tiamat* of the mythological world of Babylonian cosmogony. While recognizing the differences of Moses' confession, the similarities have become more the focus of attention (*Light From The Ancient Past*, Princeton, 53). Thus, the difficulties are introduced into the interpretation of the verse as problems of borrowing and assimilating terms while setting them in some new context. This view is taught in our universities with dogmatic force today. An opposite view has been proposed by Paul L. Seely in his article "The First Days of Genesis in Concordist Theory and in Biblical Context," *PSCF*, Vol. 49, No. 2 (June 1997), 85-95. My article in the same publication on "Natural Theology," 96-104, represents my early struggles to understand Barth and the problem of the relationship of the terms and their meanings in the various contexts we may read among the ancient

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After a thorough examination and analysis of the history of the exegesis of this verse, Barth concludes, in one of the fine print sections of his *Church Dogmatics*,

“Our only option is to consider v.2 as a portrait, deliberately taken from myth, of the world which according to his revelation was negated, rejected, ignored and left behind in his actual creation.”<sup>2</sup>

The verse is thus thought to express that which opposes God’s “perfect” and “good” beginning of his creation. Barth will thus proceed to develop his understanding of *Das Nichtige* (the “nothingness” of the verse’s implications) as belonging to the mystery of Evil in this world. This is the world in which the “impossible possibility” would be realized against the “very good” and “blessed” intentions of the will of God as the Creator of the creation. The *chaos* (ΤΟΧΗ) and *emptiness* (ΒΟΗΗ), *darkness* (ΧΩΣΗΕΚΗ) and *deep* (ΤΕΗΟΜ) of the *waters* (ΜΑΥΙΜ) *brooded over* (ΜΕΡΑΧΕΡΗΕΤΗ) by the Spirit of God is often thought of as impotent in the face of Evil in God’s creation. The words of Genesis 1:2 are terms whose origins may be found rooted in the cosmogonies of the myths and animated idols of the ancient peoples and made comparable with the intention of the writer in Genesis 1. As the Prophet of Israel and the Servant of God, as the Confessor of the Creator of the creation, we are made to seek to contradict the contradiction of the idol and myth makers against God and his “very good” or ‘perfect’ creation of God in the Beginning, a far cry from the Voice of the ‘burning bush’ or the Voice of “light” in this Beginning. The world of Genesis 1:2 is made in this interpretation to belong to terms whose significance is not God’s creation but an evil world against him. Similarities and comparisons between the ancient cosmogonies and Moses’ cosmology have rendered the terms of Genesis 1:2 as unfit for God’s intention and purpose in a world that is his creation. Perhaps it is the very uniqueness of this “very good” and “blessed” creation of God that is being despised here. It is, perhaps, the very uniqueness of the confession of the

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cosmogonies and cosmologies. Modern analytical interpretation of texts suffers generally from a lack of understanding of a truly modern scientific methodology.

2 Ibid., 102-110. Barth surprisingly, with American scholarship at this point, attempts to read the “rudimentary” conditions laid down in v.2 as those which deny the will of the Creator. He then seeks to contradict the contradiction the verse signifies against the whole of the confession of the Week of the Creator.

cosmos of the creation, according to Moses, that gives his interpreters so many problems in the history of the interpretation of his prophecy about the creation.<sup>3</sup>

Barth's grasp of Genesis 1:2 and his assertion that *Das Nichtige* or the "nothingness" of Israel's "creation theory" is a contradiction of the Creation Week, the contradiction of Evil to be contradicted by the Creator, and is thoroughly explored in its form and content in the history of its exegesis. The relationship between the creation and the covenant with Israel thus forms the basis of his arguments in his volumes on the theology of his concept of the Word of God in this world.<sup>4</sup> I believe that his understanding of the meaning of Genesis 1:2 suffers from the fashionable and general consensus of modern or post-modern methods of historical-critical-analytical methods of biblical interpretation in our times. I now think that Barth's grasp of the verse suffers from a partial understanding of the purpose of Moses' confession and testimony to the revelation of the Word of God. Certainly, he is justified to seek to understand Moses' God in opposition to what is against the Creator's will, with the "very good" creation, but is he justified in claiming the dark as Evil, without any Good, as the first day of that

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3 Barth's exegesis of Genesis 1 did take seriously, with many of the fathers of the early Church, the assumption that it was in the light of the Incarnation that we may seek to understand the sense the "good" and "very good" we read in the confession of Moses. In this light, he can argue, that the "nothingness" of the creation is to be identified with evil and sin as the dark opposing God's intention and purpose in his creation. But this understanding then sees the cosmos of the creation as the "*strange and alien world of the Bible,*" a world in which theology needs to be delivered from any influence of any of the various particular cosmologies laid down in the history of our "Western" civilization. In this way the great theologian avoids any confrontation with "natural theologies," including the claims of modern physics upon his exegetical efforts, and this frees him to develop his theology. (For Torrance's meeting with Barth on this issue see *Space, Time, & Resurrection*, Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1976, ix-xiii.) Torrance goes on to argue that the epistemological claims of modern physicists upon the relationship between the revelation of God and a "natural theology" ought to be accepted in our times. The fact that Barth never read Einstein or the 'Quantum people' of our times needs to be overcome.

4 See my article entitled "God and the Nothingness," in *Quodlibet Journal* Vol. 2, No. 2 (Summer 2000), for my early understanding of Barth and the problem between the meaning of the "nothingness" and the *nature* of the creation. We may not identify the "*nihilo*" with modern views of the "void" in our Big Bang cosmology today!

creation? I will argue that Evil appears nowhere in Genesis 1:1–2:3, and is only introduced in the account of the covenanted relationship between God and Adam as read later in chapter 2 and in chapter 3. The terms of Genesis 1–2:3 are all significantly a part of the “very good” creation whose vitality across the ages has given Moses’ confession an appropriate correspondence with our efforts to understand the nature of the universe.

Today, we tend to disregard the harmony implicated in the concert between the traditional doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, our understanding of *chaos*, *emptiness*, *darkness*, and *the deep of the faces of the waters* of the primordial world, embraced by the Spirit of God, and the speaking of the Voice of God we are given to hear as the source of the positing of “light” in Day One of the Beginning.<sup>5</sup> Our willingness to divorce the power of God in the Beginning (*creation out of nothing*) and the Spirit of God (*brooding over or cherishing or sustaining*) the unformed earth under the heavens and the earth, and the Voice of the Creator as the source of “light” in the cosmos of the creation obviates our natural unease with the real converse between the “nothingness,” and the “*something-ness*,” that is the formless emptiness of the earth and the deep darkness that is the creation before God’s speaking of “light” into existence in his “very good” creation, and the actuality of the “light” giving form and content to the cosmos. We are more comfortable today with the concept of “creation out of chaos, and so forth,” than we are with “*creatio ex nihilo*” as God’s “good” and “very good” creation. Our comfort belongs to a pre-suppositional framework of thought able to interpret “things” out of something or other but at a loss to understand the real “nothingness” of God’s cosmos as his creation from the Beginning and until the Ending of created time and times, where humankind is to known as his image and likeness, blessed with his rest upon his “very good”

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5 See, for instance, John Goldingay’s *Genesis for Everyone* (John Knox Press, Louisville: 2010), 5-9. The author claims there is no “absolute beginning” in mind, no philosophy in mind, and that the author is interested in the ‘transformation’ of ‘empty wastes’ into “formed cosmos,” “creation out of chaos,” rather than in the doctrine of “creation out of nothing.” But it was common in the way the early Church understood Moses, to believe in a strong resonance between the acts of God and his Being in the beginning when light came into being, and the “new Beginning” established by the Incarnation of his Word. The significance of this harmony appears to be quite lost upon many today.

creation. With such frameworks of thought, we have developed another kind of battle between Good and Evil in our times and in the deep split between Church dogma and biblical theology with which so many work even today. There is little enough real regard shown for the role of the doctrine of the *creatio ex nihilo*, as implicated with v. 1, and as laid down by Israel and the early fathers of the Church in concert with the actions of God in v.2 and v.3.<sup>6</sup>

The modern preference for reading the concept of "creation out of *something*," — "chaos," "void," "formless," "waste," etc. — without any appreciation for the significance of the doctrine of "creation out of *nothing*" and its concert in the Beginning of God's creation, has resulted in much of the reductionism we may trace in human thought, either in abstract, timeless categories or positivistic autonomous empirical sciences, from Ptolemy (200 AD-1500 AD) to Newton (1670-1915 AD) to the universe of light of Einstein's revolution in our times.

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6 I do not believe that the many, who think the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* was only taught as a result of the entanglement of Moses' world with Greek philosophy, are the source of the fruitfulness of the doctrine with our Western Civilization. The doctrine signifies that God's action (BARA') in the Beginning of the biblical world is unique. Later readers of the confession struggled to understand this significance, especially with reference to the problems Greek philosophers had with *creatio ex nihilo*, who claimed that nothing can come out of nothing. The doctrine possesses a meaning the interpretation of which cannot seek to prove its truth on a logical basis conceived outside of Moses' prophetic testimony to the revelation of God. Thus, there exists a long tradition of struggle about the doctrine, even among the early fathers of the Church. The doctrine finds one of its fullest exegetes in the works of John Philoponus (490-570 AD) in Alexandria. He attempted in his time to take the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* seriously for the physics of the cosmos of God's creation. Of Philoponus, Professor Torrance has written: "*Never in all the history of science has Christian theology had such a transforming impact on science as through John Philoponus of Alexandria in the sixth century. His was a biblical and Christocentric theology in which he sought to give an adequate account of its contingent rational order*" (in *Theology and Natural Science*, Wipf & Stock, Eugene: 2002, 107). The doctrine of "creation out of nothing" is fundamental to the confession of Moses and to the physics and cosmology of Philoponus, against the arguments of the Master Aristotle from the 4<sup>th</sup> century BC. With his "thought experiments" the Grammarian was able to develop his "impetus" and his "light" theories, which became justified with the works of Copernicus (1543 AD), Galileo (1643), Newton (1687), and finally with Einstein (1905/15) and his revolution of how we understand space and time in the history of science in our own day.

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Much biblical commentary today seeks to understand Genesis 1:2 as out of something or another and out of the evil that opposes God's "perfect" Beginning. I would argue that the formation of "Day One" from the Beginning of the "very good" Creation Week is bound up with both the doctrines of *creatio ex nihilo*, the creation "out of chaos," and the creation as "light" in a symphony of actions taken by God in the Beginning which is the object of Moses' confession and knowledge of the Creator, knowledge that depends upon his knowledge of the Lord as the Redeemer of Israel from Egypt and the Deliverer of the people of God among the nations in God's "very good" creation. To know the Creator is to know the Redeemer, and knowledge of the Redeemer has priority over knowing the Creator — this is the significance of the divine call of the Great I-AM the Lord God in his appearance in the events of the burning bush with Moses at Horeb.<sup>7</sup>

I believe that we need to recover the interpretive insights of Israel and the early fathers of the Church into the revelation of God, if we are going to obtain a fresh understanding of the all that is implicated with the *saga* that is the background for the prophet's account of the renewal of the covenanted relationship between God and Israel, a relationship whose *nature* ought not to escape our attentions, a relationship given to be read in the Five Books of Moses at the foundation of the canon of biblical faith. We need to gain a truly dynamic apprehension of this relational reality in our time, one that exists between the theology of the revelation of God and the history of Israel among the nations in God's creation, one we have named as "The Pentateuch" today. Without this foundation, and the understanding of how God as Creator and God as Redeemer are linked, "history" in our generation has become reduced to the evolution of our kind in the universe.

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<sup>7</sup> The verbs of Genesis 1:1-5 in the formation of Day One, *BARA'*, *MERACHEPHET*, *'AMAR*, *R'AH*, *BADAL*, and *QARA*, with *HAYAH*, are acts of God to be heard resonating strongly with one another as a part of a symphony to be heard with the confession and its prophetic thrust. The Time-space being defined from the Beginning and being sustained as nights and days of the Creation Week are "good." Karl Barth has characterized this confession as *saga* about the history of the creation, story we are unable to hear as history. But it is this "story" that bears the command of the Great I-AM (Exodus 3:14-15) in the light of the "story" of the Exodus, as the origin of the knowledge Moses is given as the Prophet of Israel and the Servant of God in his times, tuned into the events of the Creation Week as background to the veracity of the deliverance of Israel from Egypt.

Divorced from a biblical understanding of history, revelation can become merely empty abstractions about Time and times. We need in our time to obtain a solid and cognitive grasp of that which holds together the two as one.<sup>8</sup>

The Creation Week in this way is intended to serve as the background for the testimony of Israel's redemption. According to the *nature* of the revelation of God with the prophetic history of the chosen people of God among the nations, we are to read the relationship between God, the world, and humankind at their inception from the Beginning of Time to a certain Ending of Time belonging to the glory of God as the Lord he is — the Great I-AM of the relationship — whose Word we are made to hear throughout the processes of his creation. Other notions of time and space found among the many creation epics, prevalent among the peoples of the Ancient Near East with Moses, are denied by this testimony. They have no claim to the reality that the world is God's "very good" creation from the Beginning to the Ending of his intention and purpose in Time and times. Moses thus confesses in the Exodus of Israel from Egypt the 'new Name' of God as the Lord he is, and the great I-AM he is, as the giver of the Name and the commander of the Prophet of Israel in the world. Moses is commanded to proclaim the "new Name" of God against the idol and myth making in the peoples of the Ancient Near East at the time of the self-revealing and self-naming events in the history of the people of God.

It is this self-defining Lord God, whose Voice from the Bush to Sinai is the commander of Israel's history, that is to be heard and obeyed according to the biblical covenanted relationship inherent in the testimony. The Torah and the Tabernacle established by Moses belong to this same Voice, the Voice to be heard in God's Beginning and in his Ending with Israel. There exists no other that is the One his people must hear. We understand the significance these events in history as a renewal movement for the covenanted relation between God and his people in his creation. With these renewals, we are steadily commanded to serve in the theatre of the world the primordial intention of humankind as made in the "image and likeness of God." With the renewals, relationship is steadily justified

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8 See T. F. Torrance, *Natural and Theological Science* (Wipf & Stock, Eugene: 2001).

and restored from its fallen condition in the history of the creation.<sup>9</sup> Against all the idols, idol-making, and myth-making surrounding Israel in the Ancient Near East, Moses has appeared to testify to the Great I-AM. With her Exodus from Egypt, Israel is called to bear witness with her history to this revelation of the Redeemer-Creator that he is, this One who is the Great I-AM and the Lord of the covenant between himself and Israel among the nations. As this One, he is the holy One with Israel in his creation. He is self-revealing, self-naming, self-defining One and no other. He is this One as the Lord and God who is the One who has determined to communicate himself in his acts for his people, to deliver Israel from the "gods" of times past, from the destructive illusions about who he is with his people and his creation. The doctrines of *creatio ex nihilo*, "creation out of chaos" and "emptiness" and so forth, and creation out of "his Voice in the creation" are to be heard as the Beginning of the world as his creation. These doctrines thus form a key background for the formation of a framework of thought that is meant as Moses' witness to the revelation of God, the confession of his Voice, his Spirit, and his Hand as the Creator in his Beginning. The freedom we have in this world is thus rooted in the freedom of the One he is. Let it be understood as the actual case that we do not understand who the I-AM the Lord God is except by the faith that is his gift to us in our times!

We do not need to labor this point any further. I believe it is inherent in the purpose of the intention recorded in the biblical history of Israel and the biblical history of God's creation as the covenanted relationship between Time and Eternity. The Great I-AM of Moses' prophecy possesses that divine freedom to be who he is with us as none other than the Lord of the covenant and the true Creator of the heavens and the earth. He is to be known as such because he is the true Redeemer of humankind, through Israel, against all the idols of his enemies as this one Great I-AM giving himself to be known among us. Genesis 1:2 ought

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9 We need to keep in mind, as steadily as we can, that the *nature* of this world, meant as home for our kind, may never be turned into mere myths and legends, where heroes freely roam victoriously among us. We are made to appreciate our need to understand the covenanted relationship between biblical theology and the science of the world we are to develop in our times. The "home" the universe is meant to be for us cannot be viewed through the lens of a false concept of time and space, according to the testimony of Moses and his followers.

not to be construed, then, as possessing, in common with the nations of the Ancient Near East, any other significance than the uniqueness of the meaning of the confession in the history of the world. Language employing terms found to possess meanings in common with the nations is not language made to serve the revelation of God with Israel. Moses' use of writing is meant to transform into real service to the revelation the intention and purpose of the One who is who he is, against all idol and myth making in the world. Thus the language of Moses' testimony would refer, in the freedom of God, to his royal authority over all he has created, as a world outside of himself. The terms of v.2 are meant to signify that which stands polemically over and against the polytheisms of the ancient peoples, their ritual magic and mythical animations among the darkness of the stars, and so forth, and that which stands, on holy ground, for the experience of Israel in this world. Moses' language thus transforms any meaning the terms might possess among the nations into the service of the revelation of the Word and Being of the Great I-AM. His Voice, his Spirit, and his Hand hold the secret of the creation, a secret we may be given within the prophetic thrust of the confession. This is:

- the One who will not be who he is as Lord and God without his Israel in his creation
- the Voice that spoke with the prophet from the burning bush. This is the Voice that spoke with Israel at Sinai
- the Voice that speaks prophetically in his creation even today.

He is the One that Israel must hear among the nations, in our histories, in the light of his revelation.

In this sense, the Exodus of Israel is to be understood as something utterly new in the history of the world. It is an utterly new event and fundamental for understanding his revelation as the faith of Moses' testimony to him. The Prophet and Servant of God's self-revelation with his people bears witness in Time and times to the Great I-AM whose Hand and Spirit and Voice, from the Beginning to the formation of Day One in the Creation Week acts to make "very good" the primordial background Moses understands as the ground on which the Exodus is to occur. This is the One who is to be known and heard as the Commander, the I-AM, revealed as the unique and incomparable One. It is this knowledge of God as the Lord that is the object of Moses' confession of him. This is the holy

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One who gave Moses to stand on his holy ground and be commanded as the Prophet and Servant the leader of Israel was to become. This is the Great I-AM Israel has been made to love. This is the subject of the object Israel must know and love with all her life in the world. There is no other world with this One and he will not be any other than this One that he is with his people in his creation. Humankind belongs to the Great I-AM of the revelation with Moses' confession. All the cosmogonies supposedly existent outside of him are to be cast aside and away. Something new is happening in the world — God as the Lord wills to deliver Israel from her sin and affliction in Egypt. Thus, all humankind is to be free from its idol and myth making and made free to follow its true Maker — the Almighty One! He is the One who makes Israel the prophecy she is among the nations in the history of his creation. When Moses employs human language for his testimony, there is no common sense to it; there is only the logic of the Word of God with his Spirit and his Hand giving voice to the terms of his humanity as God with his people in their Time and times in his creation. Their use by the rest of the Ancient Near Eastern peoples and languages is emptied of meaning. They are given a new significance within the revelation and set into service of his purpose and intention in this world. The Prophet of Israel, the Servant of God, Moses thus transforms the meaning and significance of the terms he employs into a language, human indeed, perhaps more human than we know, that is made to serve his covenanted relationship with humankind in his creation. As such they possess a prophetic and eschatological thrust at any given time in concert with their meaning for all Time. They are, indeed, the language of grace in God's revelation to Moses for Israel for all that Time truly is. To the *nature* of this Time we find no real definition in our selves, but only in the One who is who he truly is, and with no one else. I believe this point is often missed or ignored by much modern critical analysis of the Five Books of Moses today.<sup>10</sup>

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10 We may invoke here the claim that the prophet of Jerusalem, Isaiah, made concerning the relationship between faith and reason, belief and understanding: "Unless you believe, you will not understand"! (Isaiah 7:9b, LXX). I would translate the Massoretic Hebrew "Unless you AMEN, you will not AMEND"! The verse was commonly embraced by the early Church fathers in order to work out an Orthodoxy that was able to serve the prophetic intention of the Word of God with Israel. I read the reciprocity between the two "Amens" as asymmetrical in nature.

The referencing power of Moses' polemical testimony to the revelation ought never to be allowed to escape our attention. It is this power that possesses the *universal* intent of the revelation. It is this power that is the bearer of the harmony intrinsic with the acts of God as the Lord with the *particulars* — and this *universal* and no other in the revelation. This power possesses a *nature* to be understood on holy ground, rooted in the grace and truth of this One in his covenant with his people among the nations in the creation, a *nature* that is indeed rooted in the ground of the wisdom of his Being as the Great I-AM to be the Lord of the covenant and the God of the creation with his people. It is this power he will not allow to escape our attentions. He will not be this One that he is without us in our times. The confession of the formation of "Day One" in the Creation Week belongs in the power of the Lord to name himself anew in the Exodus of Israel from Egypt and Egyptian "gods." He will not allow this power to escape our attentions; we may not disregard the humanity of his Word, his Voice, his Spirit, his Hand even from *the* Beginning of Time and all times. The blessing of this God's day and Week is the blessing of Israel seeking to restore us from our fallen condition in the world, to become the children of his Kingdom.<sup>11</sup>

The significance of the use of the Name of the One who is the Lord God as the Great I-AM of the revelation with Moses belongs to the Voice that he is both within himself and in his acts with his Word for his people, with Israel among the nations. It is this Voice his people must hear as the Torah of foundation and formation in the world. As this One and no other, he is the I-AM of Moses in the Old, and the I-AM Jesus Christ in the new forms of the one covenanted relationship between God, the world, and man according to their witness to his revelation. He is in this witness the I-AM of the Trinity of God as the Redeemer-Creator confessed by the Church as the people of God among the nations. We

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11 I have attempted to argue for this understanding of the *Five Books of Moses* in my book, *The Great Amen of the Great I-AM* (Wipf & Stock, Eugene: 2008). See especially chapters 2 and 3. From beginning to end, the wholeness of the Pentateuch's polemic entails the diverse particulars of the confession with a universal and unique intention and purpose that informs the relationship between Genesis 1–2:3 and what follows. No other time, no other space, can be claimed as the basis for understanding the cosmos of this world. Its beginning time and its ending time are acts of God marking the boundaries he himself draws in our histories with him.

are to hear, as steadily as we can, both the polemical nature of this witness and against idol and myth-making and the positive dimensions in its witness to our salvation in him. Moses' confession of the Beginning, Christ's confession, and the confessions of the people of God all are too seldom heard as witness to this One I-AM who is Lord of the covenant and God of the creation, against all the cosmogonies of the ancient peoples throughout the world. The self-revealing, self-naming, self-giving, self-defining power of this I-AM will be known as the One he is as Lord and God of his witnesses, Israel and the Church among the nations. We may not in this case understand the Beginning as created "out of nothing" divorced from the Incarnation of this Voice in the form of Jesus Christ, the Redeemer-Creator he is in opposition with his revelation against all pretenders to his throne, the Lamb and Lion of his Apocalypse with divine freedom, sovereign authority, and majestic faithfulness as the Trinity of the One he is in his Name for us in our times. As we interpret his Name, we must interpret all of his acts in covenanted relationship with his creation, his humankind, and the providence, presence, and prophecy of his Being as confessed by Moses in the service of the revelation in the first Exodus of his people from their bondage and afflictions among the gods of the idols of the ancient peoples. I was once a student of the physics teacher<sup>12</sup> who gave Einstein's "singularities" the name "Black Holes" in our modern cosmologies; he often said to us that every scientist needed to spend the first twenty minutes of every morning of his existence meditating on the Beginning of this world, for it was more important and vital to the development of our physics than we often realize. I did not heed his advice at that time, but I believe it was good advice then and it is good advice now for our scientists and theologians.

How then shall we seek to understand Moses' confession in verse 2 of Genesis 1? How should we seek to understand this language as his testimony to the Creator and the creation in the light of the claims of the Word become incarnate as the Person of Jesus Christ, a Jew in Palestine, as the Great I-AM of the witness to the revelation of God? To take seriously this confession and the scope of its

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12 He was John Archibald Wheeler, who named the infinitely dense and curved space-time of the invariance in Einstein's gravitational field equations "Black Holes" and taught them at Princeton in 1954. It was a part of his "Meaning Physics" for which he searched the scientific enterprise of his times.

reach across the ages in our civilizations is breath-taking. That a man, especially a Jew, was to be understood as God with us, was not a fact neither Greek, nor Roman, or Barbarian could take seriously. But when we do take seriously his call and claim upon our lives in this world, we discover our life becoming quite different from the natural bent of humankind here, that is, free to follow him as the One he is in our times, our enmity against him gone, and our willingness to hear him with his Word, in any language, for us now. The grace and truth of this One that he is enlightens us with the light of his Word, so that we may seek to understand the humanity of his words in the world. The priestly and prophetic service of the wisdom of this Lord as God belongs to the One, according to the testimony of Moses, Christ, and triune Redeemer-Creator he is as this one I-AM. The Beginning of Moses' confession, the Beginning of Christ's confession, and the Ending of the I-AM the Lord God is in the fulfillment of his covenant in his creation for his people are to be heard as the Time of God with us in our times. In this light, Genesis 1:2 is meant to be understood in the context of an embrace that belongs to I-AM he is as the Lord of Israel's deliverance in the creation and as the God of the whole of his creation. We tend to forsake this dogma in our times, with deep consequences upon all of our meditations and search for meaning since the Beginning of God with us.

Specifically, this means that we are to read the verbal action of God as the "brooding" (MERACHEPHETH) of God's Spirit in v.2 in resonance with the rest of the verbs intended to confess the formation of Day One in the Creation Week. We need to hear all the acts of God for the first night and day of the seven nights and days as forming a wholeness of acts whose purpose resides ultimately with the blessing of the creation on Day Seven. All these acts of God belong to the whole of the "very good" creation with God from the Beginning (*creatio ex nihilo!*). The six verbs that depict the actions of God during the formation of Day One are thus to be heard as acts whose concert belongs to a wholeness that forms the content of the cosmos *in* the Beginning, where the whole is a cosmos that is a home for humankind, male and female, blessed as his image and likeness in the "very good" world of God's creation. The "brooding" over the "faces of the waters" with the "chaos and emptiness," the "darkness over the faces of the deep" that the earth is *after* the Beginning may be understood as the way God cherishes and sustains what he has "created" (BARA') or caused to

exist outside of his own existence.<sup>13</sup> With the same power that causes that which he is not to be, he causes that which he is not to subsist in its own *nature* as created being. The significance of the dogma of *creatio ex nihilo* must not be lost upon our understanding of that which sustains the world, causing it to subsist freely outside of God's Being. In this case, the transcendence of God's Being in existence before the creation is bound up with his determination to be its Creator as rooted in his wisdom even from before his "creating" his Beginning of his creation, a wisdom that belongs to the divine freedom, sovereign authority, and majestic truth of his Being the One he is as made known in his revelation, against all the pretenders to his throne.<sup>14</sup> The "nothingness" of the creation confessed by Moses must mean to us what it means to God the Lord and the Great I-AM he is in his covenanted relationship with his people. In this way, there exists for Moses and Christ a primordial dispensation in the meaning of the creation as an object that only the personal reality of the Redeemer-Creator can define with us. My point here must be that God *cherishes* ("broods over") the whole of what we must refer to as the unformed and empty darkness of the waters of the earth under the heavens as God's creation in the Beginning. All of that *stuff* or "something," whatever it is in v.2, in concert with the assertion of v.1, is the confession of time and space as a part of a whole that is yet to be determined by God as his own "very good" creation.

When Moses continues to confess the speaking of God ('AMAR) in v.3, and asserts that the origin of created light ('OR) belongs to this Voice of the Creator, we must understand that out of the night of the first day by the act of God's speaking there is posited with the 'stuff' of v.2 an order whose reality in the midst of these primordial realities forms the basis for the determination of Day One in the Beginning. Once this is established, we may hear that God sees (RA'AH), that he distinguishes (HIBDIL), and that he then names (QARA') what he is able to see and differentiate in created existence with its evenings and mornings now

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13 I do not like to translate *BARA'* with English "create" because it signifies what all kinds of subjects can or may do, which it does not mean in the biblical world. I do not know a term for it in English.

14 This is the reason that we may discover no necessity in the creation as being the reality it is and nothing arbitrary in its Beginning. The Fathers of the Church called Christ thus the Wisdom of God as the Creator and Redeemer he is! (Proverbs 8:22-31)

given to form as an object of the Voice of God the creation is and will be.<sup>15</sup> Thus, the whole of day One is a part of God's "very good" creation in the Beginning. The point here must be that we ought to hear all of the verbs in a resonating composition with one another, which we may call a concert of actions whose prophetic depths bear witness with Moses to the Time and times of the Lord God with Israel in all of her times in his creation. The cosmos of that Beginning belongs to the being of all six actions of the Creator in his Beginning, against all the myth making of the ancient peoples. It is in the light of his speaking that the "light" of "day" is "good" and the "dark" of "night" is good. God "sees" night and day distinctly (as man may see); he can differentiate them from one another and name them as the good days and nights of his experience in this world, against all the idols among the nations in times past. *The Beginning* is thus what it is, fundamentally, as it is in all times, past, present, and future according to the cosmos of Moses' confession of the creation. It was a challenge with Moses and Israel and evidently a challenge for us even to this day!

It is vital to remember here that the whole of these acts belong to the "very good" creation of God's Time for us in our times. The blessing of his finished work and his rest with his creation — when and where man, male and female as his image and likeness here, is made and blessed with a home — is never abrogated according to the *nature* of the covenanted relationship between God, the world, and humankind. There is no mention of evil anywhere in *this* Beginning of God with us. From the Beginning, "Day One" of verses 1-5 lays down a particular, the continuum of which in time and space belongs to the divine freedom, sovereign power, and majestic faithfulness of the Creator who is the Great I-AM, the Lord God of Israel in the creation. The space-time world in the orders of the light of day and the dark of night are formed to provide place for the events we experience as man in the history of the world as the image of God in our time and times. This "goodness" belongs to the prophetic power of Moses' confession in this world and its vitality across the centuries in our experience on the earth and under the heavens. Again, we find nothing explicitly connected with evil in this confession of the first day and the first week; that is

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15 I think of the last triad of verbal actions in the formation of Day One as the humanity of the Creator in interaction with the Beginning, and the secret of the divine/human presence of God with and in the whole of his creation.

Moses' testimony to the cosmos of the "very good" creation from the Beginning. The whole of created reality is to found as an object rooted in the holy ground of God's divine freedom and power to be the Redeemer-Creator he has chosen to be with his people among the nations in his creation.

Why then do we read so much about the evil that opposes him among our commentaries on Genesis 1:2? Why does so much criticism today seem to prefer to believe that Moses, or whoever wrote Genesis 1, could not possibly have had in mind the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo*, but who would seek to affirm the fact that the Judeo-Christian tradition only means to hold before us a doctrine of "creation out of chaos and emptiness"? What have we lost sight of when we refuse to understand that the "nothingness" of the creation belongs to what is "very good" about the creation and Beginning? Why does the doctrine find so much consideration by the fathers of the early Church? What is the *nature* of the vital relationship between the Incarnation of the I-AM and the I-AM with Moses? Many would argue today that "*creatio ex nihilo*" is nothing else than Greek categories of thought being read back into the world of the Hebrew, a development occurring under the influence of the great Greek philosophers.<sup>16</sup> As we have said, even the great Karl Barth did not avoid joining the consensus of

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16 I may refer here again to the champion of the dogma of "creation out of nothing" in ancient Alexandria, John Philoponus, a disciple of Athanasius (325 AD) and Cyril of Alexandria (454 AD), and the foremost commentator on Aristotle in his time (490-570 AD). The Greeks opined that "Nothing comes out of Nothing!" Their cosmos was an eternal reality embedded by God with his Logos from his Eternity. Philoponus struggled against this doctrine: "If people assign the place above to the Divinity, this is not yet to be taken as a proof that heaven is imperishable. Because those too who believe the holy places and temples to be full of gods and raise their hands towards them do not assume these dwelling to be without beginning or imperishable but regard them only as a place more fit than others to be inhabited by God" (Shmuel Sambursky's *Physical Thought from the Pre-Socratics to the Quantum Physicists*, Pica Press, 1975, 119). The great Grammarian of the Academy in Alexandria here believed that "creation out of nothing" was a concept which belonged to the affirmation of the contingent rationality and unity of the creation, when and where the creation is what it is, separate from the *nature* of God, but with its nature interactive with the Creator, bound up together with him in a freedom by which both implicate orders of the creation and the explicate orders of the Creator were together freely related to one another.

modern historical-critical-analytical scholars with his reading of Genesis 1:2.<sup>17</sup>

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17 A simple survey of the consensus will serve our purposes. B. W. Anderson, ed., *Creation in the Old Testament* (SPCK and Fortress Press, Minneapolis: 1984) is quite aware of the chasm between science and theology as viewed by the biblical scholars. He works the split assumed popularly today between dogma and biblical theologies and our scientific views of time and history. Gunkel (*ibid.*, pp. 26-52) sought to understand the text as belonging to the many oral traditions in the Ancient Near East long before literary forms were found to set down the various cosmogonies among the nations. G. von Rad, *Genesis*, Westminster Press, 1972, 46-52, makes critical assumptions that lead the great German scholar to contribute to the force of the consensus and reads v.2 as a contradiction to the *creatio ex nihilo* of v.1. He posits that P's theology of "Day One" represents an understanding of Genesis 1:1-5 as that which joins the war against "creation out of chaos." He certainly does not think of "creation out of nothing," "creation out of chaos," and the creation of light as objects of the Creator's will with Moses and Israel. He thinks that "Yahweh" (The Lord) as the Creator (God) absorbs Egypt's ancient wisdom in order to confess a full doctrine of the creation (pages 62-63). The Jesuit Father, Dennis McCarthy (*ibid.*, 75) can in this same way divorce the covenant of the Lord from the creation of God, the Creator, in the biblical world. He thus posits a chasm between the "Uncreated Nature and Being of God" and the created nature and being of the creation as an object absolutely independent of God (Deism!). The splits and chasms belong to assumptions unable to understand the implicate and explicate orders of contingent rationality and unity between God, the world, and humankind. These lead to the great abyss with which scholars work between history and Salvation history and between modern creation theories and our evolutionary theories (*ibid.*, 90-101). Westermann argues that Genesis 1:1-2:4a reflects a composition whose long history indicates a steady struggle in which an evolution of understanding is crystallized within and out of the many myths and legends about the world of the gods of men. The lasting value of the texts in Time and times is a result of the necessity in this long evolution for understanding of God and his relation to the world (*ibid.*, 102-117). He can claim then that the contingency of the world is accidental or sheer randomness. Reminding his readers that the confession must possess some real eschatological significance, H. H. Schmid (*ibid.*, 102-117) can argue against any assertion that gives priority to redemption over creation. He argues for a "creation theology" in possession of a wisdom and righteousness that informs history with its events even without the uniqueness of the revelation. H. J. Hermission (*ibid.*, 130) writes, "The world well ordered, chaos excluded, the world therefore comprehensible within limits: this fits in very well with the concept of wisdom." All of these scholars affirm with Anderson that the *Chaoskampf*, the war that was "in the Beginning," denies *chaos and emptiness* any "goodness" in the creation. It is war from the beginning of the confession. Only with Walter Eichrodt and G. M. Landes do we find any discussion about the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* in an exegesis of Genesis

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In spite of his great efforts to go beyond an understanding of the Bible from a *a priori* systems of reference and to relate the Bible's witness to God, he appears unable to persuade many as to his understanding of the revelation of God in the history of the world. What is the problem here?

Are we then to hear that the wisdom of the will of the Hand and Spirit and Voice of the Creator in the Beginning comes from outside of his revelation with Moses? Are the orders and laws of the created reality of life and existence, as rooted in the "Uncreated Life and Being" that is God the Lord interacting over and with and in the creation of the world, to be conceived as the object of the making of humanity? No, with his Hand, Spirit, and Voice, the God of the

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1:1-3. Eichrodt (ibid., 65-73, cp. his *Old Testament Theology*, Vol. I, 102-106), a colleague of Barth at Basle, argues against the subordination of v.2 to v.1 and for the absolute value of v.1 as a general axiom entailing what follows in the confession. His discussion of the doctrine of "creation out of Nothing" would relate v.2 as "nullifying" the "perfection" signified by v.1, yet in opposition to the other "Creation Epics" found among the nations in the ancient peoples. He is without comment on the relationship of this understanding to any cosmology in our scientific culture, perhaps with Barth's rejection of "natural theology," that would serve as a framework of thought to interpret the Bible. With G. M. Landes we do find some discussion of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* with reference to an exegesis of Genesis 1:1-3, with v.2 participating in the "very good" the creation *is*. In the Beginning, there is no battle that takes place between God and the emptiness of the world. This author claims to hear "liberation" in the movement from v.1 to v.2 to v.3 of the confession. Genesis 1 belongs to the positing of "human hope," but again there is no effort to relate this hope to any sort of scientific cosmology that might be implicated with the chapter. He writes, "At the beginning of its creation, the earth is empty, enclosed by waters in total darkness. But when God's Spirit moved over the waters to separate them, the earth can be born, so to speak, i.e. it can emerge from its primordial darkness into the light of time, its surrounding waters filled with plants, animals, and humanity" (ibid., 138). "Emergence" is "liberation" from the primordial darkness and so forth. Finally, with the investigations of R. C. Clements, we are not asked to face any relationship of the covenant with Abraham and through Moses to David in the creation. His study is without mention of Genesis 1. The Pentateuch may be read with a deep chasm posted between redemption and creation in Moses' confession. The Prophet of Israel as the Servant of God appears to deliver God's people from Egypt for a land that has nothing to do with the cosmos of the heavens and the earth which from the Beginning lays down the contingent *nature* of the created reality which the world *is*.

creation is the Lord of the covenant (as the I-AM he truly is), and we may not divorce the one from the other. The Creator is free to “call” and “name” his created orders in the space-times and light of his creation as rooted in the holy ground of his “uncreated Light, Being, and Nature.” Implicate with Moses’ explication of the creation’s Beginning is the contingency of the world and its cosmos and humankind.

It is little wonder that, with his rejection of “natural theology,” Karl Barth could conceive of a new beginning for Christian theology freed from its assumptions and the various particular cosmologies viewed at various epochs in the history of European and then Western Civilizations. The abyss created by the split between biblical and dogmatic theologies, with the derivative chasms created between Redemption and creation, between Redeemer and Creator, in our times required the fresh start that Barth was to seek, free from Nazi Socialism and the German Church’s willingness to sign on with Adolf Hitler. He thus set himself the task of giving this new beginning to Christian thought, one that would not allow any “natural theology” to be conceived outside of the revelation of God as witnessed by the biblical world. There exists no antecedent conceptual system to the revelation that was capable of judging who God is, his acts in the world, and his Word in the same with his Time for our times in the history of his creation. There is no *a priori* framework of interpretation of the revelation of the Word of God. The dynamic nature of his revelation demands that the readers of the Bible develop an *a posteriori* poise towards this actual creation, one that belongs to the work of his reconciliation accomplished, hand in glove, with the revelation of the Great I-AM which the Lord God is both from his Eternity and with his Time for the created reality of time and times. Thus, the grace of this I-AM with his revelation of his Being in his Acts with his Word and his Acts as his Word in his Being formed the burden of Barth’s moving as a Reformation theologian beyond his Luther and his Calvin. Genesis 1 is to be interpreted in a manner that does not commit the exegete to any particular cosmology posited by our scientific cultures.<sup>18</sup>

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18 Again, see T. F. Torrance, *Space, Time & Resurrection* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1976) ix-xiii, or his *Transformation & Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1984) chapter 9, for the author’s meeting with Barth on the issue of the great Swiss theologian’s stance against any “natural theology” and his full explication and understanding of their encounter, where Barth gave his blessing to Torrance’s assessment of the problem. Just as Einstein set Euclidian geometry into the heart of physics, where

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Perhaps the freedom, whose reason is inherent and co-inherent in the fields of theology and science, respectively, underlies our problems with grasping the relationship between the revelation and the Time and times of God's creation. Barth never read Einstein. Einstein never read Barth. They lived the abyss between two cultures. Perhaps a real freedom exists undergirding both fields of knowledge, a freedom the grace of which ought to be "cherished" with the Spirit of God even for us in our times, in the ages of our histories on the earth.<sup>19</sup>

Given Barth's escape from the rise of Hitler and Nazi Socialism in Germany, given the escape from Marxism in Russia, given Einstein's escape from Berlin to a new home at Princeton, given World War II, the fact that these two great thinkers in our times never read one another can only throw light upon the darkness in which their lives occurred. How may we seek to overcome the abyss between them?<sup>20</sup>

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it became transformed into real service as 4-dimensional physics, we need to set any "natural theology" into the heart of revelation, and through reconciliation develop that framework of thought and interpretation transformed into true and faithful service to the God of the creation and the Lord of the covenant, with all due respect for the theology and science relationship.

19 Again, see *Transformation and Convergence in the Frame of Knowledge* (Eerdmans, Grand Rapids: 1984) and Torrance's *Theological and Natural Science* (Wipf and Stock, Eugene: 2002) for the kind of transformations Torrance has in mind here a belief that leads him to posit a real cognitive relationship between God, the world, and man which we must not allow to escape our attention. For it is with this relationship that we may, as the people of God, Israel and the Church, possess the biblical faith that must seek understanding of interactive wisdom with his creation and his humankind. Thus, from beginning Time to ending Time, created freedom and his freedom belong together with one another, respectively, as the authority and faithfulness he is as the commander of our destinies in his creation and redemption.

20 Torrance argues that it is "a sovereign freedom and lordly authority" that judges all Beginnings in and of this world. The Beginning bound up with Moses' confession and the Beginning bound up with the Incarnation belong to the self-revelation of the Great I-AM the Lord God in the space and time of this world. We need to think these together as the real source of all true knowledge of the grace this One is, who is both the Redeemer of Israel and the Creator of all as the Great I-AM he is. Thus, we may not seek to divorce them from one another and pretend that we are seeking him with our lives.

When Barth turned back for help in making a fresh beginning for his *Church Dogmatics*, he embraced the Reformation's concept of the grace of God, with Augustine and with Luther, when he articulated his position as an exegete of Genesis 1:2. He quotes Zimmerli in his discussion of the "rudiments" of the verse, and the chaotic chasm against God's Beginning of the creation, an object of "his perfect will." No positive resonance with v.1 is there to be heard.<sup>21</sup> He then takes the position that v.2 belongs to a time past that existed before light was spoken into existence in the creation, where Evil's darkness surrounds, impotently, the perfect creation. If the "nothingness" of the creation is identified with v.2 (the "rudiments"), then the contradiction which the *τοηυ* and *βοηυ* ("chaos and emptiness" or the "unformed and unsubstantiated") signifies in God's creation must itself become contradicted by God himself. The teleological and eschatological dimensions of the reality of time in the creation are lost upon us. V.2, for Barth, is the "nothingness" that in the end will be nothing. Barth thus claims that the Spirit of God ". . . is not known in his reality and therefore hovers and broods over it impotently or wordlessly."<sup>22</sup> It is only with the "speaking" (v.3) that the Word of God against this primeval Evil restores the original perfection to this evil phantom in God's Beginning. The steady determination of God against

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21 Barth, *CD* III.1, 103-4, does side with Zimmerli against Luther on the relationship between v.1 and v.2 "The decisive objection against this exposition (Luther's contention that the verse explained the primal condition of God's creation in the Beginning before its light was spoken into existence), which Zimmerli rightly calls a 'desperate expedient,' is as follows . . ." Barth goes on to contend that any connection between v.1 and v.2 is inadmissible. God did not will the "things" proclaimed in v.2. He goes on to quote Isaiah 45:14 as evidence that the world was never meant to be inhabited right from the beginning and was never meant to exist as a *chaos and void* with a *darkness over the deep and the faces of the waters* which the Spirit of God had to maintain as against the will of the Creator. The "things" or "rudiments" of v.2 are "stuff" that needs to be overcome and transformed according to the 'perfect' will of God in his Beginning, whose will was moved to speak "light" freely into existence according to the confession.

22 *Ibid.*, 108. When I studied the verb *MERACHEPHET*, I discovered in the Syriac Tradition that "brooding" had obtained a significance of "cherishing," assigning a very positive dimension to its meaning. It is meant to be interpreted, not as "impotence" or anything irrational, but the love and wisdom of God acting to sustain what is "creation out of nothing" in the Beginning for the formation of "Day One."

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Evil is thus inherent our reading of Genesis 1. But we may observe that no Evil appears in the confession until the account of Redemption from the Fall of man in the garden of the paradise of the Lord God. There is no Evil identified with v.2. There is no war posited between the "good" and Evil in the primordial reality of Moses' confession. It seems to me that what we need to accomplish here is a transformation of our concept of "perfection" in our times, not an explication of the war between Good and Evil today.

In contrast with Barth, Brevard Childs addresses the problem we have represented here with some very different conclusions. He believes that there exist some very real connections between v.1 and v.2. The "brooding" of the Spirit of God in v.2 is entailed by the power of God (hand in glove with the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo!*) in the Beginning as signified in v.1. The speaking of God in v.3 possesses a resonance with both v.1 and v.2 then, in which the power of the Voice of the Spirit is confessed as the source of the conditions that will become Day One of the Creation Week. A full "chord" of action is to be heard as struck from the Beginning within the wholeness of what the creation is as the blessed home for humankind, made in the image and likeness of God, in the "very good" Beginning. Divine freedom, sovereign authority, majestic faithfulness are to be heard at play with the wisdom of God, all in his will for that Creation Week. Because it is the will of this wisdom that we are to hear in the confession, against the idol and myth making among the nations, the polemical nature of the doctrine of *creatio ex nihilo* must not be allowed to escape our attention. It is not a war against Evil that we are to read, but a warless Good we are to hear. It is this Week that gives to Moses' prophecy the vitality it has possessed across the ages of our histories. His Time for us in his creation, time past, time present, and time future are servants of the revelation of the Lord God with us. The resonance of this chord with its humanity in God's "very good" Creation Week is to be heard throughout the renewals of the covenant of the Lord as the God of his creation. It is for this reason that we may hear the Great I-AM of the Exodus (Exodus 3:14-15) and the ONE he is with the Promised Land of the covenant (Deuteronomy 6:4), and find ourselves compelled to overcome the divorce between covenant and creation from Beginning to Ending Time with our times. All *a priori* understanding of what this created reality is and who we are in it must be disallowed, for the sake of a positive grasp of the wisdom of God

in his freedom to redeem what he has "created" and "sustained" in existence outside of himself. When we learn to integrate them from this Beginning of Time to this Ending of Time, we may hear the Word of his grace and the grace of his Word in the actual *nature* of his Being as the I-AM he is with us, more near to us than we are to ourselves.

*Crux interpretum?* Indeed! A challenge that the Savior accepted on his Cross, the Redeemer and the Creator as the Person for all times and all seasons in the world!<sup>23</sup>

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23 Barth, *CD* III.1, 102.