

The Bible: A Survey with Critical Analysis

By Aaron Alexander
Beginning on Saturday, December 08, 2007

I will here attempt to read through and carefully study the Biblical account of the world. I will attempt to provide arguments for and against certain interpretations and add my own thoughts, interpretations, arguments, and questions. More, I will be yielding to the reflections of other great thinkers of history and similar commentators and critics, for greatness of intellect ventures to us from every avenue of the world as whole. These words will be appended to *each* verse of each chapter of each book as scholiums (that is, *notes* or *commentaries*) until I complete the entire literature. The format will be the following.

C#.V#^{KJV} And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

^{NAS} Evening came, and morning followed--the fifth day.

Scholium #^{KJV}: Written scholium.

Scholium #^{NAS}: Written scholium.

The text I will be reading from is the Skeptics Annotated Bible, which is based on the King James Version. It is stated by the author that the “pro-Bible propaganda” has been removed. However, I will also be reading and providing commentary on the New American Standard. I will read of both for the KJV is considered the *oldest* translation while the NAS is considered the most *accurate* translation from the Hebrew/Greek/Aramaic. These verses and their corresponding scholiums will be marked

respectively. Where they will *not* be marked is where the translations are almost exactly similar.

It must be understood that I am no textual critic or Biblical scholar, and that my undertaking here is more so philosophical. I here examine utility of language and meaning as best I comprehend it and relate it to the Bible itself and my present understanding of the world (involving science and contemporary thought). I will highlight words and translation discrepancies that I find pertinent to my interpretations and reflection. This may be of benefit to you as well. It will certainly be instructive for me!

I will try to make my language and inquires as intelligible as possible, but I cannot say that they will be terse or apparently reaching to a relevant point. But I will try to establish connections to other seemingly contradictory or contrary verses and descriptions found therein. All I ask is that you let these words waver in your minds, for my attempt here is not to attain to truth positively but negatively. And in so doing, it will do us all good service to ourselves to revel in what questions and antagonisms we can muster with no clear goal in sight. Indeed, Truth is existence itself. Nothing we say is about Truth; everything we do is truth affirming itself.

Genesis 1

1.1 ^{KJV} In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

^{NAS} In the beginning, **when** God created the heavens and the earth,

Scholium 1: This is vague. Why is an exact date for the creation of the heaven and the earth not provided? (Look for this.) Why were two domains created in the first place? What purpose does this dichotomy of kingdoms serve as a motivation to create them as two distinct realms? Not only should we inquire into the motivation for each disparate kingdom, but what reasoning did God have to create two, and only two realms, rather than three, four, or an infinite number of realms? What significance is there in *two* worlds? Is it not anachronistic for God to describe “in the beginning,” as vague as it is, but for there to be an entire mythology and history preceding the Earth’s creation? Before man, archangels, angels, and demons met with sword and tooth before the creation of the earth and the story of man. Why would God so deceptively leave this out with a “general” creation account, and, still further, leave this history out with the second, more descriptive creation account (Cite the starting verse of the second creation account.)?

Scholium 2^{NAS}: Why would the NAS subject itself to chronological scrutiny? Or, better asked, what motive would the KJV translators have to conceal or sacrifice possible exactness?

1.2 ^{KJV} And the earth was without form, and **void**; and darkness was upon the face of the **deep**. And the **Spirit of God moved** upon the face of the waters.

^{NAS} the earth was a formless **wasteland**, and darkness covered the **abyss**, while a **mighty wind swept** over the waters.

Scholium 1^{KJV}: What is “the deep,” the depth of a “void”? We are finding this metaphorical language to be misleading and confusing if we are to maintain their definitions even throughout the context of a single sentence or passage. Perhaps the definitions that we now maintain for these words are diametric to the original writing and culture of the time. What does it

mean for a “void” to have “darkness”? A void has no qualitative characteristics. It cannot be described as this or that; it is not distinguishable—but only done so as a category. Inasmuch as it is a category of something, it can only be distinguished and compared to a plenum. We do not mean plenum is a Cartesian sense, but only that should we wish to describe a void, such a description can only pinpoint it as a *something* only in so far as noting its contradiction—a *something* which has qualities and content. A void is a something only in the sense that it can be conceived as a thing, but it does not have qualities which can be described of it. A void only exists as a conceivable thing due to the existence of a plenum—a thing which can be perceived in various many ways but can also be conceived to not be at all. Thus, we are left to ask ourselves: “What is “darkness” to a void? What is “depth” to a void?

Scholium 2^{KJV}: “Spirit of God” cannot be said to be God’s existence exactly—not anything physical or even metaphysical. The Spirit of God is an idea that God’s essence traverses all things within itself eminently. The Spirit of God flows through all things such as the Spirit of God is within and is constituted by all things. However, we are forced to question what sort of “waters” existed before the formation of the Earth. Could it be said that the Hebrew writers, then, were thinking of a continuum? Is the Universe itself or what preceded it a wave which is never composed of individual and discrete particles or contiguous corpuscles? However the case is accepted, we know clearly that “waters” then do not describe water such as the element we understand by today’s scientific opinion.

Scholium 3^{NAS}: Clearly this is a Spinozistic influence on Biblical criticism and translation. His criticism was aimed at the metaphorical language depicted in the Bible for the names or name phrases of God in which the Hebrews would often employ to perpetuate throughout their lives the praising of his being. The language was attributed to the arguable immanence. Thus, all things in nature were an expression of his essence. It is curious that the NAS would disregard these pantheistic leanings of the Hebrews. It seems such as a propagandistic strive to influence NAS readers towards monotheism rather than the arguable pantheism or panentheism of the Hebrews. (Cite the TPT of Spinoza; look further for translation distinctions that fail to adequately express the notions of the original Hebrews.) It is questionable that something should be “closer” to the

original written words while sacrificing the notable cultural leanings of the authors. Can we subtract their metaphorical language so easily? Does the metaphorical language used suggest implicit argument for a certain and definite belief?

Scholium 4: This distinction between “and void” and “wasteland” seems important. Of the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, we find for the first definition of “wasteland” the following. 1. Barren or uncultivated land. On “void,” we find the following. 1. Not occupied; 2. Containing nothing; 4. Being without something specified; 5. Vain, useless. I choose these definitions here because as I understand it, the second and third definitions of wasteland seem to imply a value judgment of what a void may be. Definition 5 of “void” does not imply any value judgment beyond utility, which itself can only be judged within the context of future action. Therefore, to be “useless” is not to be morally repugnant or “bad,” but only without effective value in so far as productivity and progress towards some general end goes. A crippled dog is not “good” or “bad” for sledding. It is merely useless to that function. This is the same sense in which the world before creation may have been perceived as “useless.” Further, we do not wish to bias ourselves into believing that a “void” is something that has qualities to distinguish it from other things, as stated in previous Scholium 1. It is curious that either the Hebrews would have described what existed before creation as something “ugly” or “unsatisfying”, as the second and third definitions of “wasteland” suggest. The word itself carries a negative connotation to it. So either the Hebrews described it as such or the NAS translators translated it as such with an intent or reasoning behind doing so. We could say they *translated* the description *or* they [the NAS translators] *described* it as such within the context of the passage, chapter, book, or whole agenda of the Bible itself. More worrisome would be that they *described* it as such with their own agenda in mind. We should not entertain conspiracy theory or paranoia, however, for that is not within our purposes here.

1.3 ^{KJV} And God said, Let there be light: and there was light.

^{NAS} Then God said, "Let there be light," and there was light.

Scholium 1: These verses are very similar. Ricky Gervais, an English comedian, notes the anachronistic nature of the creation account at this

passage in his comedic standup special titled “Animals.” It is a witty endeavor on his part to highlight what are perceivable absurdities of the creation story. He argues that that God created the magnificence that is “the heaven and the earth” before putting forth light to “see” what he was constructing or designing. This is an interestingly humorous and subtle counterargument against the mechanistic notion of God as an Architect or Author of Nature, given that this thought is highly metaphorical in the first place. This counterargument is accordingly against that of Deism or God *as a wise architect* that “crafted” the Universe with its “hands.” To use such metaphorical language requires that you subsume the *whole* of the analogy, that is, its context. Architects, designers, engineers, and so forth, do not build and construct in “darkness”—they need to see what it is they are piecing together and planning. However, a counterargument against this attack on the *wise architect* notion is that Genesis 1.1 is merely setting the literary stage for further illustration of events. The verse itself is not bound to detail and should not be taken as a literal part of God’s actions. It is similar to when someone says, “So I began my morning routine. I put on clothes, washed my face, you know how it goes.” We have to assume or interpret such a description of one’s “morning routine” as having included with it what we generally expect a morning routine to consist of and in generally expected order: brushing of the teeth, washing of the face, applying certain chemicals to one’s face, etc. But one is nonetheless forced to inquire as to why the “general” creation account is so obscure and misleading.

Scholium 2 ^{KJV}: Another counterargument may be said that God is not bound to the restrictions and limits that human architects and engineers, being that they are finite and he is infinite. But this really explains nothing, and further, it precludes us from intelligibly referring to him as an “architect” in the first place. The metaphor thus becomes a stillborn attempt at explanation.

1.4 ^{KJV} And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness.

^{NAS} God saw how good the light was. God then separated the light from the darkness.

Scholium 1: See Genesis 1.1 Scholium 1. More specifically, what motivation would God initially have to create “light” from “dark.” How do these concepts factor into his goals? We must admit they are concepts in his mind in which they are used to achieve something. For although he could create the whole of the world on a mere whim or out of mercy, there *must* be a reason why *these* two concepts—and not others—were fabricated, such as the way they were, being “light” and “dark,” so as to achieve whatever fancy he wished.

1.5 ^{KJV} And God called the light **Day**, and the darkness he called Night. And the evening and the morning were the first day.

^{NAS} God called the light "**day**," and the darkness he called "night." Thus evening came, and morning followed--the first day.

Scholium 1: Of course, now adding *quotations* the label of what God refers to as “day” in the NAS removes, however slightly, the ambiguity of the day *referred to then* as the 24-hour day we come to now understand from observation of the falling and rising of the Sun and moon. In any event, we are greeted with the repeated usage of the term “darkness.” It was used in Genesis 1.2 to describe the “void” or “wasteland” before creation. Are we to infer the darkness of “night” to be synonymous with the darkness of the “void”? The metaphorical language, again, is elusive.

1.6 ^{KJV} And God said, Let there be a **firmament** in the midst of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters.

^{NAS} Then God said, "Let there be a **dome** in the middle of the waters, to separate one body of water from the other." And so it happened:

1.7 ^{KJV} And God made the firmament and divided the waters which were under the firmament from the waters which were above the firmament: and it was so.

^{NAS} God made the dome, and it separated the water above the dome from the water below it.

1.8 ^{KJV} And God called the firmament *Heaven*. And the evening and the morning were the second day.

^{NAS} God called the dome "the sky." Evening came, and morning followed--the second day.

1.9 ^{KJV} And God said, Let the waters under the heaven be gathered together unto one place, and let the dry land appear: and it was so.

^{NAS} Then God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered into a single basin, so that the dry land may appear." And so it happened: the water under the sky was gathered into its basin, and the dry land appeared.

1.10 ^{KJV} And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas: and God saw that it was good.

^{NAS} God called the dry land "the earth," and the basin of the water he called "the sea." God saw how good it was.

1.11 ^{KJV} And God said, Let the earth bring forth grass, the herb yielding seed, and the fruit tree yielding fruit after his kind, whose seed is in itself, upon the earth: and it was so.

^{NAS} Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth vegetation: every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it." And so it happened:

Scholium 1: It seems here that God has here established a certain law which itself, independently of God's actions, carries out the functions of future fruit and plant creation. We will call this the *Law of Autonomous Formation*. This Law could be said to be potentially applicable to all things in so far as it is a dictate for *causing* and *perpetuating* a category or type of thing's existence. This Law rests on the interpretation that God intentionally created fruit trees to "yield fruit after his kind." Thus, God had a decision to make: Either (a) God will continue to create things by

his own power, or (b) God will create things so that they may self-regulate their own creation. God must have a reason for either decision. The consequent of the latter, however, implies that God may not see it best to interfere with the Law he has created, for it is such that in the next verse God saw that it was “good.” What is this association to good that God bears? Of course, generally speaking, “good” is either within God or outside of God. This should be clear to everyone. However, less clear, is the relationship God would have to a good that is outside of itself. If within itself, this good would be of the nature of God which it necessarily creates. If outside of itself, this *Good* would be something that God *does not* necessarily create. It would be a thing of itself, however described, that God call upon, that God perceives. Again, if within itself and necessarily created, God would be affirming itself in so far as it is the immanent creator of things. However, given this condition, the intelligibility and quality of Good would be lost to those indwelling in God because God itself would be the only thing with the capability to *perceive* the Good in which case it alone would furthermore have the sufficient intellect to *comprehend* that it is genuinely, that is, absolutely, good.

Scholium 2: We must also wonder if a thing considered “good” to God is something of which he is not *willing* or not *able* to modify. That is, if *not willing* to modify something “good,” then we must concede that God judges “good” things to be so too immutable things. And if *not able* to modify something “good,” we find ourselves at the previous Scholium resultant inquiry, concerning goodness being within or without. If *not able*, then it seems that goodness is without or outside of God itself. Therefore, we must conclude that God itself *did not* necessarily create it and that it is independent of God. Being omnipotent necessitates that things *within* the power of an omnipotent being must necessarily be malleable to that omnipotent being. Thing beings outside of that omnipotent being, should this hypothesis be reasonable in the first place, given the definition of an omnipotent being, would have to be things independent of that being’s ability and further outside of that thing’s will. For if it is unable to exert its omnipotence on an external thing, then that means its will is subject to the resistance of that thing. Thus, its will must yield to the power of that thing.

1.12 ^{KJV} And the earth brought forth grass, and herb yielding seed after his kind, and the tree yielding fruit, whose seed was in itself, after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

^{NAS} the earth brought forth every kind of plant that bears seed and every kind of fruit tree on earth that bears fruit with its seed in it. God saw how good it was.

Scholium 1: See the previous Scholium.

1.13 ^{KJV} And the evening and the morning were the third day.

^{NAS} Evening came, and morning followed--the third day.

1.14 ^{KJV} And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years:

^{NAS} Then God said: "Let there be lights in the dome of the sky, to separate day from night. Let them mark the fixed times, the days and the years,

1.15 ^{KJV} And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth: and it was so.

^{NAS} and serve as luminaries in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth." And so it happened:

1.16 ^{KJV} And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also.

^{NAS} God made the two great lights, the greater one to govern the day, and the lesser one to govern the night; and he made the stars.

1.17 ^{KJV} And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth,

^{NAS} God set them in the dome of the sky, to shed light upon the earth,

1.18 ^{KJV} And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

^{NAS} to govern the day and the night, and to separate the light from the darkness. God saw how good it was.

1.19 ^{KJV} And the evening and the morning were the fourth day.

^{NAS} Evening came, and morning followed--the fourth day.

1.20 ^{KJV} And God said, Let the waters **bring forth** abundantly the **moving** creature that hath life, and fowl that may fly above the earth in the open firmament of heaven.

^{NAS} Then God said, "Let the water **teem** with an abundance of **living** creatures, and on the earth let birds fly beneath the dome of the sky." And so it happened:

Scholium 1: "Teem" now is the evolved verb for the verb phrase "bring forth," which is one of its definitions; but it is an archaic usage now. This is troublesome and seemingly unethical to translate from an old language to a new language those words into the new language's vocabulary. A certain meaning is lost; but of course all this depends on the accuracy of the translation. In any event, *bring forth* suggests a self-directed and active nature while *teem* suggests passivity. Truly, what has occurred here may be more disloyal to the Scripture, as has been expressed and should that note be correct: the Law of Autonomous Formation as laid out previously would be sacrificed if we are to grant that the waters *teem* rather than *bring forth*. It is a matter of consistency. Simply, we have a translation discrepancy between a transitive verb phrase, *bring forth*, and an intransitive verb, *teem*. *Bring forth* seems to convey the notion of action and introducing a change while *teem* seems to indicate the subject being the container of changes which are introduced from something other than itself. However, they each bear definitions falling under their verb form counterparts. So maybe this is a trivial dispute.

1.21 ^{KJV} And God created great **whales**, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

^{NAS} God created the great **sea monsters** and all kinds of swimming creatures with which the water teems, and all kinds of winged birds. God saw how good it was,

1.22 ^{KJV} And God blessed them, saying, Be fruitful, and multiply, and fill the waters in the seas, and let fowl multiply in the earth.

^{NAS} and God blessed them, saying, "Be fertile, multiply, and fill the water of the seas; and let the birds multiply on the earth."

1.23 ^{KJV} And the evening and the morning were the fifth day.

^{NAS} Evening came, and morning followed--the fifth day.

1.24 ^{KJV} And God said, Let the earth bring forth the living creature after his kind, **cattle**, and creeping thing, and beast of the earth after his kind: and it was so.

^{NAS} Then God said, "Let the earth bring forth all kinds of living creatures: **cattle**, creeping things, and wild animals of all kinds." And so it happened:

Scholium 1: It is interesting to note the translation of "whale" and "sea monster" of the previous verse. Yet here we see "cattle" is a mutual translation. This would make sense, that the Hebrew language had a specific term for land animals before sea creatures, given that the NAS is accurate in its translation (And we have no reason to doubt that it is not more accurate than the KJV).

1.25 ^{KJV} And God made the beast of the earth after his kind, and cattle after their kind, and every thing that creepeth upon the earth after his kind: and God saw that it was good.

^{NAS} God made all kinds of wild animals, all kinds of cattle, and all kinds of creeping things of the earth. God saw how good it was.

1.26 ^{KJV} And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea,

and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, **and over all the earth**, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth.

^{NAS} Then God said: "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. Let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and the cattle, and over all the wild animals and all the creatures that crawl on the ground."

Scholium 1^{KJV}: Clearly "over all the earth" is anthropocentric, a keen suggestion of the KJV's propagandistic nature. The NAS translation duly subtracted such an absurd notion, but at what cost to the meaning of the book? Either the KJV translators unjustly *inserted* that suggestive phrase (And NAS has it translated properly.), or the NAS translators *subtracted* it for a specific reason (And KJV has it translated properly.).

Scholium 2: "...man in our image..." suggests either that God is a human being or that when, initially created, human beings were not the same sort of thing that exist today. That is, Adam and Eve were "human" in a completely different way, either biologically or spiritually, from humans today. We could easily attack this notion of "image" *or* an image adequately and intelligibly expressing God's existence. At some point in the description, we have to admit that our image must be categorically different from God's. However, we must ask what "image" is supposed to refer to: Is it God's nature or is it God's existence as something perceivable, something describable? Truly, the verse is rather vague on this.

1.27 ^{KJV} So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them.

^{NAS} God created man in his image; in the **divine** image he created him; male and female he created them.

Scholium 1^{NAS}: From this translation, we are given the notion that the human image is itself "divine." Why would the KJV not express such an uplifting and anthropocentric notion. After all, shouldn't it be that *divine* beings on Earth have *dominion* over it rather than merely beings of God's

image having *dominion*? It would seem that the KJV would opt for the former, but it doesn't seem that the text suggests that.

1.28 ^{KJV} And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

^{NAS} God blessed them, saying: "Be fertile and multiply; fill the earth and subdue it. Have dominion over the fish of the sea, the birds of the air, and all the living things that move on the earth."

Scholium 1: What exactly is this relationship God has bestowed upon the whole of lesser beings with respect to each other? Apparently, man is to have dominion and is to subdue over the far lesser creatures. From what I gather, these far lesser creatures, cattle, creeping things, etc, serve *some* purpose. Some of these purposes may be:

1. To function as a food source (as we commonly treat animals)
2. To function as companions (as we too commonly treat animals)
3. To function as a means to a greater goal (either our personal goal or for God's personal goal)

Now all of these purposes, initially, can co-function. Certain animals exist for this or that, others for other purposes. Cattle exist for food; dogs exist for companionship; horses exist for travel. This is how we typically associate ourselves with the animal kingdom.

1.29 ^{KJV} And God said, Behold, I have given you every herb bearing seed, which is upon the face of all the earth, *and every tree*, in the which is the fruit of a tree yielding seed; to you it shall be for meat.

^{NAS} God also said: "See, I give you every seed-bearing plant all over the earth and every tree that has seed-bearing fruit on it to be your food;

Scholium 1: It is important here to note is the dietary dictate of God towards the first human beings. By our current evolutionary conditioning, we depend on meat as the most accessible source of protein. That is, we strive to attain meat from animals as hunters *and we receive* it most easily from them in our consumption of them. These are two evolutionary qualities of human beings: it is psychological and biological. Now, in the case of the first humans of the Garden of Eden, they received all of their nourishment from the “fruit of a tree yielding seed.” This would imply that as far as evolution goes, the first human beings were not of the species *homo sapiens*. Indeed, the dietary condition of the first “humans” seem to preclude them from the description of *homo sapiens*—it seems to suggest that they were not within the confines of how we describe species through the theory of evolution. Would it be reasonable to call them biologically human if they sustained themselves in a way radically different way than we sustain ourselves? It could be possible that the fruit of the Garden of Eden contained all the vitamins and proteins necessary to sustain them. But this amounts to merely rationalizing and grabbing for the imaginations which would further require us to explain why the fruit itself differed in constitution. We could go on to infinity rationalizing why this or that little thing of the Garden of Eden maintained a subtlety different nature than how things maintain today just to defend ourselves against the possibility that the Garden, and so too the world as God initially created it, may be “radically” different.

1.30 ^{KJV} And to every beast of the earth, and to every fowl of the air, and to every thing that creepeth upon the earth, wherein there is life, I have given every green herb for meat: and it was so.

^{NAS} and to all the animals of the land, all the birds of the air, and all the living creatures that crawl on the ground, I give all the green plants for food." And so it happened.

Scholium 1: Here we see the order for an entirely omnivorous population of the world as initially created. It seems here that the consumption of other life was not intended for the relationship between moving and creaturely things, including human beings. However, it may be suggested

that they do not have this *ability* stripped of their natures. They *could* still consume other living things, but God set it so that they did not. But one must wonder why God gives the *physical* ability yet programs the opposite to transpire. How does this factor into his *intentions* and *apparent omniscience*? We notice this theme throughout this work, especially with the *general* ability—and less difficult to defend—couched within the notion of free will. We will meet this difficult discussion later. For our purposes with this passage, however, it may be conceded that the first “humans” and, indeed, the whole of creaturely things in the world were created to eat only of the “seed” and of the “herb.” An initial question might be: Should *we* strive to that end such that God initially intended? We must also deeply consider why things have changed, for humans and for animals.

1.31 ^{KJV} And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

^{NAS} God looked at everything he had made, and he found it very good. Evening came, and morning followed--the sixth day.