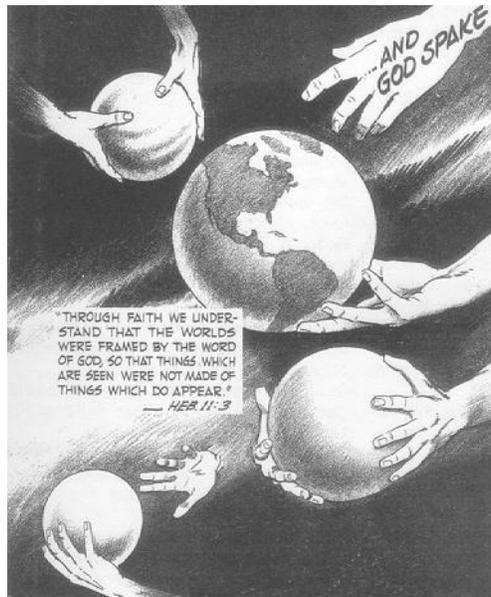

Creation Stories of the Ancient Near East

David Livingston



One Viewpoint

Many professors in colleges, universities and seminaries today agree with the following ideas and so teach their students. This is one reason young people who have had a strong religious faith lose it when they go to college.

For many centuries, Jewish and Christian theologians agreed that the accounts of the world's origin given in Genesis were not only inspired by God, but owed nothing to any other scriptures. *This extreme view has now been abandoned by all but fundamentalists.*¹

These authors are probably correct that all but Bible believers (fundamentalists) have abandoned this view. The abandonment of the Genesis Creation Story as a factual account has become so prevalent that some denominations now treat it as "myth" in their Sunday School material. However, the fundamentalist view is not "extreme." It is based on fact.

The Genesis Creation Story does not owe anything to the creation myths of Egypt and Mesopotamia. The latter were written for a completely different purpose. They are not really about the *creation* of the universe at all. They are related to the "genesis" of a certain king's reign. Priest-scribes wrote them to establish

¹ Robert Graves and Raphael Patai, *Hebrew Myths*, London: Cassell (1964), p. 21. Our emphasis.

the king's (and his god's) supremacy. Each myth is different with its local adaptations. The Biblical history has unity, never changing, as the myths do with each succeeding king. Yet...

The first account of Creation (Gen 1:1–2:31) was composed at Jerusalem soon after the return from the Babylonian Exile (500 BC). God is here named 'Elohim.' The second account ([Gen 2:4–22](#)) is also Judaeen, possibly of Edomite origin, and pre-Exilic. (600 BC). Here God was originally named 'Yahweh,' but the priestly editor has changed this to 'Yahweh Elohim' (usually translated as 'the Lord God'), thus identifying the God of [Genesis 1](#) with that of [Genesis 2](#), and giving the versions an appearance of uniformity. He did not, however, eliminate certain contradictory details in the order of creation.²

Many scholars agree with this interpretation of [Genesis 1](#) and [2](#). Their opinions are that the Creation stories were made up quite late, precluding any Mosaic authorship. They claim (without proof other than some seeming similarities) that they were borrowed from the literature of other nations. Even though competent scholars have demonstrated that the Pentateuch is much older than these men claim, the critics, nevertheless, continue to press their viewpoint. That their contentions hold sway even among church educators can be seen in a sample from a publication for the instruction of laymen.

Out of these sources (Genesis through Numbers) they formed what is called the 'Priestly History.' The motive for the formation of this history was Israel's own situation. The community had been destroyed and the people scattered. How should they plan for the future? The priests turned to the past for their guidelines.. . [Ed. i.e., they composed the "Books of Moses" from oral tradition and the myths of the other nations of the ancient near east.] And so their Priestly History became the foundational document by which the exiles from Babylonian slavery sought to organize themselves.³

This author espouses the theory that the priests "made up" the Books of Moses as a means of pulling the Israelites together and organizing them as a nation. Looking at it this way, religion could be used as an "opiate." By this theory, Genesis is simply a semi-historical preamble for the books of Exodus to Deuteronomy. In the latter, the Tabernacle is described, the priestly order is laid out, the sacrificial system and feast days are all instituted.

The above authors claim that these Old Testament books were written for the same purpose as all other Ancient Near Eastern documents were written — to control men through religion. To continue with the *Layman's Introduction*,

The heart of this history is the story in [Exodus 1–15](#) of the deliverance by God of Israel from Egypt. This key event, by which the exilic priests interpreted the meaning of history, was the central event to which Israel had looked for centuries.. . The narratives in the book of Genesis seem to have been

² *op. cit.* p.24.

³ Robert B. Laurin, *The Laymen's Introduction to the Old Testament*, Valley Forge, PA: Judson Press (1970), pp. 27,28. Although not a recent publication, similar teaching is still much in vogue today.

added as a preface to the history of God's salvation described in Exodus through Numbers.. . the creation stories in the Bible do not give us a scientific description, but a symbolic one. They were trying to present the theological meaning of creation.. . The writers of the Old Testament, however, *borrowed motifs and allusions from the myths of Mesopotamia and Canaan* as means of describing the significance of God's acts in the world. They never borrowed the mythological materials unchanged, but always transformed them into ways of describing the actions of the one God of the world.. . *So we do not read this creation story for accurate information about the process of creation.*⁴

It is very important to keep in mind that we are still reading picturesque literature. In answer to the question 'Did it happen exactly this way?' — We must answer 'No!' *This is parabolic literature, not historical literature.* The growth of civilization, for example, depicted in chapter 4 is *patently nonhistorical.*⁵

Many scholars teaching in seminaries train ministers who, in turn, teach things similar to the above. We hope the reader will discern the error in their interpretation. Many today consider the Bible Creation Story a "myth." They believe it has "evolved" and is written for the same basic purpose as the truly mythical creation accounts of the ancient near east. These scholars seem incapable of understanding that the Bible is history and the myths of the ancient near east are little more than political propaganda. Characteristics of the position taken by these authors are the following:

1. Religion has evolved. Thus man will get better and better.⁶
2. Adam and Eve were not real people. They were only symbolic, or mythical persons.
3. Israel did as other nations did. Their leaders "manufactured" the Torah to control the people.
4. The Torah (5 books of Moses) was late, 600–500 BC, thus it was "borrowed" from other literature.
5. The possibility is rejected that Genesis was written so early that all others borrowed from it.
6. There is always the possibility that this kind of writer is guilty of that which they accuse the Bible writers. That is, they *use* a philosophy of the evolution-of-religion to control other people's understanding of God's Word.

Another Viewpoint

Another viewpoint is that the myths and legends of creation are serious attempts by the ancients to philosophise on the origin of the universe and man. The myths are compared with the Bible and similarities and differences analyzed. Many scholars, both conservative and liberal, espouse this interpretation of creation legends and make important contributions to our understanding of both myths and the Bible.

⁴ *op. cit.*, pp. 30, 31. Our emphasis.

⁵ *op. cit.*, p. 34. Our emphasis.

⁶ But, cf. [2 Tim 3](#).

However, **that is not the viewpoint that will be discussed in this article.** Comparisons will be made, but with the understanding that the composers of the myths had a far different purpose in mind for them than is commonly supposed. Now let us look at several “creation” stories.

The Memphite Theology

A “creation” account from Egypt describes a god who created everything by the word of his mouth. It was the god Ptah who “spoke, and it was.” Although there are some striking resemblances to [Genesis 1](#), they are not as close as it may at first seem. The complete account is not like Genesis at all.

In examining this account called the Memphite Theology, one finds that the god Ptah *thought*. There was a *thought-process*

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 81

involved, then he spoke. But Yahweh-Elohim of Scripture does not go through a thought sequence. In creating, *He is all-knowing at all times.*

What is actually being set forth in this Egyptian “creation” myth is that a “new” god, Ptah, the god that put Pharaoh on the throne, is better than all previous gods. The basic purpose of the myth, then, is to vindicate the new Pharaoh’s right to the throne. In reading carefully, what one discovers is that *the new god is patently nothing more than the god-hood of the new king.*

When the First Dynasty established its capital at Memphis, it was necessary to justify the sudden emergence of this town to central importance. The Memphite god Ptah was therefore proclaimed to have been the First Principle, taking precedence over other recognized creator-gods. Mythological arguments were presented that the city of Memphis was the “place where the Two Lands are united” and that the Temple of Ptah was the “balance in which Upper and Lower Egypt have been weighed.”⁷

Atrahasis Creation Epic

The Atrahasis Creation Epic was discovered and first translated about 1876. However, only one-fifth of it had been known until 1965. Then in a museum cellar there was discovered a number of clay tablets which were recognized to be part of this same account. Now about four-fifths of the myth is available. It is probably the most important creation myth of the Ancient Near East outside the Bible. It dates to about 1630 BC, or over 3600 years ago, but it probably comes from an earlier source. So it was written before the time of Moses.

According to some scholars, Moses would have borrowed from it. As we examine it, see if you agree.

Actually, no account of the creation of the world is found in the Atrahasis Epic. It is concerned exclusively with the story of man and his relationship with the gods, which is hinted at in the beginning statement, ‘When the gods, man-like...’ The introduction describes the situation at the outset of the story, when the world had been divided between three major deities of the Sumerian-Akkadian pantheon.

⁷ James B. Pritchard, *Ancient Near Eastern Texts*, Princeton: Univ. Press (1955), pp. 4-6. Referenced as ANET in following notes.



The Atrahasis Creation Epic

A.R. Millard analyzed this “New Babylonian Genesis” text.⁸ The quotations in the following section are found in his article.

The gods took one hand in the other,
They cast the lot, made division!
Anu went up to heaven.
Enlil...the earth to his subjects.
The lock, the bar of the sea,
They gave to Enki, the prince.

In this text, Anu is the god of heaven, Enlil the god of the earth, Enki is the ruling king. The introductory description of the world situation in the Atrahasis Epic depicts the junior gods laboring at the behest of the senior deities. Note that the gods are like men.

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 82

When the gods, man-like,
Bore the labor, carried the load,
The gods’ load was great,
The toil grievous, the toil excessive.
The great Annunaku, the Seven,
Were making the Igigu undertake the toil.

The underlying idea of the Atrahasis Epic and the other Babylonian Creation stories is that *man was made to free the gods from the toil of ordering the earth to produce their food*. The gods instructed the Mother-goddess (Nintu) to:

Create a human to bear the yoke.

⁸ *Tyndale Bulletin* 18 (1967) pp. 3-18.

Let him bear the yoke, the task of Enlil,
Let man carry the load of the gods.
Let them slaughter one god,
So that all the gods may be purified by dipping.
With his flesh and blood
Let Nintu mix clay.
So let god and man be mingled
Together in the clay.
After she had mixed the clay
She called the Anunna, the great gods.
The Igigu, the great gods,
Spat upon the clay.
Mami opened her mouth
And said to the great gods,
You commanded me a task
And I have finished it.
I have removed your toil
I have imposed your load on man.

Basic Purpose of the Atrahasis Epic

Priest-scribes “created” a caste-system with the king on top in the god’s image, and they themselves as administrators of the god’s kingdom. (Common) man was “created” to support the whole system. The point is, the king throughout all the ancient near east was presented as “son” of the local god, his “image” on earth. Therefore, all service done the king was service done to the gods. All religion (including creation legends) was contrived as an “opiate of the people” (see: “The Sons of God,” *Archaeology and Biblical Research*, Winter, 1990.)

Babylonian Creation Epic

A bilingual creation story speaks of the creation of the rivers and canals, without naming the agent of creation, then concentrates upon making man to maintain them. This text relates the creation of man and beast, rivers and vegetation, then states, “He built up a dam at the edge of the sea.”⁹ As the next line describes the draining of a swamp, this may have been related to that, but mention of the sea suggest that the dam’s purpose was to keep the land from sea floods.

⁹ Alexander Heidel, *The Babylonian Genesis*, Chicago: Chicago U. Press, (2nd ed., 1951) pp. 61-63.

Throughout the ancient near east, at the very beginning of history, it was believed that anyone who founded a city, or rebuilt it, was its creator, and that anyone who drained a swamp, thus creating new land, deserved a place with the gods.¹⁰ Alexander the Great, in founding Alexandria, Egypt (among other cities he founded named “Alexandria”), acquired a place with the gods for so doing. The people of the ancient near east understood that concept.

These creation stories do not actually deal with the creation of the universe, but with the creation of some new land, a city, or an empire. The patron god of that area, then puts his “son” in control of it (according to myths contrived by the priesthood).

Other Akkadian texts indicate man’s purpose is to uphold earth’s order so that there will be produce to feed the gods. The god in the temple and his “son” in the palace (representing him) must live in a manner befitting a god.

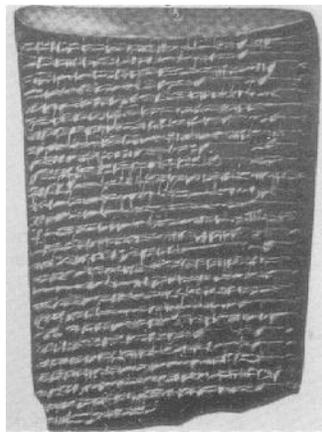
Many able studies have been made of the similarities between Genesis and other Creation stories. Taken out of context, some sentences sound similar to the Bible account. But a careful consideration of the whole clearly indicates

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 83

basic differences. Some of the accounts have crassly immoral sections.

Enuma Elish Creation Epic

This was a part of the New Year(Akitu) festival, and was recited on the fourth of eight days. George Roux points out that this festival “resulted from the confluence of two powerful currents of religious thought: an extremely ancient fertility cult, originally common to the whole prehistoric near east, and a more comparatively recent Sumerian cosmogony.”¹¹



Enuma Elish Creation Epic

Roux says something very important for us today. That is, in pre-flood times sex was perverted to the “nth” degree. Then, in post-flood times, a violently anti-Yahweh religio-politico system was

¹⁰ Fustel de Coulange, “Worship of the Founder,” *The Ancient City*, Garden City: Doubleday (1873) pp. 142-146.

¹¹ Georges Roux, *Ancient Iraq*, England: Penguin (1964) p. 361.

manufactured incorporating sex deviations. He further says, "In the Babylonian akitu-festival Sacred Marriage and the myth of Creation were harmoniously blended together."

Of course, in all this, Yahweh was not given the slightest credit for anything. In this Babylonian version, Marduk, who had been a minor deity before that time became a major one by being proclaimed the creator of the country. (Later, Asshur was substituted for Marduk in the Assyrian version.) Actually, very little is said about creation.

The purpose of the myth seems to be that through intercourse between the gods (represented by the king and queen on earth), everything is assured of functioning properly for the coming year. Roux points out that *Enuma Elish* was an acceptable explanation of the universe to the deeply religious Babylonians,

... It made good the fact that men must be the servants of the gods; it accounted for the natural wickedness of humanity, created from the blood of evil Kingu; it also justified the exorbitant powers of Marduk (originally Enlil) by his heroic exploits. But, above all, it had like the sacred marriage, a powerful magical virtue. If every year for nearly two millenia *Enuma Elish* was recited by the priests of Babylon on the fourth day of the New Year Festival, it was because the Babylonians felt that the great cosmic struggle had never really ended and that the forces of chaos were always ready to challenge the established order of the gods.¹²

... *Enuma Elish* is not primarily a creation story at all... It is first and foremost a literary monument in honor of Marduk as the champion of the gods and the creator of heaven and earth. Its prime object is to offer cosmological reasons for Marduk's advancement from the position as chief god of Babylon to that of the head of the entire Babylonian pantheon... (the account of his victory over Tiamat) was added not so much for the sake of giving an account of how all things came into being, but chiefly because it further served to enhance the glory of Marduk and helped to justify his claim to sovereignty over all things visible

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 84

and invisible.

Next to the purpose of singing the praises of Marduk comes the desire on the part of the Babylonian priests, *who were responsible for the composition of this epic*, to sing the praises of Babylon, the city of Marduk, and to strengthen her claim to supremacy over all the cities of the land. Babylon's claim to supremacy was justified already by the fact that it was Babylon's god who had conquered Tiamat and had created and organized the universe. It was further supported by tracing Babylon's origin back to the very beginnings of time and by attributing her foundation to the great Annunaki themselves, who built Babylon as a dwelling place for Marduk and the gods in general (Tablet VI:45–73). *Our epic is thus not only a religious treatise, but also a political one.*¹³

The reason for the substitution of Marduk in the Babylonian version was the fact that with the political ascendancy of the Semites (beginning with the First Babylonian Dynasty, 19th-16th

¹² *op. cit.*, p. 96.

¹³ Heidel, *op. cit.*, pp. 10-11.

centuries BC) the city of Babylon became the capital of the great Babylonian empire and the cultural center of the whole Mesopotamian world. With the rise of Semitic Babylon to its lofty position as metropolis, *Marduk had to be raised to the rank of the chief deity of the Semitic pantheon*, and this was accomplished by attributing to him deeds which had originally been performed by the older gods. It is a social thesis in the sense that it puts man in his 'proper' place; namely, by *making him a servant of the gods* whose duty it is to supply them with their daily needs. . . That was the reason for his having been 'fashioned' and that was his function in life.¹⁴

Supposedly, there are parallels between the Genesis account and the Babylonian account of creation. One is hard put to find them. But, four may serve to show how unlikely the "parallels" are:

I. Creation of the firmament and earth:

The Lord (Marduk) trod upon the hinder part of Tiamat,
And with unsparing club he split her skull.
He cut the arteries of her blood
And caused the north wind to carry it to out-of-the-way places.
When his fathers saw this, they were glad and rejoiced
And sent him dues and greeting-gifts.
The Lord rested, examining her dead body,
To divide the abortion and to create ingenious things therewith.
He split her open like a mussel into two;
Half of her he sat in place and formed the sky as a roof,
The Lord measured the dimensions of the Apsu,
And a great structure, its counterpart, he established,
Namely Esharra (the earth),
The great structure Esharra which he made as a canopy.¹⁵

Can this be considered a serious attempt at explaining origins? We see it rather as a deliberate *attempt to explain the already existing order* in terms that give all credit to Marduk, god of the city of Babylon.

II. Creation of the luminaries:

¹⁴ Isaac Mendelsohn, *Religions of the Ancient Near East*, New York: Liberal Arts Press (1955) p.17. Our emphasis. A complete translation of *Enuma Elish* is found in Mendelsohn. See also the doctoral dissertation of Joan Delano, *The "Exegesis" of "Enuma Elish" and Genesis 1 — 1875 to 1975: A Study in Interpretation*, Milwaukee: Marquette U. (1985) Available from U. Microfilms, Ann Arbor MI.

¹⁵ Heidel, pp. 42-43; ANET, p. 67.

He created stations for the great gods;
The stars their likenesses, the signs of the zodiac, he set up.
He determined the year, defined the divisions;
For each of the twelve months he set up three constellations (etc.)¹⁶

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 85

This is obviously an attempt to use already existing heavenly bodies to establish the usefulness and function of astrology — at the heart of divination — a vital activity in a tightly controlled religious state. Where did astrology originate? It originated in the very area where these things were written supported by this type of mythical literature. Astrology was already in vogue when Enuma Elish was written. It was part of the local religio-political system.

III. Creation of man:

(See texts above on page 82.) Like other creation accounts, its purpose was to give the impression that man was created to serve and feed the gods.

IV. The “Rest” after the “Creation”:

Scholars have looked for the concept of a day-of-rest in Babylonian texts. But outside Israel there is no Sabbath in ancient near eastern cultures anywhere, neither in Mesopotamia nor in Egypt.

In Babylonian the word *sabbatu* is found. But it has something to do with the moon and only occurs once a month, or at most, every 15 days. It has nothing whatever to do with the Old Testament concept of a day of rest. The Sabbath was instituted by Yahweh in the very beginning for His followers to keep as a sign of their belief that He is the Creator. There is no “Sabbath” in this creation myth at all. The closest statement to it is:

Now, O Lord, who hast established our freedom from compulsory service,
What shall be the sign of our gratitude?
Come, let us make something whose name shall be called “sanctuary.”
It shall be a dwelling for our rest at night;
Come, let us repose therein!
There let us erect a throne dais (platform),
a seat with a back support!
On the day that we arrive (for the New Year’s festival), we will repose in it.¹⁷

Who will repose in it? The King will. Posing as “son” of Marduk, he will sit on the throne of the patron god. The Babylonian “creation” myth is actually political propaganda in a religious cloak. It is meant to support the “divine right” of a king to rule (as a tyrant).

¹⁶ Heidel, p. 44; ANET, p. 67.

¹⁷ Heidel, p. 48; ANET, p. 68.

Counterfeit “divine” kings promulgated their claim to authority as “son of the creator.” In other words the “rest” is really in a place in the sanctuary where the king sits on his throne representing the god - in this case Marduk. So the “rest” is really a rest of triumph, of gaining complete control over the realm. There is no concept of a Sabbath rest here.

Myth And History

The creation stories we have considered are myth. What is a “myth”? And what is real history? Why do men compose myths?

A myth is the attempt of a culture to overcome history, to negate the forces and ravages of time, and to make the universe amenable and subject to man. The myth reveals a hatred of history. History shows movement in terms of forces beyond man and in judgment over man; history rides heavily over man, is inescapably ethical, shows a continuing conflict between good and evil, and clearly shows man to be the actor, not the playwright and director. And this man hates. To fill a role he never wrote, to enter on stage at a time not of his choosing, this man resents. The purpose man then sets for himself in his myths is *to end history*, to make man the absolute governor by decreeing an end to the movement that is history.¹⁸

To destroy history, to make out of history a fantasy, a fairy tale, men take a
(article continued on page 87)

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 86

Comparisons Between The Biblical And Ancient Near Eastern Creation Accounts

Bible. (The Bible is real history. The historical narratives are true and are not myths.)

Ancient Near East Stories. (Religio-political propaganda)

1. Creator is separate from the creation.

1. Multitude of deities; intensely polytheistic.

Only one god — not divided.

Nature is inseparable from the gods, spirit and matter are mixed; gods are “in” everything. (Animism.)

Breath of life in man only from God.

Thus man has clean break with lower forms of life.

Man has blood of gods — “divine” (demons).

Man and beast created the same day.

2. Exalts Yahweh.

2. Exalts man. That is, the king via the gods.

¹⁸ Rousas John Rushdoony, *The Mythology of Science*, Nutley, NJ: Craig Press (1967) p. 1. Rushdoony’s main thesis is to explode the myth of evolution. But his explanations apply equally well in our discussion.

Full of praise to Him.

3. Creation of whole universe.

Created by word of mouth (fiat).

God rested, but not tired.

Sabbath a sign to keep ([Ex 31:13f.](#))

3. Creation only of area over which a local god rules through his “son.”

Founder of a city is a “creator.” It is fashioned like a human craftsman.

Gods don’t work. Live off man.

No sabbath elsewhere in the ancient near east.

4. Man to have dominion over earth.

[Gen. 1:26–29](#) ([Ps 8:6](#), [115:16](#), [Heb 2:8, 9](#))

Sublime account of first man and wife, created by and subject to Yahweh.

4. Man is to serve “gods” (other men) — to “feed” them.

Sex, violence, physical strength emphasized.

5. Sin and Fall — only in the Bible.

5. Man was “noisy” (bothered the “gods”).

6. Story of Creation revealed by Creator.

Yahweh made man in His image — holy, just, pure, righteous.

By worshipping and serving Him, acknowledging that in Him we “live and move and have our being,” man becomes strong, pure, victorious.

“Man” — only one, not “mankind” ([Rom 5:12–14](#))

6. Story of “creation” fabricated in temple by priest-scribes.

Man made gods in his own image — vile! Man becomes more and more like his gods.

This system so corrupted man, he had to be destroyed ([Gn 6–9](#)).

Jesus Christ is a personal First Cause

Whom we can know and serve ([Eph 1:21](#), [6:12](#), [Jn 1:1–3](#).)

Do we have purpose in life because we now follow our Creator-God?

(Other Scripture on Creation: [2 Kgs 19:15](#), [Heb 1:2, 11:3](#))

(God’s judgment on this system: [Rom 1:18f.](#))

Is the myth of evolution taking us down this same path?

Even if science does “create” one cell, and eventually “man,” he will not be in God’s image.

Why are the philosophers of evolution so desperate to prove man happened by chance? Are they the modern attempt to push God out of the universe, even as rulers of the ancient near east tried to do?

Bible and Spade 5 (1992).

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kernel of history and expand it into a great myth. Men thus mold history to their own liking.

What have we, then, in the “creation” myths? We have a king who wants to be like a god. He cannot be a god, really. But in a myth he becomes a god, or like one, and does great exploits. In this view, Rushdoony explains that myths are used “to make man the *absolute governor* by decreeing an end to the movement that is history.”

Where his myths acknowledge men’s lot in history, man ascribes his sorry role, not to his depravity, but to the jealousy of the gods. . .¹⁹

This is certainly true of the ancient near eastern (and most other) myths. Clever men used myth as religio-politico propaganda in order to deceive the populace into thinking a ruler was divine or “son” of the divine, and that he had his “right to rule” from a god — but, a god created by ingenious men through “cunningly devised fables,” making the fiction sound plausible. On the other hand, precisely the opposite is true with the factual history recorded beginning with [Genesis 1](#).

The early chapters of Genesis are true history, not myth. Writers like Laurin, Graves and Patai *try to make myth out of history*. They put the writings of Israel into the same class as the religio-politico fabrications of ancient near eastern city-state systems. They have assumed (without proof) that Genesis was written by priests (after the Babylonian exile), to use in controlling Israel’s religious life. They fail to grasp that these Bible stories are history; whereas myths are used as political propaganda.

Modern writers must not impose their own “religious evolution” presuppositions upon Scripture. In so doing, they themselves may unwittingly be trying to control people’s understanding of Scripture. Let God’s Word be what it is — true history.

Ruling God Out Of His Universe

Communism used the myth of “evolution” to rule God out of the universe (by trying to make Him unnecessary). Clever men used a *non*-religion to explain the universe and, along with the “party line,” developed their own “opiate” to control people.

Evolution (biological and religious) is itself a myth and is taking our nation down a dangerous path. Evolutionary philosophers try every way possible to prove man happened by chance. They place great hope in science’s ability to create life, and eventually even “man,” unaware that man created by man will be a monster. These philosophers and pseudo-scientists are the modern attempt to push God out of the universe, even as rulers of the ancient near east tried to do.

In one of the Flood myths, it says that man became noisy and bothered the gods. This made the gods angry and that is why the gods destroyed man with a flood. The Bible, on the other hand, says man was rotten, so vile that he had corrupted the whole earth. The only remedy was to obliterate him. Conversely, in the myths, the gods are no good; man is all right. Men were simply bothering the gods (like flies), so the gods destroyed man. It was the gods’ fault, not man’s.

¹⁹ *ibid.*

.. . The goal of the myth, progressively more clearly enunciated in time, has become the destruction of history and the enthronement of man as the new governor of the universe.²⁰

Rulers of the ancient near east were trying to rule God out of the universe and to govern it themselves. To facilitate this they composed “creation” myths.

We can understand them by looking at it like this — Whoever “created” me, owns me. If someone else convinces me that he (or his god) did it, I am his slave.²¹ That is the motivation behind the creation myths of the ancient near east. They were written to keep people in bondage.

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 88



The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork.

Whoever is responsible for making you and the things you have is your owner. If he has then turned over this ownership to me and I have become his steward, then I own you. That is the theory of rule in the kingdoms of the ancient near east. The kings’ scribes say as much in their literature on clay tablets. They claim to own all the people and all the land. The gods created those things for their own service and then put “King So & So” in charge, with a group of administrators to help the king supervise all of

*** politico *** to ***. If one ***, the purpose *** near eastern *** more apparent.

*** Creation Account

On the other hand, the Biblical Creation story has to do with purpose in life and in the universe. If the Creation Story was “borrowed” from other cultures — then it is only a guess at Truth, and no better. If all life arose by chance — then there is no purpose, just fate. But if [Genesis 1–2](#) is absolute truth revealed by God the Creator, as we assert, then we have a message of purpose, life, and hope. Darkness becomes light, night becomes day.

Moses could not have borrowed from the creation stories of Egypt and Mesopotamia. They are for a completely different purpose. They are not about the creation of the universe at all. They relate to the “genesis” of a certain king’s reign. They are written to establish his (and his god’s) supremacy. Each story

²⁰ *ibid.*

²¹ But, if I surrender my authority to the Living Creator — I am free!

is different because of *** adaptations. Just as Genesis begins *** establishing Yahweh's supremacy *** "creator."

The Genesis *** almost certainly *** first. *** of Deceit *** unscrupulous *** truth. Parallels may be discovered between the principle of manipulated religion, used to govern these ancient kingdoms, and the opposite of that principle in the Bible. Religious history and secular history are related. They cannot be separated. In order to understand history, one must comprehend God's working in history first, then examine how the opposition works through the deceit of the Adversary.

BSP 5:3 (Summer 1992) p. 89

Creation Of Man In Scripture

In Scripture, man has a clean break from lower forms of life. Evolutionary teaching on the origin of man and Biblical teaching on the origin of man are mutually exclusive. One cannot believe both. They are each an article of faith. The "missing link" between man and his beginnings, according to Scripture, is God. But, He is not "missing" at all. He has been there all the time.

The reason we say that evolution and creation are mutually exclusive is because of what [Genesis 2:7](#) says in Hebrew, "And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life and man became a living soul." The "LORD" in this verse is Yahweh. When it is spelled "Lord," the Hebrew is *Adonay*. Yahweh is the covenant God of Israel. In [Genesis 2:7](#), Yahweh is the God who formed man.²²

The word for "formed" is the Hebrew verb *yatsar*. It is used to describe the actions of a potter making a vessel. As the potter's wheel spins, he shapes the clay with his fingers. The design is in his mind, but he shapes the vessel with his hands. The mechanics God used in forming man, we do not know. But the word used to describe it is suggestive.

In Hebrew the word "man" is *adam*. Some say that *adam* means "mankind." But where did "mankind" come from? Obviously, from man, the first man. God formed man from the "dust" ("dirt") of *** the ground. The word for ground is *adamah*. Adam was made of *adamah* (a female form of the noun).²³

Man was, formed. But he was still lifeless. There was no continuity whatever with any lower form of life. Man was lifeless until something else happened. The next phrase says, "He breathed (or blew) into his nostrils the breath of life, the *mishnat chayyim* (the very breathing in and out of life) and man became a living soul (or being)."

When God blew man's breath into his nose, He also blew in his being! Paul used this terminology when he spoke much later to the Athenians in [Acts 17:28](#), "In Him we live and move and have our

²² The word *elohim* is the word for "God." The first chapter of Genesis says that God made man. The second chapter says *yahweh elohim*, the God who is the Saviour God, the God who makes covenants with man, is Creator. Yahweh is the self-existent God, always has been and always will be. Most scholars think *yahweh* is formed from the verb "to be."

²³ Perhaps this is where the idea of "Mother Earth" originated. Nations the world over speak of "Father Heaven" and "Mother Earth."

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