

The Creation Narrative

The Creation narrative is an example of the ancient Hebrew literary style of **repetition**. Instead of duplicate accounts, these two narratives are complementary. Genesis 1 is an outline of creation events and ends with the climax of man who was created in the likeness of God. Genesis 2 is more specific with the details of man, his original state, his home, and his helper. And in establishing man's sinless original state, the account sets up the coming sin and Fall of man.

When examining the structure of Genesis 1, a complete literary unit is seen with **parallelism**.

- A. Introduction (Gen 1:1-2)
 - B. Creation of light; 1st day (Gen 1:3-5)
 - C. Creation of sea and sky; 2nd day (Gen 1:6-8)
 - D. Creation of dry land and plants; 3rd day (Gen 1:9-13)
 - B'. Creation of sun and moon; 4th day (Gen 1:14-19)
 - C'. Creation of birds and fish; 5th day (Gen 1:20-23)
 - D'. Creation of land animals that eat plants; 6th day (Gen 1:24-31)
- A'. Epilogue: God's rest; 7th day (Gen 2:1-3)

This literary unit begins with an introduction and ends with an epilogue. The creation of light is paralleled with the creation of the sun and moon. The creation of the sea and sky is paralleled with the creation of birds and fish. And the creation of dry land and plants is paralleled with the creation of land animals that eat plants. The account is a structurally complete narrative.

The presence of the **tôledôt** suggests that the Genesis 2 account was not designed to be a narrative account of creation. Instead of a duplicate account, it appears to be a **repetition** of Genesis 1 to emphasize the details of man and his creation. And another **parallelism** in the form of a chiasm can be seen:

- A. Man, placed in the garden, is prohibited from the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (Gen 2:8-17)
 - B. Woman is created and the first humans are naked and unashamed (Gen 2:18-25)
 - The Sin and Fall** (Gen 3:1-19)
 - B'. Woman is named Eve and the first humans are naked and ashamed (Gen 3:20-21)
- A'. Man is forced from the garden, because he disobeyed the prohibition (Gen 3:22-24)

The purpose of the chiasm is to call attention to the real and theological impact of the Original Sin.

The structural design and literary beauty of Genesis 1 and 2 suggest that this is a purposeful and single Creation account told in parallel and complementary passages; it is not two accounts told by two different authors as proposed by destructive critics.