

The
MANIFOLD
BEAUTY
of
GENESIS
ONE

A Multi-Layered Approach

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Tables and Figures from
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TABLE 1. PARALLEL STRUCTURE OF THE DAYS OF CREATION			
creation of heavens and earth (1:1)			
A. <i>tohu</i> (formless)		B. <i>bohu</i> (empty)	
1	A1. realm of x. light y. dark	4	B1. filling with x. sun y. moon and stars
2	A2. realm of x. sea y. sky	5	B2. filling with x. fish y. birds
3	A3. realm of x. land y. then plants	6	B3. filling with x. animals y. then humans ⁶
completion of heaven and earth (2:1-3)			

TABLE 2. REPEATING PATTERN OF PHRASES IN PARALLEL DAYS	
1 (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) And there was . . . (c) God saw that . . . was good (d) There was evening and morning	4 (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) It was so (c) God saw that it was good (d) There was evening and morning
2 (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) It was so (c) (d) There was evening and morning	5 (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) (c) God saw that it was good (d) There was evening and morning
3 (a) God said. "Let . . ." (b) It was so (c) God saw that it was good (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) It was so (c) God saw that it was good (d) There was evening and morning	6 (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) It was so (c) God saw that it was good (a) God said, "Let . . ." (b) It was so (c) God saw . . . it was very good (d) There was evening and morning

BOX 1: SCHOLARS AND EXEGETES ON THE GENRE OF GENESIS 1²³

“Is it prose or poetry? The choice is a gross oversimplification.” —Henri Blocher

“If you have read Genesis 1, you know that the chapter could easily be described as poetry, or even as a song.” —Sandra Richter

“I think Genesis 1 has the earmarks of poetry and is therefore a ‘song’ about the wonder and meaning of God’s creation.” —Timothy Keller

“It has been clearly shown that the dividing line between prose and poetry is not fixed and sharply defined but that elevated or impassioned prose may approximate very closely to poetry, especially that it is often marked by that basic characteristic of Hebrew poetry, balanced repetition or parallelism.” —Oswald Allis

“The language type is not the same as the literary form; it aligns more with the style and register axes. That is, a piece of writing that has the literary form of a prose narrative can use ordinary, scientific, or poetic language types; knowing the literary form does not settle all the most important interpretive questions.” —C. John Collins

“Hymnic Features [of Genesis 1]: The creation account is pre-eminently dominated by a number of formal poetic elements.” —Frank Polak

“Gen. 1 is not normal Hebrew prose either; its syntax is distinctively different from narrative prose. [Other scholars have] pointed to poetic bicola or tricola in Gen. 1, while admitting that most of the material is prose. It is possible that these poetic fragments go back to an earlier form of the creation account, though, as Cassuto observes, ‘it is simpler to suppose . . . the special importance of the subject led to an exaltation of style approaching the level of poetry’ . . . Gen. 1 is unique in the Old Testament. It invites comparison with the Psalms that praise God’s work in creation (e.g., 8, 136, 148) or with passages such as Prov. 8:22–31 or Job 38 that reflect on the mystery of God’s creativity. It is indeed a great hymn, setting out majestically the omnipotence of the creator, but it surpasses these other passages in the scope and comprehensiveness of vision.” —Gordon Wenham

Blocher, *In The Beginning*, 32; Richter, *Epic of Eden*, 98; Keller, *Reason for God*, 97; Allis, *Five Books of Moses*, 109; Collins, *Reading Genesis Well*, 72; Polak, “Poetic Style and Parallelism,” 4; Wenham, *Genesis 1–15*, 50.

**TABLE 3. EXCERPTS FROM EACH DAY IN GENESIS 1
WITH KEY HEBREW WORDS.²⁸**

<p>Gen. 1:1–2 God created the heavens [<i>shamayim</i>] and earth [<i>'erets</i>] . . . hovering over the face of the waters [<i>mayim</i>]</p>	
<p>Day 1, Gen. 1:3–5 Let there be light . . . God separated the light from the darkness. God called the light day, and the darkness he called night.</p>	<p>Day 4, Gen. 1:14–19 Let there be lights in the expanse [<i>raqia'</i>] of the heavens [<i>shamayim</i>] to separate the day from the night.</p>
<p>Day 2, Gen. 1:6–8 Let there be an expanse [<i>raqia'</i>] . . . [God] separated the waters [<i>mayim</i>] that were under the expanse from the waters that were above . . . God call the expanse heaven [<i>shamayim</i>]</p>	<p>Day 5, Gen. 1:20–23 Let the waters [<i>mayim</i>] swarm with swarms of living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse [<i>raqia'</i>] of the heavens [<i>shamayim</i>].</p>
<p>Day 3, Gen. 1:9–13 Let the waters [<i>mayim</i>] under the heavens [<i>shamayim</i>] be gathered together . . . God called the dry land earth [<i>'erets</i>], and the waters that were gathered together he called seas [<i>yammim</i>].</p>	<p>Day 6, Gen. 1:24–26 And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea [<i>yammim</i>] and over the birds of the heavens [<i>shamayim</i>] and over the livestock and over all the earth [<i>'erets</i>] . . .</p>

28. Heavens (*shamayim*), earth (*'erets*), expanse (*raqia'*), waters (*mayim*), seas (*yammim*).

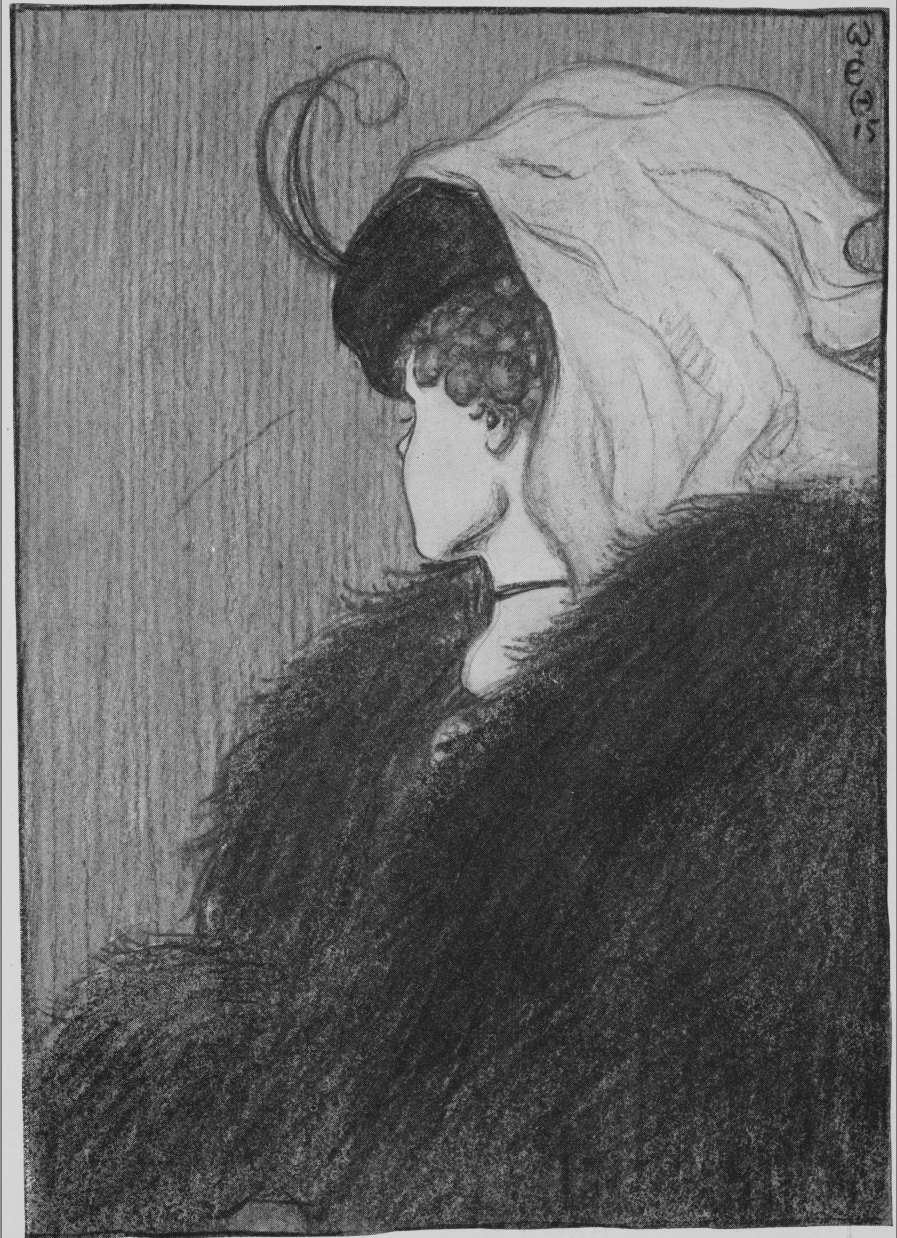


Figure 1. My Wife and My Mother-in-Law, by William Ely Hill



*Figure 2. Map of the ancient Near East
(Not all identified people groups or nations were present at the same time.)*

**TABLE 4. PLAGUES OF EXODUS AND
POSSIBLE GODS IDENTIFIED AS TARGETS⁴**

Plague	Egyptian god
water to blood	Hapi, god of Nile
frogs	Hekt, goddess of fertility, water, renewal (head of a frog)
gnats/lice	Geb, god of earth—lice/gnats formed from the ground
flies	Khepri, god of creation, rebirth (head of a fly)
cattle	Hathor, goddess of love, protection (head of a cow)
boils	Isis, goddess of medicine, peace
hail	Nut, goddess of sky
locust	Seth, god of storms, chaos—locusts from the sky
darkness	Ra, god of sun
death	Pharaoh

4. Copan and Jacoby, *Origins*, 37–38.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF SIMILARITIES AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN ANE ORIGIN STORIES¹³

	Egyptian	Genesis 1	Mesopotamian
View of reality	Static	Dynamic	Dynamic
Gods and Beginning (see Gen. 1:1)	Some preexistent gods, who embodied principal elements (earth, primeval waters, sky, outer limits)	One eternal God creates cosmic matter by divine spirit and thus exists independent of his creation	Some preexistent gods, subject to impersonal cosmic principles; divine spirit and cosmic matter coexistent and coeternal
	Theogony One self-created (sun) god brings order by subduing preexisting gods, then creates other gods from own body (by naming, sneezing, spitting, or masturbating)	No Theogony (because one eternal God)	Theogony Preexisting gods create other gods by sexual procreation
Pre-creation (see Gen. 1:2)	Original chaos, primordial waters, darkness, primeval hillocks	Original nonfunctional matter: formless and empty (<i>tohu wabohu</i>); darkness; deep (<i>tehom</i>) = primordial waters	Original chaos; Tiamat enveloped in darkness
	God of wind/breath on waters	Spirit of God over waters	
Means of Creation			Theomachy (Enuma Elish)
	Various, including mere verbal fiat	Verbal fiat	(e.g., Marduk destroys/restores constellation with his word)
	Image of creator gods crafting cosmos on potter's wheel or as a metalworker	(Potter imagery behind "formed" in Gen. 2:7; cf. Isa. 29:16; 45:9; 64:8)	Creation is done by crafting

13. Adapted from various sources: Currid, *Against the Gods*, 37–39; Currid, *Ancient Egypt and the Old Testament*, 33–49; Miller and Soden, *In the Beginning*, 125–26; Walton, *Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology*, 139–84. See also the chart in Walton, *Genesis*, 29–31.

TABLE 5. SUMMARY OF SIMILARITIES AND CONTRASTS BETWEEN ANE ORIGIN STORIES			
	Egyptian	Genesis 1	Mesopotamian
View of reality	Static	Dynamic	Dynamic
(see day 1)	Overcomes chaos by creating light (light before sun rises in its place)	Overcomes darkness and emptiness by creating light (before sun); separates day and night	Light emanating from the gods (light, day, and night exist before luminaries)
(see day 2)	Separates sky and earth	Separates sky and earth	Separates sky and earth
(see day 3)	(cf. primeval hillocks)	Separates dry land and water	
	Vegetation	Vegetation	
(see day 4)	Luminaries (sun rises on first day)	Luminaries (for signs, seasons, etc.)	Luminaries (for signs, seasons, etc.)
(see day 5)	Fish and birds	Fish and birds	
(see day 6)	Land animals	Land animals	
	Humanity in deity's image from divine breath or tears	Humanity in God's image from dust and divine breath (Gen. 2)	Humanity as gods' slaves (only kings in deity's image) from clay or blood of deity
(see day 7)	(e.g., Ptah rested after completing work of creation)	God rests and sanctifies day 7	The gods rest and celebrate; gods typically rest in temples they build

TABLE 6. HYBRID BIRTHS AS OMENS OF COMING EVENTS

Parent	Offspring	Examples
Human	Demon	If a woman gives birth, and (the child) is a female demon with a male face, the king and his family will disappear. (II.67)
Human	Animal	If a woman gives birth and [the child] has a dog's head, that city will go mad; there will be carnage in the land. (II.3)
Animal	Human	If a mare bears twins and they have a human head . . . the prince's army will revolt against him. (XX.13)
Animal	Animal	If a ewe gives birth to a lion and it has the body of a ram, and the head of a lion—omen of Sargon who ruled the world. (V.87)
Animal	Hybrid	If an anomaly's womb is full of faces . . . one head of a monkey, one head of a lion one head of a human, one head of a pig—the land will go mad; . . . the prince . . . attack of a usurper. (XVII.76)

The largest collection of physiognomic omen texts is the Akkadian series *Šumma izbu*, found in the library of Assurbanipal. The twenty-four tablets of more than two thousand omens are given in full in Leichty, *Omen Series Šumma Izbu*. Tablet and number references in table 6 are from this source.

BOX 2: VERSES HIGHLIGHTING GOD'S TEMPLE PRESENCE AS DWELLING, RESTING, WALKING, OR ABIDING AMONG HIS PEOPLE, IN A SANCTUARY OR TEMPLE, OR ON THE MOUNTAIN OF GOD

And let them make me a sanctuary, that I may **dwell** in their midst. (Exod. 25:8)

I . . . will set my sanctuary in their midst forevermore. My **dwelling** place shall be with them, and I will be their God, and they shall be my people. (Ezek. 37:26–27)

I will make my **dwelling** among you, and my soul shall not abhor you. And I will **walk** among you and will be your God, and you shall be my people. (Lev. 26:11–12)

Because Yahweh your God **walks** in the midst of your camp, to deliver you and to give up your enemies before you, therefore your camp must be holy. (Deut. 23:14)

You have led in your steadfast love the people whom you have redeemed; you have guided them by your strength to your holy **abode**. . . . You will bring them in and plant them on your own mountain, the place, O Yahweh, which you have made for your **abode**, the sanctuary, O Yahweh, which your hands have established. Yahweh will **reign** forever and ever. (Exod. 15:13, 17–18)

Isaiah speaking of the Messiah: “the spirit of Yahweh shall **rest** upon him” . . . there will be no harm “in all my holy mountain,” and “of him shall the nations inquire, and his **resting place** shall be glorious.” (Isa. 11:2, 9, 10)

David's intention for the temple: “I had it in my heart to build a **house of rest** for the ark of the covenant of Yahweh and for the footstool of our God.” (1 Chron. 28:2)

God's response to David: “I have not lived in a house since the day I brought up the people of Israel from Egypt to this day, but I have been **moving about** in a tent for my **dwelling**.” (2 Sam. 7:6)

Solomon's temple dedication: “And now arise, O Yahweh God, and go to your **resting place**, you and the ark of your might.” (2 Chron. 6:41)

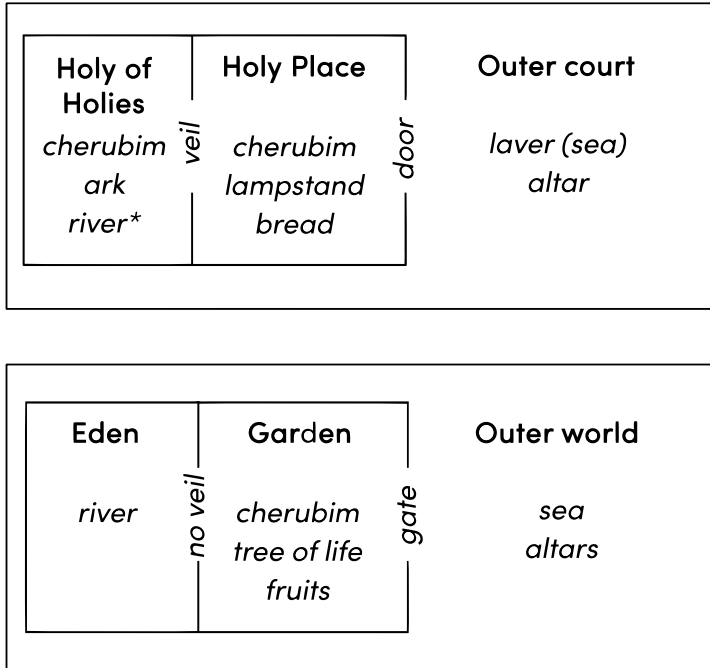


Figure 3. Schematic comparison of the temple and Eden
 (* river in temple is only in visions, e.g. Ezek. 47)

TABLE 7. THREE-TIERED LAYOUT OF THE TABERNACLE OR TEMPLE AND DESCRIPTION OF CREATION	
Tabernacle/Temple	Creation
<i>Holy of holies:</i> The most sacred space was guarded by the cherubim on the ark. The heavenly throne of God was above the cherubim, linking heaven and earth (Ezek. 10:1). In Ezekiel a river flows out of the temple (Ezek. 47:1). In Revelation, the river originates at the throne of God (Rev. 22:1).	<i>Eden:</i> Eden was also called the mountain of God (Ezek. 28:11–14), from which a river flowed to water the garden (Gen. 2:10).
<i>Holy place:</i> The space contained the lampstand, incense, and holy bread with cherubim embroidered into the curtains. Carvings of fruits and flowers decorated the posts and curtained walls (1 Kings 6).	<i>Garden:</i> The garden contained the tree of life and many fruits ultimately protected by cherubim.
<i>Outer court:</i> The outer area contained the altar of uncut stone and the washbasin, referred to as the sea (1 Kings 7:23) and supported by carved bulls facing in the four cardinal directions (1 Kings 7:25).	<i>Outer world:</i> The sea and land are still under God’s sovereignty, but necessitating altars for sacrifice.

TABLE 8. THE HEBREW CALENDAR AND FESTIVALS ¹⁷			
Season	Date	Festival	Details
Spring	1/14	Passover	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of barley harvest (and lambing season); transition to eating from new crop/flock
	1/15	Firstfruits	
	1/15–21	Unleavened Bread	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Recalls sudden departure from Egypt (Exod. 12; Deut. 16:3)
	ca. 3/8	Weeks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Beginning of wheat harvest (seven weeks after firstfruits of barley [a.k.a. Pentecost]) Recalls hardship of slavery in Egypt (Deut. 16:10–12) and need to help less-fortunate neighbor (Lev. 23:22; cf. Ruth 2)
Summer			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Tending (and some harvesting) of orchard and vineyard crops (e.g., olives, fruits); firstfruits of each kept for Booths
Autumn	7/1	Trumpets	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> After repentance and fasting, biggest feast, including summer firstfruits, wool, meat for sacrifices, and communal sharing Trumpet blast of alarm to prep for Day of Atonement (only official fast day), recognizing need for forgiveness (Lev. 23:24, 27); then (Booths) give thanks to God, recalling protection during wilderness (Lev. 23:42–43)
	7/10	Atonement	
	7/15–22	Booths/ Ingathering	
Winter (Rainy Season)			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Plant/prepare next year’s crops as rain comes over about four months; work on other house projects

17. The table draws on charts and information in chap. 3 (“The Festivals of Israel”) of LeFebvre, *Liturgy of Creation*, 38–54. The dates refer to the month/day of Israel’s calendar, not ours (e.g., 1/14 refers to fourteenth day of the first month, not January 14). On the more practical realities (e.g., risk spreading and labor optimization), LeFebvre draws often on Hopkins, *Highlands of Canaan*.

TABLE 9. THE HEBREW CALENDAR AND THE FLOOD

Holy Day (Hebrew Dates)	Theology/Symbolism	Event/Text
two weeks between two grain harvest festivals (2/17–27)	time of harvests	flood begins (Gen. 7:11; on 2/17) [judgment for rain during harvest]
Booths (7/15–22)	ultimate safety and deliverance (to Land)	ark comes to rest on Ararat (Gen. 8:4)
new moon (10/1)	transition	mountaintops visible (Gen. 8:5; on 10/1) [in tenth month plant- ing finishing; see if God gives new life]
New Year (1/1)	newness/hope	floodwaters recede (Gen. 8:13)
two weeks between two grain harvest festivals (2/17–27)	time of harvests	ground dry (Gen. 8:14; on 2/27) [cessation of rain signals mercy (contrast Gen. 7:11)]

TABLE 10. THE HEBREW CALENDAR AND THE EXODUS		
Holy Day (Hebrew Dates)	Theology/ Symbolism	Event/Text
New Year (1/1)	newness/hope	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • exodus begins (Exod. 12:2) • tabernacle erected (Exod. 40:2, 17) • death of Miriam; transition to second generation (Num. 20:1)²³
Passover/Unleavened Bread (1/14–21)	sudden redemption (from Egypt)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5× refer to original (Exod. 12:3, 6, 18; 13:3–4; Num. 33:3)²⁴ • 2× refer to first Passover at tabernacle (Num. 9:1–5, 11)²⁵
new moon (2/1)	transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • census (those traveling under God’s care) (Num. 1:1, 18); first new moon following Passover, so year’s “journey” under way
same week, between two grain harvest festivals (2/15–27)	time of harvests	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • manna and Sabbath on 2/15–21 (Exod. 16); keep Sabbath even in harvest season • leaves Sinai on 2/20 (Num. 10:11)
Weeks (ca. 3/8)	covenant renewal (to Sinai)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • arrival at Sinai (Exod. 19:1); covenant renewal (e.g., 2 Chron. 15:10–12)
new moon (5/1)	transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • death of Aaron (Num. 33:38) [midpoint of summer]
Booths (7/15–22)	providence through trials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • wilderness wandering in tents (Deut. 8:2–4; Lev. 23:43)
new moon (11/1)	transition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • death of Moses after final speeches (Deut. 1:3; cf. 32:48–50) [prep for New Year and Passover]

23. Exodus 2:2 and Num. 20.1 explicitly state only the month, with first day implied.

24. Exodus 12:3 refers to the 10th day for selecting the Passover lamb in preparation for killing and eating on the 14th.

25. Numbers 9:11 refers to an alternative Passover (on 2/14) due to some of them being unclean (see v. 6).

TABLE 11. KINGLY AND PRIESTLY PARALLELS BETWEEN ADAM AND ISRAEL	
Adam and Eve (Genesis 1–3)	Israel
<i>Kingly Roles</i>	
commanded to fill the earth (1:28)	Abraham a father of nations (Gen. 17:4); blessing to the nations (18:18)
commanded to have dominion over creation (1:28)	kings to rise from Abraham (Gen. 17:6); dominion over Canaan (Deut. 9:1–6)
called image bearers (ANE expression of being steward-ruler under divine king) (1:27)	Israelite kings to serve under the authority of God (Deut. 17:14–20)
authority to name the animals (2:19–20)	God changed names (Gen. 17:5, 15; 32:28); kings gave names (Dan. 1:7)
<i>Priestly Roles</i>	
commanded to “work and keep” the garden (2:15)	warned against defiling the land (Jer. 2:7)
dwelled where God’s presence was manifest (3:8)	dwelled in a land where God’s presence was manifest (Lev. 26:12)
should have guarded against idolatry (snake) (2:15; 3:24)	guarding against idolatry (Lev. 19:4; 26:1)
dietary restriction from the fruit of a tree (2:16–17)	dietary restrictions from unclean animals (Lev. 11)
role as guardian replaced by cherubim (3:24)	cherubim guardians depicted in temple (Exod. 25:18–22; 26:1, 31; 36:8; 37:7–9; Num. 7:89)

TABLE 12. PARALLELS BETWEEN CREATION AND ISRAEL'S EXPERIENCE (SINAI AND BEYOND) ¹⁶		
	Creation/Eden (Genesis)	Sinai/Canaan
God prepares a special land ready for habitation	1-2	Deut. 8:7-10
People taken and placed into the land	2:9	Exod. 6:8
God rests and promises rest in the land	2:1-3	Deut. 12:8-11
Command to exert dominion	1:28	Deut. 7:1-5; 9:4
Warnings against disobedience (death/exile)	2:17	Exod. 22:20; Lev. 26:14-39
Symbols of idolatry	3:1-7 (snake)	Deut. 7:1-5 (Canaanites)
Sabbath and festivals	1:14; 2:1-3	Lev. 23
Fear of God's presence	3:10	Exod. 19:16; 20:18
Exile following disobedience	3:21-24	Num. 14:20-25

16. Postell, *Adam as Israel*, 124.