



## Understanding The Genesis Creation Accounts: Unity Or Duality?

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### Abstrak

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*Scholars, theologians, and lay readers have long disagreed about the creation stories included in chapters 1 and 2 of Genesis. Some contend that these stories show a dichotomy of traditions, while others insist that they narrate a single story. To ascertain whether Genesis 1 and 2 are complementary or conflicting, this article evaluates their literary, linguistic, and theological aspects. Key Hebrew phrases, structural patterns, and thematic connections—such as the function of plants, the lack of rain, and humanity's obligation to cultivate the ground—are examined through careful textual analysis. Additionally, it affirms the text's wholeness and coherence from a Seventh-day Adventist perspective while analyzing historical-critical viewpoints, such as the Documentary Hypothesis. The findings suggest that rather than being at odds, the two narratives offer complementary interpretations of God's creative act, highlighting both the cosmic order of creation and humanity's special place within it. By providing a fair interpretation of these key texts, this work advances our understanding of the Genesis creation story and its theological ramifications.*

**Kata Kunci:** *Creation, Unity and Duality, Seventh-day Adventist Perspective, Documentary Hypothesis, Genesis 1 and 2*

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### PENDAHULUAN

Many Christians have long been baffled by the apparent distinctions between the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2, which have led to discussion and uncertainty regarding their relationship and significance. Genesis 2 concentrates more closely on the creation of people and the Garden of Eden, whereas Genesis 1 offers an organized, chronological account of creation that ends with the Sabbath. Some readers have questioned whether the stories are complementary or conflicting because of these discrepancies, which include the order of creation, how God is portrayed, and the literary style. In Genesis 1, for example, vegetation is produced on the third day before humans (Gen 1:11–12), while in Genesis 2, it seems that there was no vegetation before Adam was created (Gen 2:5). These differences have led to a variety of interpretations by academics and laypeople, from interpreting the stories as a single, cohesive story to seeing them as several traditions interwoven. To understand the relationship between the two stories and their significance for biblical interpretation, the literary, historical, and theological aspects of the text must be carefully examined.

Modern biblical research has been greatly influenced by the historical-critical approach to the creation stories in Genesis, which provides insights into the composition, sources, and historical setting of the book. This approach, which gained popularity in the 18th and 19th centuries, looks at the Bible as a product of



its period and frequently analyzes it using literary and historical development as a lens (Barton, 1996: 9–12). The Documentary Hypothesis is at the heart of this strategy. It asserts that the Pentateuch, including Genesis, was assembled from a variety of sources, usually referred to as J (Yahwist), E (Elohist), D (Deuteronomist), and P (Priestly) (Friedman, 1997: 24–35). This hypothesis's proponents contend that the distinctions between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 represent different literary and theological traditions, with Genesis 2 usually credited to the Yahwist source and Genesis 1 to the Priestly source (von Rad, 1972: 46–48). Although this viewpoint has offered a framework for comprehending the intricacy of the text, it has also drawn criticism for being speculative and having the ability to compromise Scripture's theological coherence.

Whether the Genesis creation stories in chapters 1 and 2 represent a single story or a dual tradition is the main issue this article attempts to answer. Because it influences how readers understand the text's literary and theological messages, this issue is extremely important. A fragmented picture of God's creation process and humanity's place within it could result from the testimonies being seen as inconsistent or coming from different sources. On the other hand, if the stories are viewed as complimentary, they present a more comprehensive and coherent picture of creation, highlighting the harmony found in Scripture. For societies who maintain the inspiration and coherence of the Bible, the argument over unity or duality also has wider ramifications for biblical authority, hermeneutics, and theology. This research aims to offer a fair and knowledgeable viewpoint on this age-old controversy by critically analyzing the literary, historical, and theological aspects of the Genesis creation stories, so advancing our comprehension of the text's significance and meaning.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study question of whether the creation stories in Genesis 1 and 2 depict unity or duality is intended to be addressed via the methods of this article. The study uses a multipronged strategy that combines comparative exegesis, topic inquiry, and textual analysis to accomplish this. The biblical text itself is the main focus, with special attention to its linguistic characteristics, literary structure, and theological topics. First, the Hebrew text of Genesis 1 and 2 is thoroughly examined, with an emphasis on important words, phrases, and literary devices. Next, it examining and investigating the main ideas of both creation stories, including the relationship between God and creation, the order of creation, and the role of humans. Finally, it evaluating the historical-critical method, such as the Documentary Hypothesis, to assess the arguments of the two chapters. This interaction is crucial, because the study aims to disprove dualism presumptions and emphasize the unity of the Genesis stories. The study concludes by considering the theological ramifications of its conclusions, especially given Seventh-day Adventist views on the inspiration and authority of Scripture. By integrating these approaches, the research seeks to offer a thorough and impartial interpretation of the creation stories found in Genesis, taking into account both their literary intricacy and their theological relevance.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Important literary and linguistic elements that help us comprehend the unity or duality of Genesis 1 and 2 are revealed via textual analysis. With recurring words like “And God said,” “And it was so,” and “And God saw that it was good,” Genesis 1 uses a highly structured, poetic narrative that highlights the order and purpose of creation, culminating in the Sabbath rest (Gen 2:1–3) (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). Genesis 2, on the other hand, takes a more narrative approach, emphasizing the finer points of the Garden of Eden and humanity's creation (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). Important Hebrew words are analyzed to see if they indicate continuity or difference between the stories, such as *eseb* (vegetation) in Genesis 1:11–12 and *siah hasadeh* (plants of the field) in Genesis 2:5 (Richard M. Davidson, 2018: 45–47). Although some academics contend that these variations are the result of different sources or traditions, a more thorough examination reveals that they have complimentary functions, with Genesis 1 offering a cosmic viewpoint and Genesis 2 emphasizing humanity's place in creation (Gerhard von Rad, 1972: 46–48). The literary beauty of the Genesis stories and their common theological message are highlighted by this textual examination.

Although useful for reference, the biblical text's chapter and verse divisions are a later addition that occasionally detract from the Genesis creation stories' original coherence and flow. The original Hebrew manuscripts lacked the verse divisions that Robert Estienne added in the 16th century and the chapter divisions that Stephen Langton introduced in the 13th century (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). Especially when comparing Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, this artificial separation may give the sense that the stories are not cohesive. For instance, readers may interpret the Sabbath rest (Gen 2:1–3) as distinct from the creation story rather than as its climax due to the gap between Genesis 1:31 and Genesis 2:1 (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). The thematic continuity between Genesis 2:4 and Genesis 2:5 may also be obscured by the separation between the two chapters (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). Readers can better appreciate the literary and theological coherence of the Genesis creation tales by realizing that these divisions are not original and that they constitute a cohesive totality rather than disparate or contradicting writings (Walton, 2009: 72–74).

Instead of presenting a fragmented or inconsistent story, the themes and organization of the creation stories in Genesis show a purposeful and complimentary design. The highly structured, seven-day structure of Genesis 1 highlights the goodness, purpose, and orderliness of God's creation. The Sabbath rest is the culmination of a daily cycle of divine command, fulfillment, and appraisal (Gen 2:1–3) (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). On the other hand, Genesis 2 takes a more narrative stance, emphasizing the specifics of how humans were created and their place in the Garden of Eden (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). Notwithstanding these stylistic distinctions, the two narratives have themes in common, including God's sovereignty, the virtue of creation, and the special position of humans as stewards and bearers of God's image (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). For instance, Genesis 1 emphasizes that humans were made in the image of God (Gen 1:26–27), while Genesis 2 goes into detail on why humans are supposed to “till and keep” the garden (Gen 2:15) (von Rad, 1972: 46–48). These thematic links imply that far from being at odds, the two narratives give complimentary viewpoints on God's creative

activity and present a comprehensive picture of creation that balances cosmic order with human accountability.

Important clues on the connection between the two creation stories can be found in the Hebrew words used to describe vegetation in Genesis 1 and 2. The vegetation formed on the third day is referred to in Genesis 1:11–12 as "*deshe*" (tender grass), "*eseb*" (herbs), and "*ets*" (trees), highlighting the wide classifications of plant life (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). The terms *siah hasadeh* (plants of the field) and *eseb hasadeh* (herbs of the field), on the other hand, appear to allude to domesticated plants that need human attention in Genesis 2:5 (von Rad, 1972: 46–48). Because of this divergence, some academics contend that rather than contradicting Genesis 1, Genesis 2 assumes the creation of vegetation (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). For instance, the lack of rain and a human to till the land explains why *siah hasadeh* is absent in Genesis 2:5, indicating that these plants were potential rather than actual at this point (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). This language analysis lends credence to the idea that the two stories are complementary, with Genesis 2 concentrating on the particular circumstances required for cultivated plants in the Garden of Eden and Genesis 1 offering a cosmic overview of creation.

A crucial component in comprehending the connection between the two creation stories and their theological ramifications is the term "plant of the field" (*siah hasadeh*) in Genesis 2:5. This phrase describes cultivated plants that need human assistance to flourish, including watering and tilling (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). The phrase *siah hasadeh* emphasizes the part that humans play in cultivating and caring for the world, in contrast to the more general categories of plants that are discussed in Genesis 1:11–12 (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). This topic is further explored in Genesis 3:17–19, when Adam's transgression curses the earth and forces humans to work in order to create sustenance from the field's vegetation (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). Genesis 2:5 and Genesis 3:18–19 are related, which emphasizes the fall's effects by making the once peaceful interaction between people and the earth problematic (Walton, 2009: 72–74). It is evident from analyzing the biblical meaning of the term "*siah hasadeh*" that Genesis 2 enhances Genesis 1 by highlighting humanity's role in creation and hinting at the difficulties that result from disobedience.

Genesis 2:5's statement, "no man to till the ground," emphasizes the special place of humans in God's creation and prepares the reader for the appearance of Adam in Genesis 2:7. Since human work is necessary for the growth of cultivated plants (*siah hasadeh*), this remark emphasizes the interconnectedness of humans and the land (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). Genesis 3:17–19 expands on the idea of tilling the ground by describing how Adam's transgression has cursed the land and forces humans to work in order to produce sustenance (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). Genesis 4:2, which depicts the continuing of humanity's God-given duty despite the effects of the Fall, further supports this relationship by describing Abel as a keeper of sheep and Cain as a tiller of the ground (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). The lack of a human to till the ground in Genesis 2:5 is not a contradiction; rather, it is a purposeful narrative device that highlights humanity's pivotal role in God's creative design, as may be seen by combining these passages (Walton, 2009: 72–74). This theme emphasizes how the creation stories in Genesis are cohesive and how they all center on humanity's duty to care for and develop the planet.

A crucial aspect in comprehending the circumstances of the pre-human creation is the reference to rain in Genesis 2:5, where it is stated that "no shrub of the field had yet appeared on the earth and no plant of the field had yet sprung up, for the Lord God had not sent rain on the earth." (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). This poem emphasizes the interdependence of natural processes and human action by highlighting the lack of rain as a major cause in the absence of cultivated plants (*siah hasadeh*) (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). Later, in Genesis 7:3, 12, the topic of rain is expanded upon, serving as a key metaphor of both judgment and rebirth in the flood story. It is clear from comparing these verses that rain in Genesis 2:5 is a theological indicator of God's provision and timing in creation, not just a meteorological detail (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). The idea that the planet was in a state of preparation, waiting for humans to arrive and fulfill their function as stewards and cultivators, is reinforced by the fact that there was no rain before humans were created (Walton, 2009: 72–74). By showing how even seemingly little aspects add to the larger story of God's intentional and well-organized creation, this analysis strengthens the unity of the Genesis creation stories.

The historical-critical research argues the text was assembled from four main sources—the Yahwist (J), the Elohist (E), the Deuteronomist (D), and the Priestly (P) sources—rather than being written by a single author, like Moses (Friedman, 1997: 24–35). Each source can be identified by its distinct narrative styles, language characteristics, and theological emphases. For instance, the Yahwist source, connected to Genesis 2, presents God in a more anthropomorphic manner and emphasizes the close relationship between God and humans, whereas the Priestly source, frequently tied to Genesis 1, stresses order, structure, and the transcendence of God (von Rad, 1972: 46–48). The idea that these texts were written at various points in Israel's history and then edited into their current form was made popular in the 19th century by academics like Julius Wellhausen (Wellhausen, 1885: 1–12). These differences have been emphasized by academics like Claus Westermann and Gerhard von Rad, who contend that the two narratives came from distinct historical and theological backgrounds (Westermann, 1984: 76–80). By attributing the Yahwist source to Genesis 2 and the Priestly source to Genesis 1, the dualism perspective frequently supports the documentary hypothesis (Friedman, 1997: 24–35). However, the dualism perspective could cause a misinterpretation of the biblical author's intentions and jeopardize the creation narrative's theological coherence (Harrison, 1969: 522–525). Therefore, the duality approach poses significant issues regarding the text's interpretive implications, even as it provides insightful analysis of the text's creation.

Despite its influence in biblical studies, the dualism approach has serious flaws and contradictions that call for careful consideration. Its propensity to minimize the complementary themes and shared theological truths of Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 while overemphasizing their contrasts is one of its main criticisms. For instance, rigorous literary and contextual research can resolve the seeming contradiction in the sequence of creation, where vegetation emerges before humans in Genesis 1 yet is absent until after Adam's creation in Genesis 2 (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). According to K. Harrison and Gordon J. Wenham, the idea frequently applies contemporary literary concepts to ancient texts and lacks adequate empirical

support (Harrison, 1996: 522-525; Wenham, 1987: 39-40). Additionally, the dualism approach runs the risk of splintering the creation story's theological coherence, which could result in a skewed perception of Scripture's unity and God's creative intent (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). A more comprehensive understanding of the Genesis creation stories that honors both their literary diversity and theological coherence can be achieved by challenging the presumptions and contradictions of this viewpoint.

The statement in Genesis 1:31 that God viewed everything He had created and found it to be "very good," despite the fact that Adam and Eve had not yet been created, is a perplexing part of the Genesis creation story. This begs the question: Without mankind, who are subsequently portrayed as being essential to God's creative intent, how can creation be deemed good and complete? (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). Academics argue such perspective shows a theological stress on the created order's intrinsic beauty, which is unaffected by human activity, while others argue the term "very good" foreshadows the completion of creation once humanity is formed and given the responsibility of caring for and cultivating the world (Gen 1:28; 2:15) (Walton, 2009: 72–74). This conflict draws attention to how complementary Genesis 1 and 2 are, with Genesis 1 giving a cosmic summary of creation's goodness and Genesis 2 focusing on humanity's special place in it. It is evident from analyzing this interaction that the two narratives do not conflict but rather work in tandem to offer a comprehensive understanding of God's creative activity and humanity's role in it.

Although it provides a framework for comprehending the distinctions between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, the dualism perspective has serious risks that could cause readers to interpret the creation stories incorrectly. This viewpoint runs the danger of severing the text's theological and narrative coherence and compromising its main point about God's creative might and intent by highlighting the seeming inconsistencies between the two chapters (Wenham, 1987: 36–37). For instance, seeing the stories as wholly distinct traditions could distort our understanding of humanity's place in creation, as described in Genesis 1:28 and Genesis 2:15, or it could mask the complementing themes of intimacy and divine sovereignty found in both chapters (Waltke, 2007: 201–203). Furthermore, by implying that the Bible is a patchwork of contradictory ideas rather than a cohesive revelation of God's plan, this method may unintentionally encourage skepticism toward the text (Harrison, 1969: 522–525). Bible interpretation, theology, and religion may all be significantly impacted by such misunderstandings, especially for groups that uphold the authority and unity of Scripture (Hasel, 1974: 81–102). As a result, it is crucial to assess the dualism viewpoint critically and take into account different interpretations that maintain the harmony and integrity of the Genesis creation story.

The classic Mosaic authorship theory, which maintains that Moses composed the Pentateuch under divine inspiration, is supported by the Seventh-day Adventist perspective on the authorship of Genesis (Hasel, 1982: 21–43). This viewpoint rejects the idea that the creation stories in Genesis are the result of several contradictory origins and instead stresses their unity and consistency. With Genesis 1 offering a cosmic overview of creation and Genesis 2 concentrating on humanity's place within it, Adventist scholars contend that the contrasts between the two books

represent complementary viewpoints rather than conflicts (Davidson, 2018: 45–47). This viewpoint is supported by Ellen G. White, a key figure in Adventist theology, who claims that the creation story is a cohesive narrative that reveals God's might, knowledge, and love (White, 1890: 44–45). Additionally, as a constant reminder of God's creative authority and the coherence of the creation story, Adventist theology emphasizes the significance of the Sabbath, which is established in Genesis 2:1–3 (Rodríguez, 2002: 4–21). The Adventist viewpoint reaffirms the Bible's credibility as a divinely inspired revelation by defending Mosaic authorship and the text's theological coherence, providing a convincing counterargument to critical interpretations that dissect the Genesis stories (Pfundl, 2011: 3–17).

## CONCLUSION

A deeper study of the creation account in Genesis 1 and 2 has shown that the two versions are complementary rather than incompatible by closely examining the text's literary structure, grammatical qualities, and thematic aspects. While Genesis 2 concentrates on humanity's special place within creation, stressing intimacy, responsibility, and relationships, Genesis 1 offers a cosmic perspective of creation, highlighting God's sovereignty, order, and the intrinsic goodness of His work. The two stories are connected by narrative elements that emphasize their theological coherence, such as the Hebrew words for vegetation, the lack of rain, and the necessity of a person tilling the ground. In addition, the study has affirmed the text's cohesiveness and theological content while critically examining historical-critical viewpoints like the Documentary Hypothesis.

This result has important theological and biblical interpretation ramifications. Readers can grasp the depth of the Genesis creation stories' message about God's creative power, humanity's purpose, and the interdependence of all creation by viewing them as a cohesive narrative. Additionally, this viewpoint upholds the inspiration and authority of Scripture, providing a strong refutation of skeptic viewpoints that dissect the text. This study supports Seventh-day Adventists' long-held views on the authorship of the Mosaics and the importance of the Sabbath as a reminder of God's creative and redeeming work. In the end, the creation stories in Genesis encourage readers to be amazed by God's omnipotence, accept their responsibility as stewards of creation, and find comfort in the knowledge that He will always be watching over the earth.

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