

The observer of Genesis

Alberto Canen

THE OBSERVER of Genesis

The science behind the creation story
Large print

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The observer of Genesis. The science behind the creation story - Large print / Pablo Rodolfo Castro-Alberto Canen ; ilustrado por Pablo Rodolfo Castro, 2013.

ISBN 978-987-29-1380-9

1. Estudios Bíblicos. I. Castro, Pablo Rodolfo, ilus. II. Título

CDD 220.7

Cataloging Date: 12/02/2013

Alberto Canen

It is made the deposit required by Law No. 11,723

Translated by Maria Jose Lago Eizaguirre

Cover and interior illustrations done by the author.

Acknowledgements

To my wife, who supports me in everything.

To my children and their questions.

To Luis Heriberto Rivas for always being available to my queries and for giving me access to interesting materials.

To Mercedes Bueto for her corrections and advice.

To my friend Fabian Rodriguez for having an open mind and for his great knowledge.

To my brother in law Pedro Diez for helping me collate scientific and astronomical matters.

And to my family and friends who volunteered as readers of the “manuscript” to help me improve it.

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Introduction

The account of creation in Genesis, is it just an introduction to biblical scripture? What are its verses hiding? Myth, invention or scientific truth? This book attempts to address an issue about which both scientists and religious people feel uncomfortable.

Science flatly dismisses the story, first with a smirk and then with anger, and the Catholic Church has relegated it to a mere introduction to the Scriptures. “The tale of Creation is a religious text with religious teachings,” they say. “There is no science in it”, “we should not seek scientific explanations”, of course.

But...

I must admit that I have always been a harsh critic of the Genesis. I was always among those we tried to conceal a smile and changed the subject in order to avoid discuss-

ing it. Talking about Genesis and Creation in particular seemed unthinkable to me..., until a few months ago.

It is about a year since my youngest son asked me about God with great interest, more than he used to have.

At the time we chatted, I explained everything I could within my knowledge and we agreed to read the holy books of the major religions to expand concepts. So we began to read, first the Bible¹, as the main book of Catholicism-Judaism-Islam, to then continue with the Bhagavad Gita² of Hinduism-

1 See appendix I

2 Bhagavad-Gita, the most important Hindu scripture. It is considered one of the most important religious texts in the world. The term Bhagavad-Gita means Bhagawan's song (Bhagawan, God, who has [all]opulence). Often the Bhagavad-Gita is simply called Gita (Gi-tá-). Although the Sanskrit noun is feminine Gita ("Song"), in Spanish it is often translated as masculine can be viewed many times as male ("el canto" instead of "la canción"), and the stress can also change (from gi: 'ta to 'gi:ta:). It is part of the epic text Mahabharata (possibly from the third century

Buddhism³.

When I read him the Bible, when we were moving forward with the book of Joseph, I had what we might call a revelation. I understood then the reason for the Bible, the reason for the creation of the Chosen People, the reason for the coming of the Messiah, The Creation, Eden, the policies of the Catholic Church, the momentous task of the

BC.) and consists of 700 verses. It contains a conversation between Krishna-whom the Hindus consider an incarnation of Vishnu (while krisnaístas consider it the origin of Vishnu), or as the main personality of God- and his cousin and friend Arjuna on the battlefield in the moments before the start of the Kurukshetra war. In response to the confusion and moral dilemma of Arjuna, Krishna explains to him all the mysteries of spirituality. During his speech, Krishna reveals his identity as the “God himself” (suaiaam Bhagawan), blessing Arjuna with an impressive view of his divine universal form among other teachings.

3 Although much of Buddhism denies that their doctrine has its essence in the Bhagavad Gita, and therefore in Hinduism, it is undeniable that Buddha’s teachings are based on or are the same as those of Hinduism: dharma (right action) and the end of samsara (cycle of birth) to attain nirvana (enlightenment).

Jewish people, polytheism, monotheism, and much more. This revelation caused me such a shock that I decided to write it down and I poured it in my book One God (Un Único Dios).

The explanation of the Creation story of Genesis was to be part of that book, but after analyzing it with my editor and literary adviser we decided it was better to leave it for a separate book as it warranted special treatment.

When I finished the book One God, in August 2011 - I returned to the account of creation in Genesis and devoted myself to solve it.

It was clear to me that the Genesis story was real; they were facts that could have happened but were somehow masked.

What was the key? What was the Rosetta stone that would allow me to interpret the narrative?

The key, I discovered, was that the story-the text- was a narrative of someone who was telling what he was seeing. That was the key -the board, so to speak- on which I had to assemble the pieces of this puzzle.

In the text of Creation there was an observer, a narrator. They were not just verses, no, it was clear that it was a narration: the narration of an observer.

By introducing this variable, the-narrator-observer, all made sense. From then on the rest was just a case of looking for the right questions: Was it a vision or a revelation? Or both? How long did the vision take? Who was he? Where did he live? What was his location?

The location, the location was crucial.

The observer and its location were the cornerstones for understanding the story of Creation.

This book describes the journey I had to make from the Bible to science in a perma-

nent back and forth until I managed to unravel the mystery.

I encourage you to join me in my discovery.

Let's have a cup of coffee, find a comfortable chair, and leave the preconceptions aside for a moment.

Let us open our minds and look at what mysteries have been hidden in the verses of Genesis for over three thousand years.

The version I have used for this comparison is The Jerusalem Bible.

The Jerusalem Bible (Bible de Jerusalem) is a version of the Bible published in installments between 1948 and 1953 that the French Biblical and Archaeological School of Jerusalem published later as the result of the translation to French of the Greek and Hebrew manuscripts. It was later translated into other local languages, and to the Spanish language. The approach they took was to compare the translation with the original texts in Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek.

THE BIBLE, THE GENESIS,
CREATION
Seven days?

Who has not wondered: seven days? Yes, who would not? –as we look at each other askance, with a mean grin.

It is a fact that fewer and fewer people believe that God created the heavens and the earth in seven days.

What about the dinosaurs? Well, by the time this question arises (a purely rhetorical one, of course) we are already engaged in a discussion that might embarrass even the toughest hooligans.

Usually, speaking of Genesis leads us, inevitably, to an irreconcilable division between science and religion. Apparently, one overrides the other. If Genesis says seven days,

and science has proved there were six billion years, it all indicates that something is wrong, obviously... in The Bible.

It is difficult for us to say that the analysis of science is wrong, apart maybe from a hundred million years up or down. So, following this logic, we will base this analysis on what science claims that were the early days of the solar system and of our planet, the Earth, based on the current findings.

Well, if the solar system and the Earth have been in existence for more than six thousand million years since they were just a cloud of dust and gas floating adrift in our beautiful galaxy... how did we get to those seven days? Sure, I know, don't tell me: pure superstition, myths, and ancient tales of various mythologies. Well, I don't blame you, I was of the same opinion until, reading the Bible to my youngest son, I discovered that some-

thing was wrong with the texts of Genesis, or wasn't?

Something in the sacred texts caught my attention and I stopped for a moment to look at them and I thought: what if the Genesis made sense? What if the narrative were consistent with the scientific explanation? What if the text of Genesis was the vision of someone who has seen the creation of the solar system like in a movie? And I remembered how many discoveries have started with this simple phrase: What if...?

And yes, let's try to approach the issue from that perspective, after all... what could we lose?

Of course, I should clarify at this point that I believe in God. I believe that God created everything. I am, as they say, a believer.

Philosophically I lean more towards the Hindu-Buddhist side, than towards the Jew-

ish-Catholic-Muslim, but as God is the same in both cases, I see no conflict in reading the holy books of both religions, and analyze what God has told men, in Mesopotamia as well as in the Indus Valley.

Well, let's see then what God has told us.

First, let's reflect on the "never well weighted" seven days.

Of course, the seven biblical days should have some sort of explanation, I thought, and I devoted myself to find it.

The first thing that occurred to me was that if God was infinite, a God's day might last a billion years, so seven days of God may well be six billion years. You may say, why six billion years? Well, because it is currently estimated that from the original nebula to the present six billion years have passed, and four billion six hundred million years since the consolidation of the Earth.

Although Occident has not handled major figures-and when I say major figures I mean figures as large as billions of years- in their mythologies, it may be interesting to

note that in India, at the time of writing the Genesis-they were already used to thinking of numbers of that magnitude.

For example: according to the Vedic scriptures⁴, the four yugas (ages) form a cycle of 4,320,000 years (Majá-yuga, or ‘great age’), which is repeated again and again. The first is the Satya-yuga or ‘age of truth’ of 1,728,000 years in which the average life span of a person was 100,000 years. It is the Golden Age, according to another classification.

Then comes the Duapara-yuga or ‘second age’ which covers 1,296,000 years with an average life span of 10,000 years; it is also called the Silver Age.

4 Vedas (literally “knowledge” in Sanskrit) are four ancient texts, the basis of Vedic religion, which was prior to the Hindu religion. The Sanskrit word Veda comes from an Indo-European term (Weid), related to the vision, is the root of the Latin words *vedere* (see) and *Veritas* (truth) and the Spanish words “*ver*” (see) and “*verdad*” (truth). The Vedic texts were developed into what is called the Vedic culture, based on castes (varna or ‘color’) and ashrams (religious life stages).

The ‘third age’, Treta-yuga, lasted about 864,000 years, with an average life span of 1,000 years; it is also known as the Bronze Age (although it is not meant to match the Bronze Age in India).

Finally, Kali Yuga or “age of quarrel” lasted 432,000 years where the average life span of a human being was 100 years (at the beginning of it, 5100 years ago). It was called Iron Age (it is not meant to match the Iron Age in India either).

Interesting, very interesting.

So far I didn’t find any drawbacks to consider the “seven days”.

If one believes in God, it would be normal, I think, to believe that He is infinite, thus it has not bothered me at all changing days for millions or billions of years.

Let’s continue.

Let's consider now the explanation that science gives us about the birth of the solar system and our planet Earth, in order to then be able to compare it with the text of Genesis.

I invite you to place ourselves in place and time.

Let's go to that moment when it all started in our little corner of the universe.

Six billion years ago, a cloud of gas and stardust-what is called a planetary nebula-, floats adrift in space.

This nebula, the cloud of stellar gas and dust is the waste product of a star that after its death as a supernova⁵ (star that explodes

5 Supernova: Star that explodes and throws around most of its mass to high speeds. After this explosive phenomenon there may be two outcomes: either the star is completely destroyed, or its central core remains, which in turn collapses by itself giving life to a very massive object such as a neutron star or a Black Hole.

The phenomenon of the explosion of a supernova is similar to the explosion of a Nova, but with the essential differ-

in its death, its final stage) scatters into space the materials that have been formed inside it from simpler elements.

The objects created in this stellar oven -now more complex- make up this huge cloud of dust, gas and ice that floats peacefully adrift. Our local nebula.

At one point, this calm, this placid floating, is altered by the arrival of waves, wave-shock waves produced possibly by the explosion of

ence that in the first case the energies involved are a million times stronger. When a catastrophic event like this happens, astronomers observe a star igniting in the sky that can reach apparent magnitudes of -6m or more.

The explosion of a supernova is a relatively rare phenomenon. We have testimonies of such events: in 1054, a star in the constellation Taurus ignited, the remains of which can still be seen in the form of the beautiful Crab Nebula; in 1572, the great astronomer Tycho Brahe observed a supernova shining in the constellation Cassiopeia, in 1640, a similar phenomenon was observed by Kepler. These are all appearances of supernovae that exploded in our Galaxy.

Today it is estimated that each galaxy produces, on average, a supernova every six centuries. A famous supernova of an external galaxy is Andromeda, appeared in 1885.

another supernova, another star which ends its days in the vicinity.

These shock waves, these waves that impact and shake our peaceful nebula trigger a contraction on it, and when it contracts it starts spinning and flattening.

This flattened disk that is now our planetary nebula leads most of the material toward the center, where it accumulates.

This huge mass of matter (mostly gas) makes it collapse under its own weight and due to gravity, initiating the combustion of a fledgling central star, the Sun.

The same force of gravity -the same gravitational force- that generates matter accumulation in the heart and leads to the creation of a star, in our case the Sun, also produces swirls and clumps in the dust disk.

These lumps that turn like swirls about themselves and continue their journey around the center are the nodes that will give rise to planets.

These primordial planets, these nodes or swirls of stellar matter, continue their path around the sun, but not in a circular motion, but in a spiral, falling toward it, moving closer with every lap, every orbit. It follows that when their spins started, the original swirls, they were farther away than the “finished” planets are now.

And what was the consequence of that approach to the Sun down that spiral road? Well, what happened was that those baby planets we might say were “cleaning” of debris, dust, and gas the space through which they passed and, thus, they increased their mass with the captured matter.

So, let’s recap and look at the big picture.

First comes a chaotic cloud of dust and gas, the result of a prior supernova explosion that scatters its matter into space.

Then, an accretion disk is generated from that matter which will give rise, first to the

Sun and then to the planets.

Finally, that disk is itself a cloud of dust and gas, which the orbiting planets will be cleaning from the surrounding space.

When they “sweep” that material by drawing it to themselves, the planets will increase their size with the captured dust and gas.

Many of these rocks, dust and ice, remnants from that cloud, are the meteorites that still today keep hurtling to earth, and that have scarred the surface of the moon and our own planet.

Also the solar wind, product of the nuclear combustion of the Sun, cleans the surrounding space from the light material and dislodges it into the confines of the system.

While this wave of gas and light dust is ejected by the solar wind, it is again caught in its path by the gravitational pull of planets in its wake, thus increasing a little more the mass of each one of them.

Well, we already have got primitive planets revolving in nearly circular orbits around the sun, because when the overall movement of the system was stabilized, these orbits are no longer spiral.

These planets, which were receiving material from the space gas and powder -possibly often in the form of violent collisions- must have existed at the time in molten lava state (in the case of non-gaseous planets),because the friction generates heat, and those collisions produced a lot of friction which resulted in a large increase in temperature that melted rocks and dust uniting all in single, and often almost spherical masses.

Since the planets were receiving less and less impacts, they began to cool, and as they cooled down, they generated a shell, a scab, a solid surface on the earth's crust on which we currently walk. Not only the surface was formed, but also the gases that were released

and trapped by the force of gravity formed an atmosphere; this was the case in our planet Earth and how the atmosphere which we breathe today was created.

Meanwhile, the ice of the original cloud, also trapped, originated water and therefore its accumulation would generate the seas, rivers and rain.

Well, okay, let's now think about how it was like when the planet, even though it had cooled enough to form the earth's crust, was still too hot for water to accumulate in liquid form on the surface. At that time, the cycle: evaporation-condensation-rain was much faster due to high surface temperatures. In those days, the humidity was truly unbearable. Showers and thunderstorms occurred without continuity. The rain evaporated as soon as it touched the earth.

An impenetrable sky, heavy fog and sun-

light that could barely filtered.

Surely it would have been impossible for one person to have been on the surface, to have seen the stars or the sun itself due, first, to the thickness of the clouds and fog, and secondly, because of the remnant dust which would still be floating in space among emerging planets.

Sounds too complicated or difficult to imagine? Yes, it does.

I think that it would be a good exercise to put ourselves in that situation to imagine ourselves in the midst of a severe sandstorm and once there try to see the Sun

We would probably see the light, the glow that surrounded us, but it would be difficult to accurately identify the source, the origin of that light. Dust, “sand” that flies in the storm, that airborne dust would prevent us from seeing the Sun

Moreover, while this “sandstorm” goes on

“outside”, here, in the planet’s atmosphere, we would be in the middle of a torrential boiling rain with clouds, thunder and lightning, as well as volcanic eruptions, ash rains and poisonous fumes.

Certainly all a stage, a huge stage, a scenario very different from today.

This scenario, in which we probably would not last a minute nowadays, would create the ideal conditions to start the journey of life (humidity, temperature, solar radiation and cosmic rays, which impacted with hardly any impediments). Ideal conditions that would create the first amino acids, the first molecular chains. Chains that later would give rise to more complex organisms.

Now, that the conditions are ripe, let’s examine the next step. The evolution of life.

AND IN THIS CORNER... LIVE!

We saw earlier that life as we know it on our planet, began with and in the water. Water has a key role in our kind of existence. Consider that we humans are composed of seventy percent of that element; we could almost say that we are sea animals adapted to the surface.

Well, we must place ourselves there and think that, the planet is cooling, the water remains liquid longer, and it is accumulating in the lowest places by simple gravity simultaneously.

This initial ocean, it seems, was just one and so were the lands -as continents.

Science calls today that super-continent *Vaalbara-Pangaea*⁶.

6 Pangaea (Vaalbara-Pangaea): from the Greek pre-

Pangaea does not remain as the only conti-

fix “pan” meaning “all” and the Greek word “gea”, “soil” or “earth”. Thus, it would be a word that means “the whole earth.”

Pangaea is the result of the evolution of the first continent Vaalbara, which was probably formed about 4 billion years ago. Pangaea splits some 208 million years ago into Laurasia and Gondwana. At present fragments of this ancient continent are part of Africa, Australia, India and Madagascar.

Chronology

Minor or partial supercontinents:

- Nena (supercontinent, it emerges about 1,8 billion years).
- Atlantica (supercontinent, it emerges about 1,8 billion years).
- Gondwana (it emerges about 200 million years ago).
- Laurasia (Along with Gondwana, Laurasia emerged about 200 million years ago).
- Eurasia (the supercontinent Eurasia is now made up of Europe and Asia).

Major supercontinents:

- Vaalbara (it emerges about 4 billion years ago).
- Ur (supercontinent, it emerges about 3 billion years ago).
- Kenorland (it emerges about 2,5 billion years ago).
- Columbia (supercontinent, it emerges about 1,8 billion years ago).
- Rodinia (it emerges about 1,1 billion years ago).
- Pannotia (it emerges about 600 million years ago).
- Pangaea (it emerges about 300 million years ago).

nent but gets fractured and its segments drift, sail so to speak on the molten lava beneath the crust and lead to the continents we know today.

Let's tell now tell a *racconto* and put all these facts in perspective.

Note that life, to evolve, develops first in the sea and then migrates to the land, while the supercontinent Pangaea-Vaalbara breaks and moves across the globe to fill the places we find familiar today.

At sea, where life generated animals, plants were also created, which moved inland and became land-dwelling vegetation, trees, grass, etc. ..

Some of the marine animals that had "come out" to land, while evolving, returned to the sea where they continued their evolution-e.g. cetaceans (whales, dolphins, etc.).

Other primeval animals became used to living on the surface and resulted in the famous

dinosaurs, who reigned on the planet for about one hundred and sixty million years.

I do not want to overwhelm or drown you with the history of our world -many of you are certainly aware of it- but it is important we refresh what we know and try to notice certain “details” that are essential clues for understanding the topic at hand.

Let continue, (with a small remark).

Dinosaurs emerge about two hundred and thirty million years ago and disappear -go extinct- about sixty five million years approximately.

Considering that the human species, the first *Homo*, appears only in the last two million years, we understand that dinosaurs and humans never coexisted.

From the last dinosaur to the first *Homo* there was a sixty million years lapse, enough to not have ever encountered one another.

At this point I would like to focus your attention on some details of the evolution of life that will be important when we discuss the Genesis.

Interestingly, some dinosaurs could fly – like the Pterosaur-, and may have had their habitats on the beach. Consider that these animals had wings like bats and they were unfit to taxi like a plane or a duck, but they needed to jump from a high area, a high ridge to start the flight; and for that, what better than a cliff above the sea? Some of them were very large animals with a 12 meters wing-span, almost like a small plane.

It is also very important to emphasize that humans have been the last to appear in this story, the story of evolution.

Right. As you may have noticed it took about six billion years for the Solar System to form and man appeared in the last two million years.

It is common practice to compare these six billion years with one year of three hundred sixty-five days, in which the nebula begins to collapse the first of January and the human species makes its appearance at 23:00, December 31.

Mankind has his *moment* at the end, at the very end of the whole process.

I think this brief *racconto* of the history of the Earth gives us a sufficient and necessary basis of information to perform our comparison, so let's try!

Behold...
GENESIS⁷

«In the beginning God created heaven and earth. Now the earth was a formless void, there was darkness over the deep, with a divine wind sweeping over the waters. God said, “Let there be light,” and there was light. God saw that light was good, and God divided light from darkness. God called

7 Genesis. The Greek name comes from the contents of the book: the origin of the world, mankind and the Jewish people, the genealogy of all mankind from the beginning of time. Also “Genesis” has the sense of “prologue” as Jewish history properly begins with the Exodus, which Genesis is merely a prelude. This title appears in the Septuagint or Greek Septuagint (LXX). In Hebrew, the book is called “Bere šyt”: “In the Beginning, from the first word in the opening sentence. The text used for analysis belongs to The Jerusalem Bible, Editions du Cerf, Paris, 1973.

light “day”, and darkness he called “night”. Evening came and morning came: the first day.» (Genesis 1:1-5).

Let’s observe carefully what this first paragraph tells us.

In this description, I clearly distinguish the original chaos nebula of cosmic dust that science mentions. A “sea” of dust, for someone who may be watching in the darkness, and who does not have the slightest idea that what he is witnessing is not water but a nebula in which he (our possible observer) is “floating”. This individual is in the place, in the exact place, in which hundreds of millions of years later the Earth in formation will be located. Moreover, as he is not yet on solid ground all he can discern or understand, according to its parameters, is the abyss, the abyss of space.

Then, this same individual (who continues his observation and narrates what he sees) perceives that the light shines for the first time and believes that God at that precise moment has created it -the light-as he still cannot see that it is the sun that originates the light. He sees the light, but not where it comes from. For him it is as if God had “switched on” the light.

Then we face the first major dilemma typical of Genesis: how light can be created before the stars? (This obviously rhetorical question is usually accompanied by some skeptical gesture, knowing boastful look and intent to end the conversation). Yes, it is true, it cannot be, but - there is always a but- what if we placed the viewer in the exact location where the primordial swirl was, the one which will lead to our planet? It is obvious that our observer could have seen the light, but would have been unable to know where

that light had come from, because -as noted earlier- the “dust storm” would have prevented it. Also, as he would be “standing” on the swirling, he would perceive the passage of day-night, light-darkness, due to its rotation. This person -because he’d be standing, situated, on the swirling- would turn with him, and therefore, a moment he would be facing the light, and the next, he would have his back to it.

Here, we can already realize that it is essential, fundamental, the existence of an observer and -even more-its location, in order to understand the Genesis.

This individual who notes, and then tells what he has seen, is watching it from a particular site, from a specific location. He is somewhere stationed at the time when he “watches”, at the time of receiving the vision, the revelation. And that place, that location

where he is, is what makes the difference; that's what makes us believe that the description of Genesis may make sense; it is the key to the riddle. The key that opens a world of possibilities

(What now? Where is the boastful grin? ...).

It is necessary to clarify that when I talk about an observer I mean someone who in recent times, say about three-thousand years ago, receives a vision or a revelation of God and through it he watches the creation of the solar system.

It doesn't mean that the observer has witnessed the creation at the time God was doing it, but that he saw or grasped it later through some kind of extremely concise vision.

I believe that to many people Genesis never made sense. Or at least I think it did not make sense because most of those who analyze it consider that the information about Creation (Genesis) should have been given to the person who wrote the Bible in the format of a book of science, with scientific data, charts and graphs; or in the format of a detailed revelation, that would allow us to understand what happened from all angles. Specifically with this possibility: to see events from all angles.

It is possible that the reason for this prejudice is that our scientific mind expects scientific data to be accompanied by graphs, charts, statistics, and-of course-the correct format. However, if we look at how people who get visions or revelations of God “see” what He reveals, we’ll understand that these divine events never occur according to human parameters. Usually, these visions or

revelations are just that, visions. Visions like very short films about which the viewer has no control. The visions are usually similar to a dream.

Sometimes these visions are accompanied by an idea that becomes clear after ecstatic contemplation or, in some cases, there is someone who talks to the person who has the experience and explains something in particular that may-or may not-be related to what he has seen.

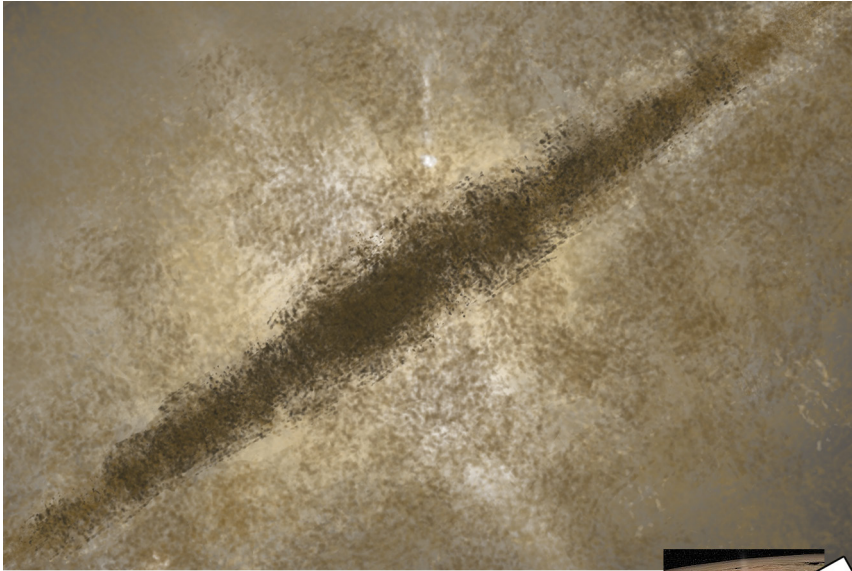
Right.

Let's advance a little further with our approach and try to unravel this mystery.

If this guy (our observer) had found himself floating in space above the solar system during its formation he would have "seen" that the star is born along with the light, but clearly that was not the case as he first sees light and much after the existence of the stars. So at this point I asked myself why?

Why doesn't he see? Why doesn't he see something so obvious?

Just because he can't.



- View from the observer's location

The arrow indicates the location of the observer

View from space •



It is certain, to me that its location-the site from where he observes-is not in space but in the accretion disk, at the level where the planets are created, and it is precisely for this reason that the stars are hidden behind the

remaining dust. The key, the key to this mystery is the observer's location, and that location has to be, without question, a point on the surface of the planet. Therefore, we will continue our comparison under the assumption that the observer is standing on what will eventually be the surface of our planet, Earth.

Notice what happens on the second day:

«God said:

«“Let there be a vault through the middle of the waters to divide the waters in two”. And so it was: God made the vault, and it divided the waters under the vault from the waters above the vault. God called the vault “heaven”. Evening came and morning came: the second day» (Genesis 1:6-8).

In this passage, our observer remains in the

same place, the surface of the Earth (now already formed), and from there he tells what he “sees”, the vision that God has sent to him.

To me it is obvious he is observing the cooling of the planet and, as a result, water condensation, the water that it is beginning to accumulate on the surface and the clear separation of the gases in the atmosphere that will form the sky, heaven.

For him, before the separation of the waters, everything was mixed, hence the “separation”. But what is it that is mixed? Water and air (sky).

Such is the existing steam and moisture, to which clouds are added -possibly volcanic clouds- that his feeling is that the sky is mixed with rain and seawater.

For him this is very confusing. But as the Earth (the planet) gradually cools, the separation of the waters -we could say-is evident. Rain is rain, the land is land and the sea is the sea.

Have I caught your attention yet? Have I?
Not yet?

Right.

Third day:

«God said:

«“Let the waters under heaven come together into a single mass, and let dry land appear”. And so it was. God called the dry land “earth” and the mass of waters “seas”, and God saw that it was good.

«God said:

«“Let the earth produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants, and fruit trees on earth, bearing fruit with their seed inside, each corresponding to its own species”. And so it was. The earth produced vegetation: the various kinds of seed-bearing plants and the fruit

trees with seed inside, each corresponding to its own species. God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came: the third day» (Genesis 1:9-13).

Here comes, again, very briefly, what we had observed in our racconto about what science deduced on the evolution of the planet.

We must not forget that our observer sees these events at a truly dizzying pace; that's how it must have happened, since the planet's six billion years –or at least four billion six hundred years- were summarized to him in seven days.

Let's analyze this third day.

The water collects in a single ocean-sea and the land in a single mass.

I am convinced that our observer is referring here to the supercontinent Pangaea Vaalbara.

It's too coincidental the observation the

narrator makes on one land and one sea, almost too coincidental and unnecessary if it weren't because that's the way it really happened.

But he could not see it (we're talking about a super continent) therefore it must have been an idea that he saw in the vision. This makes its mention more interesting, almost remarkable.

Then this guy (the observer) sees growing plants around him which he identifies with life forms known to him: trees, seeds, fruits, perhaps algae.

Fourth day:

«God said:

«“Let there be lights in the vault of heaven to divide day from night, and let them indicate festivals, days and years. Let them be lights in the vault of heaven to shine on the

earth”. And so it was. God made the two great lights: the greater light to govern the day, the smaller light to govern the night, and the stars. God set them in the vault of heaven to shine on the earth, to govern the day and the night and to divide light from darkness. God saw that it was good. Evening came and morning came: the fourth day» (Genesis 1:14-19).

And now our observer -at last- can see a clear sky, free of clouds, moisture and gases, as well as of stardust -the remaining stardust that had disappeared from the surrounding space because it had been captured by the planets and swept by the solar wind.

Finally, he sees the sun, the moon and the stars and, of course, he believes that God has created them right then.

Obviously he is not aware that the stars al-

ready existed before but he had not spotted them yet. And why not? Why hadn't he seen them? He had not noticed them because-as we had noted- the conditions of the atmosphere and outer space had not allowed him to. Remember the dust storm in space, and the torrential rains, the water steam and the volcanic gases in the planet's atmosphere. But now, with a colder earth and growing vegetation, the air would be clean enough for the general appearance of the sky to be quite similar to the present, much like the sky we're used to seeing. A clean sky, blue and clear. Enough to observe the sun, the moon and the stars.

Now with a more "normal" environment, we might say, our observer continues, standing in the same place, watching time pass before his eyes at a frightening pace. At the same time he tries to interpret, through self-referrals and the knowledge of the time in which he lives, events that he doesn't under-

stand. Facts that human kind would need -at least- two thousand, or three thousand years and hundreds of scientific discoveries to interpret.

Fifth day:

«God said:

«“Let the waters be alive with a swarm of living creatures, and let birds wing their way above the earth across the vault of heaven”. And so it was. God created great sea-monsters and all the creatures that glide and teem in the waters in their own species, and winged birds in their own species. God saw that it was good. God blessed them, saying, “Be fruitful, multiply, and fill the waters of the seas; and let the birds multiply on land”. Evening came and morning came: the fifth day» (Genesis 1:20-23).

At this point, I must admit that the fact that in the story plants emerged first and marine animals later, generated some concern in me ... it just did not make sense. The idea bothered me for days without being able to find an explanation that appeased me.

In the end, as I could not realize the reason for this sequence, I went back to the central hypothesis-the location of the observer- and then I realized that maybe our observer was on a beach. It occurred to me that the same spot that concerned us so much, the exact location of the observer, must have been on a beach.

This little detail made the difference, as a piece that falls into its proper place. If the observer was in a beach-then- it makes sense that he had been able to see first the plants-algae and then the sea life, the birds (perhaps flying dinosaurs), the great sea monsters (marine dinosaurs) and the other sea ani-

mals.

With this new location of the observer -indeed by identifying its location- we could find this sequence more logical: plants-birds-sea animals (sea monsters).

It is also possible that, between glaciations, the beach is completely flooded and that, perhaps, some of our observer's vision were submerged, and hence the "bubbling waters for their species."

We should note that the continents drifted over the plates to their current locations, and that while they did it there were several glaciations. These glaciations retained liquid water on the ground as snow, ice, and the water flooded the coast at every opportunity. This to-and-fro of water occurred many times.

The sea monsters



And what about the land animals?
We are getting there, let's not rush.

Sixth day:

«God said:

«“Let the earth produce every kind of living creature in its own species: cattle, creeping things and wild animals of all kinds”. And so it was. God made wild animals in their own species, and cattle in theirs, and every creature that

crawls along the earth in its own species. God saw that it was good.

«God said:

«“Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground”. God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them. God blessed them, saying to them:

«“Be fruitful, multiply, fill the earth and subdue it. Be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that move on earth”.

«God said:

«“Look, to you I give all the seed-bearing plants everywhere on the

surface of the earth, and all the trees with seed-bearing fruit; this will be your food. And to all the wild animals, all the birds of heaven and all the living creatures that creep along the ground, I give all the foliage of the plants as their food”. And so it was. God saw all he had made, and indeed it was very good. Evening came and morning came: the sixth day» (Genesis 1:24-31).

In this paragraph of the sixth day we find the emergence of land animals and then human beings. It's very important, very important, that man is the last to appear, we already discussed why. The fact that it is the last is not a minor detail. Man could have appeared at the beginning of the story and it would have been more reasonable or consistent if we were to believe that the whole story was invented. It seems to me that someone who

invents a story of creation normally begins with the most important character: the human being. However, in Genesis man, the center of creation, is the last to make his arrival.

Perfect, so far just perfect.

But ... again a but, why in the description land animals are mentioned after the plants, birds and the sea animals? Yes, why?

This did not fit, there was something missing. I had overlooked some piece of this puzzle.

I was again at a dead end. Some piece was missing again. I mulled it over for days, with no solution.

(Some of you are probably now saying: “Did you see?”, but don’t go so fast, because this isn’t over yet).

Finally I returned to the basis of my theory that focuses on the location of the observer. I

thought: let's find the exact location.

The key can be given to us by the individual who sees, by the observer.

Who was this observer? Where did he live? What was he doing? What did he do for a living?

As we have no reference about this individual, because the only thing we have is his story, we must deduce it.

The Genesis is a narrative that is part of the texts, stories and traditions compiled by Moses, or at least that's what the Bible scholars suppose. Following this logic we can deduce that if the text is part of the cultural heritage of the Hebrews, it is so because whoever wrote it or narrated it was a member of its people or at least someone very close to them. With this information we would be able to define a much more precise geographic location; the area would be confined to the region of Mesopotamia, between the Euphrates and Tigris. Our observer would very possibly be a shepherd.

Well, well, well ... very well.

At that moment something fell into the tangle of clues and pieces. I had the feeling, the certainty of having found something important. I thought: I must investigate that place, investigate Mesopotamia in the early days of Pangaea. I searched and searched in books and ... Bingo! Guess. Mesopotamia, or at least the territories that would one day become Mesopotamia, were a beach, a beach of Arabia. He was at the land mass that would drift with the other blocks and then end up “almost crashing” with Asia. The beach was there, the beach was the place from which our observer saw the sea monsters.

While our block of Arabia drifts on the ocean, that small sector-that millions of years later would be Mesopotamia- is a beach, a long beach that stretches in front of the ocean. But beware, because it is not just any beach. Before starting the drift-or we could

say at the time it was still part of that one continent- that region is a small coastal edge of Pangaea. Then, after moving, it continues being a beach until it collides with Asia and it's no longer a beach-at least in part-to become an inland region. But, and here's another very interesting "but", the field left inland is just the land which becomes Mesopotamia while the rest of the coast remains a beach, the Gulf Beach.

Thus, we could explain why our observer saw first algae-plants, then sea animals- sea monsters and birds while Pangaea drifts- and finally land animals -without monsters (because there weren't any dinosaurs any more)- and at the very end, men.

I should make a small remark: in the narrative, referring to marine animals he speaks of "monsters", but when he mentions land animals, he doesn't. Why? Yeah, I wonder why some sea animals seemed monstrous but the land animals didn't?

Behold the key.

Behold THE key.

Let's recall the timeline.

If we consider that when this guy is watching the sea (while drifting on the block of Arabia) it is just the time of the dinosaurs, during which the beach may have also been submerged at some point; and that he then sees the mainland in the period when dinosaurs were extinct, the time sequence acquires a unique logic⁸.

What the viewer sees, facing the sea, at the time of the dinosaurs are sea dinosaurs, thus

8 The mass extinction of the Cretaceous-Tertiary was a period of mass extinction of species about 65 million years ago. It corresponds to the end of the Cretaceous period and the beginning of the Tertiary period. It is also known as mass extinction of K/T (German Kreide / Tertiär Grenze), to mark the boundary between the Cretaceous-Tertiary.

No one knows the exact duration of this event. About 50% of biological gender disappeared, including most of the dinosaurs. Many explanations have been proposed for this phenomenon; the most widely accepted is that it was the result of an asteroid impact on Earth from space.

the “sea monsters” that he had never seen and would never see again. However, at the sight of land animals none of them catches his attention, despite the elephants, and giraffes, simply because for him they weren’t monsters. Animals were known to him.

It is very interesting the fact that when Saudi “collides” with Asia dinosaurs were extinct. There were no monsters inland. Gone were “land monsters” that our observer could ever see.

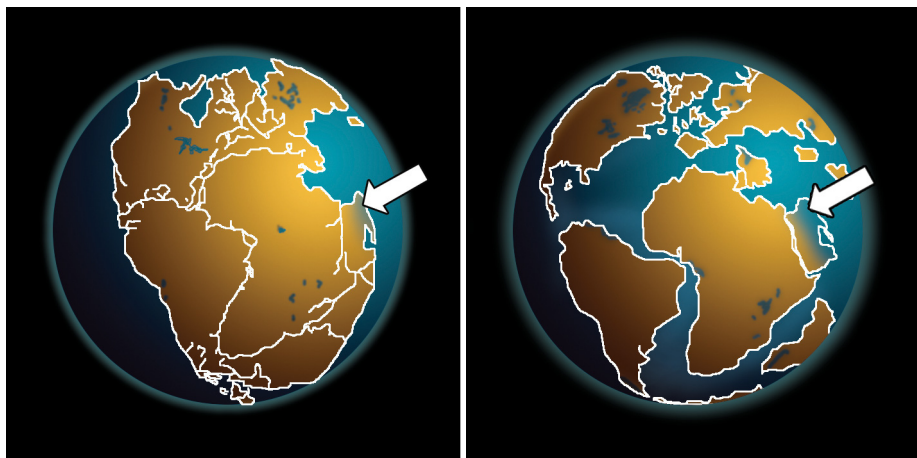
Think this guy was always “stuck” to the floor; he never turned, he never changed the direction of his gaze.

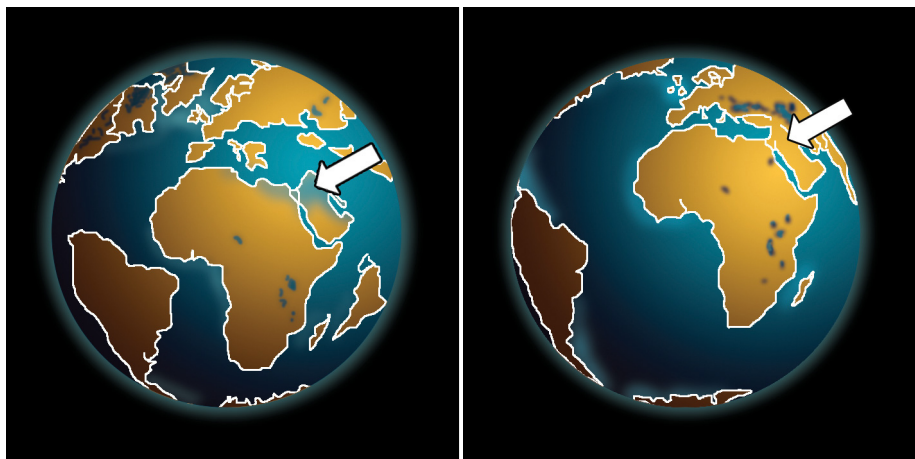
While his vision lasted, at all times, he came across a display of events that happened before his eyes, as if he had been in front of a movie screen on which Creation was being projected. Or, as a cameraman filming with a fixed camera.

He turned with the planet, moved with the ground and, of course, he was not able to fly.

Which, though it might seem like a disadvantage, actually gives us the certainty that what he saw was absolutely real; a gift of God to a particular person, possibly for him to tell it what and thus reveal the mechanisms of God to create solar systems and planets like Earth.

Pangaea and the continental drift:





The arrow indicates the location of the observer.

At this point I will tell you something very interesting.

When this book was almost finished and we were doing the final corrections, in those days, I was watching television and going over some programs that I'd recorded.

As I didn't find any comedy-which is what I like to see after a day's work- I checked the documentary programs recorded and randomly selected one on the Sahara Desert.

Watching the documentary, to my surprise,

I hear scientists talking about the enormous amount of sea fossils that formed the sands of the Sahara desert. They said that the Sahara had been a shallow sea beach, so much so that mangrove glowed (mangrove trees are very salt tolerant and their roots are immersed in sea water).

The documentary referred to a particular area in Egypt called Wadi Al-Hitan, or Whale Valley due to the large number of fossils of whales and ancestors of these. They also commented that the stones used in the construction of the pyramids were crammed full with coastal marine fossils, i.e., shells, seashells, fossils and other more ancient like nummulites ("small coin"), extinct foraminifera that lived from between 55 and 39 million years to the present.

At the end of the film-this documentary program-geologists concluded that all the top range of Africa had been partly submerged while continental drift occurred,

and some sea-shore land had risen in times
Africa is approaching Asia and block Arabia
“collides” with Asia - (now Iran, Iraq, Turkey).

Huge surprise.

Huge and pleasant surprise.

If we consider how close is the beach, or the key location where we assume that our observer was- from the area of this “valley of the whales” -less than 1,000 kilometers- and we also consider the manifest existence of fossils that concludes that the area was submerged enough so that at certain times our individual could see the “famous” sea monsters, the theory at hand, our observer’s theory and its location make perfect sense.

(I guess, at this point, I have got your attention and there are no sneers ...).

And finally...

At the end of the sixth day, man makes his appearance.

«“Let us make man in our own image, in the likeness of ourselves, and let them be masters of the fish of the sea, the birds of heaven, the cattle, all the wild animals and all the creatures that creep along the ground”. God created man in the image of himself, in the image of God he created him, male and female he created them”» (Genesis 1:26-27).

Not in the first, nor the second, not even in the sixth. How can that be? How is it that man was created by God at the end and not the beginning? Come on; are we not the most important thing? We are the center of creation! Should He not have created us in the beginning? But he didn't. He created us at the end. Completely the opposite of what would be expected of a creationist account.

A perfect finale.

In six billion years that the whole process of creation of the Solar System lasted, Homo sapiens appears at the end, in the last two million years.

Precisely.

At the end of the sixth day.

And now... the seventh day.

«Thus heaven and earth were completed with all their array. On the seventh day God had completed the work he had been doing. He rested on the seventh day after all the work he had been doing. God blessed the seventh day and made it holy, because on that day he rested after all his work of creating.

«Such was the story of heaven and earth as they were created.

«At the time when Yahweh God made earth and heaven» (Genesis 2:1-4).

This last day has something extra in addition to the day of rest, in which God sees his work; He decides it is already finished and there is a truce, and we read again that God made the earth and the heavens, neither more nor less.

This repetition of the phrase -earth and heaven, already mentioned in the first day- is the key to unlocking the mystery.

What about ...?

We return to the LOCATION -yes, this time with capital letters- of our observer.

If the story was made by God, it would make no sense the expression “earth and heaven” because God does not stand anywhere, God is omnipresent. If we speak of heaven and earth it’s because the observation is made from a purely human perspective, so the

observer-narrator must be a man, a man, an individual, who as we saw, is standing on the earth's crust, the planet's surface, and from there he narrates.

The land is all that is under his feet -the-planet- and the sky is all that is on that world, and that means the atmosphere, space, stars, the rest of the universe and other universes-if there are any; everything, absolutely everything, including the world of ideas and the laws governing the behavior of creation, such as the laws of physics, chemistry, etc., etc., etc.

I would like to mention something to you now. One of my children, the youngest, aged nine, told me: *"Why didn't God do everything with magic? As He can do anything he wants just by clicking (thundering) his fingers."*

Yes, I know, children's questions...

Yes, I thought, and why can't Creation happen like that? Why doesn't God do things by magic?

And it occurred to me that maybe what happens is that we have become so accustomed to the magic of God, that it does not shock us anymore. It is possible that, as science has discovered some of the mechanisms of this Grand Wizard's tricks and also the mechanisms that make these "tricks", at one point we have come to think that anyone can do them.

But clearly not everyone can create a solar system, not even in six billion years.

Following these readings and reflections I was telling a friend about this idea of magic. I asked him: "Why do we assume that if God creates something he must do it with a magic wand? As if every morning he peeped a wand and a voice from heaven said, "Egg, chicken, egg, chicken ..." and eggs and chickens filled our farms."

God has mechanisms for all, and that's what we see every day of our lives and we do not re-

alize: how children are born, how trees grow, how the tides rise and fall, how we breathe, how rain is generated, how the stars move, and hundreds of billions of things more.

And we are used to them. We got used to the way the world works around us; so much so that we are convinced that things have happened by chance, without any planning; that behind the Creation there isn't a Creator; that our existence is pure chance. And that, I believe, is the reason that often arises for the division between science and religion.

It would seem that what can be proven scientifically cannot be the work of God.

As if man had created, on his own, any of the laws of physics.

Newton discovered the laws that bear his name, discovered them ... not created them; there is a huge difference.

LOCATION AND ENVIRONMENT

Babylonians

I also thought that this observer we speak about, must have been immersed in a cultural context, obviously influenced by the myths, legends and gods of his culture and of course, exposed to other creation narratives.

If the location we propose is correct, he must have had great influences of Babylon. Knowing then what the Babylonians said in his texts on this event can be very interesting.

I transcribe below the Babylonian poem of creation called *Enuma Elish* (for its first two words) which begins:

*When the sky above had no name,
And the very earth beneath was not yet
named,*

*(Then) the waters of the primordial abyss
(APSU: freshwater)
and of the tumultuous Tiamat (salt water)
were mingled together.*

This poem Enuma Elish, found in the library of Ashurbanipal in Nineveh (669 BC - 627 BC), records the birth of Marduk, his heroic deeds and how he became the lord of the gods after killing his grandmother, Tiamat, from whom he snatched the Tablets of Destiny.

It reads:

«When high above heaven had
not been named it had not been
called with a name the mainland
below; and there was just the primordial Apsu, their father, (and) Mummu-Tiamat, she who bore them all, mingled their waters as one body.

And no field was formed, no

marsh was to be seen, when none of the gods existed, and none bore a name, and no destinies were ordained; then Lahmu and Lahamu were called into being. During eternities they increased in age and height. Anshar and Kishar were formed, surpassing the others. Days passed, years accumulated. Anu was his son, a rival of his own parents, yes, Anu, Anshar's firstborn, was his equal. Anu begat Nudimmud in her own image. Nudimmud became their parents' owner, unparalleled wise, insightful, strong and powerful, much stronger than his grandfather Anshar.

He had no rival among the gods his brothers. Together the divine brothers came and went altering Tiamat when they shook from side

to side; yeah, they altered Tiamat with their hilarity in their heavenly abode.

Apsu could not stifle their cries and Tiamat was speechless at their behavior. Their actions were obnoxious to [...] their behavior was abhorrent; they became unbearable. Then Apsu, progenitor of the great gods, shouted, addressing Mummu, his vizier: “Oh Mummu, my vizier, who brightens my spirit, come with me to Tiamat. (...)».

These verses continue maintaining the same tone as we move away from the possibility of any scientific correlation between the Enuma Elish and science.

By reading it we have seen the enormous difference between the Genesis and the other cultures of the area.

9 Full text in APENDIX I.

Note that there is -in the Babylonian story- the image of father and mother giving birth to creation. One idea would be normal for someone of a polytheistic culture that tries to explain the creation through a belief system that is familiar to him; where what is born must inevitably come from two parents, a male and a female.

Egyptians

Perhaps we might think that the idea of creation of Genesis may have been taken from the Egyptians, because, at one point, they were the most advanced in the area at a scientific level.

Read the description of the creation by them:

«It is said that water was NUN,
it was the God of Darkness, it was

the beginning of everything ... but he was sleeping, only sleeping.

When he finally woke up NUN found only boredom, he was all he saw around. Neither animals nor plants, nor men ... not even gods. Then, recognizing the immense power of creation in itself, he decided to get down to work and start with the creation of the universe.

«As he was water he began creating land; a large island of loamy soil arose from himself; it was Egypt, and he thought that, as Egypt had emerged from water, this should give it life, that's when God created the divine river, the Nile.

«NUN continued to create ... the sky, air, plants, animals and gods, but something was missing, there wasn't total darkness, but there wasn't light either. One day, from

a lotus floating on the Nile came light. The flower was reluctant to open up and when it could not take it anymore, RA, the sun, came out, giving the world what it needed, that light with which to appreciate the colors, the beauty of creation and of course the time since RA would go back into the cup of lotus flower to rest during the night. RA became the most powerful god, the master of the world and also the most envied...».

Obviously not, we can't make the correlation with science, it is impossible.

Hebrews

What about the popular cosmological notions of the Hebrews?

Let's review what the Hebrew description, design, popular idea was.

For them, the earth was founded upon the waters of the primeval ocean, Tehom, and its boundaries were washed by the waters of the ocean.

Below the earth was the abode of the dead, the seol, equivalent to the Greek *Hades*, the Babylonian *arallu*, as it was conceived as a hollow ground inhabited by the shades of the dead.

Above ground the solid sky was holding the upper waters. This solid firmament had gates that opened out to the waters of the flood and torrential rains.

The stars were fixed in the firmament.

Above the upper waters there was "the heaven of heavens," where God dwelt sur-

rounded by his court, the angels, the children of God, or perhaps the family of God. This idea of divine abode became the empyrean heaven, where in the middle Ages stood the mansions of the blessed.

This popular Hebrew conception about the origin is very interesting, since although they had the text of Genesis, they did not have sufficient scientific knowledge to explain it. Therefore they made a free interpretation of the narrative and end in this confusing idea of solid skies and fixed stars in the firmament, beyond the abode of God and the angels that would be a theme rather focused on the philosophical.

It's very shocking to me to observe how the same description has, or has not, sense depending on the knowledge applied to their interpretation and how today with the information available and the ease of finding it, anyone could make a more accurate comparison than any done in previous centuries.

Now, come on ..., the text of Genesis is, at least, three thousand years old; and the fact that its pieces fall perfectly into place has to be, for me, without a doubt the work of God.

Which leads to the next thought. The Genesis has too many “coincidences” regarding what we suppose happened scientifically. And I for one do not believe in coincidences, especially when there are so many.

So how does that information reach our observer? Where does it come from? How does he get it?

THE SACRED WRITER

To understand it better, I would like to refer to how the Catholic Church deals with the idea of the sacred writer, the writer who captures what he understands to be the word of God.

When we say that the texts are words of God, one could imagine that God has dictated the phrases that he wanted to reach readers in the author's ear; that's how represented the authors of the sacred books are usually represented in many of the paintings seen in the churches. However, the phenomenon is much more complex. This phenomenon is called inspiration. But this inspiration should not be understood in the same way that a musician is inspired to create a work, but as the discrete action of God deep inside the sacred writer. This inspiration respects,

as it were, the humanity of the author, his culture, his inclinations, his tastes, his writing, as Luis Heriberto Rivas explains in his book “The books and the history of the Bible. Introduction to Holy Scripture”¹⁰.

That is why it can be noted that the various books of the Bible have distinctly different styles.

This is precisely because the hagiographer (such is the name given to the sacred author) is fully involved in what God commanded him to write.

“Thus, when one asks about the author of the Bible, one must take into account this double dimension: in the one hand, the author is God who inspires, on the other, it is the hagiographer who does as best as he can godly task”(Sic. Luis Heriberto Rivas. Editorial San Benito. 2008)¹¹.

10 Rivas, Luis Heriberto, *Los libros y la historia de la Biblia. Introducción a las Sagradas Escrituras*. Editorial San Benito. 2008.

11 Ídem.

I think this paragraph can elucidate the mechanism -some might say-, by which God's information reaches first the writer and then the reader of the sacred text. But anyway, it is still hard to imagine.

So I've written this fictional account with the mere intention of allowing the reader stand, if only for a moment, in the place of our famous observer.

It is important to clarify that the following story is pure fiction and that nowhere in the Bible is it specified that it happened this way.

THE OBSERVER

Contemplating creation

Fictional account that can help you understand the way some people have received God's visions and revelations.

Mesopotamia
Semitic Village
1000 B.C.

He was slowly regaining control, his control, control of himself, while he became aware of what had happened.

His legs trembled; his mind was a chaos of questions that demanded answers.

What did I see? What happened to me? Did I have a hallucination? Where am I? The sheep?! How long..? He thought, desperate and greatly confused.

He looked around.

The sheep! There they are!

Thank God, thank God they have not escaped!

Is it still dawn or dusk?

The day was ending and there was little light, he saw that the sun was setting but he was still confused.

His legs did not supported him He fell to his knees, leaned his hands on the floor.

I must come back home, I must come back home and tell everyone what happened to me.

The images he had seen returned to his mind as fast memories. *Have I dreamed?* He tried to focus on what was important at the time. *I must go home, back to my family, safe and with the flock.*

He had noticed it was getting dark. He took

his crook and the fur that kept him warm. *I'm starving, my stomach hurts from hunger* –he had not eaten since leaving home that morning, and the day was over. *Water, water, I need to drink.*

He ran to the creek that was a few meters away, and squatted. He took great gulps as if they were the last and felt better. He wiped his mouth with his sleeve as he stood. He was exhausted as if he'd run a race.

He was slowly beginning to relax.

Everything seemed in order. He gathered the sheep and drove them to the hut where he lived.

He arrived an hour later, hurrying under the moonlight.

He locked them in the pen.

Elam had a wife, Misur, and two children, a boy of eight and a girl of six.

Upon hearing the sheep enter the pen the children ran to greet their father. In the dark, they hugged him and Elam lifted Samud, the

girl, and grabbed the oldest, Urkis', hand.

- Mom was worried because you did not show up -Urkis said.

Misur had already left the house and went to meet him.

- Husband, did anything happen to you? -in Misur's face the concern was palpable.

- Oh my wife, let's go inside as I must tell you my day. You should hear what happened to me.

- Did an animal attack you? Are you all right? Are you hurt? Have you had a problem with the sheep...?

- No woman. Stay calm. Make me something to eat, please, I have not eaten all day and I'm starving.

Elam took a piece of bread and poured some wine while he waited for Misur to prepare him something to eat. He sat on a bench, began to relax and fatigue became noticeable. Taking a deep breath, he leaned on the table and ate.

He did not know where to begin to tell her what had happened. Misur urged him:

- Tell me, tell me, my husband.

- I'll do it, woman. I went as usual to the pastures, beside the stream. I sat on the rock, the one from which I can watch over the sheep, you know which one I mean. The sun began to rise on the horizon, the air was still, there were almost no sounds, the animals grazed in total tranquility and a moment later ... everything was gone.

I was enveloped in darkness, I could tell that there was something like a sea, in which I was submerged, and all around me there was a huge mess, as if everything were mixed. I could not see where it began and where it ended. It was like being in a sandstorm in the middle of the night. I felt I was floating over an abyss, I saw no ground under my feet, and over that sea I could clearly feel the presence of God.

Light arose suddenly, the light came from

somewhere but I could not see where.

The light that was kindled moved, it crossed over me like the sun crosses. And when it was behind me the darkness returned like the night.

When I woke it was evening, it was getting dark and I could not realize how much time had passed...

Tell me, woman, was it just today or was I absent a few days?

- It was only today. This morning you left home and you have returned tonight as always. Stay calm. Finish eating and go to sleep, rest, perhaps it was only a dream, Misur told him in a vain attempt to make him feel better and calmer.

- No, it wasn't a dream-Elam said with determination, as he stood and walked around the room, clearly upset. I'm sure it was to do with God, I can feel it.

She could see that this event had affected him and did not know what to do; she did

not know how to proceed in such cases.

If Elam had really had a revelation of God it was necessary to tell the priest of the temple, he would know if it had been a dream or a message. It was possible that they would not understand the message, that they could not interpret it. Or maybe it had just been a dream.

- Let's proceed in this way -Misur told him- while you take the sheep to pasture tomorrow, as usual, I can go to town in search of the priest or one of his aides to consult them; and when you return, in the afternoon, we will know what to do.

Elam agreed. There was nothing else to do, he had to sleep, he needed rest, and he was exhausted. They put the children to bed and then they did the same.

- Woman, ask them also whether we should make sacrifices or offerings, do not forget.

The night was long for Elam, images of the day again kept coming back and he could not

get them out of his head; the morning came as a relief.

He and his wife got up before dawn -the children were still asleep. They had breakfast like every morning and agreed that Misur would go to the village to see the priest.

Elam took his crook, his saddlebag with the food Misur had prepared him for the day; and he went in search of the sheep that were in the pen.

The morning was calm, the air still, the aromas familiar. He was leading the animals to pasture near the stream, as was his routine.

I will try to catch a fish that will distract me and I'll stop thinking about the vision. This time of year, some big ones go near the shore to spawn; then I could search for medicinal herbs. Yes, I will try to keep busy.

He reached the rock he usually used as a