Kingdom Through Covenant: Humanity as the Divine Image[1]

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Although centuries of analysis and debate have been focused on interpretation of the divine image in Gen 1:26-28, a significant contribution can yet be made to our understanding of this text by combining biblical theology on the one hand and recent insights into the cultural setting and language of the text on the other. The biblical theological framework of Gen 1:26-28 will be discussed first and then an exegesis of the text itself with attention to its cultural and linguistic setting.

Biblical Theological Framework of Gen 1:26-28

The major agreements or covenants defining divine-human relationships form the backbone of the larger story of scripture and, therefore, constitute the biblical theological framework. Whether or not a covenant is entailed in Genesis 1-3 continues to be debated. This question will be addressed first from the larger metanarrative of Scripture before consideration of exegetical issues in Genesis 1-3.

The Hebrew word for covenant in the Old Testament is *bᵉrît*. A brief definition of this term and description of its use in the Old Testament provide the context necessary to address issues concerning the biblical metanarrative.

Covenants in the Old Testament

The term covenant is used in Scripture for a diversity of oath-bound commitments in various relationships. It is used to refer to international treaties (Josh 9:6; 1 Kgs 15:19), clan alliances (Gen 14:13), personal agreements (Gen 31:44), legal contracts (Jer 34:8-10), and loyalty agreements (1 Sam 20:14-17), including marriage (Mal 2:14).

Definition and Illustration

Defining the term "covenant" is debated, but for heuristic purposes the following may be used as a place to start:

> A covenant is an enduring agreement which defines a relationship between two parties involving a solemn, binding obligation(s) specified on the part of at least one of the parties toward the other, made by oath under threat of divine curse, and ratified by a visual ritual.[2]

Gordon Hugenberger, who has produced a thorough and scholarly treatment of marriage as a covenant, notes that in the history of Israel a covenant always entails (1) a relationship (2) with a non-relative (3) that involves obligations and (4) is established through an oath.[3]

The events described in Gen 21:22-34 provide an excellent example of what is entailed in a covenant in the ancient Near East. The narrative concerns a king of Gerar, a city in the south of Canaan, who makes a covenant / treaty with Abraham. Four features characterise this treaty and indeed covenants in general:

(1) A covenant does not necessarily begin or initiate a relationship. It forges or formalises in binding and legal terms

a relationship between parties developed and established before the covenant is made. Abimelech and Abraham have already developed a relationship together. And when the covenant is made, Abimelech appeals to this already established understanding between them by speaking of the lovingkindness (*ḥesed*) he has shown Abraham in the past. It is true that the covenant does specify a new level to this relationship, but the parties have had dealings in the past. (2) There is a conventional language for initiating covenants or treaties which is standard in the Old Testament. The standard expression for initiating a covenant is 'to cut a covenant' (*kārat bᵉrît*). (3) A covenant gives binding and quasi-legal status to a relationship by means of a formal and solemn ceremony. (4) Covenant making involved an oath or promise and signs or witnesses. Here the parties of the treaty solemnly swear to the agreement. As William J. Dumbrell notes, the oath "is obviously an important ingredient in the total arrangement, but it is not the covenant itself."[4]

Although the ceremony is not described in detail in Genesis 21, we can put the pieces together from different sources. Animals are slaughtered and sacrificed. The animals are cut in two and the halves are placed facing each other. Then the parties of the treaty walk between the halves of the dead animal. This action is symbolic. What is being expressed is this: each party is saying, "If I fail to keep my obligation or my promise, may I be cut in two like this dead animal." The oath, then involves bringing a curse upon oneself for violating the treaty. This is why the expression "to cut a covenant" is the conventional language for initiating a covenant in the Old Testament.

Many other covenants and treaties are recorded in the Bible: the covenant between Joshua and the Gibeonites (Joshua 9), the men of Jabesh Gilead and Nahash the Ammonite (1 Sam 11:1-3), David and Jonathan (1 Sam 18:3), David and Abner (2 Sam 3:12-21), David and Israel (2 Sam 3:21; 5:1-3), Ahab of Israel and Ben Hadad of Syria (1 Kgs 20:31-34), and Jehoiada the High Priest and King Joash of Judah (2 Kgs 11:17). While the components and also the nature and status of the parties differ, and the language varies somewhat, in each case a covenant concluded involves commitment solemnized by oath in which a relationship between parties is specified.

This survey of covenants in the Old Testament is indebted to the pioneering labors of Dumbrell whose work has been sharply criticized in recent studies by Paul Williamson[5] and Jeffrey J. Niehaus.[6] Niehaus summarizes the definition of Dumbrell as follows: "a covenant does not create a relationship between two parties. Rather it confirms an already existing relationship."[7] He argues that the approach of Dumbrell blurs the distinction between covenant and covenant renewals. His critique of Hafemann, who follows Dumbrell, should be cited:

> [Hafemann] follows in Dumbrell's footsteps by believing that "[l]ike a treaty or a marriage, a 'covenant' is a particular kind of political or legal arrangement that confirms or formalizes a relationship that already exists between two parties." As in Dumbrell's case, so with Hafemann, it is this mistaken definition of covenant which makes the "one covenantal relationship" view possible. Yet, as we have pointed out above, it was covenant renewals, and not covenants, that served this function in the ancient Near East and in the Bible. The fact that marriage is a covenant is actually a piece of contrary evidence. Marriage does not confirm an existing relationship:

it takes an existing relationship (in which a couple is engaged) to an entirely new level—thus transforming it—and establishes a new state of affairs, with new privileges and new responsibilities.[8]

This critique is helpful, but only partially right. A covenant, e.g. marriage, does specify a different and new level of relationship from what has been true in the past, but Dumbrell is right in noting that this is not the beginning of relationship between the two parties. Dumbrell may in some instances blur the distinction between covenant and covenant renewals, but his definition is based on passages like the treaty in Genesis 21. Craig Bartholomew's adjustment of Dumbrell's definition is helpful:

> Dumbrell neglects the constitutive side of the divine covenants in his understanding of covenants as commitments that normalize existing relationships. The divine covenants do operate within existing relationships, but they shape and give future direction to the relationship, just as does the marriage covenant.[9]

Covenants in the Ancient Near East

We must not think that the kind of agreements or covenants described in the Bible were unique to the nation of Israel. Covenants or treaties similar to the ones mentioned in the Old Testament were common all across the ancient Near East, whether Egyptian, Hittite, or Mesopotamian. Indeed, cognates of the word *bᵉrît* are found in texts from Egypt and Syria from at least the thirteenth century B.C.[10] Two types of treaties in the ancient Near East are especially noteworthy: (1) the suzerain-vassal treaty and (2) the royal charter or land grant. The first is a covenant between a sovereign or great king and a vassal or petty king of a territory subject to the sovereign. The second is a covenant between a king and a noble or prince in his kingdom. Moshe Weinfeld describes the differences between the treaty and the grant this way:

> While the "treaty" constitutes an obligation of the vassal to his master, the suzerain, the "grant" constitutes an obligation of the master to his servant. In the "grant" the curse is directed towards the one who will violate the rights of the king's vassal, while in the treaty the curse is directed towards the vassal who will violate the rights of his king. In other words, the "grant" serves mainly to protect the rights of the *servant*, while the treaty comes to protect the rights of the *master*. What is more, while the grant is a reward for loyalty and good deeds already performed, the treaty is an inducement for future loyalty.[11]

In addition to the differences between the two, there are important similarities as well, also described by Weinfeld as follows:

> While the grant is mainly a promise by the donor to the recipient, it presupposes the loyalty of the latter. By the same token the treaty, whose principal concern is with the obligation of the vassal, presupposes the sovereign's promise to protect his vassal's country and dynasty.[12]

A number of biblical covenants such as the Sinai Covenant in the Book of Exodus and the addition to it in the Book of Deuteronomy are identical in form (but not in content) to international treaties in the Ancient Near East, especially to the Vassal Treaties of the Hittites (fourteenth century B.C.).

The Major Covenants as the Framework of the Biblical Metanarrative

In the Bible, certain agreements or covenants between God and humans are

especially significant and may be briefly listed as follows:

 (1) Covenant with Creation
   (Genesis 1-3)
 (2) Covenant with Noah
   (Genesis 6-9)
 (3) Covenant with Abraham
   (Genesis 12, 15, 17)
 (4) Mosaic Covenant
   (Exod 19:3b-8; 20-24)
 (5) Covenant with David
   (2 Samuel 7; Psalm 89)
 (6) New Covenant
   (Jeremiah 31-34;
   Ezek 33:29-39:29)

These covenants constitute the framework of the larger story. They are the backbone of the biblical narrative.[13]

The biblical narrative begins with the fact that there is only one God. He has made everything, and especially made humankind to rule under him. In this context, God is the center of the universe and we find our purpose in having a right relationship to God and to one another. The first man and woman, however, rejected this way. Now what happens when God is no longer the center of our universe. Who steps in to take his place? Why, we do. I want to be at the center of the universe. Will this work? No, because you want to be there too. And so chaos and evil have reigned since Adam and Eve because we no longer have a right relationship to God or to one another as humans. God judged the human race and made a new start with Noah. This too ended up in chaos and evil. Finally he made a last new start with Abraham. He would restore a creation and humanity ruined by pride and rebellion by using Abraham and his family as a pilot project. The people of Israel would be an example, a light to the world of what it meant to be properly related to God and to treat each other properly according to the dignity of our humanity. We may call this the Mosaic Covenant. But the people of Israel did not keep the Mosaic Covenant. They were to be blessed for obedience, cursed for disobedience. And that is why the biblical story ends up by talking about a New Covenant. This time it would be possible to keep this covenant.

This brief summary of the biblical story shows that the covenants are the key to the inner literary structure of the Old Testament as a book, not as an anthology of texts. The point has been well put by Rabbi Richard Elliott Friedman:

> With the Noahic covenant promising the stability of the cosmic structure, the Abrahamic covenant promising people and land, the Davidic covenant promising sovereignty, and the Israelite covenant promising life, security, and prosperity, the biblical authors and editors possessed a platform from which they could portray and reconcile nearly every historical, legendary, didactic, folk, and the like, account in their tradition. If we could delete all references to covenant—which we cannot do, precisely because it is regularly integral to its contexts—we would have an anthology of stories. As it is we have a structure that can house a plot.[14]

A Covenant With Creation/Adam?

The question of whether or not a covenant between God and humans or creation is supported by exegesis of the biblical text continues to be debated to the present. The first occurrences of the term $b^e r\hat{\imath}t$ in the Hebrew Scriptures are significant in determining the existence of a covenant in Genesis 1-3. The word covenant first appears in the Noah story (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 12, 13, 15, 16, 17). In four instances God speaks of "confirming" or "establishing" a covenant with Noah (Gen 6:18; 9:9, 11, 17). The expression in Hebrew is $h\bar{e}q\hat{\imath}m\ b^e r\hat{\imath}t$. The remaining four

occurrences have to do with the sign of the covenant and remembering the covenant. Thus, when we consider the covenant God made with Noah and his descendants, we notice right away that the normal expression or language for covenant initiation is lacking. Nowhere do we read of God cutting a covenant (*kārat bᵉrît*). Why is the language different here and what does it signify? A careful and exhaustive analysis of all instances of *berît* in the Hebrew Bible reveals a completely consistent usage: the expression "cut a covenant" (*kārat bᵉrît*) refers to covenant initiation while the expression "establish a covenant" (*hēqîm bᵉrît*) refers to bringing to personal experience in the life of someone who is already a covenant-partner a promise entailed in a covenant initiated previously.

The difference in the expressions can be illustrated in the case of the covenant with Abraham. The covenant is initiated in Genesis 15. Notice that in 15:18 we have the standard terminology in the Hebrew text: "to cut a covenant." Later in Genesis 17, God confirms or establishes his covenant. Verses 7, 19, and 21 consistently employ the expression *hēqîm bᵉrît* while the expression *kārat bᵉrît* is not used. Here God is bringing to pass the promise he had made in the covenant initiated earlier in chapter 15.

So the expression used in Genesis 6 and 9, in the covenant with Noah, indicates that God is not initiating something new, but rather establishing for Noah and his descendants a commitment already initiated previously. This language clearly indicates a covenant between God and creation, made at creation. When God says that he is confirming or establishing his covenant with Noah, he is saying that his commitment to his creation, the care of the creator to preserve, provide for, and rule over all that he has made including the blessings and ordinances that he initiated with Adam and Eve and their family are now to be with Noah and his descendants.

This analysis, although advanced by Dumbrell, did not originate with him.[15] Already in 1934 Cassuto described the usage this way.[16] Subsequent scholarship has supported this understanding,[17] but recently it has been challenged by Paul Williamson. Unfortunately, full review of Williamson's critique of Dumbrell cannot be given here. Williamson's discussion of the expressions in which *bᵉrît* is a verbal object contains fatal flaws. He appears to base his research on the study of Weinfeld instead of examining all the data himself.[18] One example from his discussion will be given. In attempting to show that *hēqîm bᵉrît* can mean to initiate a covenant and is equivalent in meaning to *kārat bᵉrît* he states, "[s]imilarly, in Jeremiah 34:18 a strong case can be made in support of a covenant being instituted and not just renewed (cf. Jer 34:10)."[19] The evidence, however, is otherwise. The expression *kārat bᵉrît* is employed in Jer 34:8, 13, and 15 as well as a similar expression *bô' bibrît* (enter a covenant) in 34:10 for the initiating or making of a covenant between King Zedekiah and all the people of Jerusalem to proclaim freedom for Hebrew slaves. The people then fulfilled the obligation by freeing the slaves, but later reneged on the covenant and re-enslaved the manumitted slaves. Jeremiah was sent to challenge this covenant violation (see the expression `ābar bᵉrît* in 34:18) and called upon the people to "uphold the covenant" (*hēqîm bᵉrît*) meaning to bring to pass in the experience of the people the promise entailed in the covenant made earlier to free the slaves. A simple straightforward reading

of this text, then, shows that a strong case can be made *for the usage* as described by Dumbrell rather than a "strong case" against. Williamson construed the argument of Dumbrell to mean that *hēqîm bᵉrît* meant covenant *renewal* and has misunderstood the usage in Hebrew.[20] The metanarrative constructed by Williamson is one essentially beginning with Noah in which Adam has largely disappeared. This damages the parallels Paul draws between Adam and Christ.

In addition to linguistic usage, literary techniques such as key words, dominant ideas, parallel sequences of actions, and similar themes clearly link the Noah narrative to the Creation narrative in Genesis 1 and 2. First, the flood story is presented in the narrative as a new creation. Just as God ordered the original heavens and earth out of the chaotic deep, so here God orders the present heavens and earth out of the chaotic floodwaters. Genesis 8:1 records that God caused a wind to pass over the waters of the flood covering the entire earth, which reminds one of the creation narrative where the Spirit of God hovers over the waters of the original chaotic deep.[21] In the creation narrative, God gathers the waters together and the dry land emerges, then he commands the earth to bring forth vegetation. After the flood, the dry land emerges as the waters subside and the earth brings forth vegetation as we see when the dove returns with an olive leaf in her beak. These parallels indicate that after the flood, we have a new beginning like the first beginning.

Second, Noah is presented in the narrative as a new Adam. The blessing and commission given to Noah is the same as the one given to Adam (Gen 9:1 = 1:28a). So Noah is presented to us as a new Adam. As we look at the terms of the covenant next, we will see that Noah is re-commissioned with all of the ordinances given at creation to Adam and Eve and their family.

From the Flood Narrative in Genesis 6-9, then, both the language used there as well as the literary techniques indicate a covenant confirmed which had been initiated previously. This covenant entails a divine-human relationship initiated and specified at creation. Such a covenant could not, by definition, involve a ceremony between both parties, since what was involved was the creation of one of the parties in the relationship. That is probably why the normal or standard language "to cut a covenant" is absent in Genesis 1-11.[22] Another reason is suggested by John H. Stek. He argues as follows:

> [B]iblical covenants do not belong to the fundamentals of the God-creature relationship…. Covenants served rather to offer assurances, bolster faith, and reinforce commitments. In a world not invaded by sin, there would be no need for adding oaths to commitments, no need for "covenants"—no more than in such a world would oaths be necessary to establish the truth of one's "yes" or "no" (see Matt. 5:34-37; Jas. 5:12; cf., Heb. 6:16). Biblical covenants were ad hoc emergency measures occasioned by and ministering to human weaknesses—until the kingdom of God has fully come.[23]

Stek might possibly have a point in arguing that the term covenant is used after the fall into sin because only then were oaths needed to provide assurances for commitments. Yet Craig Bartholomew notes in answer to Stek that marriage is an example of a covenant that is not just a postfall phenomenon.[24] Thus Genesis 1-3 may well be described as a covenant between God and his creation, or at least

a commitment on God's part to his creation, including conduct stipulated for his creatures. Let us remember, too, that covenants include oaths, but the oath is not the covenant itself.

Strong support for a covenant in Genesis 1-3 is found from consideration of the biblical-theological metanarrative. We need now to provide the particulars of this covenant by detailed exegesis of Gen 1:26-28.

The Divine Image in Genesis 1:26-28

Humans are the Crown of Creation

The creation narrative, Gen 1:1-2:3, is divided according to the chronological structure of a week into seven paragraphs. Genesis 1:26-28 describes the creation of humans in a paragraph delimited by Gen 1:24-31 that is devoted to the events of day six. The following considerations may appear to belabor the point unnecessarily, but vv. 26-28 are intended to be viewed as the climax and crown of God's creative work.

(1) The clauses describing the creation of humans are marked by a notable change in style. To this point the creation has been achieved by a series of divine words always introduced by third person singular verbs. Surely the first person plural "Let us …" catches the attention of the reader and signals something significant. The interpretation of the first person plural will be discussed later, but whatever the interpretation, the main point is that something special is happening in this section.

(2) The paragraph in Gen 1:24-31 has a different pattern from the other paragraphs. The paragraphs in the creation narrative follow a standard sequence of (a) announcement, (b) command, (c) action, (d) evaluation or report, and (e) temporal framework, with minor variations. The pattern of events in paragraph six deviates from the norm considerably and thus informs the reader that the topic is important.

(3) In terms of the larger literary structure, the work of creation is accomplished in six days. In such a sequence, day six is clearly the climax of this creation work.

(4) The number of words in paragraph six is far above the norm—another indication of the significance of the creation of humans.[25]

(5) Genesis 2:4-25, the so-called "second account" of creation, is in fact not evidence of an editor patching together different sources, but corresponds well to the normal pattern of Hebrew narrative to consider a topic in a resumptive manner. We cannot critique *ancient*, *eastern* texts using principles of literary analysis based upon *modern*, *western* literature. Instead, the approach in ancient Hebrew literature is to take up a topic and develop it from a particular perspective and then to stop and take up the same theme again from another point of view. This pattern is kaleidoscopic and recursive. The first creation story (1:1-2:3) gives a global perspective. The second creation story (2:4-3:24) begins by focusing on the creation of man. Thus the first focuses on the origin of the universe, the second on humanity. Therefore, 2:4-3:24 is, in fact, devoted to further development of the topics broached in the sixth paragraph of the "first account" and so adds to the significance of the creation of mankind.

(6) The clause marking the temporal framework normally has the pattern "and it was evening and it was morning, a ___th day. It is interesting to note that for paragraph six, the definite article is used:

"*the* sixth day." The function of the article here has yet to be explained satisfactorily, but adds to the significance of the creation of humans.[26]

(7) The use of *bāra'*, the verb "to create," is interesting. This verb always and only has God as subject and seems to be a special word. It occurs only three times in the creation narrative: in 1:1 which some commentators see as the creation of matter *ex nihilo*, in 1:21 at the creation of organic life, and in 1:26 at the creation of human life.[27] In between, other synonyms are used. Thus this verb seems to mark important points in the creation work.

(8) *'ādām*, a generic term for mankind as both male and female, is created as the image of God. This is another indication of humans as the crown of God's creation.[28]

(9) Humans exercise royal rule. This requires some discussion, but points to the significance of mankind within creation as a whole.

(10) Psalm 8, attributed to David, in vv. 5-8 constitutes a word-by-word commentary and meditation on Gen 1:26-28. The psalmist understands that mankind is at the apex of God's creation, however one understands the disputed verse 5.

In sum, a large number of literary techniques point to the significance of the creation of humans. The interpretation of the creation of man as the divine image will unfold this significance.

The Image of God: Survey of Views

Explanations of the divine image during the last two thousand years have been numerous and varied.[29] Since the amount of ink spilled on the subject is enormous, careful exegesis is necessary as well as humility in interpretation. An extremely brief survey of the different views follows, adapted from the commentary by Gordon Wenham.[30] The present writer, however, is ultimately responsible for the evaluation of each view.[31]

(1) The terms "image" and "likeness" are distinct aspects of man's nature (from Irenaeus, *ca.* 180 A.D. onwards). The "image" denotes the natural qualities in man (personality, reason, etc.) that make him resemble God, while the "likeness" refers to the supernatural (i.e., ethical) graces that make the redeemed godlike. Lexical analysis of "image" and "likeness" according to the cultural setting of the biblical text shows that this distinction is foreign to Genesis.

(2) The divine image refers to the mental and spiritual qualities that man shares with his creator. The fact that commentators cannot agree in identifying these qualities makes this approach suspect.

(3) The image consists of a physical resemblance. In favour of this, the Hebrew term *ṣelem* does refer to a physical image or statue in a majority of its occurrences. Moreover, in Gen 5:3 Adam is described as fathering Seth "after his image," which most naturally refers to physical appearance. The Old Testament, however, emphasizes the incorporeality and invisibility of God (Deut 4:12). Also, if the terminology is related to Egyptian and Mesopotamian thinking, the image of God there refers to the function of the king and not to his appearance. Furthermore, the Old Testament does not sharply distinguish the material and spiritual realms in the way that we sometimes do. The image of God must characterize the whole man, not simply his mind or spirit on the one hand or his body on the other. Finally, the image of God is what separates man from the animals, and yet the practice of sacrifice must have made

the ancient people of Israel well aware of the physiological similarities between humans and animals.

(4) The divine image makes man God's representative on earth. Careful exegesis below indicates that the ruling function is a *result* of being made in the divine image and *not the image itself.*

(5) The image is a capacity to relate to God. The divine image means that God can enter into personal relationships with man, speak to him, and make covenants with him. Karl Barth propounded this view and C. Westermann further argued that the "image of God" is not part of the human constitution so much as it is a description of the process of creation which made man different. Although this view has something to commend it in that relationship to God is fundamental to the image of God, nonetheless passages like Gen 5:3 and Exod 25:40 suggest that the phrase "in the image" describes the product of creation rather than the process.

The majority of Christians have followed the second view, believing that the image refers to mental and spiritual qualities which humans share with the creator God. Since God is invisible (John 4:24), man does not resemble God physically, but rather in terms of morality, personality, reason, and spirituality. This interpretation did not originate with the Christian church, but can be traced to Philo of Alexandria, a Jewish philosopher living in the time 30 B.C. to 45 A.D. (*On The Creation* § 69).

The traditional view is inadequate because it is not the result of grammatical and historical interpretation of the text. Rather, it is based largely on a kind of reasoning from systematic theology. It does not come to grips with the fact that "image" normally refers to a physical statue and cannot be exegetically validated as the author's intended meaning or the first audience's natural understanding of the text in terms of the ancient Near Eastern cultural and linguistic setting.

The Image of God: Exegesis of Genesis 1:26-28

An attempt to determine the meaning of this text according to the historical setting and linguistic usage of the time in which it was written begins with the literary structure, consideration of grammatical and lexical issues, and ancient Near Eastern background.

The Structure of Genesis 1:24-31

As already noted, the paragraph in the creation narrative devoted to describing events of the sixth day is structured differently from the other paragraphs. The following outline builds upon the work of P. E. Dion as best representing the structure in the text.[32]

The Sixth Day – Gen 1:24-31

A. Creation of the Animals		1:24-25
1. Command for creation		
of animals		24A
Confirmation		24B
2. Execution of creation		
of animals		25A
Evaluation		25B
B. Creation of Mankind		1:26-31
1. Decision for creation of man		26
To make man		26A
To give him a certain role		26B
2. Execution of creation of man		27-28
Creation of man		27
Proclamation of his role		28
3. Food regulations		29-30
For man		29
For animals		30
Conclusion		31
Evaluation		31A
Day notation		31B

For the creation of humans, instead of the normal pattern giving a command and indicating a result, there is first a

divine decision followed by a divine execution of that decision. Note that the decision has two parts and the execution of the decision has the same two corresponding parts. This observation leads to consideration of two separate grammatical issues before looking at the ancient Near Eastern setting.

Key Grammatical Issues in Genesis 1:26-28

The sequence of verbs in v. 26 is inadequately represented in most modern translations. The first verb in the divine speech is נעשה. Randall Garr's analysis is both adequate and complete:

> Technically, this form is ambiguous; the imperfect and cohortative of final weak roots are usually not distinguished in the morphology but are expressed by the self-same ending הֶ-. The interpretation of נעשה, however, is clear enough. Not only does the clause-initial position of the verb suggest the cohortative reading, but a comparison with the jussives that engaged other acts of creation reinforces its desiderative sense.[33]

The first verb, then, is a command form and correctly rendered "let us make" in all of the English versions. The second verb in the sequence is וירדו. This, too, could be construed as either imperfect or jussive. What is important, however, is that grammarians of Hebrew agree that this particular sequence marks purpose or result.[34] The correct translation, therefore, is "let us make man … *so that* they may rule." Here many modern versions fail to represent properly the grammar of the Hebrew text. An important exegetical point is at stake: the ruling is not the essence of the divine image, but rather a result of being made as the divine image.

Another grammatical issue concerns the clause patterns in v. 27. The verse contains three clauses or sentences: (1) and God created man in his image; (2) in the image of God he created him; (3) male and female he created them. The first sentence has a normal clause pattern: Verb-Subject-Object. The conjunction *waw* is used and the verb is a *waw*-consecutive imperfect—standard in Hebrew narrative. The remaining two sentences have a different clause pattern: Modifier-Verb-Object. Both are also asyndetic, i.e., not connected by the conjunction *waw*; the verbs are both perfects. This is a clear macrosyntactical signal with pragmatic significance: these clauses do not advance the narrative but digress and pause to comment on the first clause in the verse.[35] These two short sentences are grammatically marked as circumstantial information or parenthetical remarks. The author is *digressing from* the narrative in order to stress two particular aspects or features of the creation of man:

(a) creation of mankind entails male and female
(b) mankind resembles God in some way

By pausing to stress these two things, the author prepares us for the two commands given to man in the very next verse:

(a) be fruitful (three imperatives in Hebrew)
(b) rule over the other creatures (two imperatives in Hebrew)

The actual literary presentation is chiastic in structure:

God created mankind in His image according to His likeness:

A   in the image of God He created him
B   male and female He created them
======
B´   be fruitful and increase in number and fill the earth
A´   and subdue it and rule over the fish/birds/animals

Thus, duality of gender is the basis for being fruitful, while the divine image is correlated with the command to rule as God's viceroy. These observations from the discourse grammar of the narrative are crucial. They are decisive in showing that the divine image is *not* to be explained by or located in terms of duality of gender in humanity.

We are now in a position to explain the meaning of the clause in 1:26a: "let us make man in our image according to our likeness." The exegetical microscope will be focused on (1) the ancient Near Eastern background to the text, (2) the meaning of the nouns "image" and "likeness," (3) the exact force of the prepositions "in" and "according to" and (4) the referent of the first person plural pronoun "let us" in that order.

The Ancient Near Eastern Background

In biblical revelation God communicates in the culture and language of the people. Yet in employing language God also fills the terms with new meaning. The key to correct interpretation, therefore, is to *compare and contrast* the biblical text and the data from the contemporary cultures. One must not only notice similarities between the Bible and the ancient Near Eastern background, but the differences which show the new meaning being revealed by God.

This can be illustrated by considering the Tabernacle (Exodus 25-40). If we consider the plan of the Tabernacle or the plan of Solomon's Temple, there is nothing unusual or unique.[36] Its overall plan was just like any other temple in the ancient Near East. They all had an outer courtyard, an altar of sacrifice, and a central building divided into a "Holy Place" and a "Holy of Holies." What made the faith of Israel different from the faith of the pagan religions surrounding her? If one were to enter a pagan temple, passing through the courtyard, and the Holy Place into the Holy of Holies, what would one find there? An image representing one of the forces of nature. But that is not what one finds at the center of Israel's worship. What was in the Holy of Holies in the Tabernacle? First of all, there was no image or statue there because God is spirit and cannot be properly represented by man-made images. All there is in the Holy of Holies is just a little box. And what is in that box? The Ten Commandments. Thus, what God is saying to the Israelites is that he cannot be manipulated by magic. If they want the good life, they must conform their lifestyle to his revealed standards of right and wrong. Ethics guarantees the good life, not manipulation of the powers that be by magic. The meaning is clear when one both compares and contrasts the biblical text with the ancient Near Eastern cultural setting. At the outset, the differences appear to be small and insignificant. Yet in the end, the differences are so radical that only divine revelation can explain the origin of the text.

Paul Dion has produced one of the most careful and thorough studies of the ancient Near Eastern background to the image of God.[37] His work can be consulted for the detailed evidence which the fol-

lowing only briefly summarizes. In the ancient Near East, we see the flourishing of plastic arts; it was part and parcel of religion. Statues and likenesses of all sorts have been preserved to the present time.

The epithet or descriptive title of the Egyptian king as a "living statue of such and such a god," was common in Egypt from 1630 B.C. onwards and, therefore, was well-known to the Israelites. In Egyptian thinking, the king is the image of god because he is the son of god.[38] The emphasis or stress is not on physical appearance, e.g., a male king could be the image of a female goddess. Rather the behavior of the king reflects the behavior of the god. The image reflects the characteristics of the god. The image reflects the essential notions of the god.

Commonly associated with the image is the notion of conquest and power. A clear example is an inscription from the Karnak Temple marking the triumph of Thutmoses III at Karnak, c. 1460 B.C. In the following stanza, the god is speaking in the first person and the second person refers to the king:

> I came to let you tread on Djahi's chiefs,
>   I spread them under your feet throughout their lands;
> I let them see your majesty as lord of light,
>   so that you shone before them in my likeness.[39]

The god Amen-Re in giving victory to Thutmoses III calls the king his son in the prologue of the poem and in this stanza indicates that the extension of the rule of the king entails him shining before his enemies in the likeness of his god.

In the thirteenth century B.C., Pharaoh Ramesses II had his image hewn out of rock at the mouth of the Kelb River, on the Mediterranean just north of Beirut. His image—displayed like the presidents at Mount Rushmore—meant that he was the ruler of this area. In the ancient Near East, since the king is the living statue of the god, he represents the god on earth. He makes the power of the god a present reality.

To sum up, the term "the image of god" in the culture and language of the ancient Near East in the fifteenth century B.C. would have communicated two main ideas: (1) rulership and (2) sonship. The king is the image of god because he has a relationship to the deity as the son of god and a relationship to the world as ruler for the god. We ought to assume that the meaning in the Bible is identical or at least similar, unless the biblical text clearly distinguishes its meaning from the surrounding culture.

Likeness and Image

Careful and exhaustive lexical studies of the Hebrew terms "likeness" (דמות) and "image" (צלם) indicate the possible range of meaning.[40] "Likeness" (דמות) may refer to a physical entity such as the model of the altar King Ahaz sent Uriah the priest (2 Kgs 16:10b). It may also refer to a likeness that is real yet referentially unspecific or inexact (Isa 40:18). It can even be nonreferential to express resemblance or relative similarity (Isa 13:4). Ezekiel 1:26 is instructive since it is opposite to Gen 1:26, which speaks of humanity created in the likeness of God; Ezekiel's vision speaks of God appearing in the likeness of humanity. As Garr notes, either way, God and humanity are morphologically similar.

"Image" (צלם) frequently refers to an object in the real world that can have size, shape, color, material composition and value. The image erected by King Nebuchadnezzar in the plain of Dura is an example (Dan 3:1). Yet as Ps 39:6-7

shows, *ṣelem* can also be abstract and nonconcrete. And like *dᵉmût*, "image" can simply be an imprint etched on a wall (Ezek 23:14b, 15b).

Particularly instructive for Gen 1:26-28 is the usage of the words "likeness" and "image" in the Tell Fakhariyeh Inscription.[41] Inscribed on a large statue of King Hadduyith`î of Gozan, a city in what is now eastern Syria, is an Akkadian-Aramaic bilingual text from the tenth or ninth century B.C. The text is divided thematically in two sections. The first half focuses on the role of the king as a supplicant and worshipper of his god and is headed in the Aramaic text by דמותא, equivalent of the Hebrew דמות. The second half focuses on the majesty and power of the king in his role in relation to his subjects. This is headed in the Aramaic text by the word צלמא, equivalent of the Hebrew צלם. While both terms can and do refer to the statue of the king, each has a different nuance.

Akkadian Texts containing the cognate for the Hebrew word "image" support the force and meaning of the word in the Tell Fakhariyeh Inscription. Three brief examples will suffice to further clarify the use of the term "image."

ABL 6:14b-19 (from the time of Esarhaddon, 681-668 BC):
As to what the king my lord wrote me, "From the lips of my father I have heard that you are a loyal family, but now I know it, I have seen it." The father of the king my lord was the (very) image of Bel, and the king my lord is likewise the (very) image of Bel.[42]

The author of the letter is a loyal subject. He proclaims that the king is the image of the god Bel because he is acknowledging the authority and majesty of the king in the king-subject relationship.

ABL 5 r. 4 (from the time of Esarhaddon, 681-668 BC):
Why should not a meal be served before the king my lord a second time today? Whoever mourns for Shamash, the king of the gods, mourns for a day, a whole night and again two days. The king, the lord of the countries, is the (very) image of Shamash; for half a day only should he put on mourning.[43]

The king is the image of the god Shamash and should be treated as representing his authority and power.

Thompson 170 r. 2 (from the period 1000-625 BC):
O King! thou art the image of Marduk, when thou art angry, to thy servants! When we draw near the king, our lord, we shall see his peace![44]

The king represents the majesty, authority and power of god to his subjects.

We must now *compare and contrast* the data in Gen 1:26-28 with these ancient Near Eastern data. In regard to the similarities, let me note the following. As Garr notes, the grammar of the first sentence in Gen 1:26a is unusual.[45] Following a hortatory predicate (נעשה) and an undetermined direct object (אדם) are two distinct prepositional phrases which are not obligatory either grammatically or semantically. The exact force of each preposition will be discussed shortly. This much is clear: the nonobligatory phrases specify a divine-human relation in the creation of mankind and the differential marking suggests each phrase has distinct meaning.

Given the normal meanings of "image" and "likeness" in the cultural and linguistic setting of Old Testament and the ancient Near East, "likeness" specifies a relationship between God and humans such that *'ādām* can be described as the son of God, and "image" describes a

relationship between God and humans such that *'ādām* can be described as a servant king. Although both terms specify the divine-human relationship, the first focuses on the human in relation to God and the second focuses on the human in relation to the world. These would be understood to be relationships characterized by faithfulness and loyal love, obedience and trust—exactly the character of relationships specified by covenants after the fall. In this sense the divine image entails a covenant relationship between God and humans on the one hand, and between humans and the world on the other. In describing a divine-human relationship, the terms in Gen 1:26-28 correspond precisely to the usage of the same words in the Tell Fakhariyah Inscription.

Confirmation of this interpretation of "likeness" and "image" comes from both the context of Genesis 1 and interpretation of Genesis 1 found later in the Old Testament. (1) The term "likeness" indicates that *'ādām* has a special relationship to God like that of father and son. This is clearly implied by Gen 5:1-3:

> 1 This is the book of the generations of Adam. When God created man, he made him in the likeness of God.
> 2 Male and female he created them, and he blessed them and named them Man when they were created.
> 3 When Adam had lived a hundred and thirty years, he became the father of a son in his own likeness, after his image, and named him Seth (RSV).

The comment of Stephen Dempster is both adequate and succinct:

> By juxtaposing the divine creation of Adam in the image of God and the subsequent human creation of Seth in the image of Adam, the transmis-sion of the image of God through this genealogical line is implied, as well as the link between sonship and the image of God. As Seth is a son of Adam, so Adam is a son of God. Language is being stretched here as a literal son of God is certainly not in view, but nevertheless the writer is using an analogy to make a point.[46]

This can be further supported from later texts: (1) Luke 3:38 interprets the "likeness of God" in Genesis to indicate that Adam is the son of God; (2) Israel inherits the role of Adam and Eve and is specifically called the son of God (Exod 4:22, 23). The Song at the Sea (Exod 15:17) pictures Israel as a new Adam entering the Promised Land as a new Eden. Later the divine sonship devolves particularly upon the king in the Davidic Covenant (2 Sam 7:14-15): what was true of the nation will now be fulfilled specifically and solely by her king.

(2) The term "image" indicates that *'ādām* has a special position and status as king under God. Humans rule *as a result of* this royal status. The term "to rule" (*rādâ* in Gen 1:26, 28) is particularly true of kings as Ps 72:8 illustrates. Also the term "to subdue" especially speaks of the work of a king (e.g., 2 Sam 8:11).

Further confirmation comes from Psalm 8 in which vv. 5-8 constitute a word-by-word commentary and meditation on Gen 1:26-28. Verse 5 which says "you have made him a little less than the gods; you have crowned him with glory and honor" is a commentary on 1:26a "let us make mankind in our image and according to our likeness." Verses 6-8 then detail and unfold the rule of mankind specified in 1:26b. It is clear and obvious that the psalm writer has the text of Gen 1:26 before his mind word-by-word. Note in particular that the terms in Hebrew for "crowned" (עטר), "glory" (כָּבוֹד), and

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"honor" (הָדָר) are all royal terms. This shows that the psalm writer understood "image" to speak of royal status. Furthermore, the Hebrew word "rule" (מֹשֵׁל) used in Ps 8:7 is a broad term meaning "have dominion, reign, rule," but generally speaks of a king (examples of royal uses are Ps 103:19, Micah 5:1, Isa 14:5; 19:4, 2 Sam 23:3, Prov 29:26a). The phrase "place under his feet" (וירגל תחת שית) is an image associated with royalty. This is clear from 1 Kgs 5:17, Egyptian texts like the Poem of Thutmoses III cited above, Phoenician inscriptions (Karatepe A.i.16), and Assyrian Royal Texts.[47] In verses 7-8 of Psalm 8, humans rule over the animals. P. Dion appropriately suggested that the word "all" in Ps 8:6b is restricted to the earthly sphere in the light of Gen 1:14-19 and 26-28 where man only rules the earthly sphere.[48]

With regard to the difference between the biblical text and the contemporary documents, we should note the following. In Egypt, only the king is the image of god. In the Bible, all humans constitute the image of God. The covenant relationship between God and Man is not restricted to an elite sector within human society.

Precise Meaning of the Prepositions
"in" and "as / according to"

As already noted, the grammar of the first sentence in Gen 1:26a is unusual. Two distinct prepositional phrases which are not obligatory either grammatically or semantically follow the predicate (נעשה) and direct object (אדם): "in our image, according to our likeness." The preposition "in" corresponds to the preposition b^e in Hebrew while "as" or "according to" corresponds to Hebrew k^e. What is the exact semantic value of each preposition?

The phrase "made in his image" has been construed in two different ways. First, the "in" has been interpreted to indicate the norm or standard. This is normal usage of the preposition "in" following the verb "to make." The statement that man is created "in" the image of God would then mean that man conforms to a representation of God.[49] As Gordon Wenham explains, "man is made '*in* the divine image,' just as the tabernacle was made '*in* the divine pattern.' This suggests that man is a copy of something that had the divine image, not necessarily a copy of God himself" (italics his).[50] The traditional view, however, does not do full justice to the meaning of the words "image" and "likeness," nor does the explanation of Wenham account for the fact that the prepositions *seem* somewhat interchangeable. The phrase is found in six instances:

Genesis 1:26a	*in* our image, *according to* our likeness
Genesis 1:27aα	*in* his image
Genesis 1:27aβ	*in* the image of God
Genesis 5:1b	*in* the likeness of God
Genesis 5:3a	*in* his likeness, *according to* his image
Genesis 9:6b	*in* the image of God

It is possible to use "in" with "likeness" as well as "image" and Gen 5:3a has the prepositions exactly the reverse of what we find in Gen 1:26a. Indeed, in the example of the tabernacle used by Wenham, the expression "made *in* the pattern" in Exod 25:40 is "made *according to* the pattern" in Exod 25:9. James Barr has shrewdly observed, "that b^e, commonly 'in' *when combined with nouns of the semantic function 'likeness',* is thereby brought to have almost the same effect as the preposition k^e 'like, as'. It is the semantics of the noun, not those of the preposition alone, which are

here decisive" (italics his).[51] Thus, when the verb "make" is followed by "in" (b^e), *because it is used with nouns indicating likeness*, the "in" likewise receives by this fact a value almost identical to "as" (k^e).[52] This makes the expression in Gen 1:26a differ somewhat from that in Exod 25:9 where the object of the preposition is "pattern" (*tabnît*).

It is possible, then, that the preposition "in" could be translated "as" in Gen 1:26a. The usage shows that b^e = "in" and k^e = "as" have roughly the same value in these texts. God indeed created man *as* the divine image. Humans do not conform to a representation of God, they are the divine image. This interpretation is supported by the New Testament. In 1 Cor 11:7, Paul states that man is the image of God. Why, then, is the statement in Genesis not more forthright in explicitly saying that man *is* the divine image? Why is this expressed in a slightly more indirect manner? I suggest that a more indirect expression is used in the cultural and linguistic setting of the ancient Near East to prevent man from being considered an idol and worshipped as such.

In spite of the fact that the two prepositions are close in meaning, we must not assume that the meaning is identical. This has been discussed extensively in a recent 300 page monograph on the divine image by W. Randall Garr. Garr is correct to affirm that "the differential marking of each nonobligatory phrase suggests that each phrase has distinct meaning, at least in relation to one [an]other."[53] His careful and thorough linguistic analysis reveals that the preposition b^e = "in" emphasizes proximity while the preposition k^e = "as" or "according to" emphasizes something similar, yet distinct and separate. Garr's linguistic analysis is also supported by the exhaustive research of Ernst Jenni who has produced an entire monograph on each of the three basic prepositions in Hebrew. One volume analyses all 15,570 instances of the preposition b^e, a second all 3,000 instances of k^e, and a third all 20,000 instances of the preposition l^e ("to" or "for") in the Hebrew Bible. Jenni concludes that in fundamental meaning k^e stands between the opposition pair b^e (marking an equating relation) and l^e (marking a non-equating relation) as an expression of partial equation (and so also partial non-equation) of the semantic characteristics of two quantifications.[54] Thus, again, b^e indicates something locative and proximate while k^e indicates something similar but distal and separate.

We have already seen that although the words "image" and "likeness" share similar meanings, each has a different emphasis. In the Tell Fakhariyeh Inscription the word "likeness" focuses on the king as a suppliant and worshiper of his god and communicates sonship. The word "image" focuses on the majesty and power of the king in relation to his subjects. These ancient Near Eastern data confirm and correspond to the use in the biblical text. The word "likeness" in Genesis is closely associated with the creation of the human race, human genealogy, and sonship. It occurs in Gen 1:26 in the creation of humans and again in 5:1 when this is recapitulated under the heading "Birth History of Humankind." The third use is in 5:3 with the generation of Seth. The word "image" is consistently used of man representing God in terms of royal rule. Putting the nouns and prepositions together, humans closely represent God in image, i.e., they represent his rule in the world. Humans are also similar to God in performing the action of creating

human life, but not in the same way. Thus b^e emphasizes a way in which humans are closely like God, k^e a way in which humans are similar, but distinct. This interpretation also explains the reversal of the prepositions in Gen 5:3. Seth shares precisely in the matter of generation and sonship, but is only similar and not identical in the representation of his father's image.

Before considering the difficult first person plural "let us" it may be useful to crystalize, consolidate, and summarize the exegetical results to this point. Genesis 1:26 defines a divine-human relationship with two dimensions: one vertical and one horizontal. First, it defines human ontology in terms of a covenant relationship between God and man on the one hand and second, it defines a covenant relationship between man and the earth on the other. The relationship between humans and God is best captured by the term sonship. The relationship between humans and the creation may be expressed by the terms kingship and servanthood, or better, servant kingship.

This interpretation best honors the normal meaning of *ṣelem* ("image") according to the cultural and linguistic setting. Hans Walter Wolff expressed the matter well as follows:

> In the ancient East the setting up of the king's statue was the equivalent to the proclamation of his domination over the sphere in which the statue was erected (cf. Dan. 3.1, 5f.). When in the thirteenth century BC the Pharaoh Ramesses II had his image hewn out of rock at the mouth of the *nahr el-kelb*, on the Mediterranean north of Beirut, the image meant that he was the ruler of this area. Accordingly, man is set in the midst of creation as God's statue. He is evidence that God is the Lord of creation; but as God's steward he also exerts his rule, fulfilling his task not in arbitrary despotism but as a responsible agent. His rule and his duty to rule are not autonomous; they are copies.[55]

Thus the image is both physical and yet goes far beyond being merely physical. This is an interpretation that allows for the physical aspect of "image" but results in an emphasis such that the character of humans in ruling the world is what represents God.

It is important to note that this definition of the divine image is not a functional one, but an *ontological* one. As Wenham points out, the phrase "in the image" describes the product rather than the process of creation as suggested by usage in Gen 5:3 and Exod 25:40.[56] The grammar reveals that man rules as a result of being made as the divine image; ruling is not the essence of the image itself. Thus those who define the image merely in functional terms are in error both linguistically and theologically.[57]

Man *is* the divine image. As servant-king and son of God mankind will mediate God's rule to the creation in the context of a covenant relationship with God on the one hand and the earth on the other. Hence the concept of the kingdom of God is found on the first page of Scripture. Indeed, the theme is kingdom through covenant. No wonder the Mosaic Covenant, which seeks to implement this in Abraham's Family, can be summarized as providing divine direction concerning (1) a right relationship to God, (2) how to treat each other in genuinely human ways, and (3) how to be good stewards of the earth's resources.

Theologians have debated the extent to which the divine image was marred or even lost by the fall into sin (Genesis 3). Normally it is argued that the divine

image was marred but not lost through the fall (Gen 9:6; James 3:9). The interpretation given here of the divine image as God establishing his rule in the world through covenant clarifies the matter. The human rebellion described in Genesis 3 violated the love, loyalty, obedience, and trust at the heart of the covenant. God sought to confirm and re-establish this relationship in the covenant with Noah; hence the expression *hēqîm berît*. The story of the drunkenness of Noah (Gen 9:20-27) shows once more the inability of the human partner in the covenant relationship. God makes a new start with Abraham and his family in the covenant made with Abraham. The Abrahamic covenant is implemented in the Iron Age with Israel as Abraham's family through the Mosaic Covenant. Israel, or more particularly, Israel's King, as the Davidic Covenant later makes plain, will be the instrument for renewing the covenant relationship and establishing the instruction and will of Yahweh (i.e., *tôrâ*) in the hearts and lives of his people and through them, to the nations. In a long history of apparent failure, Jesus of Nazareth came as Israel's King to renew the relationship by inaugurating a New Covenant and bringing about the rule of God in the lives of those who are part of his new creation. Thus Jesus' proclamation of the kingdom is nothing less than the message we already find in Gen 1:26-27.

When we look at the New Testament and the references there to the renewal of the divine image brought about by the work of Jesus Christ, terms are used that emphasize man's relation to God. This is clear in the parallel texts in Ephesians and Colossians: "and put on the new humanity created according to God in righteousness and holiness which derives from the truth" (Eph 4:24); "and have put on the new humanity that is being renewed to a true knowledge according to the image of the One who created it" (Col 3:10). God has planned a new creation—a new heavens and a new earth. Unlike the first creation where he first made the place and afterwards the people to live there, in the new creation he is first making the people and afterwards the place where they will live. The new creation begins in the midst of the old: when God raised Jesus from the dead, he was the first man in the new creation. And anyone who is joined to Jesus Christ by faith *is* new creation (2 Cor 5:17). This happens first in the inner person, and later at the resurrection, in the outer person. The passages in Eph 4:24 and Col 3:10 call believers to adopt in daily lifestyle all that is entailed in the new creation life within them. The phrase "according to God" in Eph 4:24 may be ambiguous by itself, but is clarified by the parallel in Col 3:10 and means that the new creation is, like the old, according to the image and likeness of God. The words that Paul uses in connection with this are righteousness and holiness in Ephesians 4 and knowledge in Colossians 3.[58] This has been misconstrued in studies on the divine image in the past. Paul mentions holiness, knowledge, and righteousness, not because one can identify ethical or mental or spiritual qualities as *elements* of the divine image, but because these terms are *covenantal* and describe a covenant relationship. Thus the New Testament supports the explanation of the divine image in Gen 1:26 advanced here. The divine image indicates man's relationship and spiritual fellowship with God.

The Meaning of the First Person Plural

The interpretation of the first person

plural "let us make" is a difficult problem. The recent commentary by Kenneth A. Mathews provides an excellent summary of the various views and the impasse in scholarship over this issue:

> Among commentators the plural reference is variously understood: (1) a remnant of polytheistic myth; (2) God's address to creation, "heavens and earth"; (3) a plural indicating divine honor and majesty; (4) self-deliberation; (5) divine address to a heavenly court of angels; and (6) divine dialogue within the Godhead. It is unlikely when we consider the elevated theology of 1:1-2:3, that any polytheistic element would be tolerated by the author; therefore, the first option can be ruled out. The second option is flatly contradicted by v. 27, where God alone is identified as the Creator. The plural as used to show special reverence (honorific plural) is flawed since the point of the verse is the unique correspondence between God and man, not the majesty of God. The fourth viewpoint considers "Let us make" a plural of self-deliberation, depicting God anthropomorphically as someone in contemplation. This is supported by the change to the singular ("*his* own image") in v. 27 which indicates that the figure of "deliberation" is completed. In ancient myths divine deliberation prefaces the creation of humans. Self-deliberation is attested in the Old Testament (e.g. Pss 42:5, 11; 43:5), but there is no attestation that the plural form is used in this way.[59]

Mathews finds evidence from the Old Testament and from ancient Near Eastern parallels for the view that God is addressing a heavenly court of angels to be impressive, but rejects this view on theological grounds: how can humans be said to be created in the image of angels? He then develops the interpretation that it refers to divine dialogue within the Godhead, although he admits that this can only be entertained as a pos-

sible "canonical" reading of the text. This admission, in fact, shows how unlikely his final proposal is to be right. The Bible is a divine-human book. A reference to the Trinity may possibly have been intended by the divine author, but this cannot be discovered until one comes to the New Testament. D. Clines argues that the plural refers to a dialogue between God and the spirit of God mentioned in 1:2,[60] but B. K. Waltke shows that this construes "spirit of God" in a New Testament sense.[61] It is virtually impossible that such a meaning was intended by the human author of Genesis 1 or even understood by the original audience. Interpretation that rides roughshod over the human authorship and audience in the text in this way is highly suspect. Canonical reading of the text is imperative, but this appears more along the lines of special pleading.

Is there a way out of this impasse? Evidence for the view that God is addressing his heavenly court is impressive. Some readers may be unfamiliar with this approach. Texts from ancient Canaan and Mesopotamia depict a pantheon in which the high or supreme god operates in an assembly or community of gods. Yet one need not look to the culture contemporary to the Old Testament since evidence abounds within the Old Testament itself. Psalm 82:1 is a case in point: "God presides in the divine assembly. He gives judgement in the midst of the gods." We also glimpse the divine assembly in Job 1 and 2, 1 Kings 22, Isaiah 6, and Jer 23:18. They are variously referred to as "messengers" / "angels" (מלכים), "gods" (אלהים) or "divinities" (בני האלהים = sons of the gods, i.e., those of the class of gods or divinities). The angels or gods in the Old Testament are subordinate and subservient to God. They bow down to

him (Ps 29:2), obey him (Ps 103:20-21), praise him (Ps 148:2-5), and minister and serve him (1 Kgs 22:19).[62]

John Walton has recently shown that the first commandment, when interpreted in the context of the ancient Near Eastern setting, is directed against falsely construing these "gods" as sharing power with Yahweh or being worthy of worship in any sense. Although the command "you shall have no other gods before me" is normally understood in terms of priorities, this interpretation is contrary to the linguistic data where every occurrence of the preposition "before" plus personal object in the Hebrew Bible is spatial. Walton argues that the correct interpretation entails a reference to the divine assembly. His argument must be cited in full to avoid misunderstanding:[63]

> In the light of even deeper probing of the practices and beliefs that were current in the ancient Near East, Werner Schmidt has proposed a couple of other alternatives. He begins by suggesting that the first commandment prohibited the setting up of the images of other deities in the temple.[64] However, this does not follow the common logic of ancient Near Eastern practices in which temples were typically made to honor a single deity along with his consort.[65] Schmidt advocates another approach that focuses on God's heavenly rather than His earthly presence. That is, when the first commandment prohibits other gods in the presence of Yahweh, it is ruling out the concept that He operates within a pantheon, a divine assembly, or with a consort. J. Bottéro compares this system to that of a king at the head of the state with his family and functionaries around him operating in a structured hierarchy.[66]
> Having this image as background suggests that the Israelites were not to imagine any other gods in the presence of Yahweh. Scholars could have arrived at this meaning by

simple lexical study, but without the benefit of the ancient Near Eastern material, the results of the lexical study made no sense to interpreters. Consequently, they devised alternative explanations, even though when the prepositional combination that occurs in the Hebrew text takes a personal object the meaning is consistently spatial. Using comparative cultural information, we have recovered a neglected sense of the text that was there all the time.

In view of the information provided from outside the Bible, this spatial sense gains credibility. In the ancient Near East the gods operated within pantheons and decisions were made in the divine assembly. Furthermore, the principal deities typically had consorts. For the gods life was a community experience. The destinies of the gods were decreed in assembly, as were the destinies of kings, cities, temples and people. The business of the gods was carried out in the presence of other gods. Lowell Handy helpfully summarizes this system as a hierarchy of authoritative deities and active deities.

> The highest authority in the pantheon was responsible for ordering and maintaining earth and cosmos but was not actively engaged in the actual work necessary to maintain the universe. The next lower level of deities performed this function. Serving under the authority of those who actually owned the universe, the active gods were expected to perform in a way that would enable the cosmos to operate smoothly. Each of the gods at this level of the pantheon had a specific sphere of authority over which to exert his or her control. Ideally, all the gods were to perform their duties in a way that would keep the universe functioning perfectly in the manner desired by the highest authority. Yet the gods, like human beings, are portrayed as having weaknesses and rivalries that kept the cosmos from operating smoothly.[67]

Accordingly, by a comparative interpretation of the first commandment the Israelites were not to construe Yahweh as operating within a community of gods. Nor were they to imagine Him functioning as the head of a pantheon surrounded by a divine assembly, or having a consort. In short, He works alone. The concept of a pantheon/divine assembly assumed a distribution of power among many divine beings. The first commandment declared simply and unequivocally that Yahweh's authority was absolute. Divine power was not distributed among other deities or limited by the will of the assembly.

The point of the prohibition of the worship of any other gods "besides" Yahweh was to ensure that Israel's perception of divinity was to be distinct from the peoples around them. This text is readily misunderstood if the interpreter is not aware of the notions being rejected. According to this revised interpretation, the purpose of the first commandment was not simply to promote monolatry; it served the monotheistic agenda another way. Although this text does not explicitly deny the existence of other gods, it does remove them from the presence of Yahweh. If Yahweh does not share power, authority, or jurisdiction with them, they are not gods in any meaningful sense of the word.[68] Thus, the first commandment does not insist on the non-existence of other gods; only that they are powerless. In so doing it disenfranchises them, not merely by declaring that they should not be worshiped; it leaves them with no status worthy of worship.[69]

The approach in the Old Testament to the divine assembly is thus twofold. On the one hand it acknowledges the existence of beings known as angels or gods who serve God in his presence. On the other hand, it rejects the notion prevalent in the societies around Israel that these gods share authority or power or status worthy of worship with Yahweh.

Evidence that the phrase "let us" refers to the divine assembly is stronger than even Mathews allows as a result of the work of Garr. Garr notes that Gen 1:26-27 follows the formula or pattern for clauses introduced by *hābâ*. In form, *hābâ* is an extended imperative, qal stem, masculine singular from the root *yāhab*, "to give." There are two distinct uses of this verb: literal and non-literal. In the literal use, the verb actually means to give. In the non-literal use, the verb functions as a manipulative and suasive particle prefixed asyndetically to commands exactly like "c'mon" in English: "C'mon, let's play together." Unlike לכה and קומה, however, the imperative *hābâ* is always connected without a conjunction and need not agree in number and person with the command to which it is prefixed. What is significant is that all clauses beginning with *hābâ* have a fixed pattern as follows: (1) a directive or assertive utterance (represented by a cohortative or imperfect respectively) (2) which proposes an activity (event) (3) jointly and cooperatively, between the speaker and a referentially distinct addressee; (4) the speaker's proposal receives the tacit consent of the addressee and (5) is executed by an agent, whether unidentified or identified and salient (e.g., addressee, leader).

This pattern can be observed in all instances: Gen 11:3, 4, 7; 38:16; and Exod 1:10. What is noteworthy is the fact that Gen 1:26-27 has exactly this formulaic pattern, albeit without the introductory particle *hābâ*. The absence of the particle *hābâ* in Gen 1:26 is explained by Garr as dialect-specific to a particular source, but this approach is unnecessary. During his exhaustive analysis he also observes that the particle *hābâ* is always used to introduce situations spelling trouble and there is no sign of trouble in Gen 1:26. This is

a compelling explanation for the absence of the particle *hābâ*. Thus, the formulaic pattern of Gen 1:26-27 provides a strong argument that God is addressing the heavenly court.

It remains to show what this could possibly mean in context. A proposal is at hand from the discussion of the ancient Near Eastern setting described by John Walton. The ancients believed that the ruling of the world was a community effort on the part of the gods. I propose that Gen 1:26-27 be understood as a polemic to subvert such an idea. God announces to the heavenly court his decision to share rule with humanity. This entails both a negative and positive result. On the positive side, it elevates humanity to a status almost equal to the angels. Like the angels, humans will in obedience and subservience to Yahweh effect the rule of God in the world. This is exactly the point being made in Ps 8:5: "you have made him a little less than the gods." There is also, however, a negative side. This decision in effect disenfranchizes the gods according to ancient Near Eastern thinking. Yahweh does not share rule with them in the sense understood in ancient Canaan.[70] This is another way of saying "You shall have no other gods before me" and strongly makes the point of monotheism.

Clines's objection to this view "that the *elohim* would be said to have shared in man's creation" does not give adequate attention to the details of the text.[71] As Garr notes citing Gemser:

> in the plural of v. 26 a plurality of heavenly beings may be understood, but there is not a hint of diversity of will or purpose. God's divine court agrees to his proposal.[72]

Garr also points out the contrast between proposal and execution in the text. In the proposal, God involves his heavenly court. Yet in the execution, the sole use of third person verbs and the significant shift from עשה to ברא, shows that the execution is absolutely and exclusively reserved for God.[73] The creation of all, including the creation of humans, is solely the work of God.

Some, no doubt, may not be persuaded by the above argument. It is not necessary for the exegesis given of Gen 1:26-27, but it is in harmony with it because it fits the interpretation of the divine image as expressing the theme of *kingdom through covenant*. God has communicated to the divine assembly, that his rule in the world will be effected largely through humans, not through "gods" or "angels."

Concluding Observation: Genesis 1:26-27 in the Context of Genesis 2:8-17

The interpretation advanced here for the creation of humans as the divine image and according to the divine likeness is corroborated by Gen 2:8-17 and developed further there. Wenham, followed by Dumbrell, has described the garden of Eden as a sanctuary and Adam as a priest worshipping there. This may be briefly summarised and connected to the divine image.

The Garden as Separate Space

Hebrew word for garden (*gan*) comes from a root meaning to "enclose," "fence," or "protect." The garden envisioned in Gen 2:8-17 is an enclosed or protected space. In the Old Testament, walls surrounded both royal gardens (2 Kgs 25:4, Neh 3:15, Jer 39:4, 52:7) and vineyards (Prov 24:30-31, Isa 5:5). The Septuagint, the Greek Translation of the Old Testament, employed a loan word from Persian (παράδεισος) in

Genesis 2 that means a pleasure garden surrounded by an earthen or stone wall. Kings in Mesopotamia created and kept extravagant gardens. In fact, gardener was a descriptive title or epithet for monarchs in Mesopotamia.[74] The role of Adam as gardener further portrays him as a royal figure.

The Garden as Sacred Space / Sanctuary

Creation accounts in the ancient Near East commonly connected creation and temple building. For example, the temple Esagila was built for Marduk in *Enuma Elish*. Genesis 2:8-17 portrays the first man as a kind of priest in a garden sanctuary. In terms of literary structure, 2:8a describes the creation of the garden and 2:8b the placing of the man there. In what follows, 2:9-15 elaborates on 2:8a and 2:16-17 elaborates on 2:8b.

Parallels between the description of the garden of Eden and descriptions of sanctuaries elsewhere in the Old Testament and ancient Near East reveal that the garden is being portrayed as as sanctuary.[75] Some of the evidence is summarized as follows: (1) The garden of Eden is characterized by the presence of God. There God comes to meet man at the cool of the day. The verb *hālak* in the hithpael stem ("to walk to and fro," Gen 3:8) is the same term employed to describe the divine presence in the later tent sanctuaries (Lev 26:12, Deut 23:15, 2 Sam 7:6-7). (2) Like the later Tabernacle and Temple, the entrance to the garden of Eden was in the east and guarded by *kᵉrûbîm* (1 Kgs 6:23-29; Exod 25:18-22; 26:31). (3) In the center of the garden of Eden is the Tree of Life. Similarly, in the center of the Tabernacle and Temple is the menorah (i.e., the branching lampstand), which as Carol Meyers has shown, is a stylized tree of life.[76] The idea that fulness of life can be found in the sanctuary is basic to the instructions for the sacrifices in the Torah and a recurrent theme in the Psalms. (4) The responsibility and task given to Adam in the garden is *lᵉˋobdāh ûlᵉšomrāh* (to serve/work it and to keep it). The only other passages in the Torah where the same two verbs occur together are found in Num 3:7-8, 8:26, 18:5-6, of the duties of the Levites in guarding and ministering in the sanctuary. These words are also commonly used in the Old Testament for worship. Thus Adam is portrayed as a kind of Levite who fulfills his rôle or task by maintaining the priority of worship. (5) According to Gen 2:10, "A river flows out of Eden to water the garden." This river brings fertility and life to the entire world as we see in vv. 11-14. Similarly, in Ps 46:5 we read of "a river whose streams make glad the city of God" and Ezekiel 47 describes a great river flowing out of the new Jerusalem temple to sweeten the Dead Sea. Such a source of fertility and life is an indication that the divine presence is there. (6) Since the river divides into four as it goes out from the garden, clearly the Garden of Eden was an elevated place. In the ancient Near East, temples were situated on mountains because that is where the earth and heavens meet. In Ezek 28:13-14, Eden is also conceived of as a mountain sanctuary. (7) The garden is the place of divine decrees. Similarly, the Tabernacle is the place from which God rules as King.[77]

Thus Gen 2:8-17 pictures Adam as a kind of king-priest worshiping in a garden sanctuary. This passage explains how the royal rule given to humankind within a covenant structure in 1:26-27 is to operate. Dumbrell begins to draw out the implications of this as follows:

In short, created in the world with dominion over it, man is immediately abstracted from the world and placed directly in the divine presence. What is being said in all this is surely how the dominion mandate was to be exercised…. Man was to control his world, not primarily by immersing himself in the tasks of ordering it, but by recognizing that there was a system of priorities by which all of life was to be regulated. If he were rightly related to his Creator, then he would rightly respond to creation.[78]

The relationship between Gen 2:8-17 and Gen 1:26-27 is significant. Gen 2:8-17 explains the relationship between "likeness" and "image" in the covenant relationship between man and God. Only when the father-son relationship is nurtured through worship, fellowship, and obedient love will humankind appropriately and properly reflect and represent to the world the kind of kingship and rule intrinsic to God himself. Kingship is effected *through* covenant relationship.

ENDNOTES

[1] I am grateful to the following colleagues and students for constructive criticism and proofing of my work: Gregg Allison, Uche Anizor, Stephen G. Dempster, Matt Dickie, Laura Gentry, Andy McClurg, and Stephen Wellum.

[2] Adapted from Daniel C. Lane, "The Meaning and Use of the Old Testament Term for 'Covenant' (*b*^e*rît*): with Some Implications for Dispensationalism and Covenant Theology" (Ph.D. diss., Trinity International University, 2000).

[3] Gordon Hugenberger, *Marriage as a Covenant: A Study of Biblical Law and Ethics Governing Marriage Developed from the Perspective of Malachi* (Leiden: Brill, 1994), 11.

[4] William J. Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation: A Theology of Old Testament Covenants* (Nashville: Thomas Nelson, 1984), 17.

[5] Paul R. Williamson, *Sealed With an Oath: Covenant in God's Unfolding Purpose* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2007).

[6] Jeffrey J. Niehaus, "An Argument Against Theologically Constructed Covenants," *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 50, no. 2 (2007): 259-73.

[7] Ibid., 265.

[8] Ibid., 270.

[9] Craig G. Bartholomew, "Covenant and Creation: Covenant Overload or Covenantal Deconstruction, *Calvin Theological Journal* 30 (1995): 25.

[10] K. A. Kitchen, "Egypt, Ugarit, Qatna and Covenant," *Ugarit-Forschungen* 11 (1979): 453-64. For the Egyptian texts, what is in question are Semitic loan-words, not Egyptian words.

[11] M. Weinfeld, "The Covenant of Grant in the Old Testament and in the Ancient Near East," *Journal of the American Oreintal Society* 90 (1970): 185.

[12] M. Weinfeld, *Deuteronomy and the Deuteronomic School* (1972; repr., Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1992), 74.

[13] This claim does not necessarily provide support for a classic covenant theology position nor is it support for the claim made, for example, by W. Eichrodt that covenant is at the centre of a biblical theology. It is a claim that covenants are key to the inner-literary structure of the Bible as a book, not as an anthology of texts. See Stephen G. Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty: A Theology of the Hebrew Bible* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity, 2003).

[14] Richard Elliott Friedman, "The Hiding of the Face: An Essay on the Literary Unity of Biblical Narrative," in *Judaic Perspectives on Ancient Israel* (ed. Jacob Neusner, Baruch A. Levine, and Ernest

S. Frerichs; Philadelphia: Fortress, 1987), 215.

[15] See Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 15-26.

[16] Umberto Cassuto, *La Questione della Genesi* (Florence: Felice le Monnier, 1934), 112-16. See also U. Cassuto, *The Documentary Hypothesis: Eight Lectures* (trans. I. Abrahams; Jerusalem: Magnes, 1961), 47-48.

[17] See especially Jacob Milgrom, *Leviticus 23-27* (Anchor Bible 3B; New York: Doubleday, 2001), 2343-46 and bibliography there.

[18] I have carefully examined all instances of $b^e r\hat{i}t$ and in particular, all expressions in which $b^e r\hat{i}t$ is the modifier of a verb in the Hebrew Bible. My research is based on two independent and separate studies of all the evidence conducted ten years apart. Although the results must await publication at a later time, I found the basic distinction claimed by Dumbrell to hold true, even though his interpretation of some texts may be challenged.

[19] Williamson, *Sealed With an Oath*, 73.

[20] A detailed refutation of the claims of Williamson must await a fuller treatment.

[21] This connection is possible because the term for "wind" or "spirit" in Hebrew is the same word ($r\hat{u}^a\d{h}$).

[22] See Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 15-26.

[23] John H. Stek, " 'Covenant' Overload in Reformed Theology," *Calvin Theological Journal* 29 (1994): 40.

[24] See Craig Bartholomew, "A Time for War and a Time for Peace: Old Testament Wisdom, Creation and O'Donovan's Theological Ethics," in *A Royal Priesthood? The Use of the Bible Ethically and Politically—A Dialogue with Oliver O'Donovan* (ed. Craig Bartholomew, Jonathan Chaplin, Robert Song and Al Wolters; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2002), 106; and esp. idem, "Covenant and Creation," 11-33.

[25] See, e.g., the chart in Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 57.

[26] See David A. Sterchi, "Does Genesis 1 Provide a Chronological Sequence?", *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 39, no. 4 (1996): 529-36. The connection claimed between anarthrous designations in number and chronology claimed by Sterchi remain to be tested, but he is doubtless right that the article signifies something significant.

[27] See C. I. Schofield, ed., *The New Schofield Reference Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University, 1970), 1 n. 4.

[28] Usages of the term *'ādām* in the text of Genesis 1-5 move almost imperceptibly from (1) a generic sense of humankind to (2) Man, i.e., the primal human being, to (3) Adam as a personal name. See especially Richard S. Hess, "Splitting the Adam: The Usage of *'ĀDĀM* in Genesis I-V," in *Studies in the Pentateuch* (ed. J. A. Emerton; Leiden: Brill, 1990), 1-15. Occassionally in the present paper I employ "Man" because of this ambiguity in the original text, although I would argue in the strongest terms that the image of God applies generically to all humans, both male and female.

[29] For an excellent and impressive survey of views in just the last one hundred years, see Gunnlauger A. Jónsson, *The Image of God: Genesis 1:26-28 in a Century of Old Testament Research* (Lund: Almqvist & Wiksell, 1988).

[30] Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15* (Word Biblical Commentary; Waco: Word, 1987) 29-32.

[31] Even when material is adapted and borrowed from Wenham.

[32] P. E. Dion, "Ressemblance et Image de Dieu," in *Suppléments aux Dictionnaire de la Bible* (ed. H. Cazelles and A. Feuillet; Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1973), 55:383.

[33] W. Randall Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness: Humanity, Divinity, and Monotheism* (Culture and History of the Ancient Near East 15; Leiden: Brill, 2003), 85.

[34] See Paul Joüon, *Grammaire de l'hébreu biblique* (Rome: Biblical Institute, 1923), § 116; and Thomas O. Lambdin, *Introduction to Biblical Hebrew* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1971), § 107.

[35] Stephen Dempster, "Linguistic Features of Hebrew Narrative: A Discourse Analysis of Narrative from the Classical Period" (Ph.D. diss., University of Toronto, 1985).

[36] See Othmar Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World: Ancient Near Eastern Iconography and the Book of Psalms* (trans. Timothy J. Hallett; New York: Seabury, 1978), 151-63.

[37] Dion, "Ressemblance et Image de Dieu," 55:365-403.

[38] On the birth of the king in Egypt as divine son see Keel, *The Symbolism of the Biblical World*, 247-56.

[39] Miriam Lichtheim, *Ancient Egyptian Literature: A Book of Readings*, (3 vols.; Berkeley: University of California, 1976), 2:36-37.

[40] Numerous studies are available in

addition to the lexica. See, e.g. J. Barr, "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis—A Study of Terminology," *Bulletin of the John Rylands Library* 51 (1968-1969): 11-26; H. D. Preuss, "דָּמָה *dāmāh*; דְּמוּת," *Theologi-cal Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck and Helmer Ringgren; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1978), 3:250-60; F. J. Stendebach, "דָּמָה *ṣelem*," *Theological Dictionary of the Old Testament* (ed. G. Johannes Botterweck, Helmer Ringgren and Heinz-Josef Fabry; Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 2003), 12:386-96. The brief comments here are indebted to the full lexical treatment in Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 117-76.

[41] Although I have read and studied the inscription myself, I am indebted for these observations to W. Randall Garr, " 'Image' and 'Likeness' in the Inscription from Tell Fakhariyeh," *Israel Exploration Journal* 50, nos. 3-4 (200): 227-34. Those wishing to read a translation in English may consult T. Muraoka, "The Tell-Fekherye Bilingual Inscription and Early Aramaic," *Abr-Nahrain* 22 (1983-84): 79-117.

[42] Robert H. Pfeiffer, *State Letters of Assyria: A Transliteration and Translation of 355 Official Assyrian Letters Dating from the Sargonid Period (722-625 B.C.)* (New Haven, CT: American Oriental Society, 1935), 120.

[43] Ibid., 186.

[44] R. Campbell Thompson, *The Reports of the Magicians and Astrologers of Nineveh and Babylon in the British Museum* (2 vols.; London: Luzac, 1900).

[45] Garr, *In His Own Image and Like-ness*, 95.

[46] Dempster, *Dominion and Dynasty*, 58-59.

[47] Dion, "Ressemblance et Image de Dieu," 55: 369, 398.

[48] Ibid., 398.

[49] In particular, see J. Barr, "The Image of God in the Book of Genesis," 11-26.

[50] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 32.

[51] James Barr, "The Image of God in Genesis—Some Linguistic and Historical Considerations," in *Proceedings of the Tenth Meeting (1967) of Die Ou-Testamentiese Werkgemeenskap in Suid-Afrika* (ed. A. H. van Zyl; Pretoria: Craft Press, 1971), 9. Paul Dion discovered a linguistic phenomeonon similar to this in the Elephantine Papyri of the fifth century B.C., cf. "Ressemblance et Image de Dieu," 388-89.

[52] Technically, then, this is not a *beth essentiae*, but "as" is an excellent functional English equivalent. See Barr, "The Image of God in Genesis," 8.

[53] Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 95.

[54] Ernst Jenni, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen, Band 1: Die Präposition Beth* (Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1992), 11-40; idem, *Die hebräischen Präpositionen, Band 2: Die Präposition Kaph* (Stuttgart: Kolhammer, 1994), 11-12.

[55] Hans Walter Wolff, *Anthropology of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Fortress, 1974), 160-61.

[56] Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, 31.

[57] See Eugene H. Merrill, "A Theology of the Pentateuch," in *A Biblical Theology of the Old Testament* (ed. Roy B. Zuck (Chicago: Moody, 1991), 14, who states "[i]t is a functional state-ment and not one of essence."

[58] Holiness in particular is a concept not well understood by the church today. See especially the illumination study by Claude Bernard Costecalde, *Aux origines du sacré biblique* (Paris: Letouzey & Ané, 1986).

[59] Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1-11:26* (New American Commentary; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 161.

[60] D. J. A. Clines, "The Image of God in Man," *Tyndale Bulletin* 19 (1968): 69.

[61] Bruce K. Waltke (with Charles Yu), *An Old Testament Theology: Exegetical, Canonical, and Thematic Approach* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2007), 213. See also John H. Walton, *Genesis* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 128-29, for further treatment showing that understanding the Trinity in Genesis 1 fails the test of proper interpretation. Walton opts for the plural as referring to the heavenly court, but does not think humans are created in the image of angels.

[62] From Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 69-70.

[63] The citation includes footnotes from Walton and excludes a chart listing occurrences of the preposition לפני plus personal object: John Walton, "Interpreting the Bible as an Ancient Near Eastern Document," in *Israel—Ancient Kingdom or Late Invention? Archaeology, Ancient Civilizations, and the Bible* (ed. Daniel I. Block; Nashville: Broadman & Holman, forthcoming, 2008).

[64] Werner Schmidt, *The Faith of the Old Testament* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1983), 71.

[65] Manasseh set up altars in the temple

courtyard to offer sacrifices to other deities and put an Asherah pole in the temple. This object functioned either as a cultic object for the worship of Yahweh or as a symbol of Yahweh's consort (2 Kgs 21:5-7; Ezek 8:5).

[66]J. Bottéro, "Intelligence and the Technical Function of Power: Enki/ Ea," in *Mesopotamia: Writing, Reasoning and the Gods* (Chicago: University of Chicago, 1992), 232-50; the citation is found on 233.

[67]Lowell Handy, *Among the Host of Heaven* (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 97.

[68]The significance of this notion may be extended if we attach to it the idea that in the ancient Near East something was not considered to exist if it had not been assigned a name, a place, or a function. See discussion in J. Walton, *Ancient Near Eastern Thought and the Old Testament* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2006), 87-97.

[69]This is close to the view of Christopher Wright, who says, "The fundamental thrust of the verse is not Yahweh's sole deity, but Yahweh's sole sovereignty over Israel." *Deuteronomy* (Peabody: Hendrickson, 1996), 68.

[70]After arriving at this conclusion independently, I found Garr had already expressed it in print (*In His Own Image and Likeness*, 222).

[71]Clines, "The Image of God in Man," 67. When the "us" in the clause "let us make man in our image" is construed to refer to God addressing the heavenly court this does not require interpretation that the angels co-create or join God in making humans. It is the Judge and King of the Heavenly Court announcing to the angels that their rule of the cosmos will be shared with humans. This is comparable to the Chairman and CEO of a corporation announcing to his Board of Directors / Shareholders, "let us make all employees shareholders."

[72]Garr, *In His Own Image and Likeness*, 201.

[73]Ibid., 203-204.

[74]See M. Hutter, "Adam als Gärtner und König (Gen. 2:8, 15)," *Biblische Zeitschrift* 30 (1985): 258-62.

[75]See W. J. Dumbrell, *The Search for Order* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1994), 24-25; and Gordon J. Wenham, "Sanctuary Symbolism in the Garden of Eden Story," in *I Studied Inscriptions From Before the Flood* (ed. Richard S. Hess and David Toshio Tsumura; Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 1994), 399-404.

[76]Carol L. Meyers, *The Tabernacle Menorah: A Synthetic Study Of A Symbol From The Biblical Cult* (Missoula: Scholars Press, 1976).

[77]See M. Weinfeld, "Sabbath, Temple and the Enthronement of the Lord— The Problem of the Sitz im Leben of Gen. 1:1-2:3," in *Melanges bibliques et orientaux en l'honneur de M. Henri Cazelles*, eds. A. Caquot and M. Delcor (Kevelaer: Butzon and Becker, 1981), 501-512.

D. I. Block notes parallels between the structure and wording of Exodus 25-40, the account of the building of the Tabernacle, and Genesis 1-3, the account of Creation. Furthermore, the sanctuary is described as a place of rest for Yahweh in Ps 132:14. In Exod 20:11, we note the same word used to describe the Sabbath—God rested on the seventh day. Thus we can see that the planting of the garden on the sixth day is the construction of a sanctuary and on the seventh day, God rests, i.e., enters his sanctuary.

[78]Dumbrell, *Covenant and Creation*, 35-36.