

**A READING OF GOD’S CREATION IN
GENESIS 1:1-2:4a IN LIGHT OF
THE ARCHITECTURAL
PRINCIPLE
“FORM FOLLOWS FUNCTION”**

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Abstract

This thesis attempts to read God's creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a from an architectural perspective using the architectural principle "Form Follows Function" abbreviated FFF. This reading explores the "form" of God's creation in alignment with the "function" God intended His creation design to be as found in the biblical text.

In doing so, I will analyse Genesis 1:1-2:4a utilising Historical Criticism as an interpretational tool and the architectural perspective above. In this regard, Genesis 1:1-2:4a will be treated as a P text, and its historical background situated during the Persian period. The theology and emphasis of the P document will be discussed in light of this background. Hopefully this reading will further highlight the form and function of creation in P. Moreover, the thesis will also attempt a Samoan contextual appropriation of this form and function of creation. This will hopefully give an understanding and interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:4a that is meaningful to Samoan readers of the biblical text. In other words, meaning of Genesis 1:1-2:4a that Samoan readers could easily understand, relate to, and identify with.

DECLARATION

I declare that this work has not used without due acknowledgment of any material that has been previously submitted for a degree or diploma in another institution. I also declare that the work has not used any material, heard or read, without proper acknowledgment of the source.

Signed: _____

Date: _____

DEDICATION

This work is dedicated to my dear wife Easterakesa

And our son Sosene Mafi Kolia

And, to

My beloved parents

Rev Elisaia Fiu and Samoa Kolia

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Abstract	2
Acknowledgments	vii
List of Illustrations	viii
List of Abbreviations	ix
Introduction	1
i. Interest and Issue	1
ii. Aim and Objectives	2
iii. Text Selection	3
iv. Method and Approach	4
v. Outline of Chapters	4
Chapter One: Perspective and Methodology	6
Introduction	6
1.1 Architectural Perspective	6
1.1.1 A Brief Background of Architect	6
1.1.2 Form Follows Function	7
1.2 Historical Criticism as Methodology	9
1.2.1 History of the Text	9
Summary	10
Chapter Two: The Book of Genesis: General Background and Genesis 1:1-2:4a	11
Introduction	11
2.1 General Background of the Book of Genesis	11
2.2 Literature Review of Genesis 1:1-2:4a	12
2.3 Genesis 1:1-2:4a: A Priestly Text	18
2.3.1a Date of P	19
2.3.1b Structure of P	19
2.3.1c Theology of P	21
Summary	23
Chapter Three: Analysis and Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a	24
Introduction	24
3.1 Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a	24
3.1.1 Genesis 1:1-2 - The Beginning of Creation	24
3.1.2 Genesis 1:3-5 - The Creation of Light	26

3.1.3 Genesis 1:6-8 The Separation of the Waters.	28
3.1.4 Genesis 1:9-13 - The Creation of Land and Plants	29
3.1.5 Genesis 1:14-19 - The Creation of the Heavenly Lights	30
3.1.6 Genesis 1:20-23 The creation of Birds and Fish	31
3.1.7 Genesis 1:24-32 - The Creation of Animals and Humankind	32
3.1.8 Genesis 2:1-4a - The Holy Seventh Day	34
3.1.9 Analysis	34
Summary	36
Chapter Four: A Samoan contextual appropriation	38
Introduction	38
4.1 <i>Fale</i> Samoa	39
4.2 The Structure of the <i>Fale Tele</i>	40
4.2.1 Foundation and Floor Level	41
4.2.2 Open Space	41
3.2.3 Contextual reading – <i>Fale Tele</i> and Creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a	43
Summary	44
Conclusion	45
An Architecture Reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a and the EFKS ministry	46
An Architecture Reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Further Studies	47
Glossary	48
Bibliography	49

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List of Illustrations

- Figure 1: Form of creation from an architectural perspective
- Figure 2: A Reconstruction of Ancient Hebrew Cosmology.¹
- Figure 3: Typical Roof Shape of a Traditional fale Samoa, a fale afolau.²
- Figure 4: Comparison of a foundation height difference between a Fale Tele and a Fale Afolau.
- Figure 5: Village Council Meeting Seats Allocations

¹ Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* Revised and Updated by Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington, second edition, (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), p. 92.

² John Beynon, Peter Higginson, *The Samoan Fale*. (Apia, Samoa: UNESCO Printers, 1992)

List of Abbreviations

<i>CBQ</i>	Catholic Bulletin Quarterly
EFKS	Ekalesia Faapotopotoga Kerisiano Samoa
FFF	Form Follows Function
NAC	New American Commentary
NRSV	The New Revised Standard Version
P	Priestly
WBC	Word Biblical Commentary

Introduction

i. Interest and Issue

For someone who understands science and its fundamental concepts; possible connections between science and biblical accounts particularly the Creation story in Genesis have always captivated my attention before I entered Malua Theological College. This was in spite of myself having any solid evidence and/or have made any comprehensive research on such connections. In saying that I was also conscious of the large number of contradictions presented by scientific facts versus implied facts in the literal reading of the first creation story in Genesis. Nonetheless, for the sole purpose of this specific section of this paper I would like to share how my interest developed which ends up in the writing of this paper.

Such promising connection that firstly captured my attention was how in Genesis made reference to the creation of the “heavens” and “earth” in the beginning, while in accordance to scientific knowledge especially in the field of cosmology believes that “space”, “matter” and “time” are the fundamental elements of the universe.¹ The question that came to my mind was; do the heavens and earth which were created in the beginning have any connections or relationship to space, matter, and time respectively? In Genesis chapter one verse one, it stated that “*God created the heavens and earth in the beginning*”. This verse referred to the creation of the “heavens” and “earth” in the “beginning” as if these three specific elements are the building blocks of all God’s creation. As with most bible reader, the heaven is portrayed as the place of God and the Angels while the earth is the physical world of the humans and other living things. The

¹ Ignazio Ciufolini and Richard A Matzner, *General Relativity and John Archibald Wheeler*, vol. 367. (Springer: Springer Science & Business Media, 2010), pp. 1-6.

use of the word “beginning” in Genesis is apparently referring to the beginning of time when God created the universe.

In comparison with science, “space”, “matter” and “time” have instigated discussions over the years not only on how the universe came to existence but also to provide explanations on their relationships. According to a simplified description of Einstein’s theory of general relativity by John Wheeler,² “space-time tells matter how to move; matter tells space-time how to curve”. With such description it is blatant that “space”, “matter” and “time” are to coexist together in which the other provides meaning and character to the other and vice versa. Space can be explained scientifically as “void” or “emptiness” while “matter” represents bodily things with molecular structures. The time element however is presented to locate and control the movement of matter within space.

By comparing the two perspectives, it made me wonder if God by design began the creation of the universe by building the three pillars or fundamental elements of the universe known to science as space, earth, and time.

The type of promising connection and relation mentioned above, this paper will make use of an architectural concept known as FFF to re-read the story of the creation in Genesis. FFF simply means that the shape of the finished building or product should primarily agree with its intended function.

ii. Aim and Objectives

The main aim of the thesis is to attempt a reading of Genesis 1:1 – 2:4a from an Architectural Perspective using the principle of FFF. As already mentioned above, the attempt makes use of my background as an architect to read and interpret a biblical text.

² Ibid.

Its objectives include the exploration of the form and function (as required by an architect) of God's creation described in Genesis 1:1-2:4 from the architectural principle of FFF. In other words, it will explore whether the creation design in Genesis 1:1-2:4a mirrors the architectural principle of FFF. In addition, a Samoan contextual appropriation of the above form and function apparent in the analysis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a will be attempted as well. That is, the form and function of creation, achieved in this work will be compared to a Samoan *Fale Tele*.

iii. Text Selection

The text selection is based on my presupposition that Genesis 1:1-2:4a is an architectural project that consists of a pre-developed design. To bring a design into reality, the architect shall enlist and prepare an order of activities to be followed. This order of activities or work schedule shall fuse consecutive milestones in building-up towards the final intended output. The schedule lays out the blueprint of the output's function and as well as its limitations. Moreover, some activities are prerequisite to others and therefore a critical path can be obtained. Activities on the critical path are to be monitored closely to ensure completion of project without any delays.

In the selected text, the order of events is quite apparent as activities are divided in days. Regardless of any significance of what was created in each day, this paper focuses on finding any resemblance of the FFF architectural principle within the text. To find traces of this principle in the creation story, one shall be attentive and question whether the design and implementation process was followed through. In the text, the order of events seems to arrange in a consecutive manner from day one until day six. Thus, Genesis 1:1-2:4a account of the creation story presents an architectural design like project. This paper offers a perspective to read the creation story in Genesis by recognising the forms it follows to match the functions given in the text.

iv. Method and Approach

The Method and Approach utilised in this paper will be discussed in detail in Chapter One. However, in brief, the text will be analysed using Historical Criticism. In reference to a description by Hayes and Holladay, Historical Criticism focuses on the “History of the Text” and “History in the Text.”³ “History of the Text” looks at the “career of text” while “History in the Text” highlights the history described by the text. Hence, Historical Criticism pays close attention to the world behind the text. The world behind the text considers the historical, social, and cultural backgrounds in relation to when a text was written, and the motivation regarding its composition.⁴ This paper focuses mainly on “history of the text” which centres on the author and audience, social and historical background. The interpretation of the selected text will be informed mainly by this social and historical background of the text. Furthermore, “History in the Text” will be used occasionally when and where it helps to further aid any discussion.

v. Outline of Chapters

Chapter One deals with the method and approach that the thesis will utilise. Firstly, it will explain my Architectural Perspective and the architectural principle of FFF which will be used as a perspective and lens to read Genesis 1:1-2:4a. Secondly, it will discuss Historical Criticism as an interpretational tool for the exegesis part of the research.

³ Hayes and Holladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginners Handbook* 3rd Edition. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2007), pp. 53-61.

⁴ W. Randolph Tate, *Biblical Interpretation: An Integrated Approach* 3rd Edition. (Peabody: Hendrickson, 2008), pp. 2-4. For a more detailed discussion of Historical Criticism, see, Hayes and Halladay, *Biblical Exegesis*, pp. 53-61. See also, J. Maxwell Miller, *Reading the Bible Historically, in To Each Its Own Meaning*, Steven L. McKenzie and Stephen R. Haynes (eds.) (Louisville, Kentucky: Westminster John Knox Press, 1999), pp. 17-22.

Chapter Two briefly introduces the Book of Genesis and the focus text of the study, Genesis 1:1-2:4a. A general overview of the Book of Genesis will be given to situate the focus text in relation to the rest of the book. A brief Literature review of Genesis 1:1-2:4a will follow to situate my research within the current scholarship especially with regards to creation as a building structure. The final part deals with the “History of the Text”. This is to establish a historical and social background of the text to aid our exegesis in the following chapter.

Chapter Three will focus on the text by way of exegesis. The exegesis utilises the FFF principle as architectural perspective and Historical Criticism as outlined in the previous chapters.

Chapter Four will give a Samoan contextual perspective of the analysis in the previous chapter.

The summary of the work and the reassertion of an Architectural Reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a forms a major part of the Conclusion. Moreover, it will also highlight some possible inputs of this reading to further studies and the ministry of the EFKS.

Chapter One: Perspective and Methodology

Introduction

The Chapter will discuss the proposed perspective and lens, and the methodology employed in this thesis. The first part deals with the reading perspective utilising my background as an architect. It will first give a brief background of an architect and architecture in general. Special emphasis will then proceed to discuss the architectural principle FFF which is the main aspect of architect used in the reading perspective.

Moreover, it will discuss Historical Criticism as an interpretational tool to further aid my reading and analysis of the selected biblical text. The chapter ends with a summary of the discussion.

1.1 Architectural Perspective

1.1.1 A Brief Background of Architect

The word architect derives from the Latin *architectus*, which originated from the Greek term *ἀρχιτέκτων* (*architéktōn*).¹ *Architéktōn* and is composed of two parts: *ἀρχι* (*archi*: meaning to be the first, who commands) and *τέκτων* (*tektōn*: referring to as a mason or builder). Thus, *ἀρχι* denotes primary authority and denotes the beginning in the way of, or to be the first to command.²

Contemporary functions or responsibilities of an architect are to plan, design and at the same time oversee the construction of buildings. From the definition stated above,

¹ Pevsner Nikolaus, "The term 'architect' in the Middle Ages" *Speculum* 17, no. 4. (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press Book, 1942), pp. 549-562.

² Paul F. M. J. Verschure, "The Architecture of mind and brain," in *Living machines: A Handbook of Research in Biomimetics and Biohybrid Systems*. (Spain: Oxford University Press, 2018). pp. 338-340.

an architect is a craftsman with authority that gives commands. Interestingly, their importance in the beginning of a process by being the first to command is in line with the importance of their role in the beginning of a project. Without the architect, no plans can be drawn for construction and the project cannot commence.

To practice architecture means to provide services in connection with the design and construction of buildings and the space within the site surrounding the buildings that have as their principal purpose for human occupancy or use.

For a building or any object to survive its design life and its function, the design has been able to hold all applied loads (including its own weight) and other applied loads such as furniture, decorations and most importantly its inhabitants.³ A chair for an example should have structurally sound supports (legs) to avoid breaking when a load is applied via a person sitting on it. Thus, the structural components of any object must withstand its applied loads throughout its design life.

With modern technology, there are various applications of geometrical formation such as framed structure, bearing structure, shed structure etc used to withstand loads for different building designs.⁴ This is followed by other sets of construction plans such as, the floor plan, elevation plan, electrical plan, plumbing plan, windows, and door details, drawing specifications and many more.

1.1.2 Form Follows Function

In 1896 an American architect name Louis Sullivan coined the phrase FFF.⁵ As architects, this phrase always echoed and it serves as a reminder that design architecture

³ American Society of Civil Engineers, *Minimum design loads for buildings and other structures*. (Reston: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2013), pp. 7-10.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Louis H. Sullivan, "The Tall Office Building Artistically Considered." *American Eras: Primary Source*. Vol 1, (2013), pp. 42-46.

is not only for its aesthetic purposes, but rather it should function first. Architecture must primarily serve the people who would occupy a structure or a building. Questions such as the followings must be clear and answered to support the design. What are the occupants needs? How do they work? How do they live? The answers to these questions would direct the architect to the function and then form shall follow, respectively. Therefore, the occupants must always be the centre of the design process.⁶ Personal taste and preference of a client provides uniqueness of the design. For instance, most of the clients go to an architect with some concept or abstract perception of what a specific project should look like when completed. If an architect tries to design around a look or attempts to fit a function into a form; it usually backs them into a corner and poses constraints that would ultimately limit the options to optimize the design. Despite a building being aesthetically pleasing, if it cannot function according to why it was built, the whole process falls apart and eventually the occupants would lose interest. As an example, a client may want a multi-purpose stock storage facility, but the extent to which the types of stock to be stored will depend on availability of funds to bring the facility into completion. These other factors such as financial constraints also play a role in how the functions are developed and what goes into the final decision making before a form is finalized to match the function expectations.⁷

The based assumption is that the text of this creation account is an architectural design by God the great architect. In this regard, there should be a form that follows this function in this creation project.

⁶ Saul W. Gellerman, "In organizations, as in architecture, form follows function." *Organizational dynamics*. Vol 18, no. 3, (1990), pp. 57-69.

⁷ Paul F. M. J. Verschure, "The Architecture of mind and brain," pp. 338-340.

1.2 Historical Criticism as Methodology

As a methodology, Historical Criticism is utilised as a tool to further analyse the selected text Genesis 1 – 2:4a. Historical Criticism as briefly explained above is an interpretational tool that is primarily interested in the world behind the text. This includes the “History of the Text” and the “History in the Text.” For this thesis, the “History of the Text” aspect is mainly utilised by treating the text as part of the Priestly (P) Tradition era. The focus will be on the background of the P Tradition probing into its theology, style, and emphasis. To understand these aspects of the P Tradition will help shed light on the purpose and the intention why the P writer(s) present his/their creation account in Genesis 1:1-2:4a in this form. However, the “History in the Text” aspect may be employed when needed to further clarify and explain a point.

1.2.1 History of the Text

Regardless of what is written in the text; the history of the text however depends on the perception and understanding of the world behind the text or what Hayes and Holladay called “the career of the text”.⁸ Understanding the world behind the text can be attained by seeking answers to the key basic questions: how, why, when, where, and what circumstances it originated. Moreover, one should also question the authorship of the P writer(s), for whom (which society) the text was written and how it was produced.

Many scholars now accept Genesis 1:1-2:4a as part of the P writings in which the writers are from the P circle.⁹ So, in order to understand P’s purpose and intention of presenting the creation narrative in this form, we have to discuss the issues of structure, date, and theology of P. This will give a fairer picture of a possible meaning of Genesis

⁸ John Hayes and Carl R. Halladay, *Biblical Exegesis: A Beginners Handbook*. 3rd Edition. (Louisville: John Knox Press, 2007), pp. 103-107.

⁹ Helge S. Kvanvig, *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic: An Intertextual Reading*. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), pp. 191-107.

1:1-2:4a according to P. This P understanding then will be analysed from the architectural perspective given above. These historical issues regarding P will be discussed in detail in the following chapter.

Summary

The chapter's focus was to outline the method and perspective the thesis will employ in the rest of the work. Firstly, a definition and understanding of architect and architecture were discussed. Moreover, the principle of FFF was discussed and explained. This principle is based on the basic assumption that the function of the design must be aligned or followed by its form. If Genesis 1:1-2:4a is an architectural design; therefore, if the function of the creation design is known then its form could be outlined and sketched. Furthermore, this perspective will help enlighten further the function(s) and form of creation as God intends it from the beginning.

The "History of the Text" aspect of Historical Criticism as an interpretational tool will also be utilised to highlight the purpose and significance of the creation account in its historical context. The text will be treated as a P text, so the background, theology, style, emphasis and more of P will be explored to highlight the functions of the text and hopefully it can give a sketch of the design of the form of creation.

Chapter Two: The Book of Genesis: General Background and Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Introduction

This chapter focuses on the Book of Genesis especially the selected text of Genesis 1:1-2:4a. The discussion begins with a look at a general background on the Book of Genesis. Secondly, it will then situate Genesis 1:1-2:4a in light of the whole Book of Genesis. Discussion of Genesis 1:1-2:4a will continue in the form of a literature review. The literature review of the selected text will also give a general understanding and interpretation of Genesis 1:1-2:4a within the scholarly context. This will hopefully give a context of this study in the overall scholarly conversation.

2.1 General Background of the Book of Genesis

Generally, the Book of Genesis is divided into two sections. This twofold division is usually outlined as follows:

Genesis 1-11 Primeval History

Genesis 12-50 Patriarchal History

This division perhaps signifies the focus of the book, that is, the story of the patriarchs. The Primeval History (Genesis 1 to 11) narrates the two accounts of the creation stories, the Garden of Eden, Cain and Abel, Noah, the Flood, and the Tower of Babel. The Patriarchal History begins with God's call and divine promise to Abraham (Genesis 12:2) and the sequence of events of Abraham (Genesis 12–25) and his

offspring, from Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph whose story tells how the Israelites came to be in Egypt (Genesis 26–50).¹

Moreover, most scholars claim that this twofold division is part of the whole structure of the Book of Genesis, and they are connected in the progress of the whole narrative. Genesis 1-11 narrates the history of origins, and Genesis 12-50 focuses on the history of the patriarchs. In other words, the story of the origin of Israel finds its origins from creation and the stories of the patriarchs.²

Furthermore, the consensus of scholars still holds the view that three main sources are found in the Book of Genesis. These are the Yahwist, Elohist, and P sources as crystallised by Julius Wellhausen in his Documentary Hypothesis (JEDP).³ Taking in consideration the three academic cultures (North America, Israeli, and Europe) involved when discussing the Pentateuch. Therefore, I will not engage the current debate regarding the validity and existence of these sources.⁴ However, and with regards to Genesis 1:1-2:4a, there is still a consensus about the nature of this text as a P text.⁵

2.2 Literature Review of Genesis 1:1-2:4a

This brief review, I have selected mostly those with views on Genesis 1:1-2:4a which are relevant to this research, especially those with connections to both the forms and functions of what were created in the creation narrative as well as discussions of the

¹ Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament: An Introduction* Revised and Updated by Richard Clifford and Daniel Harrington, second edition. (New York: Paulist Press, 2012), p. 69.

² Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*. Translated by Sr. Pascale Dominique. (Winona Lake, Indiana: Eisenbrauns, 2006), pp. 19-26.

³ For further discussions of The JEDP hypothesis and Sources of the Pentateuch see Lawrence Boadt, *Reading the Old Testament*, pp. 72-83; John J. Collins, *Introduction to the Hebrew Bible*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2004), pp. 50-64; Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, pp. 102-164.

⁴ For a recent discussion on this issue see Thomas B. Dozeman and Konrad Schmid (eds), *A Farewell to the Yahwist?: The Composition of the Pentateuch in Recent European Interpretation*. (Atlanta: Society of Biblical Literature, 2006).

⁵ Konrad Schmid, *The Old Testament: A Literary History*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2012), p. 147.

P writings. Moreover, I shall consult the Book of Psalm where the cosmos is equated to God's sanctuary.

W. Garr Randall draws out the verb ברא (*bā-rā*) "create" that clearly expresses God's creative story activity in the P cosmogony.⁶ The verb implements the creative procedure within the six days of the creation (Genesis 1:21, 27). Also ברא summarizes the manners of God's workweek (Genesis 1:1; 2:3).⁷ Similar to the word ברא (*bā-rā*) "create" is the verb עשה (*'ă-śeh*) "make" which appears more often in the creation story. Randall compared the two verbs and as a result, whatever identity "create" may have had, it seems concealed both by the corresponding term "make" and the other verbs in the scripture expressing what God did in Genesis 1:1-2:3.⁸

Meredith G Kline's findings are interested in foundations for a covenantal worldview.⁹ Kline defined אלהים (*'ē-lō-hîm*) God as the Alpha-Author "*For of him and through him and to him are all things*" Romans 11:36a. Furthermore, Kline's view on the creation account described in Genesis 1:1-2:4a is strictly a constructive process by this Creator of All.¹⁰ Depicting God neither a mighty warrior nor a cunning conqueror but as an omnipotent craftsman and an omniscient architect. Kline referenced

⁶ W. Randall Garr, "God's Creation: In the Priestly Source," *Harvard Theological Review* 97, no. 1 (2004), pp. 83-90.

⁷ Ibid,

⁸ For the supplementary status of Gen 2:4a, lying outside of the cosmogony proper, see Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*. 2nd ed. (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 67.

⁹ Meredith G Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*. (Eugene Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), p. 23.

¹⁰ Ibid., p. 26.

Isaiah 45:18 to state the purpose of the entire creation “*created is not to be empty but formed it as a place to live*”.

Moreover, on the other hand Kline’s alternative architectural dimension of creation was design to serve a far more exalted function than the housing mentioned above, but also a cosmic structure that He created as a habitation for Himself – to Meredith G Kline, Creation was a royal construction, where heaven and earth were created as a palace of the Great King.¹¹ Kline affirms that the Sabbath marks the completion of God’s creation; the consecration of days extends to the seventh day, the supreme dominion of him who is Lord of the Sabbath.¹²

Meredith G Kline’s further gives an analysis on the two triads that appears in the creation story: the first triad from day one to day three narrates the establishment of the Creation Kingdom. The second triad is from day four until day six narrates the production of Creatures King, leaving the last day or day seven as The Creator King. The table below shows the statement on the left side and details on the right-hand side.

CREATION KINGDOMS	CREATURE KINGS
Day 1. Light	Day 4. Luminaries
Day 2. Sky Seas	Day 5. Sea creatures Winged creatures
Day 3. Dry land Vegetation	Day 6. Land animals Man
Day 7 The Sabbath - THE CREATOR KING	

¹¹ Ibid., p. 27.

¹² Ibid., p. 38.

Rabbi W. Gunther Plaut also forms two groups of three, and there is a relation between the pairs formed by the respective days of the two groups.¹³ Rabbi Plaut follows the order of days with connection on events and what was created.

Day 1: Light (3-5)

Day 4: Lights (14:19)

Day 2: Dome (1:6-8)

Day 5: Fish/birds (20-23)

Day 3: Earth/seas/vegetation (1:9-13)

Day 6: Animals/people (24-31)

Day one, God created light (1:3) and on day four He created the sun, moon, and stars (Genesis 1:16). On day two God created the expanse that separates the waters above from the waters below. Basically, it is the separation of the sky and oceans and rivers. Day five God created the birds and the fish. Day two and day five in relationship to each other is that birds live and fly in the sky and fish live in the water below on the earth. Simply, on day two God created an environment for the creatures he made on day five. Day three and day six continue to reveal the pattern by creating dry land and then plants on day two and on the last day He created the animals first and then He created mankind in his image.¹⁴

The other interpretation of the Genesis 1:1-2:4a is based on the assembling of the Israelite's tabernacle. Dean W Collinwood and James W McConkie affirm that many of the descriptions of the tabernacle are transparently cosmic.¹⁵ The assembling of the tabernacle in the beginning of every year was traditionally linked to the creation story, and the tabernacle was assembled in stages each marked by as the Lord commanded Moses (Exodus 25-31 and 35-40).

¹³ Rabbi W Gunther Plaut and David ES Stein, *The Torah: A Modern Commentary*. revised edition. (New York: Union for Reform Judaism, 2005), p. 17.

¹⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵ Dean W. Collinwood and James W. McConkie, *Temple Theology: An Introduction*. (London: Brigham Young University, 2006), pp. 173-177.

According to the Hebrew Bible, the tabernacle (miš-kān) meaning “residence” or “dwelling place”¹⁶ is simultaneously align with Kline’s architectural dimension of creation. This cosmic structure that God created was not for humankind but a habitation for Himself, like the tabernacle assembled by Moses in the book of Exodus.¹⁷

John H. Walton gives a list of evidence that connects the cosmos and Temple. This list is as follows:

In the Bible and in the ancient Near East the temple is viewed as a microcosm.

- The temple is designed with the imagery of the cosmos.
- The temple is related to the functions of the cosmos.
- The creation of the Temple is parallel to the creation of the cosmos.
- In the Bible the cosmos can be viewed as a temple.¹⁸

Walton further adds, the Temple is where God rests. Therefore, Genesis one could be viewed as a temple text. Moreover, “Genesis 1 can now be seen as a creation account focussing on the cosmos as a temple.”¹⁹ In other words, Walton concludes that Genesis 1 “is describing the creation of the cosmic temple with all of its functions and with God dwelling in the midst.”²⁰

Christophe Nihan also argues that there are many parallels of the creation account in Genesis 1:1-2:3 and the building account in Exodus 39-40 and this forms an *inclusion*

¹⁶ Magne Sæbø, *Hebrew Bible-Old Testament: The History of Its Interpretation*. (Bristol: Vandenhoeck & Ruprecht, 1996), pp. 401-402.

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ John W. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), p. 83.

¹⁹ Ibid.

²⁰ Ibid.

around the P story in Genesis-Exodus.²¹ Also, the connection between creation and the tabernacle or temple is common in the Ancient Near East creation accounts as well.²²

Jon Levenson argues that the dedication of the Solomon Temple took place in the seventh month during the festival of the Tabernacles, which served as the general temple-dedication festival. These seven-day festivals to mark and celebrate a temple dedication are common in the Ancient Near East as well. Levenson then adds, “It is really no wonder that the creation poem in Genesis is inserted in a seven-day framework.”²³ In other words, Levenson argues that this is another close relationship of the Temple and the creation account in Genesis.

The preceding brief literature review, in my opinion, suggests two main points that are relevant to this research. Importantly, Northern America scholars agree that God’s creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a is a P account and could be considered as an architectural design. Secondly, this design is parallel to the tabernacle and the temple that is in Exodus, a P text as well. This is relevant to this work since it reaffirms the selected text as part of the overall P account.

Given these findings, my architectural approach will also contribute to the view of creation as a building or architectural design and will also provide a contextual understanding and appropriation of the creation narrative in Genesis 1:1-2:4a.

Lastly, is the consultation of the Book of Psalm where the cosmos is equated to God’s sanctuary. In terms of pillars of the Earth, Asaph quotes God’s words in Psalm 75:3 “*When the earth totters, with all its inhabitants, it is I who keep its pillars steady.*” (NRSV). The context is God’s judgment of the wicked at a time of His choosing when

²¹ Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch: A Study in the Composition of the Book of Leviticus*. (Tübingen: Mohr Siebeck, 2007), p. 54.

²² Ibid., p. 59.

²³ Jon D. Levenson, *Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*. (Princeton NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988), p. 79.

He will bring down the evildoer and exalt the righteous. The shaking “pillars” of the earth in this psalm seem to be a reference to unsteadiness and unrest in society, due to the onslaught of wicked men. God promises to intervene and restore society to stability. Or it could be that the “pillars” in Psalm 75:3 are the righteous, whom the Lord promises to keep from falling. For examples of people being described as “pillars,” see Psalm 144:12, Galatians 2:9, and Revelation 3:12.

2.3 Genesis 1:1-2:4a: A Priestly Text

2.3.1 Priestly Tradition – A Brief Background

According to Jean-Louis Ska, “The P narrative never found itself in the path of the cyclone that ravaged research on the Pentateuch.”²⁴ This is because the style and theology associated with P are relatively recognizable.²⁵ Helge Kvanvig similarly asserts that P materials stand out due to its characteristics, it has a predilection for genealogies, a narrative style of ordering events in sequence, reflecting a genealogical style, a vocabulary centered on revelation and cult and it has a clear theology of its own.²⁶

However, Ska further claims that there are five main problems that scholars are engaged recently. These are “the nature of the P narrative, its conclusion, its relationship to the “Holiness Code” (Leviticus 17-26), its theology, and its date.”²⁷ The scope of this thesis does not allow a detailed discussion of all the five mentioned above.²⁸ But I will

²⁴ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to Reading the Pentateuch*. (Winona Lake: Eisenbrauns, 2006), p. 146.

²⁵ Ibid.

²⁶ Helge Kvanvig, *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic: An Intertextual Reading*. (Leiden Boston: Brill, 2011). pp. 181-187.

²⁷ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, p. 146-161.

²⁸ For a discussion of these issues: the conclusion of P, nature of P, and its relationship to H, see Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, pp. 146-161. Also see Christophe Nihan, *From Priestly Torah to Pentateuch*.

only discuss the theology and date below since they are significant to the argument of the thesis.

2.3.1a Date of P

Scholars generally agree that Genesis is the combined work of P and other non-P sources (probably J), and that Genesis 1:1-2:4a is the work of P. With regards to the dating of P, proposals span from the pre-exilic era to the Persian period. Recently, scholars seem to lean on the Persian period as the most probable date of the P materials.²⁹ However, in saying this, scholars also acknowledge that some P materials could be dated before and during the exile and was later put together in the final P document during the Persian period.

2.3.1b Structure of P

There are many proposals that deal with the structure of P. Some scholars use the “*toledot* formula” (generation formula) to give a structure of P. This proposal claims that there are ten “generation formula” in Genesis and ten “formulas of Israel’s wanderings in the wilderness” in Exodus and Numbers.³⁰ Other scholars suggest that the structure of P could be seen in the revelation of God in three phases. These phases correspond to different divine names in the P document. The first phase is the Creation where the name *Elohim* was used. The next phase is during the promises to the patriarchs where the name *El Shaddai* was used. The last phase is during the exodus where the name Yahweh was finally revealed.³¹ Other scholars identify the structure of

²⁹ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, p. 161. Ska, in his analysis of the term ‘people of the land’ in Ezra/Nehemiah concludes that the use of this term in P is the same as it is used in Ezra/Nehemiah, a post-exilic text. Therefore, this suggests a post-exilic date for P.

³⁰ Ibid., p. 163.

³¹ Ibid., p. 153. Also see Konrad Schmid, “Judean Identity and Ecumenicity: The Political Theology of the Priestly Document,” in *Judah and the Judeans in the Achaemenid Period: Negotiating Identity in*

P in relation to the two covenants. The Noahic covenant and the Abrahamic covenant. These proposals are all interconnected and reflect P's interests and theological emphasis. However, I tend to adopt the following structure by Joseph Blenkinsopp provides relevant materials that are useful in this thesis.

Joseph Blenkinsopp proposed the following three-layered structure of P;³²

- Creation of the world
- Construction of the sanctuary
- Establishment of the sanctuary in the land and division of the land between the tribes

In the development of the above structure, Blenkinsopp states that by understanding this formulaic and programmatic feature of P has made it easier to locate clues at the linguistic and structural level to why such work was composed. He further adds, there are some repeated formulaic expressions which specifically P materials. These are: *to mark the successful completion of a work and the execution of a command given by God* either directly or indirectly.³³ Thus, formulaic expressions can be divided as conclusion-formulae and execution-formulae. The solemn conclusion-formulae are restricted to three points in the history:

- The Creation of the world (Gen 2:1, 2 ending with "God finished His Work which he had done").
- Construction of the wilderness sanctuary and its appointments (Ex 39:32; 40:33 ending with "so Moses finished the work").

an International Context, O. Lipschits, G.N. Knoppers and M. Oeming (eds). (Winona Lakes, Eisenbrauns, 2011), pp. 3-26.

³² Joseph Blenkinsopp, "The Structure of P," *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly* 38, no. 3. (Franciscan School of Theology: Catholic Biblical Association, 1976), p. 279.

³³ Ibid.

- Dividing the land among the tribes after the setting up of the wilderness sanctuary at Shiloh (Jos 19:51 ending with “so they finished dividing the land”).³⁴

Execution-formulae on the other hand are the much more common expressions such as the ones listed below to name a few.

- Construction of the ark by Noah (Gen 6:22; 7:5)
- Fulfillment of the law of circumcision by Abraham (Gen 17:23; 21:4)
- The mission to Pharaoh of Moses and Aaron (Ex 7:6; 7:10,20)
- Passover (Ex 12:28; 12:50; Num 9:5)
- Preservation of the omer of manna (Ex 16:34)
- Work on the sanctuary and P vestments (Ex 36:1; 39:1,5,21,26,29,31)
- Completion and consecration of the sanctuary (Ex 39:32; 39:42-43; 40:16)
- Setting up and furnishing of the sanctuary (Ex 40:19,21,23,25,27,29,32)
- Ordination of priests (Lev 8:4,9,13,17,29,36)
- Inauguration of Aaron's priesthood (Lev 9:10).³⁵

This structure clearly shows the connection P makes between the creation of the world in the beginning of his document and building of the sanctuary later. Also, the roles and responsibilities of Aaron's priesthood perhaps mirrors what God expects from humanity in relation to creation.

2.3.1c Theology of P

The theology of the P source does not really diverge from the structure mentioned above. That is, the emphasis on the building of the Temple and the priesthood coincides

³⁴ Ibid., p. 276.

³⁵ Ibid.

with the significance given to worship and cult. Apart from other aspects of the theology of P, one of its main focuses is proper worship. The significance of worship and rituals as an identity marker for the restored community coincides with the non-existence of the monarchy. This emphasis is apparent in P's focus on the cult and ritual.³⁶ The following characteristics of the P source further highlight this:

- emphasis on Temple cult and worship
- emphasis on the southern kingdom of Judah (because that is the location of Jerusalem and the Temple where cultic worship occurs)
- emphasis on the role of the Levites, the P class or tribe
- emphasis on genealogies and tribal lists, which established the different groups in Israelite society, including the P class
- emphasis on order and the majesty of God and creation
- examples: first Creation story (see Genesis 1:1-2:4), the Book of Leviticus

Given the above structure and the list of P's theological assertions I would like to end this section with the discussion of P's theology which he develops in his document. This is the theology of the "glory". This glory is seen in P's account in Exodus 14, 24; and Numbers 14 and 20. According to Ska, "The "glory" unites two important aspects of divine revelation: YHWH's actions in Israel's history and his presence in the cult. In the tent of meeting, Israel venerates the "glory" of YHWH, the Lord of their history."³⁷ Moreover, Ska claims that this "glory" becomes the guide for Israel and accompanies the people in the wilderness towards the Promised Land. In other words, with the "glory" assisting them in their journey, they would never fail.³⁸ This theology is

³⁶ James Baird, "Living in Christ Series," *The JEPD Theory*. (San Francisco, California: Saint Mary's Press, 2010), pp. 1-6.

³⁷ Jean-Louis Ska, *Introduction to the Pentateuch*, p. 157.

³⁸ *Ibid.*, p. 158.

relevant during the restoration period especially with the temple still in ruins. That is, prophets with P background such as Ezekiel prophesied the return of the “glory” of God in Jerusalem and will be signified by the rebuilding of the Temple.

Summary

In summary, this chapter highlights a brief background of the Book of Genesis. Moreover, it looks at the selected text from a historical perspective where Genesis 1:1-2:4a is widely accepted as a P text. The discussion of P’s dating and theology provides some important features that are relevant in the analysis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a in the next chapter. These aspects relate to the historical context of the Persian period as well as P’s theology of “glory” which connects the Creation account to the building of the Temple. These are important theological programs for the P lead community. These findings would assist in the exploration of the form and function of Genesis 1:1-2:4a.

Chapter Three: Analysis and Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Introduction

In this chapter, an analysis and exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a will be employed using the architectural perspective and methodology discussed in the previous chapter. Moreover, Genesis 1:1-2:4a will also be analysed considering P's emphasis and theology.

3.1 Exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a

3.1.1 Genesis 1:1-2 - The Beginning of Creation

Verse one serves as the title of the creation narrative, *"In the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth."*¹ This verse referred to the creation of the "heavens" and "earth" in the "beginning" as if these are three specific elements or pillars of God's creation. The title also reveals the similarity of Genesis 1:1-2:4a to science, "space", "matter" and "time".² The universe came to existence but also to provide explanations on their relationships, that is, *"space-time tells matter how to move; matter tells space-time how to curve"*.³

The use of the word בראשית (*bə-rê-šît*) "beginning" in verse one is apparently referring to the time when אלהים (*'ē-lō-hîm*) "God", ברה "created" the שמים (*Sā-ma-yim*) "heavens" and the ארע (*'ā-reš*) "earth".

¹ Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version.

² Ignazio Ciufolini and Richard A Matzner (eds), *General Relativity and John Archibald Wheeler*, vol. 367. (Springer, Netherlands: Springer Science & Business Media, 2010), pp. 1-6.

³ Ibid.

Moreover, God (Elohim) is a masculine plural form of the generic term god.⁴ It depicts Israel's view of their God. It does not refer to a plurality of gods, but this term reveals the majestic nature of the one and only God of Israel.

The verse also reveals that the God of Israel is the creator God. From an architectural perspective, God is explicitly introduced here as the designer and director of the creation project.

Verse two introduces a pre-existing environment where the spirit of God is hovering over a chaotic place on earth.⁵ The three description of the earth prior creation were תהו (*tō·hū*) formless, בהו (*bō·hū*) void, חשך (*ḥō·šek*) darkness. These descriptions show an image of the initial state of earth as covered with darkness, empty and without any proper form.⁶ The mentioning of the spirit רוח (*rūaḥ*) of God implies that the chaotic earth, which is formless, void, and dark, will have life eventually.⁷ According to John H. Walton, God's spirit was active over the non-functional cosmos; God was involved but had not taken up his residence.⁸

From an architectural perspective, the first two verses indicate the situation of the earth before God's created work. When a family prepares for a construction work such

⁴ Dianne Bergant, *Genesis: In the Beginning*. (Collegeville, Minnesota: Liturgical Press, 2013), p. 23. Also see Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*, WBC (Texas: Word Books Publisher, 1987), p. 14. Also see, James G. Murphy, *A Critical and Exegetical Commentary on The Book of Genesis with a New Translation*. (Eugene: WIPF & Stock Publisher, 1998), pp. 25-27; Mark G. Brett, *Genesis: Procreation and the politics of identity, Old Testament Readings*. (London: Routledge, 2000), pp. 24-25.

⁵ Bruce K. Waltke, "The Creation Account in Genesis I:1-3: Part 1: Introduction to Biblical Cosmogony," *Bibliotheca Sacra* 132 (January-March 1975), pp. 25-36.

⁶ Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*. (Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006). p. 26. Also see Wenham's description of *tō·hū* 'formless' and *bō·hū* 'void' as 'total chaos' in Gordon J. Wenham, *Genesis 1-15*. (Texas: Waco, 1987), p. 14.

⁷ Arthur J. Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good? Reappraising Earth in Genesis 1:1-2:4a from a Samoan Gafataulima Perspective." (Auckland: PhD Thesis, University of Auckland, 2016), pp. 120-121

⁸ John W. Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate*. (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2009), p. 84.

as a building, they need to evaluate with the assistance of an architect the existing conditions of the construction site and to establish the quality standard of the work in any kind of weather.⁹ With architects, the site is the first to be prepared and the surrounding of the proposed building area must be set out. This is in parallel with the accounts in these two verses; in which God seemed to evaluate the conditions of the earth before commencement of His creation. In this stage, the architect shall consider all aspects of the field such as the geological location, site boundaries, environmental conditions, and climate of the site. Understanding all these aspects of the site allows the architect to envision provisional issues that need to be addressed.¹⁰ For instance, from Gods initial evaluation of the earth, He observed that there is darkness and consequently He created light. On the other hand, an architect could evaluate the existing geological condition of the site and decide to improve the site material via elevation.

3.1.2 Genesis 1:3-5 - The Creation of Light

These verses explain God's first creation and mark the first contact between God and earth not physically but via God's speeches, "*let there be light and there was light.*"¹¹ It is obvious that the light here does not refer to sunlight, moonlight or starlight since these lights were created later. Therefore, it may suggest that the light here implies the presence of God. God's presence has lightened up the chaotic world. In

⁹ Ammar Saeed Mohammed Moohialdin et al., "Construction Worker Productivity in Hot and Humid Weather Conditions: A Review of Measurement Methods at Task, Crew and Project Levels," *Engineering, Construction and Architectural Management*. vol. 27 no.1. (Bingley UK: Emerald Publishing Limited, 2019), pp. 83-108.

¹⁰ PYMM Kivi and M. Mattila, "Analysis and Improvement of Work Postures in the Building Industry: Application of the Computerised Owass Method," *Applied ergonomics* 22, no. 1 (1991). For example visit the construction worker site: <https://www.careerexplorer.com/careers/construction-worker/>

¹¹ *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version*.

other words, the chaotic and lifeless situation before now has life.¹² Therefore, it is now starting to have a function.

The Hebrew word יהי ($y^{\text{e}}\cdot h\hat{y}$) is derived from the word היה ($h\bar{a}y\bar{a}h$) meaning “fall out”, “came to pass”, “become” or “be”. Therefore, יהי can also be translated as “let there be”, “may there be” or “let be”. This final form היה ($h\bar{a}y\bar{a}h$) is a jussive verb, where jussive is a grammatic mood of verbs issuing orders, commanding, or exhorting. The Hebrew jussive maybe used in either 2nd or 3rd person.¹³ The jussive verb יהי ($y^{\text{e}}\cdot h\hat{y}$) indicates God’s wish, command, exhortation, advice, invitation permission as well as prayer for light to be formed, and there was light. The light can be referred to as the form while its function is to separate the darkness and the light, a command that will reveal the day and the night as mentioned in Genesis 1:5.

From the progress of designing a building, the architects’ issues various commands, ideas, or concepts for the clients to choose which design they prefer. The meaning of jussive in Hebrew also reflects in the first part of the word *Architéktōn* discussed in Chapter One, ἀρχι (archi) to be the first who commands.¹⁴

¹² Arthur J. Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good?, pp. 117-119.

¹³ Ketevan Gadilia, *Mood in the Book of Genesis (1: 3-28): Hortative, Jussive, Optative, Imperative (Georgian, Ossetic, Kumyk)*. (Moscow, Russia: Institute for Bible Translation, 2020), pp. 1-2.

¹⁴ Paul F. M. J. Verschure, “The Architecture of mind and brain,” in *Living machines: A Handbook of Research in Biomimetics and Biohybrid Systems*. (Spain: Oxford University Press, 2018). pp. 338-340. Also see <https://www.archdaily.com/898648/etymology-in-architecture-tracing-the-language-of-design-to-its-roots>

3.1.3 Genesis 1:6-8 The Separation of the Waters.

The Hebrew word רָקִיעַ (*rā-qî-aʿ*) “expanse” is the next act of creation commanded by God, which formed during the separation of waters. Meredith G. Kline suggests that the expanse or firmament is a solid base canopying over earth.¹⁵ Its function in creation is to divide the waters present in the pre-existing world to create a space in between. Other takes this to mean a dome canopying over the earth. Dome means a rounded vault forming the roof of a building or structure, typically with a circular base.¹⁶ However, the above mentioned meaning of expanse is found elsewhere in the Hebrew traditions but not רָקִיעַ (*rā-qî-aʿ*) “expanse” in Genesis 1:1-2:4a.¹⁷ Then God named the expanse שָׁמַיִם (*šā-mā-yim*) “Sky” (Genesis 1:8).

Separating water from water continues to show the power of God by putting limits on the waters which we still see now a days’ covering the earth. The upper waters were kept there by the expanse or firmament, forming a dome which prevents the waters in the clouds falling to earth. Separation basically means creating space; thus the space was formed and ready for the next day and the upcoming event and of course for rainy season on earth. Moreover, the function of creating a space in between provides a space for further things to create for the earth.

For architects, creating as many spaces required for occupants is very important when it comes to layout and floor planning of different areas around the house. For that

¹⁵ Meredith G. Kline, *Kingdom Prologue: Genesis Foundations for a Covenantal Worldview*. (Eugene Oregon: Wipf and Stock Publishers, 2006), p. 26.

¹⁶ See <https://www.lexico.com/definition/dome>

¹⁷ Arthur J. Wulf, "Was Earth Created Good", p. 120.

reason, every country has a Building Code Manual¹⁸ which guides the architects for minimum and maximum standard requirements to build in a country or island.

3.1.4 Genesis 1:9-13 - The Creation of Land and Plants

God Himself with His almighty power, gathered water together to one place and let the dry land appear as per narrative in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. Thus, God continue His creation in form of speech. The assemblage water was then named sea and land was named earth, but how earth was formed is not specific in the narrative of the creation story. Hence, he created land to be separate from the water, and God saw that it was good.¹⁹

To assemble water under the sky God commanded יקוו (yiq-qā-wū). יקוו comes from the root word קוה (qāvâh) translated as “to bind together”. Therefore, יקוו (yiq-qā-wū) means “let be gathered together”, water was gathered and at the same time תראה (tê-râ-’eh) dry land appears. This is the first of two commands occurred on the third day of creation.²⁰

The second command on day three was direct to the יבשה (yab-bā-šā) “dry land” by saying תדשא (taḏ-šê) meaning “let bring forth”, “vegetation: plants yielding seed of every kind, and trees of every kind bearing fruit with the seed in it.”

¹⁸ Bruce Ellingwood, Theodore V. Galambos, and James Grierson MacGregor, *Development of a Probability Based Load Criterion for American National Standard A58”: Building Code Requirements for Minimum Design Loads in Buildings and Other Structures*, vol. 13. (Department of Commerce, National Bureau of Standards, 1980). Samoa also has a Building Code for construction to Ensure that all Buildings Constructions Projects complies with applicable regulations and standard.

¹⁹ *Holy Bible, New Revised Standard Version.*

²⁰ Vanlier A. Hunter, *Biblical Hebrew Workbook: An Inductive Study for Beginners*. (NY: University Press of America, 1988), p. 192.

In verses 11-13, this act of creation shows the power God bestowed upon the earth. He commanded the earth to produce vegetation and it did. He commands and the earth responds. In other words, the earth has now become a co-creator with God in creation. So, the function of the earth now has been increased. Now it can produce vegetation on its own.

The separation of sea and earth corresponds to elevating every building off the ground level. The technical word often used in drawing is offset, meaning a sloping extension in a wall or other feature where the thickness of the part above is diminished. The elevating of levels reflects the designing of buildings from its foundation to prevent the access of water into buildings.²¹

3.1.5 Genesis 1:14-19 - The Creation of the Heavenly Lights

Light commanded in day one is referring to God Himself. Then on day four God eventually created the sun, moon, and all the stars. This shows that God is light. The creations of heavenly lights are luminance as sign to differentiate seasons, and days and for years.

The Hebrew word for light in verse three אֹר (ʾō·wr) is different from מֵאֵרֶת (mə·ʾō·rōt) in verse fourteen. The Hebrew word אֹר (ʾō·wr) meaning light is illumination or (concrete) luminary (in every sense, including lighting, happiness, etc).

²¹ Christopher P. Jones et al., *Evaluation of the National Flood Insurance Program's Building Standards*. (Washington DC: American Institutes for Research, 2006), pp. 23-27.

This light refers to God as the source of light and מארת (*mə·'ō-rōt*) derived from the root word מאר (*mā'ōwr*) meaning properly, a luminous body or luminary.²²

The purpose of these created מאר (*mā'ōwr*) lights on day four is expressed through the use of לממשלת (*le-mem·še·let*) meaning to rule over the day and over the night.

Therefore, for a building design, the set of drawings comes with a footing detail, floor plan, an electrical plan for the purpose of illumination or מארת (*me·'ō-rōt*) of various space. The designer will choose the type of light or the amount of light which is best fitted for each space to be used when needed.²³

3.1.6 Genesis 1:20-23 The creation of Birds and Fish

Since day one light is associated with what was created in day four, this pattern continues for day two and day five. The רקיע (*rā·qī·a'*) “expanse” created on day two produced a space, expanse or firmament for day five. The space was then used for birds and all creatures of the sky while the sea was filled with fishes and other different creatures of the sea. God creates creatures which are identified by the Hebrew word נפש (*ne·pēš*) defined as, a soul, living being, life, self, person, desire, passion, appetite,

²² Mark S. Smith, *The Priestly Vision of Genesis 1*. (Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 2010), pp. 20-26.

²³ J Fergus Nicol, *Characterising Occupant Behaviour in Buildings: Towards a Stochastic Model of Occupant Use of Windows, Lights, Blinds, Heaters and Fans*. (Rio: Seventh International IBPSA conference, 2001).

emotion.²⁴ Hence, sky was filled with נפש (*ne-ṭeš*) “life” as well as the sea with “living beings”. These commands are still in the form of God’s creative speech.

Here, is how the architectural perspective FFF is mirrored in the first creation story in Genesis 1:1-2-4a. The same way God created the earth in those first few days mirrors the process that the architect follows in designing and laying out the different sections of a building. The creation story shows how God created the space, and separated the waters and dry lands, and so forth, each with their own unique function specific to how God intended them to work. The same can be said about how the architect designs and creates these different sections in a building, each with their own function and intended purpose to serve its inhabitants.²⁵

3.1.7 Genesis 1:24-32 - The Creation of Animals and Humankind

The pattern above continues with the relationship between day three and day six. The elevation of land and all the trees on day three is now filled with נפש (*ne-ṭeš*) “life” or creatures of the land. God once again invites more participants on earth.²⁶ Garr W. Randall draws out the verb ברא (*bā-rā*) “create” that clearly expresses God’s creative story activity in the P cosmogony.²⁷ Similarly, to the verb create is the verb עשה (*‘ā-šeh*) “make” which appears more often in the creation story. From Randall’s comparison of the two verbs, identity of “create” seems concealed both by the

²⁴ Kenneth Matthews, *Genesis 1-11: 26, Vol. 1a, the NAC*. (Nashville, TN: Broadman & Holman Publishers, 1996), pp. 307-310.

²⁵ American Society of Civil Engineers, *Minimum design loads for buildings and other structures*. (Reston: American Society of Civil Engineers, 2013). pp. 1073-1077.

²⁶ David M. Carr, *The Formation of Genesis 1-11: Biblical and Other Precursors*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2020).

²⁷ W. Randall Garr is a Professor of Religious Studies at the University of California in Santa Barbara.

corresponding term “make” and the other verbs in the scripture expressing what God did in day six.²⁸

God also has given every plant yielding seed that is upon the face of all the earth, and every tree with seed in its fruit; you shall have them for food. And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth, everything that has the breath of life, I have given every green plant for food.²⁹

Most importantly, God created humankind in His image, male and female. Then God saw everything that he made, and indeed, it was very good. Moreover, humans are blessed by God, to be fruitful and multiply. It also assigned humans to be co-creator with God. Humans are also given authority over all creation by God. A role, according to P theology, is to become holy with all creation according to the holiness of God. Hence, it is not a license to exploit and subjugate the whole of creation.³⁰ Verses 24 and 25 is stressing that these creatures identify with Earth. Earth is therefore not just the source of the living creatures but also their home and habitat.

This brings the architects designed work to an end when handing over ownership of the designed building to their client or inhabitants. It is now up to the owner to do whatever he/she wishes to do in the house/building, just as God granted dominion to mankind over everything that was created on earth. The architect being human, must design structure component which the building takes its own load and survive for its life, thus, the clients have to feel safe and secure of the structure of the building or house.

²⁸ For the supplementary status of Gen 2:4a, lying outside of the cosmogony proper, see Jon D. Levenson, *Creation and the Persistence of Evil: The Jewish Drama of Divine Omnipotence*. 2nd ed. (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1994), p. 67.

²⁹ Michael D. Michael David Coogan et al., *The New Oxford Annotated Bible with Apocrypha: New Revised Standard Version*. (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010).

³⁰ Helge S. Kvanvig, *Primeval History: Babylonian, Biblical, and Enochic: An Intertextual Reading*. (Leiden: Brill, 2011), p. 4.

3.1.8 Genesis 2:1-4a - The Holy Seventh Day

At this point, the heavens and earth were created, and all their multitude and God rested and blessed the creation of the 7th day. This part is the conclusion of the creation story which started from 1:1. This relates to the rest given to this day to mark the end of creation.

This last day of creation, according to most scholars, relates to one of the P emphases on the Sabbath. The Sabbath had become one of the markers for Judaism in the post exilic period.

Moreover, some scholars claim that the Sabbath is the climax of God's creation. It signifies the completion of the cosmic temple and where God now dwells. In other words, according to P's theology, the glory of God has now occupied the cosmic temple.

3.1.9 Analysis

The preceding analysis and exegetical work summarise the creative works by God. The utilisation of the architectural principle FFF has shown that the narrative of the creation story is subject to function as a residence or a home for humankind. In comparison with P's theology of the tabernacle, the assembling of its structure is subject to function as a dwelling place for God. Function therefore must operate before establishing a form, in other words FFF.

Now that we have given these functions from Genesis 1:1-2:4a and the tabernacle as per analysis, it precedes to the work of an architecture to design a form for these functions. The form must undergo questions as mentioned in 1.1.2 to support the design.

The function of the tabernacle in the time of Moses, according to P, symbolizes that God is in the midst of his people. A timely reminder to the people during the restoration community, and perhaps a message of hope as well, that God will restore

Judah and Jerusalem. This is indicated by his presence through His glory returning to the Temple. Therefore, the structural set up and the arrangement of the tabernacle stages presented a final perception of the form which follows its function of cult and worship.

The chaotic world before God's creation echoes the abovementioned hope in restoration for the Israelites. For that reason, I tend to agree with scholars endorsing the close relationship between the tabernacle's (and Temple) form in ordering the creation account narrative. Moreover, this form generates function for the creation account. For instance, the separation of darkness and light explores the function of day and night and the separation of the water above and water below created the function of space. Like the tabernacle, the function is known; therefore, the form for this function could possibly be outlined and sketched. Sketching the form of the creation account also undergo questions of how the occupant want his/her home to function.

In this regard, considering the functions of all the individual parts created as analysed above, and from a FFF perspective, the function of the whole creation is twofold. Creation provides a home for humankind to live and look after the creation, and a place of worship for humanity to acknowledge the presence of God. In other words, creation is not only a cosmic temple for God to rest and dwell, but also a place for humanity to worship and perform their service to God.

Therefore, given the above discussion, an apparent form that follows the overall function of creation can now be sketched. (See figure 1) This form shares similar characteristics to the one proposed by Lawrence Boadt. (See figure 2)

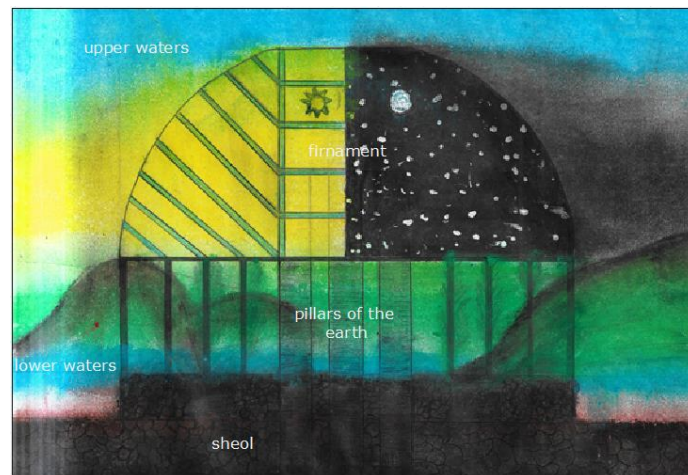


Figure 1: Form of creation from an architectural perspective by author

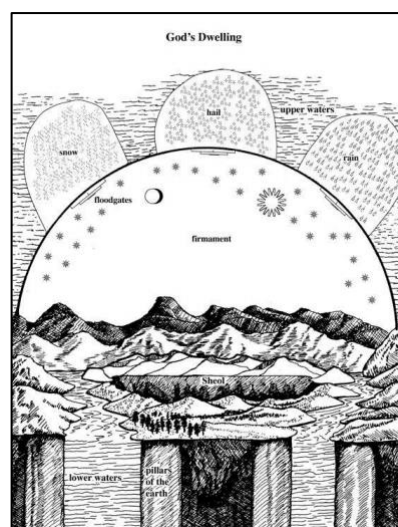


Figure 2: A Reconstruction of Ancient Hebrew Cosmology

Summary

The preceding analysis and exegetical work summarise the creative works by God as presented in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. It discusses each day and the creative activities that took place. These discussions highlight the functions of each element created by God. In the overall analysis and exegesis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a it concluded that the whole creation functions as home for humanity. The rest of creation or the whole environment will provide for the welfare and security of humanity.

Furthermore, the analysis also highlights that the same creation functions as a worship palace for humanity and resting place or cosmic Temple for God. The creation

not only will reveal the “glory” of God but will also serve as place of worship for humanity to serve and praise God.

Given these findings and conclusions above, a form of creation could be sketched from a FFF perspective. This form reflects the functions as apparent form the above analysis. In other words, it reflects a form of a home and place of worship. This apparent form is presented in figure 1.

The next chapter will further analyse this form of creation from a Samoan contextual perspective. Since the form or structure of creation apparent from this architectural perspective resembles some of the structures of Samoan buildings, therefore, the following contextual appropriation, in my opinion, will shed more light in understanding Genesis 1:1-2:4a creation story especially for Samoan readers of the bible.

Chapter Four: A Samoan contextual appropriation

Introduction

This chapter will continue the analysis of Genesis 1:1-2:4a from a Samoan perspective. In other words, it will give a Samoan contextual perspective of the architectural reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a in the previous chapter. In the analysis above a possible sketch of the form of creation was identified. This sketch of the form and structure of creation, in my opinion, resembles a Samoan *Fale* or a Samoan house especially a Samoan *Fale Tele*.¹ The *Fale Tele* is also known as *Fale Talimalo* or Guest House where the family welcomes their guests. It is also the main house used for family gatherings and meetings, and for family *faalavelave* such as funerals and *saofai* or *matai* title bestowments. Occasionally, it may also use as a meeting house for the village Council or *Fono a le nuu* or *Fono a Alii ma Faipule*. Most of all these traditional and social gatherings, besides funerals, all these gatherings start with an *ava* ceremony, a form of traditional Samoan worship.

The main aim of the chapter is to highlight the structure, form, and function of the *Fale Tele*. In this regard, the discussion will mainly focus on these three aspects of *Fale Tele*. The discussion of the chapter will be structured as follows. Firstly, a general description of a Samoan *fale* will be given. It will explain its functions and usage by the family. Secondly, it will briefly discuss the structure and form of the *Fale Tele*. Lastly, this discussion will be the basis of a contextual appropriation of the form and structure of creation attained in the previous chapter.

¹ *Fale Tele* literally means big house. This name resembles the size of the house since *Fale Tele* is the biggest house of the family and it stands at the front of the family land. There are other small houses at the back of the *Fale Tele* for living, sleeping and cooking.

4.1 *Fale Samoa*

Traditionally, the term *fale* or house is usually followed by another word which is either joined to the word *fale* or separate from *fale*. These words describe the kind of house it refers to. For examples: *Fale Afolau* is the house for living and sleeping; *Fale Tele* (big house) or *Fale Talimalo* (guest house) could be a *Fale Afolau* too, but it is much bigger in size. It is used to welcome and host guests. Most commonly too, it is used to host meetings of the Village Council or *Fono a le Nu'u*. *Faleo'o* is a small house usually for the young and untitled men of the family to stay; *Fale Palagi* (European style house) and *Falesa* (sacred house or church building). These individual houses have different sizes, forms, and functions. For example, *Fale Afolau* usually is used as a living house where people have all their belongings. It is also used for sleeping. *Fale Tele* is also known as *Fale Talimalo* usually stands in the front of the family land and has several uses. It is for hosting guests, for village meetings, family gatherings and for family *faalavelave* such as funerals and *saofa'i* or *matai* bestowments.

The form and structure of creation established in the preceding chapter resembles the *Fale Tele*. Therefore, the discussion will mainly focus on this house. According to Charles Wilkes, "Samoans greatest ingenuity work is in the construction of their native houses, and particularly the *Fale-Tele*'s or council houses."² Its intricate design involves specialized knowledge and skills that are passed down from generation to generation. Furthermore, Latu Latai claims that the design of the *Fale Tele* mirrors and contributes to the culture and life of Samoan people being deeply connected to the value of kinship,

² Charles Wilkes, *Narrative of the United States' Exploring Expedition: During the Years 1838, 1839, 1840, 1841, 1842*, vol. 1. (Philadelphia: Lea & Blanchard, 1845).

ancestral past, land and community.³ The space outside and inside of the *fale* are pivotal to culture form, ceremony, and ritual. Moreover, architectural concepts are incorporated in Samoan proverb, oratory and metaphors, and link to other art forms in Samoa, such as boat building and tattooing.

4.2 The Structure of the Fale Tele

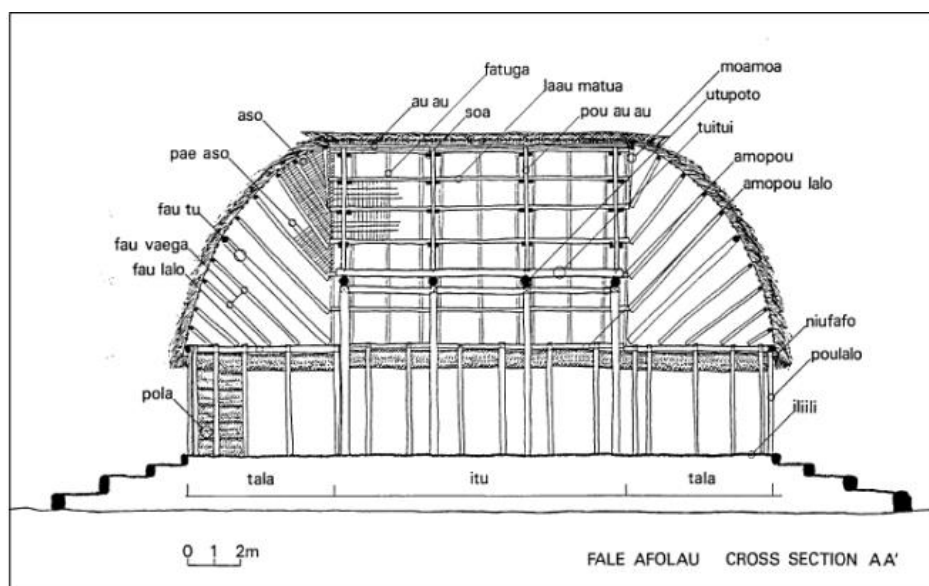


Figure 3: Typical Roof Shape of a Traditional fale Samoa, in particular a fale afolau. Source - UNESCO: "The Samoan Fale"

One of the main characteristics of a Samoan *Fale Tele* or *Fale Afolau* is its structure. This structure reflects how Samoans relate to one another as well as its environment. As an open house structure, the *Fale Tele* has a welcoming and inclusive aspect where everyone is invited and welcomed to the house.⁴ The open space also allows for a cooler house taking into consideration the warm and sometimes warmer Samoa climate. The round shape also reflects the concept of *soalaupule* which

³ Latu Latai, "From Open Fale to Mission Houses: Negotiating the Boundaries of "Domesticity" in Samoa," ed. Hyaewool Choi and Margaret Jolly, *Divine Domesticities Christian Paradoxes in Asia and the Pacific* (Canberra: anu Press, 2014), pp. 299 – 323.

⁴ Ibid.

emphasise the importance of hearing everyone's opinions and weighing options regarding village matters for the prosperity and security of the village and its members. Also, *soalaupule* aims to reach a unanimous agreement on all village matters especially very important issues.

4.2.1 Foundation and Floor Level

The original foundation was made from stones of various sizes. The foundation for a *Fale Tele* is usually built higher than all other houses of the family. This can be seen in Figure 4 below which compares the typical height difference of a *Fale Afolau* and a *Fale Tele*.

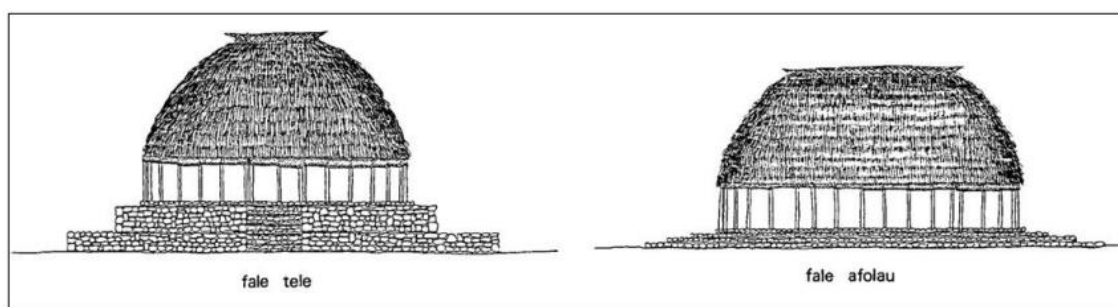


Figure 4: Comparison of a foundation height difference between a Fale Tele and a Fale Afolau. Source – UNESCO: The Samoan Fale

Originally no cement or tiling was used for the floor, so Samoans used woven dried coconut leaves (*polavai*) as flooring material. Rocks of various sizes are used as the foundation for all *fale*'s, with coral rocks used for flooring. Woven mats were then laid across for extra comfort.

4.2.2 Open Space

As seen in Figures 3 and 4, typical Samoan *Fale*'s have open space. There are no rooms and is not divided in sections. However, each *fale* has their own seating arrangement that people always respect and obey, as in the Samoan tradition and culture. An example of the seating arrangement is shown in Figure 5 below, in a *Fale*

Tele or a Village Council House. The seating arrangement shows where each matai must be seated, and seating at the correct place is also a sign of respect for the High Chiefs in the village (*Alii taua*). Furthermore, the seating identifies the kind of *matai* title a person has (*Tulafale* or *Alii*) and its rank within the village setting. That is, whether a person is a *matai Tulafale* or a *matai alii*.

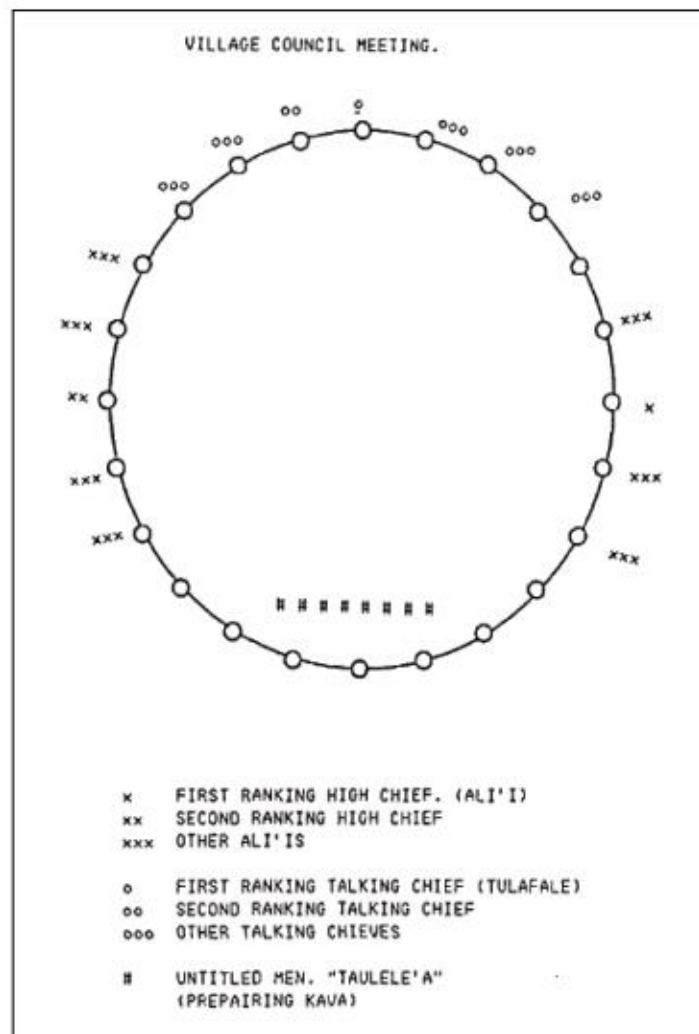


Figure 5: Village Council Meeting Seats Allocations - Source - UNESCO: The Samoan Fale

As mentioned above, a Samoan *Fale* does not have walls to divide sections of the house. However, Samoans still knows what section of the house he or she sits when the family or village convenes or meet. This is reflected in the seating arrangements in Figure 5. Moreover, having this open space allows good air flow in humid conditions.

In the event of rain and for privacy, woven blinds (*polasisi*) are used, especially at night when sleeping.

3.2.3 Contextual reading – *Fale Tele* and Creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a

Before attempting a contextual appropriation of the architectural reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a, I will reiterate some central outcomes from the discussion of the *Fale Tele*. The functions of the *Fale Tele* are to host guests, village meetings, and family *faalavelave* (*saofa'i*, funerals, etc). These gatherings and traditional ceremonies reflect hospitality, respect, security, cooperation, service, welfare, peace, and wisdom. The form and structure of the *Fale Tele* compliments these functions. The open space, round shape, and central location of the *Fale Tele* reassures its inclusiveness and inviting aspect of the house. Village Council meetings and its seating encourages *soalaupule* or sharing in decision making and respect by the face-to-face deliberations. Village council's decisions and judgments reflect wisdom. This must be shown in the security, peace, and good. Supporting family *faalavelave* encourages cooperation and service to the family and village.

Moreover, all traditional gatherings and ceremonies held in the *Fale Tele* as mentioned above, besides funerals, begin with an *ava* ceremony. This *ava* ceremony not only to welcome guests or village *matai* or family members depending on the occasion, but a form of worship to invoke the deities' blessings. Therefore, it is not too far-fetched to say that the *Fale Tele* is also a place of worship.

With regards to Genesis 1:1-2:4a, the creation or to be specific the form and function of creation will be understood by Samoan readers as a place like home, a structure like a *Fale Tele*, where guests/family members/village *matai* are invited and welcomed. It is simply a place where a Samoan performs his or her service to others. A

place where wisdom is shared and found, peace and security are paramount, hospitality at its highest is performed, and mutual respect and love exist.

Also, creation, like the *Fale Tele*, is a place where people worship and pray to God for blessings. In other words, Samoan understands creation as a place where the people as a community, a family, and as Samoans, relate to God.

Summary

The main aim of this chapter was to give a Samoan contextual understanding and appropriation of the architectural reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a. That is, to give an understanding of the apparent form and function of creation, as achieved in the previous chapter, from parallel form and function of Samoan building structures. In accepting a strong resemblance of the form attained in the analysis in Chapter 3 to a *Fale Tele*, a Samoan contextual understanding and appropriation was then possible.

Therefore, Samoans could see creation as a *Fale Tele*. It is where a Samoan enjoys life, peace, and prosperity, amongst his family members and village members, and a place to worship God through prayers and service. Finally, it is a place where Samoans invoke God's blessings.

Conclusion

To conclude this thesis, I will firstly summarise the key points of the thesis and then briefly highlight the findings and conclusion achieved.

The study sets out to read Genesis 1:1-2:4a from an architectural perspective utilising a specific architectural principle of FFF. This principle simply means that the form or structure of a building must align with its function (the use and purpose of a building). The presupposition from the beginning is treating the creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a as an architectural project. To further understand the biblical text, I employed Historical Criticism as an interpretational tool to aid the exegesis of the text.

From a historical critical analysis, Genesis 1:1-2:4a is widely accepted in scholarly circles as a P text. In this regard, the date, and structure of this P text was further explored to understand the emphasis and theology of P. This P understanding of the creation account is significant and relevant to the understanding of the function of creation. From an architectural perspective, once the function is established a form is possible to be sketched since FFF. This principle is based on the basic assumption that the function of the design must be aligned or followed by its form.

The exploration of P highlights that there is a close relationship between the creation and the temple/tabernacle. As accepted by most scholars, creation mirrors the temple and therefore, creation is God's cosmic temple. This is also supported by P's theology of glory. This theology understands the glory of God in the cosmic Temple as God's presence in his creation. In other words, creation is also God's dwelling place. However, God also desires his creation to function as a home for humanity. God created everything so humanity could have a secure and prosper living. Also, according to P's theology, creation is also intended by God to be a place of worship for humanity.

However, it is not only to perform worship but also a place to perform humanity's service to God.

Given this overall function of creation (twofold function of being a living space for humanity to enjoy and prosper and to worship and serve God) from the exegesis and analysis, a form according to the architectural perspective of FFF could now be sketched. (See figure 1)

Furthermore, this form of creation from an architectural perspective, in my opinion, resembles a Samoan building structure. Therefore, in the attempt to understand and appropriate this form from a Samoan perspective, I explore a similar structure of a Samoan *Fale Tele*. In this exploration, it became apparent that the *Fale Tele* and creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a share a lot of similarities. In fact, I would say, creation could be understood as a *Fale Tele*. For Samoans, a *Fale Tele* functions as a home and a place where a Samoan enjoys life, peace, and prosperity, amongst his family members and village members. Also, it is a place to worship God through prayers and service and where Samoans invoke God's blessings through traditional rituals and culture such as the *ava* ceremony.

In this regard, a Samoan understanding of God's creation also supports the architectural reading of the form and function of creation in Genesis 1:1-2:4a. That is, the form and function is like a home structure where people live and enjoy life and its environment. Also, it is a place where people have a close and fruitful relationship with God.

An Architecture Reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a and the EFKS ministry

As already mentioned in the beginning of this thesis, this study makes use of the background a person has in reading and understanding of the bible. It is also a Samoan contextual reading where a local concept is utilised to produce meanings that a Samoan

reader could easily understand and relate to. In turn, a Samoan reader will further his or her understanding of the Bible. Furthermore, this process will help church ministers to attract the interest of church members in reading and interpreting the bible. This will surely make them active and feel good in the church since they now have a significant contribution in the interpretation of the Bible.

It is also a significant and important input to the ministry of the church overseas. This will be a way to engage generations born overseas to Samoan concepts for them to understand them but also realised their contributions to understanding the bible.

An Architecture Reading of Genesis 1:1-2:4a and Further Studies

The trend nowadays in Biblical Studies, especially in our part of the world, is the emphasis on the reader's social location in reading and interpreting the bible. That is, there is an emphasis on the importance of a person's background in the interpretation of the bible. Also, with this same emphasis, locals are encouraged to utilise local concepts as hermeneutics to produce fresh and new meanings of biblical texts. This is especially helpful in providing meanings that are relevant to local people.

I believe, it is this trend that the architectural reading attempted here could contribute to further studies. It will encourage the use of whatever background a person has in his or her understanding of the bible. Moreover, there are many kinds of building structures in the bible that this architectural principle of FFF can shed light on them providing alternative interpretations to further enrich our understanding of biblical texts.

Glossary

<i>Alii taua</i>	Samoa High Chief
<i>Ava</i>	1. A plant use to produce a narcotic drink. 2. Referring to a Samoa traditional ceremony to consume ava.
<i>EFKS</i>	Congregational Christian Church of Samoa
<i>Faalavelave</i>	Samoa traditional hindrance
<i>Faavae - tanu</i>	Elevated floor
<i>Fale</i>	Samoa word for house
<i>Fale Afolau</i>	Traditional Samoa Fale with roofing made of coconut leaves or pandanus.
<i>Fale Palagi</i>	European style house or Western styled house
<i>Fale Talimalo</i>	Guest house
<i>Fale Tele</i>	A big Samoa house
<i>Faleoo</i>	Samoa small back house
<i>Falesa</i>	sacred house or church building
<i>Fono a Alii ma Faipule</i>	Village council meeting with the presence of High Chiefs and Orators.
<i>Fono a le Nu'u</i>	Village council meeting
<i>Polasisi</i>	Blinds woven from coconut leaves
<i>Polavai</i>	Mat oven dried coconut leaves
<i>Saofai</i>	Bestowing matai titles
<i>Soalaupule</i>	Deliberation or Discussion
<i>Talimalo</i>	Hospitality. Place to host guests
<i>Va</i>	Space
<i>Va – fealoai</i>	Respect conduct

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