

THE LITERARY FRAMEWORK VIEW

Tohu and bohu

Formless	CHAOS	Empty
DAY 1 Light and Dark	HEAVENS	DAY 4 Sun, moon and stars
DAY 2 Sky and sea	WATER & SKY	DAY 5 Birds and sea creatures
DAY 3 Sea and land Land plants	EARTH	DAY 6 Land animals Human beings
Formed	COSMOS	Filled
DAY 7 Rest		

Evaluation

- This is a very popular view.
- Do *tohu* and *bohu* really mean what we think they mean?
 - *Tohu* and *bohu* occur twice in the Old Testament (Isaiah 34:11; Jeremiah 4:23).
 - *Tohu* occurs twenty times on its own. Walton thinks the plainest meaning is “no purpose or worth” rather than “formless” (2015, p. 28).
 - *Bohu* never occurs by itself. It’s therefore not clear that it should be translated “empty”.

Has Walton hit upon a real problem...? After all, what words should be taken to *mean* is always determined by *how they’re used*. Meaning is given by context. The structuring of Genesis 1 with two sets of three days does seem to be an integral part of the text rather than something that we’re “reading in” to the text. This, in turn, seems to point to the translations of *tohu* and *bohu* as “formless” and “empty” being the correct ones.

- It’s sometimes pointed out that the parallelism between days 1-3 and 4-6 isn’t exact (William Lane Craig, 2021, p. 108):
 - God’s creation of the sky in day 2 more naturally corresponds to the creation of the lights in day 4.
 - God’s creation of the seas in day 3 more naturally corresponds with the creation of the sea creatures in day 5.
 - On day 3, God doesn’t create merely the domain (land); he also creates some of the occupants of that domain (plants).

Again, is this a serious problem with the view?