

# THE GENESIS ACCOUNT AS EARLY MODEL FOR SCRIPTURAL HERMENEUTICS

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## INTRODUCTION

In order to arrive at a *Scriptural approach* for interpreting Scriptures, the interpretive method must be exegetically derived from within the Scriptural text. Otherwise, there can be no claim to hermeneutic certainty, because any externally derived interpretive method can be preferred and applied simply by exerting presuppositions upon the text. In the case of an externally derived hermeneutic, presuppositions leading to that hermeneutic conclusion create a pre-understanding that predetermines meaning independent of the author's intentions. The outcome, in such a case, can be wildly different than what the author had in mind.

If the Bible is merely a collection of ancient stories, legends, and myth, interspersed with mildly historical accounts, then the stakes are not particularly high. The greatest damage we can inflict by a faulty hermeneutic method is of the same weight as misunderstanding the motivations and activities of Mark Twain's adventurous character, *Tom Sawyer*, for example. In such an instance we would simply fail to recognize the aesthetic virtues of a creative work. However, if the Bible constitutes an actual revelation from God, then it bears the very authority of the Author, Himself – an authority that extends to every aspect of life and conduct. These are high stakes, indeed. If we fail to engage the text with the interpretive approach intended by its Author, then we fail not just to appreciate aesthetic qualities, but we fail to grasp who God is, and what He intends for us to do.

It is incumbent, then, upon readers of the text to carefully derive hermeneutic method from the Scriptures themselves. Yet, this responsibility is complicated by an obvious absence of prescriptive material within the Biblical text that if present could direct readers toward a particular interpretive stance. In the absence of such prescriptive material, we examine here some descriptive elements from the book of Genesis, in order to discover whether or not there is actually a prevailing hermeneutic embedded in the text itself.

From the opening of Genesis to its conclusion, the book records roughly two thousand years of history. Further, Genesis alleges that these two thousand years are the *first years* of human history (c.f., Gen 1:27 and 5:1). Within that framework of chronology, the events in the book of Genesis account for the first 33% of our

recorded six thousand year history and the first 50% of the four thousand years of Biblical history. *If Genesis were univocal regarding hermeneutic method*, that single voice would go a long way in helping us understand how the Author intended for us to interpret the Scriptures. Genesis would be a guiding light, providing the time-tested descriptive model foundational to our Scriptural hermeneutics.

In order to assess the hermeneutic method applied *within Genesis, during the times which the book describes*, we simply examine in Genesis the occurrences of God speaking and the responses of those who heard. The questions addressed here include whether or not God’s initial audiences took Him *only* literally or whether they instead or additionally perceived that He intended a deeper meaning than what would be normally signified by the words that were verbally expressed. The responses are categorized as follows: Category 1 (C1) responses are those providing evidence that the initial speech act was intended for literal understanding only; category 2 (C2) responses are those providing evidence that the initial speech act was intended for any understanding beyond the literal meaning of the words verbally expressed.

### **THE SPEECH ACTS OF GOD AND RESPONSES IN GENESIS**

There are four key phrases that introduce the speech acts of God in Genesis: “God said”<sup>1</sup> (thirty-six verses), “the Lord said”<sup>2</sup> (nineteen verses), “the Lord God said”<sup>3</sup> (five verses), and “He said (twenty-four verses).<sup>4</sup> With only the exception of ten verses in the book of Job, these eighty-four verses constitute all Scripturally recorded instances of God verbally communicating during the first two thousand years of human history. The passages in Job are considered at the conclusion of this paper as a complement to and confirmation of the hermeneutic evident in Genesis.<sup>5</sup>

*God Said (thirty-six verses/ at least twenty-seven C1’s)*

- Genesis 1:3 – God commands light into existence. Light responds with a C1.
- Genesis 1:6 – God commands an expanse into existence. God responds with a C1 in 1:7, making the expanse.
- Genesis 1:9 – God commands dry land to appear. The dry land responds with a C1.
- Genesis 1:11 – God commands into existence vegetation to function a specific way. Vegetation responds with a C1, both by beginning to exist and by beginning to otherwise function as commanded.

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<sup>1</sup> Generally, Heb. *wayyomer el* or *wayyomer elohim*.

<sup>2</sup> Generally, Heb *wayyomer yahweh*.

<sup>3</sup> Generally, Heb *wayyomer yahweh elohim*.

<sup>4</sup> The “He said” passages listed here employ the pronoun to instances in which “God,” “the Lord,” “the Lord God,” or in some cases, “the angel of the Lord” were mentioned in near-context verses as the antecedent to the pronoun.

<sup>5</sup> The events of Job are generally recognized to have taken place during the patriarchal times recorded in Genesis, in part, due to the genealogical information connecting Eliphaz and Jobab (e.g., Gen 36:4, 33; Job 2:11), of the land of Uz.

- Genesis 1:14 – God commands into existence heavenly lights to distinguish times and seasons. Heavenly lights respond with a C1, both by beginning to exist and by serving the purpose prescribed.
- Genesis 1:20 – God commands into existence creatures in water and above the earth. Creatures respond with a C1, both by beginning to exist and by functioning as prescribed.
- Genesis 1:24 – God commands into existence creatures on the earth. Creatures respond with a C1, both by beginning to exist and by functioning as prescribed.
- Genesis 1:26 – God states His intention to create mankind. God responds in 1:27 with a C1, executing exactly what He had described in 1:26.
- Genesis 1:28 – God commands mankind to multiply and exercise dominion. There is no direct response recorded in the immediate context.
- Genesis 1:29 – God adds explanation to the command of 1:28. There is no direct response in the immediate context.
- Genesis 3:1 – Satan distorts what God said in order to cause Eve to question God’s word. Eve responds with a C1 in 3:2-3, as she corrects Satan’s misquote
- Genesis 3:3 – Eve responds to Satan’s question with a literal, though not entirely correct restatement of God’s command. Satan responds with a C1 in 3:4, as he directly contradicts content of God’s command. This contradiction of God’s word is the only such contradiction recorded in all of Genesis.<sup>6</sup>
- Genesis 3:9 – God calls to Adam, asking where he is. Adam responds with a C1, answering the question in 3:10.
- Genesis 6:13 – God told Noah of His plans to destroy life on earth, and commanded him to make a boat (6:14-16). Noah responded with a C1, building a boat (6:22).
- Genesis 9:1 – God commands Noah and family to multiply, filling the earth.<sup>7</sup> There is no direct response in the immediate context.
- Genesis 9:12 – God discussed the rainbow as the sign of the covenant (9:13). While there is no direct human response in the immediate context, one could interpret the occasional presence of rainbows as a C1 response on the part of nature.
- Genesis 9:17 – God concludes His discussion of the sign of the covenant. No direct response.
- Genesis 15:13 – The proper noun “God” is in the NASB,<sup>8</sup> but not in the BHS.<sup>9</sup> God prophesies a four hundred year enslavement of Abram’s descendants. The prophecy is fulfilled literally as a C1, as Israel is enslaved in Egypt for four hundred years, dwelling there for four hundred and thirty (Ex 12:40-41).

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<sup>6</sup> While Abram and Sarai responded to God’s word with differing degrees of doubt in Genesis 16-18, there was no outright contradiction as there was by Satan in 3:4.

<sup>7</sup> Notably, the dominion mandate is absent from the post-diluvian imperative.

<sup>8</sup> *New American Standard Bible: 1995 Update* (LaHabra, CA: Lockman Foundation, 1995).

<sup>9</sup> Karl Elliger and Wilhelm Rudolph, *Biblia Hebraica Stuttgartensia* (Stuttgart: German Bible Society, 1997).

- Genesis 17:1 – God introduces Himself to Abram as God Almighty.<sup>10</sup> This address continues through 17:1-16, and has no direct response until 17:17.
- Genesis 17:9 – God continues His address to the newly named Abraham.
- Genesis 17:15 – God continues the monologue, renaming Sarai *Sarah*. Abraham responds in 17:17 with a C1 evidenced by two actions: (1) laughing in disbelief,<sup>11</sup> and (2) calling his wife by the name God had given her.
- Genesis 17:19 – God reiterates that Sarah would bear a son, that his name should be called Isaac, and that God would keep His covenant through Isaac. God responds with a C1, as He provided a child through Sarah (Gen 21:1-2). Abraham responds with a C1, naming the child Isaac (21:3).
- Genesis 17:23 – This is Abraham’s C1 response (with Ishmael and every male of Abraham’s household) to God’s earlier prescription of circumcision (17:10).
- Genesis 20:3 – God speaks to Abimelech in a dream, addressing him directly without metaphorical language, indicting him for taking the wife of another. Abimelech responds with a C1, asking God a follow-up question.
- Genesis 20:6 – God responds to Abimelech’s question with a C1, answering Abimelech’s question.
- Genesis 21:12 – God discusses with Abraham the plight of Ishmael and the covenant blessing of Isaac, commanding Abraham to do what Sarah tells him. Abraham responds with a C1, by fulfilling Sarah’s request to send Ishmael and Hagar away (21:10, 14).
- Genesis 21:17 – (The angel of) God speaks to comfort Hagar, telling her to lift the boy up and take him by the hand. Hagar’s response is to give Ishmael water that God provides, but the text does not indicate how she responded specifically to the command of 21:18.
- Genesis 22:1 – God tells Abraham to slay Isaac. Abraham responds with a C1, to the point of killing Isaac.
- Genesis 26:4 – The Lord appears to Isaac, God speaks to Isaac, introducing Himself as God. Isaac responds with a C1 by worshipping and calling upon the name of the Lord who spoke to him (c.f., 26:24 and 25).
- Genesis 31:11 – Jacob recounts in a C1, how (the angel of) God appears to Jacob in a dream, and how the dream corresponds to what had actually happened earlier (31:7-9).
- Genesis 31:24 – God tells Laban in a dream not to speak to Jacob for “good or bad.” Laban responds with a C1, citing God’s command as he addresses Jacob carefully so as not to disobey (31:29).
- Genesis 35:1 – God commands Jacob to go to Bethel and make an altar. Jacob responds with a C1, first recounting the command (35:3) and then fulfilling it (35:6-7).

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<sup>10</sup> Heb., *el shaddai*.

<sup>11</sup> Laughter would be an unnatural response to a preposterous sounding prediction if there was an alternative (to the plain sense of what was verbally expressed) hermeneutic method available.

- Genesis 35:10 – God changes Jacob’s name to Israel. The writer of Genesis responds with a C1, referring to Jacob as Israel in 35:21-22. The names are used interchangeably from that point forward.
- Genesis 35:11 – God reintroduces Himself to Jacob as God Almighty.<sup>12</sup> Jacob responds with a C1, as he worships the God who spoke to him (35:14-15).
- Genesis 46:2 – God calls out to Jacob in night visions. Jacob responds with a C1, answering the call.
- Genesis 46:3 – God instructs Jacob in a night vision to go to Egypt. Jacob’s response is a C1, as he travels to Egypt (46:5-7).

While not every “God said” passage includes a direct response in the immediate context, of the twenty-eight direct responses that are immediately recognizable, all but possibly one are obvious C1’s, with only Hagar’s response in 21:18 not matching exactly the command given her. Hagar’s response there doesn’t provide evidence for either a C1 or C2. Further, we note from 46:3 that even when God uses dreams to communicate, the intended hermeneutic method is consistent with intended interpretive methodology for things verbally expressed.

*The Lord Said (nineteen verses / at least seventeen C1’s)*

- Genesis 4:6 – The Lord asks Cain why he is angry. Cain responds in 4:8 by telling Abel. Because we are not told *what* Cain told Abel, this is not evidence for a C1 or C2.
- Genesis 4:9 – The Lord asks Cain where is his brother. Cain responds with a C1, answering the question.
- Genesis 4:15 – The Lord put Cain under His own protection. The Lord Himself responds with a C1, appointing a sign for Cain’s protection.
- Genesis 6:3 – The Lord limits human lifespan. The set limit is gradually enacted in a C1, as by Moses’ lifetime (Deut 34:7), life spans generally begin to fit within that limit.
- Genesis 6:7 – The Lord pronounces that He will destroy man, animals, creeping things, and birds. He reiterates in 6:13, and makes it apparent that He will make some exceptions, by removing some from the path of judgment, including Noah’s family, and two of every living species 6:18-20. The Lord responds with a C1 as He brings about the judgment and protects life in 7:1-23.
- Genesis 7:1 – The Lord tells Noah and his family to enter the ark. Noah responds with a C1 as he does all that the Lord had commanded him (7:5).
- Genesis 8:21 – The Lord tells Himself He will never again destroy every living thing as He had done. So far, He has responded with a C1.
- Genesis 11:6 – The Lord acknowledges that a united language provides unique opportunities for human success. The Lord responds with a C1, recognizing the need for and executing the confusing of human language (11:7-8).

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<sup>12</sup> Heb., *el shaddai*, as in 17:1.

- Genesis 12:1 – The Lord told Abram to go. Abram responds with a C1: he went (12:4).
- Genesis 13:14 – The Lord tells Abram He will give to Abram all the land Abram can see. The Lord responds with a C1, reiterating and providing detail for this promise in 15:18-21.
- Genesis 16:9 – The (angel of the) Lord told Hagar to return to Sarai and submit. Hagar responds with a C1, acknowledging that it was the Lord who spoke with her (16:13), and returning to Abram and Sarai (16:15).
- Genesis 16:10 – The (angel of the) Lord promised a multiplying of Ishmael’s descendants. The Lord responds with a C1, as evidenced by the early genealogy in 25:12-18.
- Genesis 16:11– The (angel of the) Lord identifies Hagar’s pregnancy and prescribes the name Ishmael for the child. Abram responds with a C1, naming the child Ishmael (16:15), which implies a C1 response also on Hagar’s part, as it is apparent she relayed the Lord’s words to Abram.
- Genesis 18:13 – The Lord questions Sarah regarding her laugh. Sarah responds with a C1, denying the accusation because of fear (18:15).
- Genesis 18:26 – The Lord agrees to spare Sodom if He finds fifty righteous within the city. The Lord responds with a C1, as there weren’t fifty (18:32).
- Genesis 22:11 – The (angel of the) Lord calls out to Abraham. Abraham responds with a C1, answering the call.
- Genesis 25:23 – The Lord predicts to Rebekah that there are two nations in her womb, and that the older will serve the younger. Here the Lord employs a metaphor (there were two babies in her womb, not two peoples), but one that would be quite obvious. There is no direct response from Rebekah recorded in the context.
- Genesis 28:13 – The Lord appears to Jacob in a dream, identifying Himself as “the Lord, the God of...Abraham...and Isaac.” Jacob responds in worship (28:16-19), an apparent C1.
- Genesis 31:3 – The Lord tells Jacob to return to the land of his fathers. Jacob responds with a C1, returning to Canaan, the land of his father Isaac (31:18).

Again, not every “the Lord said” passage includes a direct response in the immediate context. Still, of the seventeen direct responses that are immediately obvious, they are all C1’s. In Genesis 25:23 there is a notable metaphor employed (two nations in Rebekah’s womb), with no direct response from Rebekah. While it would seem that the meaning of the metaphor would be entirely obvious to any listener, it is worth noting that the prediction came to pass in a literal way at least during David’s rule (2 Sam 8:14). This instance illustrates that when metaphorical language is used in the text it is used in such a way as to be readily discernible as metaphor, and figurative usage does not altar the intended hermeneutic method or the outcome.

*The Lord God Said (five verses / at least four C1’s)*

- Genesis 2:16 – The Lord God prohibits the man from eating of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil (2:17). Eve responds in 3:2-3 with a C1, though

- she adds a condition (touching also prohibited). Adam responds in 3:12 with a C1, acknowledging that God was speaking of a literal tree, from which Adam had eaten.
- Genesis 2:18 – The Lord God announced He would make a helper for Adam. The Lord God responded with a C1, creating Eve (2:22).
  - Genesis 3:13 – The Lord God asks Eve what she had done. Eve responds with a C1, answering the question according to the events that occurred.
  - Genesis 3:14 – The Lord God pronounces judgment on the serpent: it is cursed, will travel on its belly and eat dust; and in 3:15, there will be enmity with woman and her seed (singular), it will crush seed on the heel and be crushed on the head. Each of these judgments appears to be literally fulfilled as C1's, though the seed references are singular and may reference an individual (Messiah?) rather than simply men in general. In providing the only direct response to the entire judgment passage, Eve seems to respond with a C1, as she seemingly anticipates literal fulfillment in the form of a specific individual when she rejoices that a seed seems to be provided (Gen 4:1).
  - Genesis 3:22 – The Lord God observes the potential danger of man eating from the tree of life and living forever in a cursed state. The Lord God responds with a C1, as He drives man out of the garden, and prohibits his return (3:23-24).

“The Lord God said” references are all found in the second and third chapters of Genesis. Though 3:14-15 presents some special challenges, the statements made there seem to be best understood as C1's. At the very least we can say there is no evidence in that passage supporting a C2 understanding by any of the original listeners. Each of the other four references provides obvious C1 responses.

*He Said (twenty-four verses /at least twenty-three C1's)*

- Genesis 3:11 – He asks Adam<sup>13</sup> if he had eaten from the tree. Adam responds with a C1, answering in the affirmative (3:12).
- Genesis 3:16 – He pronounces judgment on the woman: multiplied pain in childbirth, “upon your man shall be your longing,” and “it shall be that he shall rule in you.” The pains of labor would seem to support a C1 understanding. The woman would desire her man. The exact meaning of “he shall rule in you” is not clear. To clarify, the NASB translates the preposition as “over” rather than “in” – implying either a sexual connotation or a non-egalitarian position (not prescribed here, just described, if that is the meaning), but that seems not to be an accurate translation. In any case, there is no evidence to suggest anything other than a C1 meaning here.
- Genesis 3:17 – Adam – ground cursed, providing food but with difficulty for Adam, Adam will return to the ground (in death). Experience demonstrates the difficulty of growing food. Further, Adam physically died (5:5), supporting the idea that these judgments also are intended as C1's.

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<sup>13</sup> As indicated by the second person singular masculine pronominal suffix.

- Genesis 4:10 – He asks Cain what he had done, and pronounced judgment (4:11-12). Cain responds with a C1, lamenting that the punishment was too severe (4:13).
- Genesis 15:5 – He pronounces that Abraham’s descendants would be more numerous than the stars Abraham could count. Abraham responds famously with a C1 by believing in the Lord and being credited with righteousness (15:6).
- Genesis 15:7 – He identifies Himself to Abraham as the Lord who brought Abraham out of Ur. The statement is a C1 interpretation of 12:1-4, which described Abraham’s departure from Ur.
- Genesis 15:9 – He told Abraham to bring Him specific animals. Abraham responds with a C1, as Abraham brings those specific things to God (15:10).
- Genesis 16:8 – He asks Hagar from whence she came. Hagar responds with a C1, answering the question directly.
- Genesis 18:10 – He announced that the following year Sarah would have a son. Sarah responds with a C1, interpreting the prediction literally and laughing at the possibility (18:12). God responds with a C1, as He provided for Sarah a son at the appointed time (21:1-2).
- Genesis 18:15 – He reiterated that Sarah did laugh. His comment was a C1 interpretation of 18:12, for she indeed did laugh.
- Genesis 18:28 – He said He would not destroy the city if there were forty-five. His response was a C1, as He apparently knew that the number was less than ten (18:32).
- Genesis 18:29 – He said He would not destroy the city if there were forty. His response was a C1, as He apparently knew that the number was less than ten (18:32).
- Genesis 18:30 – He said He would not destroy the city if there were thirty. His response was a C1, as He apparently knew that the number was less than ten (18:32).
- Genesis 18:31 – He said He would not destroy the city if there were twenty. His response was a C1, as He apparently knew that the number was less than ten (18:32).
- Genesis 18:32 – He said He would not destroy the city if there were ten. His response was a C1, as He destroyed the city, because there were not ten righteous in the city (19:13, 24-25).
- Genesis 22:2 – He tells Abraham to take Isaac to Moriah and to offer him as a sacrifice on a mountain He would specify. Abraham responds with C1’s to all three commands (22:3, 9), stopping only at the point the angel of the Lord calls out to him (22:11).
- Genesis 22:12 – He tells Abraham not to Isaac. Abraham responds with a C1, locating and alternative offering of God’s provision (22:13-14).
- Genesis 31:12 – He directs Jacob to consider how He has provided for Jacob, as a C1 interpretation of 31:10.
- Genesis 32:26 – He asks Jacob to let Him go. Jacob responds with a C1, refusing to let Him go unless He first gives Jacob a blessing.



- Genesis 32:27 – He asks Jacob what is his name. Jacob responds with a C1, replying with his name.
- Genesis 32:28 – He changes Jacob’s name to Israel. The writer of Genesis responds with a C1, acknowledging the name Israel for Jacob in 35:21-22.
- Genesis 32:29 – As a C1 response to Jacob’s question, He questions in return why Jacob wants to know His name.
- Genesis 46:3 – He encourages Jacob not to be afraid to go to Egypt. Jacob responds with a C1, as he goes to Egypt (46:6).
- Genesis 48:4 – Jacob recounts God Almighty’s appearing to him at Luz, and His promise of blessing to his descendants. Jacob responds with a C1, as he claims two of Joseph’s sons as his own, so that they will be blessed under the promise God had given him (48:5).

In all twenty-four instances of “He said” that are directly attributable to God, we discover C1 responses that are readily identifiable. Only 3:16 offers any challenge at all, and even that passage, describing Eve’s judgment can be viewed as understood by her with a C1 approach, particularly in light of her response in 4:1. It can at least be said here as well that there is no evidence of any C2 responses. Thus the “He said” passages constitute at least twenty-three additional clear C1 responses.

### **THE SPEECH ACTS OF GOD AND RESPONSES IN JOB CONFIRM THE HERMENEUTIC OF GENESIS**

Other than the eighty-four verses in Genesis evidencing a model for interpreting Scripture, there are ten similar passages in Job that provide a secondary support to the monolithic hermeneutic method evident thus far in Genesis. In each instance of Divine speech acts in Job, the speaker is identified as “the Lord.”<sup>14</sup>

#### *The Lord Said (ten verses / ten C1’s)*

- Job 1:7 – The Lord asks Satan from whence he came. Satan responds with a C1 (“From roaming about on the earth and walking around on it.”).
- Job 1:8 – The Lord asks Satan if he has considered Job. Satan responds in 1:9 with a C1 (an implied yes, and a suggestion of why Job was righteous).
- Job 1:12 – The Lord commissions Satan to do all but harm Job physically. Satan responds in 1:12-19 with a C1, both in departing to fulfill the commission, and also in only harming Job’s belongings.
- Job 2:2 – The Lord asks Satan again from whence he came. Satan responds with the same C1 response as in 1:7.
- Job 2:3 – The Lord asks Satan again if he has considered Job. Satan responds in 2:4 with a C1, adding that Job was only righteous because of his health.
- Job 2:6 – The Lord gives permission for Satan to harm Job, but not to the extent of taking his life. Satan responds in 2:7 with a C1, smiting Job with boils, but not taking his life.

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<sup>14</sup> Heb. *Yahweh*.

- Job 38:1 – The Lord answered Job in chapters 38-39 using a series of graphic illustrations of God’s sovereignty over nature. There is no response from Job, at this point.
- Job 40:1 – The Lord challenges Job to respond. Job responds in 40:3-5 with a C1, recognizing his own insignificance in comparison to the Lord.
- Job 40:6 – The Lord answers Job again, in chapters 40-41 reiterating His sovereignty over nature, using some metaphorical language to describe creatures He designed. Job responds by repenting in 42:1-6 with a C1, indicating that he recognized the purpose of the metaphorical language as supportive of God’s thesis that He governs nature.
- Job 42:7 – The Lord communicates his anger toward Job’s three friends, and commands them to take an offering to Job. The three respond in 42:9 with a C1, doing exactly “as the Lord told them.” Further, God demonstrated a C1 response by accepting their actions in 42:9.

In these ten verses, we find ten C1’s and zero C2’s. Notably, one of the C1 responses is from God, Himself. Job’s record of God’s speech acts and the responses indicates there is no deviation from the pattern modeled in Genesis. Further, Job’s response to God’s use of metaphorical language in chapters 40-41 indicates that the Divine use of figurative language did not change the expectation that what was verbally expressed should be interpreted in a basic, face-value, common-sense way. In short, the addition of figurative language did not result in any adjustment to the hermeneutic method.

### CONCLUSION

In examination of the ninety-four passages in Genesis and Job that record Divine speech acts, the evidence is overwhelming (*eighty-one C1’s to absolutely zero C2’s*) that God intended for His words to be taken at face value, using a plain-sense interpretive approach. The hermeneutic method that reflects this straightforward methodology has become known as the *literal grammatical historical hermeneutic*. This method recognizes that verbal expression has meaning rooted in and inseparable from the grammatical and historical context of the language used, and that these components require that readers be consistent in applying the interpretive method in their study of the Scriptures.

Because of the two thousand year precedent evident in Genesis and Job, any departure from the simplicity of this method bears a strong exegetical burden of proof, requiring that there be *explicit exegetical support for any change one might perceive as necessary in handling later Scriptures*. Absent any such exegetical data, we can conclude that (1) hermeneutic methodology for understanding Scripture is not arbitrary but is instead plainly modeled, and that (2) later Scriptures should be understood in light of the hermeneutic precedent provided by Genesis and Job.