

Hi, Everyone:

I have enjoyed reading the discussion regarding the article on Genesis 1 that TJ sent. It is time for me to weigh in, especially since Maggie indicated that she was “interested in Dr. JAD’s opinion.” So, here goes!

Maggie is correct in her statement that **בָּרָא** deals with the creative activity of God. I am drawing the following information from the Brown, Driver, Briggs *Hebrew and English Lexicon of the Old Testament*, page 135.

After providing the cognate information for the Hebrew word **בָּרָא**, the *BDB* indicates that the word is used, “always of divine activity.” What is interesting about the word, though, is the breadth of its semantic range.

First, **בָּרָא** refers to the creation of “heaven and earth” (Gn 1:1; 2:3; Is 45:18); of “mankind” (Gn 1:27; 5:1, 2; 6:7 [and, significantly, these last two passages span the sources; 5:1-2 are from P while 6:7 is from J]; Dt 4:32; Ps 89:48; etc.); of the host of heaven (Is 40:26); of the heavens (Is 42:5); of the ends of the earth (Is 40:28); of north and south (Ps 89:13); of wind (Am 4:13).

But **בָּרָא** can also refer to the “creation” of “new conditions and circumstances” --- this is *BDB* meaning # 3. And this is an important part of the word’s semantic range. It refers to the “creation” of righteousness and salvation (Is 45:8); of darkness and evil (Is 45:7); of the “fruit of the lips” (Is 57:19); of cloud and flame over Zion (Is 4:5).

Further, **בָּרָא** can refer to “transformations” --- as in new creation: “a clean heart (Ps 51:12); new heaven and earth, in place of the old (Is 65:17); transformation of nature (Is 41:20)

And all of this in the *qal*.

As Maggie indicated, **בָּרָא** refers to “action that only God can perform.”