

## INTRODUCTION

The goal of this course is to teach Spanish speaking pastors two things: 1) The message of the Bible and 2) How to make proper observations from the text of Scripture.

In using the phrase “message of the Bible” we assume that the Bible does, in fact, have a single, unfolding message contained within its pages from Genesis to Revelation. Every story, fact or fiction, has a beginning, middle and end. All contain certain literary elements like character development, plot, scene, rising action, climax, protagonists, antagonists, and the like. This is no less true of the message of the Bible. We could and should be able to identify all of these things on our own, as well as the main point of the story, by just reading the story from beginning to end. In fact, why wouldn’t we want to given that this is the best story ever written!

But Jesus has given us some help in this regard. He has already told us that the story is about him (cf. Lk 24 especially). The Bible is about his coming into this world as the centerpiece of God’s redemptive plans for this world and how in this redemption God reveals his glory in, through, and to man, as well as to all creation seen and unseen. And so, before we even begin, we know exactly what the story is about. Identifying this central message of the Bible we will call *Biblical Theology* (BT).

But we have yet to explore the details of that story in its unfolding. To accomplish this we must begin at the beginning of the story. Genesis is our starting place. We should expect to find in it all of the seeds of the message that, as the pages turn, will grow to fruition and bear much fruit. That makes the study of the opening chapter of Genesis crucial to understanding the entire message of the Bible. Observing the details of the text is what technically is called *exegesis*.

Together we will embark on this journey of finding Jesus in the message of the Bible through careful observations of the text. I trust that you will find this invaluable in your own growth as a pastor and that it will better equip you to deliver the message of the Bible to others.

## STUDY

### Finding the Limits of a Passage

Whenever we start to prepare a message from the Bible, we must figure out the limits of the passage from which we are going to preach or teach. In other words, where does my passage begin and where does it end? In this case our job is made a little easier because we’re choosing to start right at the beginning of the Bible, Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1. But where should we end our first message, at which verse? Are the chapter divisions sufficient in making this determination? What should be the controlling principle in determining where to begin and end a passage?

This is *not* as simple as it first appears. The book of Genesis contains fifty chapters. Chapter one is followed by forty-nine others, not to mention that the book of Genesis is part and parcel of four other books known commonly as *The Law* or *Pentateuch*. In other words, the book of Genesis is bound to a larger context and message. More than this, it is also a part of what Jesus calls *The Law, The Prophets* and *The Writings*, i.e. the entire Old Testament. This too is a larger context in which we must understand the

message of Genesis. And then of course it is within the context of the entire Bible, Old and New Testaments. Thus Genesis chapter 1, verse 1, does not stand alone. But it is the beginning!

So how do we discern the limits of our passage? We can't preach or teach the entire Bible in one message<sup>1</sup>. Every passage that we preach ought to contain a single main idea or thought which the author intended to communicate to his readers. Our job is to isolate and identify that idea, for it is that idea that we need to preach. We do this by observing things like the introduction of characters, the setting and changing of scenes, repetition of certain terms and phrases, references to time, and so on.

With this in mind, let's make some observations of Genesis chapter 1 to see how we might identify the limits of our first message from Genesis.

The first thing we need to do is type out the entire first chapter of Genesis on our computers, verse by verse, each verse on its own line. If you remember from our little exercise from Agassiz, we concluded that the typing out the text is one of the best ways to spot important observations.

Now that you have the entire passage before you, Genesis 1.1-31, we must ask ourselves if, and not assume that, vv. 1 and 31 are the limits of the passage. Sure the man who separated the Bible into verses thought so, but that does not mean that he was inspired when he did it. So with the text before you, ask yourself if the beginning, the middle, and the end of the passage contain a whole, distinct thought or message. What is lacking if anything?

In the beginning of the passage we have the phrase "In the beginning." That's a great way to start a story don't you agree? But where there is a beginning we expect also that there will be an end don't we? Yes, we do have an end to the *entire* story in the book of Revelation, but in this passage we must expect an end of a single, coherent *thought*.

From what I remember about the creation account, it doesn't end on the sixth day (v. 31), but on the seventh. Thus by the end of the first chapter, our author has not completed his thought. He's only six-sevenths of the way there. So we have to go a little further to find the end of the passage.

There, do you see it in chapter 2, verse 1? "So the heavens and the earth were *completed*." There's an end-kind-of-word. What was *begun* in v. 1 is *completed* in chapter 2.1-3. This draws me to conclude that the limits of this first passage is Genesis, chapter 1.1 through chapter 2.3. The author wants to tell us that God began to create on day one and completed that creation on the sixth day, but that he doesn't want to tell us about the completion until the seventh day. That's a pretty significant observation because it tells us that the first six days were preliminary or preparatory for the seventh day. Everything God accomplished in those first six days had the seventh day as their goal and purpose.

So there you have it. With some cursory observations we were able to find the limits of our passage. It has a beginning, a middle and an end.

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<sup>1</sup> Well actually we could, but that would leave us without anything else to preach the other 51 weeks out of the year as well as leave us deprived of all the wonderful details that make up the message of the Bible!

## Finding the Structure of a Passage

Now let's see if we can find the structure of the passage. The structure is the skeleton upon which the flesh of the author's message hangs. Whether we realize it or not, every time we tell a story or of an event or write a letter we first, in our minds, formulate a structure. The structure determines what is placed where in any story. It determines which details need to be said first, second, third, etc. It determines how the story is supposed to begin, be carried along and end. Depending on how long the story is determines how much time we spend formulating the structure. If the story is short, the formulation of the structure might happen in an instant. If the story is longer or of particular importance, we tend to spend more time figuring out just how to present our story. But in every case, we build our structures either in our minds or on paper before filling in the details and presenting it.

In the case of studying the Bible we are not creating structures. The author has already done that for us. Our job is to discern the author's structure. This will assist us in developing an outline from which we will preach or teach as well as help us to find the main idea that the author wants to communicate to God's people. Thus finding the structure of any given passage is very important for us in delivering God's message to his people.

So how does one go about discerning a structure from a passage of Scripture? Like detectives, as with discerning the limits of the passage, we must look to the same clues like repetitions, time elements, changes of scenery and so on. The author's use of conjunctions, i.e. *and, but, so, then, in order that, now, for, therefore, etc.*, is also very helpful.

Let's start at the top of the text and work our way downward to see what structural clues we can find. At this point we're just going to use the Spanish text before us.

**1.1** In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

What kind of a sentence is this? It is a statement, nice and short and to the point. It is also very broad in its description. It tells us *what* God did and *when* he did it, but it does not tell us *how* or *why*. In other words, there are some very important details that are missing. This tells me that this is an introductory, summary statement of fact. That's its purpose in the narrative. It introduces a subject on which the author intends to expand in what follows. He just wants to get this out on the table up front.

So we might conclude, as far as our structure is concerned, that verse one is an introduction. And where there is an introduction, there is usually a conclusion. Having determined the limits of the passage, let's see if this bears out at the end of our passage.

**2.1** Thus the heavens and the earth were completed, and all their hosts. **2.2** And by the seventh day God completed His work which He had done; and He rested on the seventh day from all His work which He had done. **2.3** Then God blessed the seventh day and sanctified it, because in it He rested from all His work which God had created and made.

This sounds an awful lot like what we concluded above concerning a passage having a beginning and an end. The conclusion to this passage is found in 2.1-3. That also is a summary statement, is it not? He begins with a summary statement and ends with a summary statement.

All the details of God's creative work are reserved for the middle section of the passage. In the beginning we're told what God did - that he created the heavens and the earth. In the conclusion of the passage we're told what God did at the end of his creating the heavens and the earth, namely that he rested.

So far our structure looks like this:

- A Introduction: God created the heavens and the earth (1.1)
- B Body: The details of his creation (1.2-31)
- A' Conclusion: God rested from creating the heavens and the earth (2.1-3)

This may seem like an odd notation to you. You are probably used to structures that look something like this:

- I. Introduction
- II. Body
- III. Conclusion

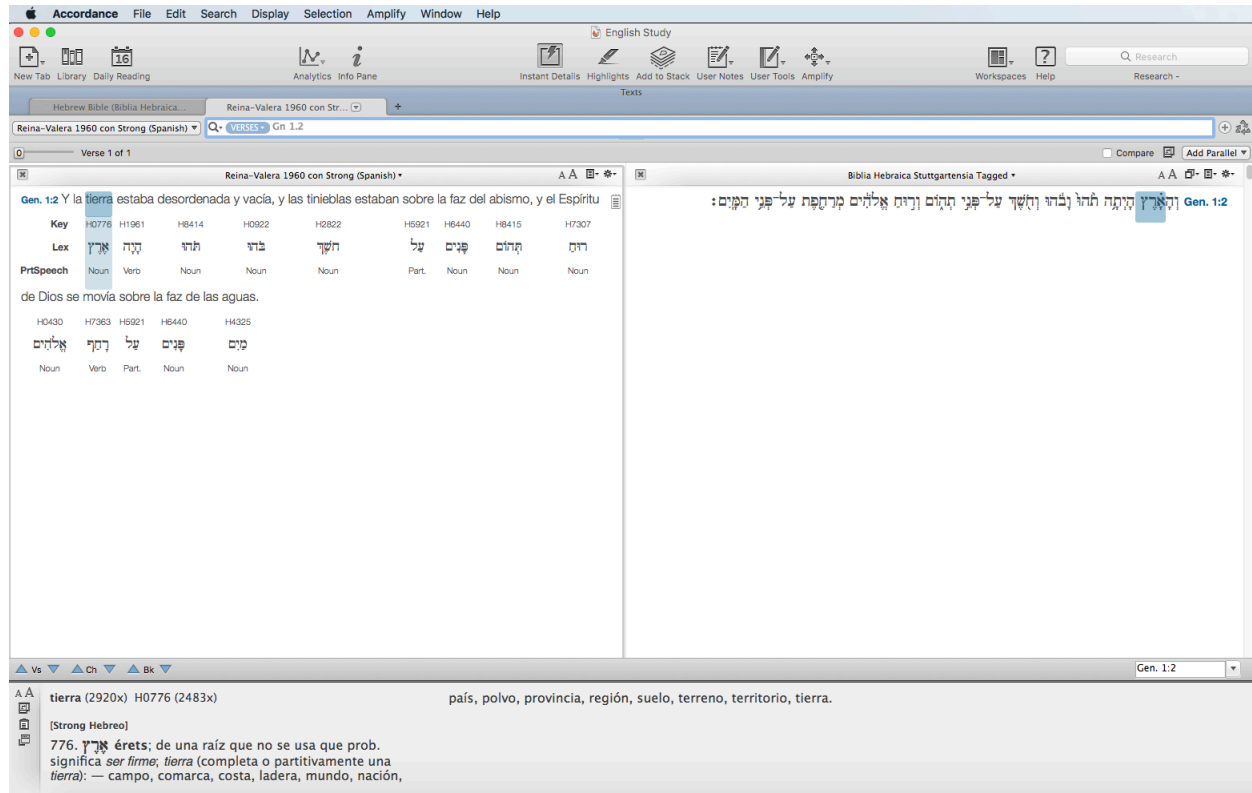
This type of structure reflects the way that western culture minds work. But it is not typically how the ancient Hebrew mind worked. He has a habit of making a statement, as in this case a summary statement, then moving on to another related subject, before coming back to the original summary statement. You will meet with this approach often in the pages of the Old Testament (and often in the NT as well given that the writers are almost all Hebrews). We see this clearly in our passage in that he uses the *merism* (we will talk more about this figure of speech a little later) *heaven and earth* both in 1.1 and in 2.1-3. In other words, he uses it in his summary statement in v.1 and then he returns to that same merism in his summary statement in 2.1-3. We call this a "top and tail" observation. He ends where he began. We can also call this type of structure a *chiasm*. This also is a structural clue that helps us discern the limits of a passage.

Having uncovered the introduction and conclusion in this structure, now let's turn to the body which begins in chapter 1, verse 2.

<sup>1.2</sup> And the earth was formless and void, and darkness was over the surface of the deep; and the Spirit of God was moving over the surface of the waters.

Here I will need to get a little technical and your Accordance software will help you to see some things that you will not be able to see in the Spanish translation. Below I've reproduced the Accordance screen. You'll notice on the left side of the screen I have the Reina-Valera 1960 version with the Strong's numbers open. On the right side of the screen I have the Hebrew Bible open. They are linked together so that anytime you hover over one word in the Reina-Valera the corresponding Hebrew word is also highlighted.

Underneath these two sides of the screen is a panel for displaying the Hebrew and Greek dictionaries. When you hover over a word with your mouse, the dictionary entry for that particular Hebrew word will appear.

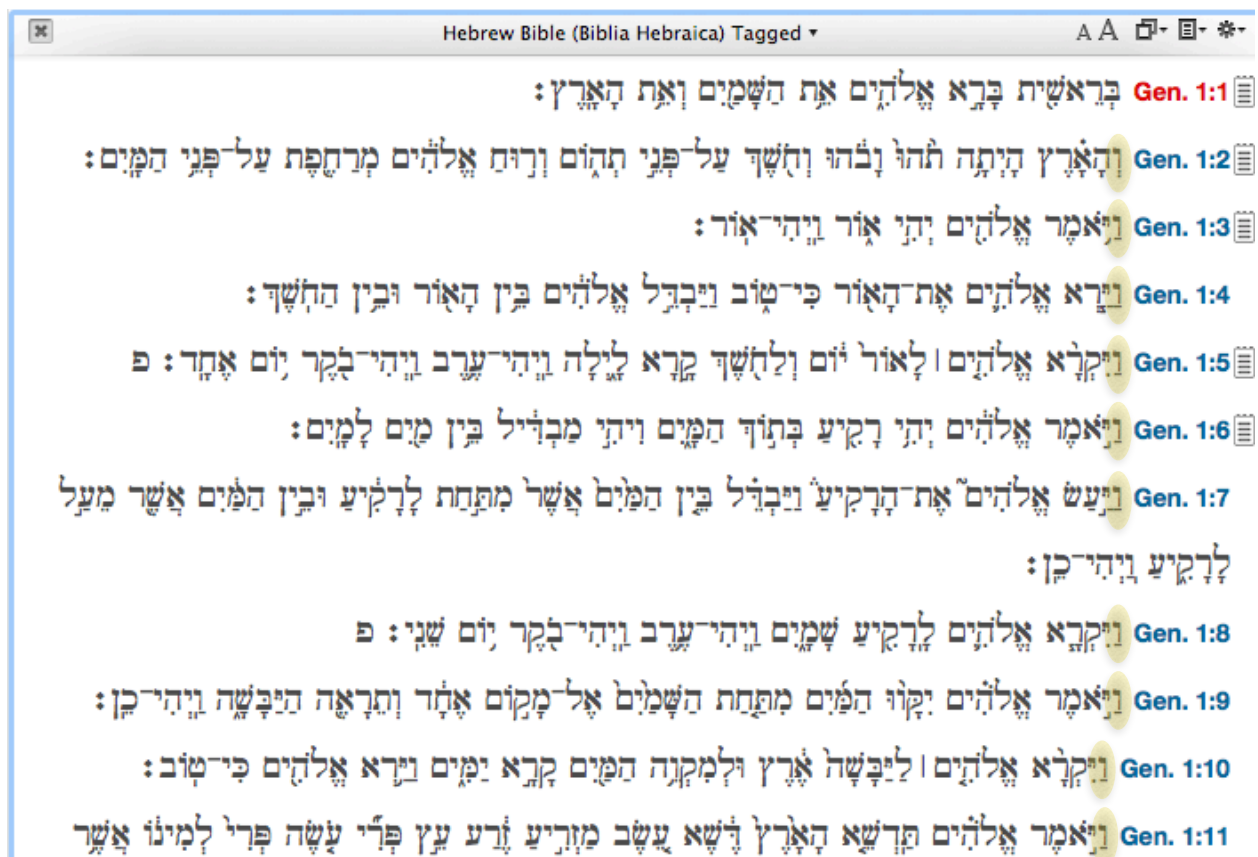


You'll also notice on the Reina-Valera screen that it is in an *interlinear* form. On the first line is the Spanish text. Just underneath that, on the second line, is the *key* (= the Strong's numbers). On the third line is the *lexical* form of the Hebrew word that the Spanish is translating. The lexical form of a word is the form that is used in the dictionary (usually in Spanish dictionaries words are presented in the infinitive form). Thus, if you compare it with the Hebrew text on the right side of the screen, the Hebrew word might be slightly different. Also note that the Hebrew words on the left side of the screen appear in a different order than the words on the right side of the screen. On the left side the words are in the order of the Spanish text. Remember that the Hebrew reads from right to left and not left to right as does the Spanish.

On the fourth line the *part of speech* is presented. Accordance does not show conjunctions or adjectives so not every word of the Hebrew is listed. Additionally, as in any translation, some Spanish words might be added that are not in the original Hebrew in order to make the transition from Hebrew to Spanish smoother. There is no such thing as a "one-for-one" translation. Language just does not work that way.

For instance, in the illustration above, *tierra* is highlighted. Correspondingly, on the Hebrew side of the screen you'll notice that only אֶרֶץ is highlighted even though it is part of a larger word וְהָאֶרֶץ. (You might also notice that the lexical form of the highlighted word is אֶרֶץ and not אֶרֶץ. (The former is the dictionary form while the latter is the form used in the narrative). This is because in Hebrew you can attach the conjunction and the article to the noun (וְ + הָ + אֶרֶץ) which is what the author did in this case. These are translated by *Y la* in the Spanish as separate words.

The importance of this will be seen in our next observation. I want you to look closely at the first word in each verse in the Hebrew text (*Illustration 2*). You'll notice that nearly every one of them begins with this little letter ו.



This letter ו is called a *waw* in Hebrew. When it occurs as a part of the first word in a verse it is almost always acting as a conjunction. It is the Hebrew way of moving a narrative along from point A to point B.

Another thing you'll notice if you move your cursor down the Hebrew passage highlighting the first letter in every verse is that in almost every instance it is a *waw* attached to a verb: “And he said,” “And he saw,” “And he called,” etc. This sequence is called a *waw consecutive* because the narrative is moving along nice and easy - consecutively - with the use of the *waw* + verb combination. But when that consecutive order is broken by the combination *waw* + noun it's called a *waw disjunctive*. The purpose for the disjunctive is to highlight something. In our example, the *waw disjunctive* occurs right at the beginning, in v. 2. Here we have הָאֶרֶץ (noun) + וְ (*waw*). This is another way of telling us that v. 1 is a summary

statement because a *waw* + verb does not follow the opening statement of v. 1. It is the job of Verse 2 to now begin the body of the passage by telling us just how this creation came into being. Thus it should be translated not with the conjunction *and*, but *now*. The idea could be expressed like this: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now let me tell you how it all came about.*

As far as the body of the passage is concerned, the structural clues are very apparent. Six times we encounter an opening statement, “And God said” almost immediately followed by a closing statement, “And there was evening and morning, day \_\_\_\_.” These correspond with the six days of creation.

But I want you to look a little closer at the text. On a piece of paper I want you to write down in one or two words what’s being created on each of the days. Now having done that, I want you to ask yourself if there is any correspondence between the days of creation. For instance, how do days 1 and 4 correspond with each other? How does day 2 correspond with day 5? How does day 3 correspond with day 6? What conclusions can you draw from this?

Days		Event	
1	Light	4	Luminaries
2	Sky/Seas	5	Birds/Fish
3	Dry Land & Plants	6	Land Animals & Man

Now if you were to categorize what’s happening on days 1-3, what would it be? How about days 4-6? Do you see a structure unfolding before your eyes?

We can now expand our outline from earlier. It should look something like this:

- A Introduction (1.1)
- B God’s forming (1.2-13)
- B’ God’s filling (1.14-31)
- A’ Conclusion (2.1-3)

Alright, so now we have our structure. We were able to do all this pretty much just by looking at the Spanish text at a cursory level, asking the right questions, and letting the text speak for itself. Now we have to ask the “So what?” question. *So what* does all this mean? How does this help me to understand the main point of the passage? How does this help me preach God’s message to my people?

So far we can conclude the following: God created the heavens and the earth by first forming it and then filling it after which he rested. That’s the big picture that we are able to discern from the structure. The structure helps us to see in summary form what the author wanted to communicate. We are well on our way to figuring out his main idea.

But our work has really just begun. Now we have to go back and put the flesh on our structure. Having identified the “big picture” of this passage in the structure, we need to do some detailed observations to firm up our initial conclusions and to deepen our grasp on its message. This will also help us to see the

ties between this opening passage of Genesis 1.1-2.3 and the rest of the story contained in the Bible. We will do this primarily by learning how to do lexical observations (or the observations of words). The key here is to remember to always keep the big picture in mind. A good exegete always shuttles in between the big picture and the particulars that make up that big picture.

### Detailed Observations

We will use the Spanish translation as our primary text, but we must remember to use the tools available to us to get back behind the Spanish to the Hebrew in this case. There is a good reason why the best seminaries make their students learn Greek and Hebrew (the primary languages of the Bible). As with all translations, a good deal of interpretation is necessary when one moves from one language to another. Language cannot be separated from the culture that uses it and different cultures have different ways of using language to communicate. The more you learn about Hebrew and Greek, the more this will become clear to you. When studying the Old Testament you have to think like a Hebrew because the Hebrew language is an expression of the Jewish culture, heart and mind. We've already experienced this in the way Hebrews construct their structures.

At this point I will share with you how I go about this part of my preparation. You are free to use it if you like. Just remember that this is not *the* way to do. It is only an example (although I think a good example from someone who has been doing this for the past 20 years or so).

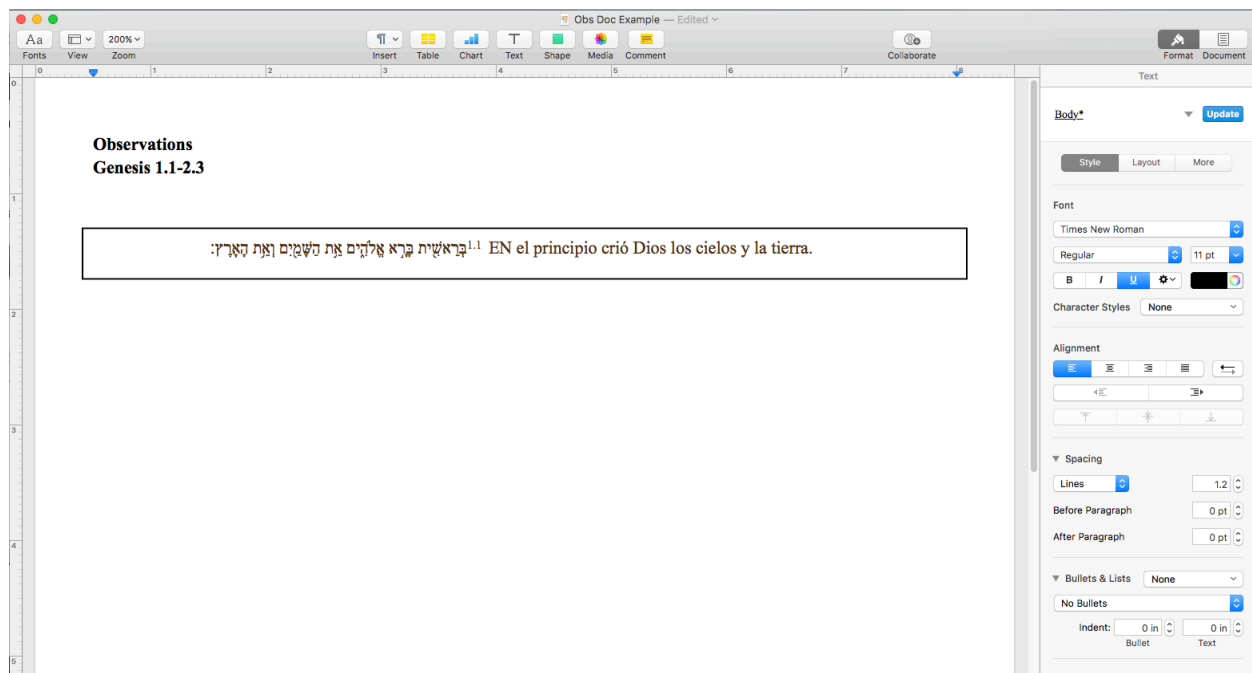
The first thing I had you do was to type out the text. Hopefully, having done that, you've marked that copy up a bit by circling words, drawing lines, making notes in the margins, etc. That is your working copy for making general observations and discerning the structure. You'll want to keep that before your eyes on your desk in front of you. However, there's only so much you can put - or ought to put - on that copy. That is a *summary*, so to speak, of your initial findings. It helps gives you the big picture of your passage in one look.

What you are about to do next will take your observations to the next level. I want you to save your original typed copy with the following name: *Structural Analysis Gn 1.1-2.3*. Then I want you to duplicate it and save the duplicate with the following name: *Observations Gn 1.1-2.3*. So the former serves as your working copy that you will have on your desk before your eyes helping you to pick up repetitions of words and phrases along with other structural clues. The second will be on your computer screen, eventually extending over several pages and containing your detailed observations.

Here's how I'd like you to format this new document. Set the margins to 1/2" all around. Place the tab spacing at 1/4". Set the line spacing at 1.2. Set the text to Times Roman (easier to read with larger blocks of text) with the font size at 11. I have found that this formatting is the easiest to work with.

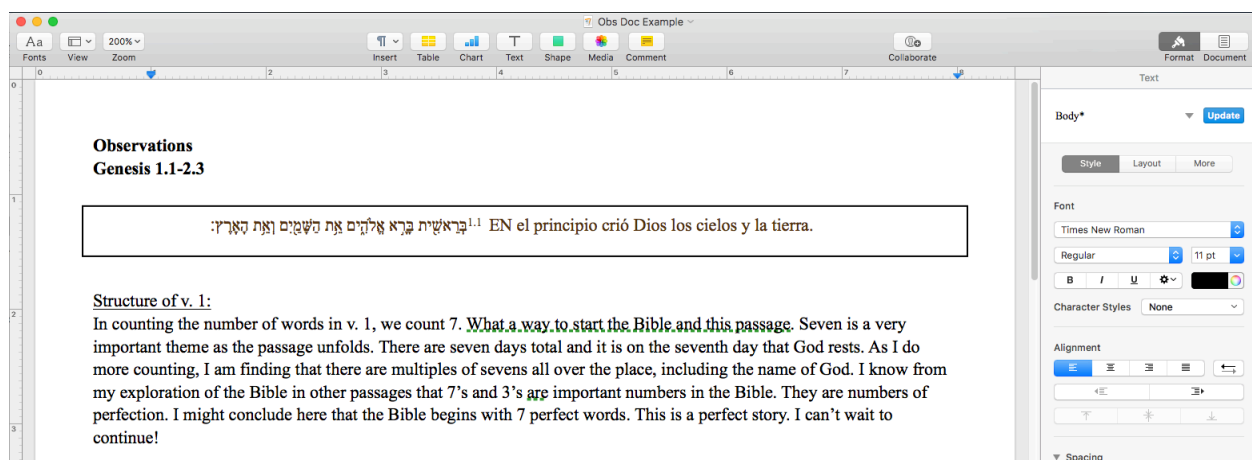
The following is how I'd like you to format every verse using verse 1 as an example:  
It doesn't matter that you do not know Hebrew. You have Accordance to help you identify the words and to match them up with the Spanish. Remember that the Hebrew reads from right to left which is opposite of the Spanish. The space underneath the box is for your detailed observations of words, phrases and clauses.





The importance of having the Hebrew before your eyes can be exemplified from making this one little observation about v. 1. Count the Hebrew words. We've already made the observation that this is a very short and concise statement of fact. This might prompt you to go ahead and count the words. You may not have time to do your observations in this kind of detail for every passage you exegete, especially if it is a long one, but sometimes it pays off to do it when there is some subtle or apparent reason to do so as is the case here. As you do your exegesis like this more and more it will become obvious over time what is worth going into detail and what is not. I will also give you another hint as to why you might want to count the words in this particular verse: numbers are pretty significant in this chapter as you will see.

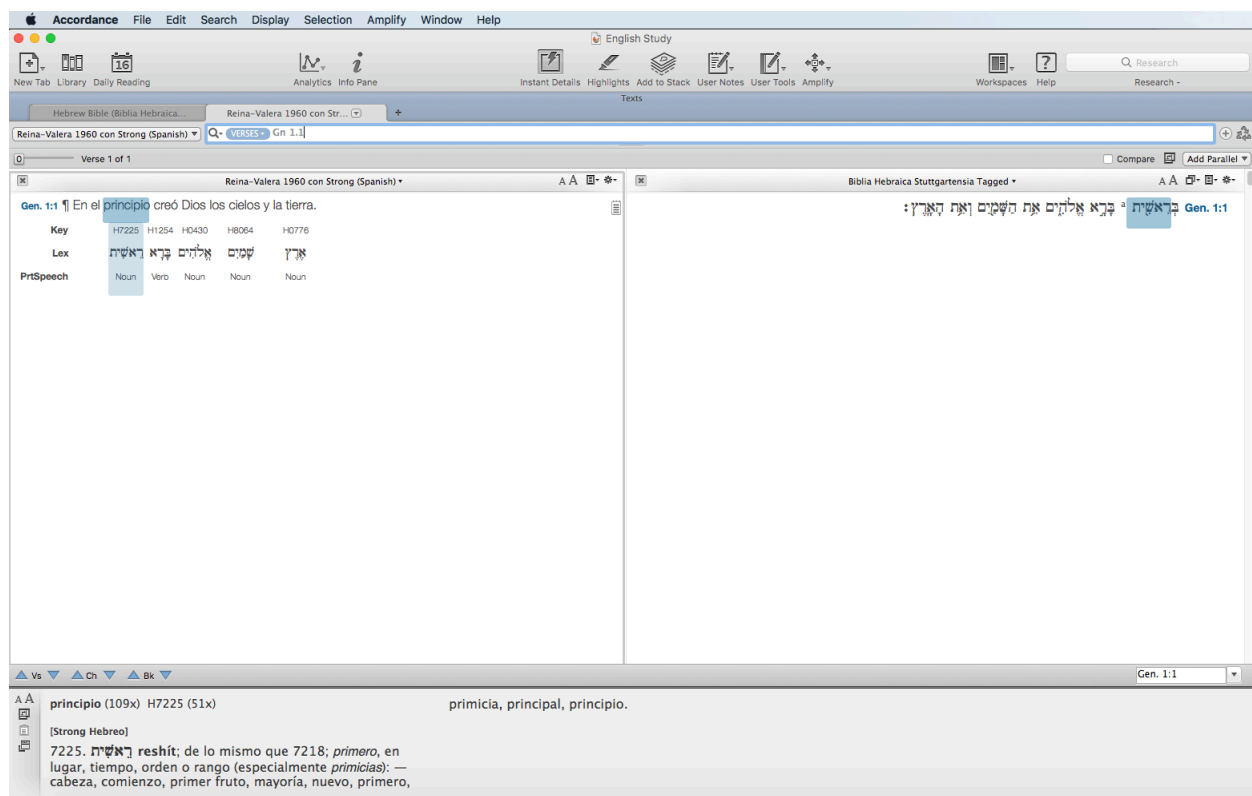
So how many words are there in the Hebrew in Gn 1.1? You're correct, seven. Do you think that seven might be an important number in this opening passage of not only the book of Genesis, but the Bible? What exactly is the importance of the number seven in this chapter? How might the conclusion of this passage in 2.1-3 help us to answer this question? What does the number seven have to do with the Sabbath? Is this an important concept right off the bat in this introductory passage to the message of the Bible? Might this influence our main point of the passage? It very well may. Let's take this little bit of information from our observation and store it away for later. We might even want to type a comment about this in our observations worksheet. Remember what I just said. The space under the box is for your observation comments. It might look something like this:



That’s how I might comment on that observation. Your’s might not be as complete as mine because I’ve already done a lot of work on this passage. But I imagine you might be able to draw some of your own preliminary conclusions about the observation that there are seven words here.

Now let’s start looking in detail at some of the words and phrases that are used. Let’s start with the first word in the Hebrew בְּרֵאשִׁית.

Using your Accordance software, try to figure out which Hebrew word(s) are translated by the Spanish words *En el principio*. If you pass your cursor over the Spanish text you will notice that neither *En* or *el* are highlighted in blue. But when you get to the word *principio* it is highlighted. Directly underneath you will see the “Key” number, then the lexical (Lex), i.e. dictionary form, of the Hebrew word that *principio* translates. That Hebrew word is רֵאשִׁית. Accordance informs us that this is a noun.



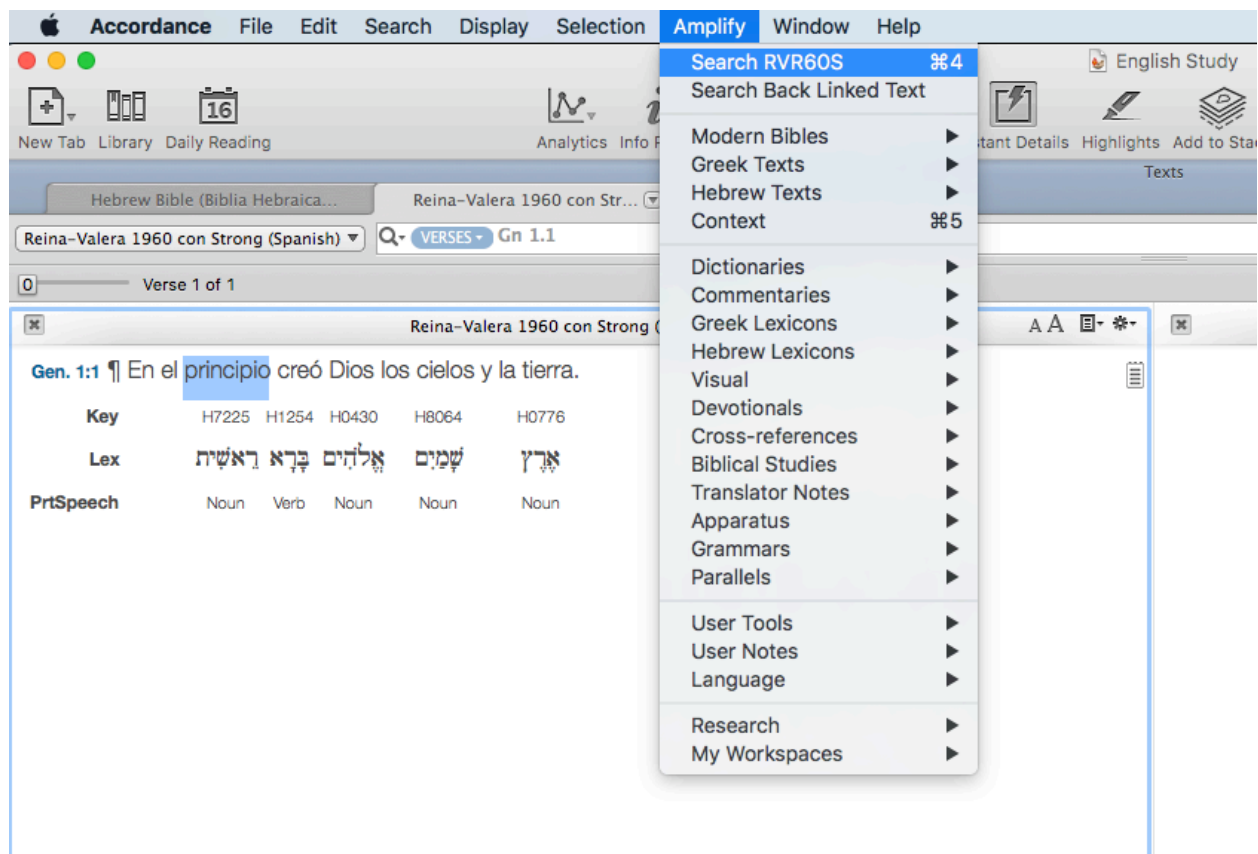
Now if you look across to the right screen what do you see highlighted? You see the Hebrew word רֵאשִׁית highlighted. However, just as in the Spanish, the first word בְּ is not highlighted. This is translated by the Spanish preposition *en*. Where is the Hebrew article that is translated by *el*? In Hebrew, it isn’t necessary to actually write the article in order for something to be definite. The context determines whether a noun is definite or not. Thus, as we found earlier, the first word in the Hebrew is actually two words combined בְּ + רֵאשִׁית.

What is the definition of רֵאשִׁית? As mentioned above, the bottom panel of the Accordance screen contains an entry for this word in the *Diccionario Hebreo* (you have to make sure this is selected in your

preferences option under “amplify”). It also tells you the number of times the Hebrew term is used in the Old Testament. I like to include the definition in my observations worksheet by either copying and pasting or, better yet, re-typing it into my observations document.

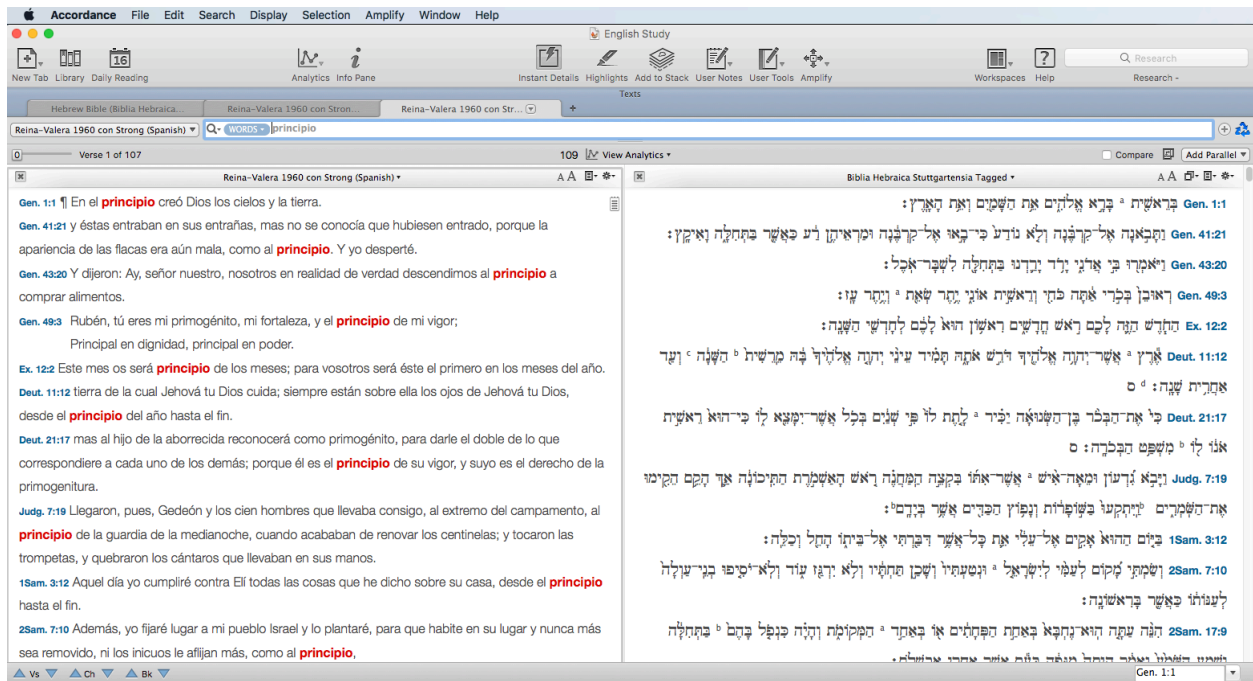
However, as important as finding the definition of the word *principio* is, finding where else it, and phrase in which it is found, occurs is equally important. Where else does this phrase or word occur in the book of Genesis if at all? Where else in the Bible does it occur? Genesis is about *beginnings*. We might also want to consider what other things began in the beginning - things that have endured to this day.

For now, let’s first focus on the single term *principio*. Using Accordance I can find out where else in the Spanish Bible the word occurs. All I have to do is highlight the word *principio* and select the “Amplify” tab. A drop down menu appears with the option “Search RVR60S” which is the Reina-Valera 1960 Bible.

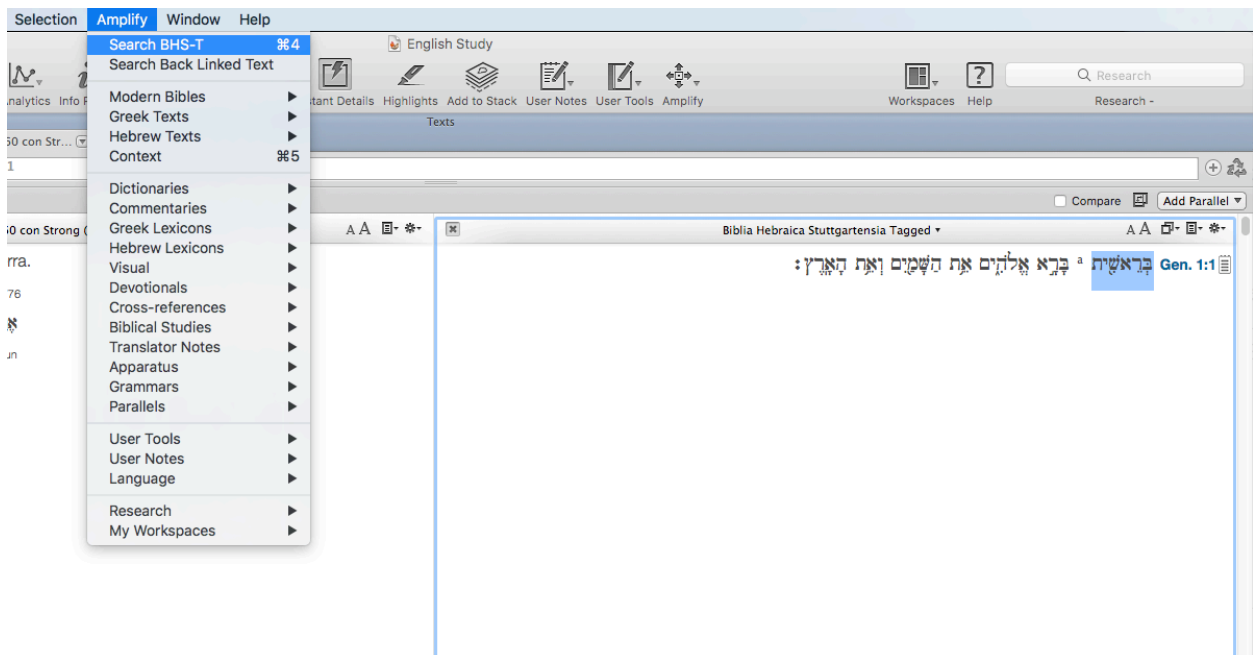


By selecting this option I will receive all the cross references where this word occurs in the Spanish Bible. Now here’s where it gets a little tricky. If I highlight the Spanish word *principio* and use the “Amplify” tab, it tells me all the instances of where the Spanish word *principio* occurs in the Old Testament. For the book of Genesis it displays Gn 1.1, 41.21, 43.20 and Gn 49.3.

However, if I highlight the Hebrew word רֵאשִׁית and the “Amplify” tab, it gives me the option of selection “Search BHS-T”. This is the Hebrew text of the Bible. When I select this option it returns different results. It lists Gn 1.1, 10.10 and 49.3. This is where the Hebrew word actually is used. In this instance the Spanish translators decided not to translate רֵאשִׁית with *principio* (whether rightly or wrongly - it is a



question of interpretation). If you only work from the Spanish and do not use the Hebrew tools to help you, you might miss the Gn 10.10 cross reference and include 41.21 (which isn't a *lexical* cross reference at all). Now these observations may or may not be significant, but you need to make the observation nonetheless.

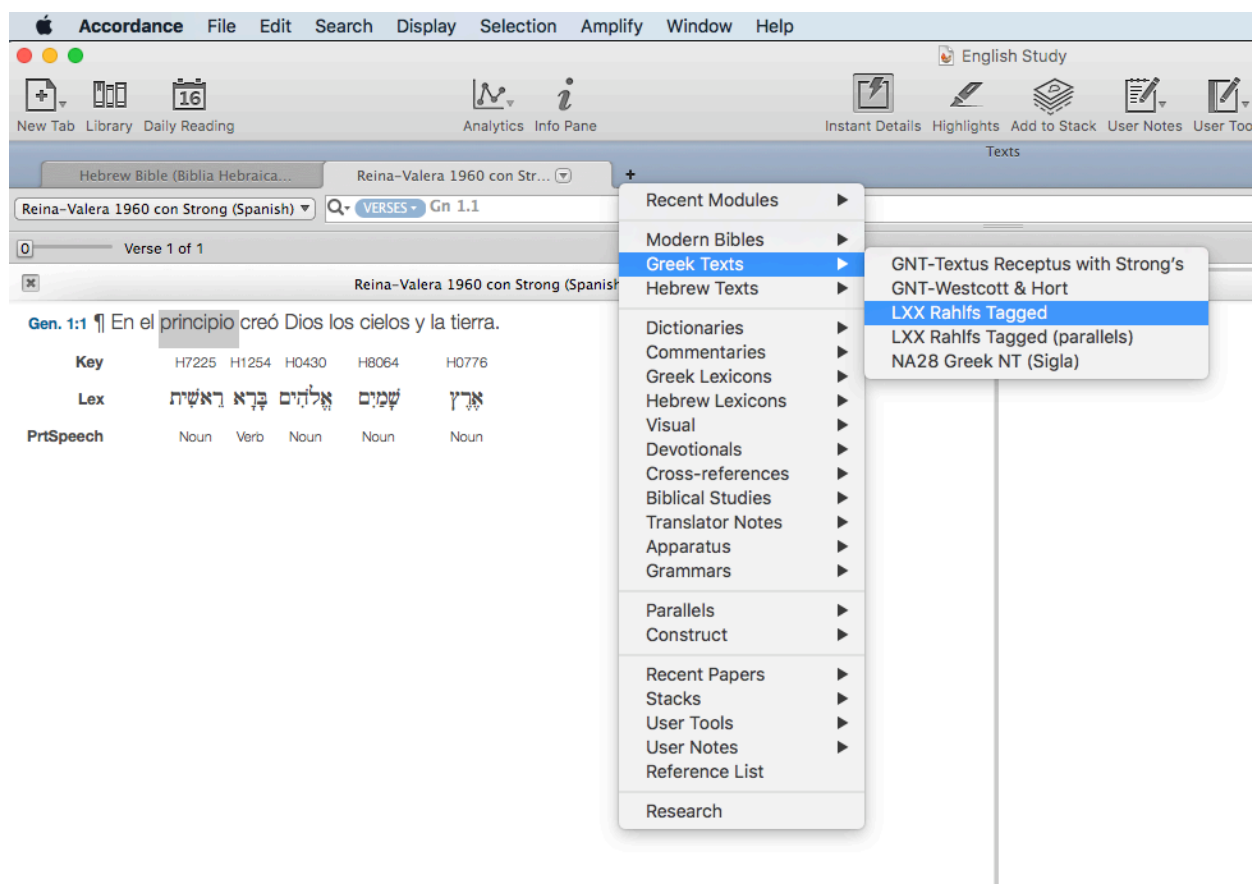


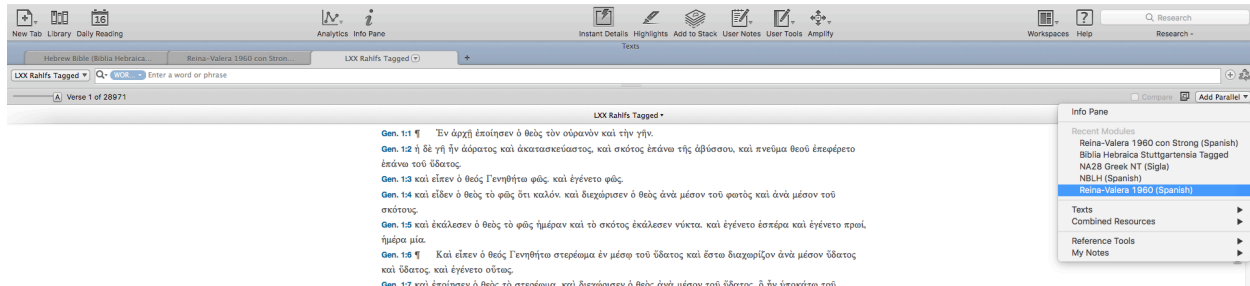
Outside of the book of Genesis, the term occurs 48 times. You need to be judicious as you survey the verses. Try to determine which ones are “creation” related. It’s on these that you will want to set your focus. Of particular interest will be Proverbs 8.22. We will return to this cross reference in a moment.

Now let's use the same process to find cross references for the *phrase* בְּרֵאשִׁית (*En el principio*). It shows us that the phrase occurs six times in the Old Testament, once in Genesis 1.1, four times in Jeremiah (referring to beginning of various Israelite kings), and one time in Hosea. We might conclude from this that just as God reigned through Adam on this earth, so he also reigned through his kings whom he seated on the throne of Israel. We might also glean from the Hosea cross reference that God's reign through the kings of Israel, as it was through Adam, failed in anticipation of the one, true King, Jesus.

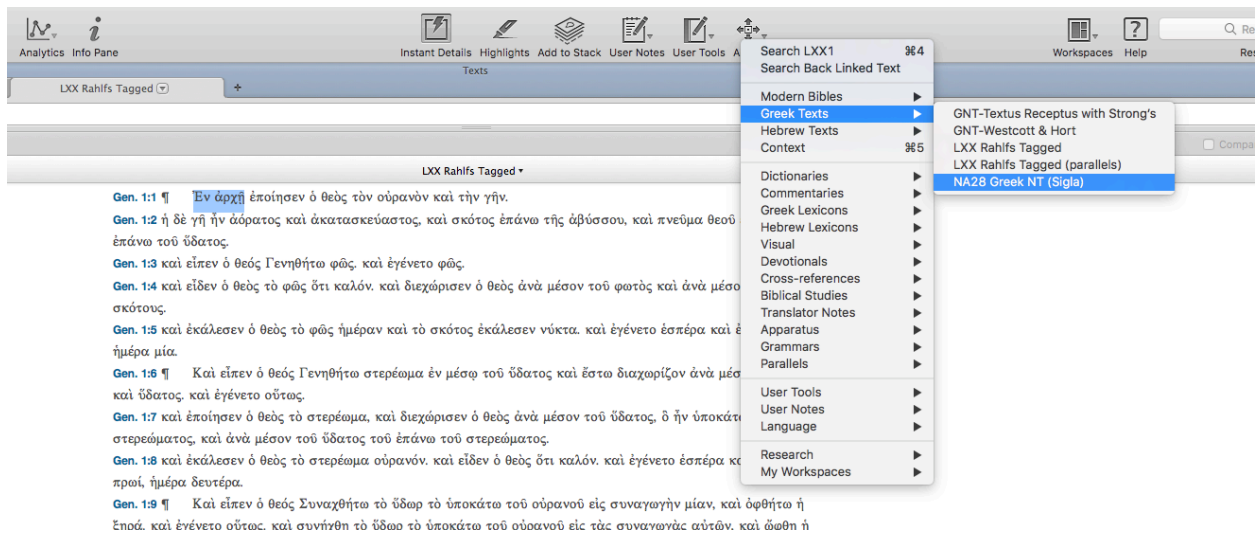
But we've only traced the phrase through the Old Testament. Can we also do it for the New Testament since the entire Bible is the overarching, complete story? Yes. But if we want to do it in the original languages (which I highly recommend) then you will need to find out how the phrase is translated from the Hebrew into the Greek (since the NT is written in Greek) and then search the New Testament for the phrase. For this we will have to turn to the Septuagint, i.e. LXX, which is the Greek translation of the Old Testament.

Do this by selecting the + button next to the *Reina-Valera 1960* tab. This gives us a drop down menu with several options. We want the one titled *Greek Texts*. From there a slide out menu appears with the option *LXX Rahlfs Tagged*. When we select this it adds another window next to the *Reina-Valera 1960* window. You can add a parallel window for the Reina Valera 1960 by clicking on the tab *add parallel*.





From this we can see the Greek translation of Genesis 1.1 Ἐν ἀρχῇ. Now in order to do a search of this phrase in the Greek New Testament, we will have to follow the same procedure as before. Highlight the phrase in the Greek, go to *amplify*, select *Greek Texts*, then *NA28 Greek NT (Sigla)*. This will return four results. Again, survey them and determine which ones might have a connection with your passage, with the creation account.



The one that really stands out is John 1.1-2. This begs the question, did John have Genesis 1.1 in mind when he wrote this in his gospel - the *beginning* of his gospel? If so, is he giving us a commentary on the creation account from a New Testament perspective?

Rather than comment on these several cross references here, you can see as an example my notes in the observations document below. I've included this so you can begin to see how the observations document should be used. It will become your best friend when it comes time to start filling in the text of your sermon or teaching material (I tend to write my notes in this document as if I am preaching or teaching).

The point of this is that in isolating on the phrase *In the beginning*, we begin to see connections to other places in the Bible, places that might help us to better understand the message of our passage.

So far we've only explored the first three words of the first verse. This is a lot of work isn't it? But believe me, if you get into the practice of mining the great gems of Scripture in this manner, you will be duly rewarded and so will those who come to hear you preach and teach! But I also believe that in putting



Obs Doc Example

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Text

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Observations  
Genesis 1.1-2.3

EN el principio crió Dios los cielos y la tierra.

Structure of v. 1:  
In counting the number of words in v. 1, we count 7. What a way to start the Bible and this passage. Seven is a very important theme as the passage unfolds. There are seven days total and it is on the seventh day that God rests. As I do more counting, I am finding that there are multiples of sevens all over the place, including the name of God. I know from my exploration of the Bible in other passages that 7's and 3's are important numbers in the Bible. They are numbers of perfection. I might conclude here that the Bible begins with 7 perfect words. This is a perfect story. I can't wait to continue!

principio  
7225. *רִאשִׁית* *rs'ahlyth, ry:shyeth*; from the same as 7218; the first, in place, time, order or rank (specifically, a firstfruit):—beginning, chief(-est), first(-fruits, part, time), principal thing.

Note: Speaking of beginnings, let's explore just what is being begun here. In the beginning of what? Who's beginning does this represent? Doesn't each of us have a beginning? Where did it all begin for each of us? Was our beginning when we were conceived in our mother's wombs? Our was our beginning with the birth of our parents or the birth of our grandparents or the birth of our great-grandparents? You see our beginning can be pushed back farther and farther can't it? It can be pressed back all the way to the beginning when God created the heavens and the earth. This tells us that we all share a common beginning. This is the beginning of the story of every one of us and it is stated as a bald fact. In the beginning God created. The history of creation and mankind trace themselves right back to the beginning of *this* story. And if we're wise, we'll continue to read this story because eventually it will unfold our story, why we exist; our purpose and our end. It will make sense of this crazy world in which we live. Who doesn't want this?

EN el principio

Pr 8.22  
Jehová me poseía **en el principio** de su camino, ya de antiguo, antes de sus obras.

Note: The author is presenting wisdom as a personification in this Proverb. However, as one reads this from a New Testament perspective, it is clear that Jesus is that personification. He is *wisdom* incarnate. He was there beside God when creation came into being. In fact, he is as much the Creator as God the Father. All things came into being through him and his wisdom. This also helps us to gain a better understanding of Jn 1.1-2 (see more below).

Jn 1.1-2  
<sup>1</sup> **EN el principio** era el Verbo, y el Verbo era con Dios, y el Verbo era Dios. <sup>2</sup> Este era **en el principio** con Dios.

Note: The John passage is an excellent commentary on Genesis 1.1-2.3. Here we have the exact same phrase. Interesting, though, that John does not finish the phrase with *God created* but instead has *was the Word*. Words are also very important in Genesis 1.1-2.3 aren't they? God is speaking a word everywhere. In fact, he's speaking creation into existence. And in John, in the beginning was the Word, right beside him as a master craftsman (cf. Proverbs 8). The word is powerful. But the word is also revealing. In creation God is speaking, revealing himself. But creation is not enough of a revelation of God. Eventually he will speak through the Word, the incarnation of God with men. At that time his revelation of himself will be complete. When John looks back

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on the creation account, he sees re-creation in Jesus. That's his perspective on things. We might also want to tuck that little bit of information away for later as well.

the pieces together like we're doing it will give you a renewed energy and eagerness to prepare your material, so much so that you'll look forward to doing this week after week.

[This concludes the trial document. The final document will continue this exegetical work through Genesis 2.3].

Now let's turn to the the subject of our verse, *Dios*. This observation is not as cut and dry as you might first think. If you highlight *Dios* and hold down the *control* key you will find that it translates the Hebrew word אֱלֹהִים, Now look at the entry and you will see that אֱלֹהִים is plural. Yet the Spanish translation is not. Later on in the chapter we will meet with God's statement "Let us make man in our image." The plural of God's name is hinting at the Trinity. We will speak more about this below.

When you do your study on the word *crió* you will find that it is only used with *Dios* as its subject. It occurs 48 times in the OT. Let's use this as an opportunity to do a word study. I'd like you to print out the verses in which this term occurs. Then briefly survey them and place them into appropriate categories.

Now let's do the same for the phrase *os cielos y la tierra* which, as already mentioned, is a merism.

You will note in my observations document that these two studies have enriched our understanding of the unfolding story of God's redemption. The point is that the Bible comes back to these words and ideas over and over to