

# Bereshit as Subject in Genesis 1:1: Theological Plausibility under Philological Constraint

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## Abstract

This third study asks a question left open by the first two. If the consonantal sequence בְּרֵאשִׁית, here designated **Bereshit** for the proposed reading, is grammatically admissible as a nominal or onomastic subject in Genesis 1:1 and historically conceivable prior to later stabilization, then what theological construals become plausible? The article does not argue that grammar proves doctrine. Its narrower aim is to identify which theological readings become responsibly available once grammatical exclusion and historical implausibility have been set aside. The method remains deliberately constrained: the philological results of the earlier studies are treated as premises, while theological proposals are tested by textual coherence, monotheistic consistency, and reception-historical intelligibility.

The article argues that the most plausible construal of *Bereshit*, if read as subject, is not that of a second deity, but of God's own originating creative agency: a revealed designation of divine action at the threshold of Scripture. This proposal is examined in relation to Jewish trajectories of Wisdom, Torah, Name, and Word/Memra, and to Christian trajectories of Logos theology, without collapsing their differences. The article further distinguishes the stabilized temporal reading, in which *Elohim* functions as the personal divine agent who creates, from the proposed subject-reading, in which *Bereshit* functions as the designation of God's creative agency in act. The conclusion is modest. A Bereshit-subject reading does not compel a single doctrinal outcome, but it does open a bounded field of theological plausibility that Jewish and Christian theologians may find newly intelligible.

## Introduction

The first two studies<sup>2</sup> in this project were intentionally limited. The first argued that Genesis 1:1 may be read with the unpointed consonantal sequence בְּרֵאשִׁית, here designated **Bereshit**, as a nominal or onomastic subject in a subject-initial clause without violating attested Biblical Hebrew clause patterns or coordination behavior. That study did not claim that the pointed Masoretic form *berē'šît*, parsed as "in/at the beginning," functions as the subject. Nor did it claim that the traditional temporal reading is grammatically impossible. The second study argued that the Bereshit-subject reading was historically conceivable before later stabilization through ancient translation, rabbinic memory, Masoretic vocalization, and vernacular tradition. Those two studies removed two strong objections to the proposal: that it is grammatically impossible, and that it is historically implausible. The present study asks the next question in sequence: if **Bereshit** in Genesis 1:1 is both grammatically admissible and historically conceivable, what, theologically, could it plausibly be?

**Terminology note.** In this article, **Bereshit** refers to the proposed nominal or onomastic construal of the consonantal sequence בְּרֵאשִׁית. By contrast, *berē'šît* refers to the received Masoretic vocalization

<sup>1</sup> This article was prepared with analytical and drafting assistance from ChatGPT (OpenAI, GPT-5 Thinking). All final interpretations, claims, and responsibility remain with the author.

<sup>2</sup> The two prior studies are: (a) *Bereshit as Subject in Genesis 1:1: A Philological Reassessment of the Unpointed Consonantal Text*, and (b) *From Openness to Stabilization: Genesis 1:1 in the Masoretic, Versional, Rabbinic, and Christian Traditions*.

normally parsed as a prepositional expression, “in/at the beginning.” The theological argument developed here depends on the former proposal; it does not claim that the pointed Masoretic form, so parsed, functions as the subject.

The question is narrower than doctrinal construction and broader than syntax alone. This article does not ask grammar to prove theology, nor does it treat later reception as a shortcut to original meaning. Its task is more limited. Once grammatical exclusion and historical implausibility have been set aside, some theological construals become more thinkable than others. The purpose of this study is to identify that bounded field of plausibility and to ask which theological readings of *Bereshit* remain coherent under philological constraint.

The stabilized temporal reading of Genesis 1:1 already gives a clear theological answer to the question of agency. In that reading, *Elohim* is the grammatical subject and the personal divine agent: God creates the heavens and the earth. Traditional Jewish and Christian theology therefore did not need to speak of *Elohim* as “agency” in an abstract sense, because *Elohim* was understood as the living God who acts. The verse names the Creator, though it does not explain the mechanism of creation. The present proposal does not deny that theological confession. It asks a different question: if *Bereshit* is read as subject, what kind of subject is it, and how can it be understood without replacing God or introducing a second deity?

The working proposal explored here is that, if *Bereshit* is read as the subject of Gen 1:1, the most plausible theological construal is not that of a second deity, but of God’s own originating creative agency. Put differently, *Bereshit* may function as a revealed designation of divine creative action rather than as a temporal phrase alone. The shift is therefore not from God to something other than God, but from God named as personal agent to divine creative agency named in the clause. This proposal does not erase the differences between Jewish and Christian theology, nor does it claim that Genesis 1:1 contains later doctrinal systems in developed form. It asks only whether the Hebrew clause, once reopened grammatically and historically, admits a bounded theological reading in which creation is named through God’s own effective self-expression.

At the canonical threshold, Scripture presents God first in action, as creator. In this study, “creative agency” names God’s effective action in bringing creation into being. If Genesis 1:1 is read with *Bereshit* as subject, *Bereshit* may be understood as the revealed designation of that originating divine agency. The claim is not that the text discloses a mechanism of creation or introduces a second divine being, but that it may name God’s creative action in a compressed and elevated form.

That question matters because the theology of Genesis 1:1 has often been discussed only after its syntax has already been stabilized. Once בְּרֵאשִׁית is received as the pointed Masoretic form *berē’šît* and heard as adverbial or construct, the range of downstream theology narrows accordingly. But if the first word of Scripture may function as a nominal subject, the opening clause can be heard not merely as a temporal frame but as a compressed declaration of creative mediation. Such a possibility does not settle doctrinal questions. It does, however, reopen a line of reflection in which divine agency, creative speech, wisdom, Torah, Name, and Logos stand closer to one another than later boundaries sometimes suggest.

Methodologically, this study remains under the same restrictions as the first two. It does not claim that grammatical admissibility establishes authorial intent. It does not infer theology directly from onomastics. It does not treat reception history as proof of original meaning. And it does not permit theological synthesis to outrun the textual limits already established. The test is therefore one of bounded coherence: does a *Bereshit*–subject reading preserve divine unity, remain intelligible within

known trajectories of reception, and avoid requiring claims that the Hebrew text itself cannot sustain?

The argument proceeds in six steps. First, the article defines what theology may and may not claim from grammar. Second, it asks what sort of divine agency *Bereshit* would designate if it functions as the subject of *bara'*. Third, it examines Jewish trajectories of Wisdom, Torah, Name, and Word/Memra. Fourth, it considers Christian trajectories of Logos theology and personal enactment. Fifth, it offers a bounded synthesis. Sixth, it identifies falsifiers and limits. The conclusion is correspondingly modest. A *Bereshit*-subject reading does not compel a single doctrinal outcome, but it does make a carefully constrained theological reading newly plausible.

## 1. Method and Guardrails: What Theology Can and Cannot Claim from Grammar

This study begins from a limit already established in the first two articles. Grammar can test whether a reading is admissible within Biblical Hebrew usage, and historical inquiry can test whether that reading remained thinkable before later stabilizations narrowed the field. Neither grammar nor history, however, can by itself establish doctrine. The present article therefore proceeds under a deliberate methodological restriction. It does not ask philology to prove theology. It asks instead which theological construals become responsibly plausible once two stronger objections have been removed: that the reading is ungrammatical, and that it is historically implausible.

That restriction matters because theological discussion of Genesis 1:1 has often begun from already stabilized syntax. Once בְּרֵאשִׁית is fixed in the received Masoretic form *berē'šît* as temporal or construct, the theological field narrows accordingly. But if the first word of Scripture may function as a nominal subject, then the range of responsible theological reflection changes. Theology here is therefore not an escape from philology, but a second-order inquiry governed by philological results.

For that reason, the article adopts four guardrails. First, it distinguishes plausibility from proof. A theological reading may become newly plausible without thereby becoming certain, original, or mandatory. Second, it distinguishes textual designation from metaphysical taxonomy. If *Bereshit* functions as subject in Gen 1:1, the text may be naming God's creative agency without thereby specifying whether that agency should be classed as person, attribute, wisdom, title, or some other later category. Third, it maintains strict monotheistic consistency. Any proposal that requires a second deity or an independent creator alongside God fails at once. Fourth, it keeps reception history descriptive. Jewish and Christian traditions may clarify what kinds of theological construal were thinkable, but they do not by themselves determine the original sense of the Hebrew clause.

Within those limits, theology in the present study means disciplined reflection on divine agency, creation, and mediation in relation to the textual findings of the earlier articles. It does not mean speculative metaphysics unconstrained by language. It does not mean harmonizing all later traditions into a single system. The question is narrower: if *Bereshit* is read as the subject of *bara'* in Gen 1:1, what kind of theological referent is most coherent with the grammar, most intelligible within ancient monotheistic discourse, and least likely to violate the distinctions already maintained by the text?

This use of agency-language is analytical, but it is not foreign to the Hebrew Bible's way of speaking. The Hebrew Bible regularly presents divine agency through concrete modes of efficacy: YHWH's word creates and accomplishes, His spirit empowers and gives life, His wisdom orders, and His Name discloses presence and authority.<sup>3</sup> These expressions do not divide God into competing beings; they

<sup>3</sup> For divine word as effective agency, see Gen 1; Ps 33:6; Isa 55:10–11. For Spirit as empowering or life-giving agency, see Gen 1:2; Ps 104:30. For Wisdom as ordering agency, see Prov 3:19; Prov 8. For the Name as manifest presence and authority, see Deut 12:5; 1 Kgs 8:29.

name forms in which the one God's action is made effective and intelligible. For that reason, speaking of *Bereshit* as a designation of divine creative agency does not require treating it as a second agent. It asks whether Genesis 1:1 may name the operative form of God's own creative action.

The answer explored here is correspondingly modest. It is safer to speak of *Bereshit* as a revealed designation of God's own creative agency than to assign it a fully developed ontology. The present argument does not claim that *Bereshit* is an angel, a separate spirit, or an independently existing being whose nature can be inferred directly from the clause. Nor does the proposal reduce *Bereshit* to a merely ornamental epithet. If *Bereshit* functions as subject, it would be a theologically charged designation: a name-form or epithet for God's originating creative agency in the act of creating *elohim*, the heavens, and the earth. The term would therefore carry real theological force, while still remaining bounded by the grammatical and historical arguments on which the proposal depends.

Such language is intentionally functional before it becomes ontological. In the Hebrew Bible, names and titles often identify realities through action, role, and disclosed character rather than through abstract definition. The issue, then, is not whether Gen 1:1 supplies a later theological essence in developed terms. It is whether the clause may present divine creative agency under a designated form that is active, intelligible, and monotheistically bounded.

This method also requires explicit limits on what would count as failure. A theological proposal built on the *Bereshit*-subject reading must be abandoned if it overrides the Hebrew syntax, ignores the historical stabilization evidence, or requires claims alien to monotheistic discourse. Conversely, it gains plausibility when it preserves divine unity, accounts for creator-creature distinction, and resonates with already attested patterns of divine mediation such as Wisdom, Torah, Name, or Word. The task is therefore not unrestricted theological invention, but bounded theological coherence.

## 2. Agent and Agency: What Changes When *Bereshit* Is Read as Subject?

In the stabilized temporal reading of Genesis 1:1, *Elohim* functions as the personal divine agent: God creates. This point should not be minimized. Jewish and Christian tradition did not fail to notice divine agency in Genesis 1:1; rather, the received syntax located agency in the personal subject *Elohim*. God is the one who acts. The verse declares the Creator, while leaving the process or mechanism of creation unexplained.

The *Bereshit*-subject reading changes the grammatical question and therefore also the theological question. If **Bereshit** functions as the subject of *bara'*, the issue is no longer simply who creates, since the ordinary divine subject *Elohim* no longer occupies that role in the clause. The question becomes what form of divine agency the text may be naming by **Bereshit**. The proposal developed here is not that God disappears from the verse, nor that **Bereshit** replaces God. Rather, the proposal is that **Bereshit** may designate God's own originating creative agency in action.

This distinction between agent and agency is important. An agent is a being who acts; an agency is the effective action, operative power, or instituted means by which something is accomplished. In the temporal reading, *Elohim* is the agent. In the proposed subject-reading, *Bereshit* is not best understood as another personal agent alongside God, but as the revealed designation of divine creative agency. The shift is therefore not from God to a rival, but from God named as acting subject to God's creative action named in textual form.

Under those constraints, *Bereshit* need not be taken as the name of a second deity, an angelic intermediary, or an independently existing being standing alongside God. Nor should it be reduced to a

semantically empty label. Rather, if read as subject, *Bereshit* may function as the named form in which divine creative action is presented at the threshold of Scripture. That construal identifies what the text may be naming in function, not what later metaphysical systems might require in essence.

A text may designate an agency without explaining its mechanism, components, or subordinate agents. Genesis 1:1, on this reading, would not be offering an account of the internal process of creation, a taxonomy of heavenly intermediaries, or a developed ontology of mediation. It would be naming the divine agency through which creation comes to be. The clause would therefore present God's creative action under a designated form without requiring the reader to know how that action is internally constituted.

Such a construal explains why several overlapping descriptors become plausible at once. If *Bereshit* designates divine creative agency, it may be described as a Name insofar as it is a revealed designation, as a Principle insofar as it names originating primacy, and as a Word insofar as it presents God's effective self-expression in creation. These are not identical concepts, and the article does not collapse them into a single formula. Yet they converge at the level of function. Each describes, in a different register, the one God's agency as productive, ordering, and world-originating.

This functional reading also suits the textual position of Genesis 1:1. At the threshold of Scripture, the verse need not supply a full metaphysical explanation of creation in order to name its divine source in action. One might expect such an opening clause to identify creative agency by what it does rather than by analytic definition. On this reading, *Bereshit* is known first through action: it creates. The text does not pause to disclose its internal composition, and this article does not attempt to infer one.

For that reason, the study does not ask whether *Bereshit* is an angel, a spirit, a delegated power, or a hidden entity. Those questions exceed what the clause can bear. The better question is whether Jewish and Christian traditions already contain categories capable of recognizing such a designation of divine agency without dissolving monotheism. The following sections argue that they do.

### 3. Jewish Trajectories: Wisdom, Torah, Name, and Word/Memra

If *Bereshit* in Genesis 1:1 is read as the subject of *bara'*, the question for Jewish theological plausibility is not whether a second deity has appeared, but whether Jewish discourse already contains categories for speaking of God's own effective agency in creation under a designated form. The answer is yes, though with important qualifications. Jewish tradition consistently guards divine unity, yet it also speaks in more than one register about how the one God creates, orders, reveals, and governs. Wisdom, Torah, the divine Name, and the divine Word all provide ways of describing how God's will becomes effective in the world without requiring a second god alongside Him.

The most obvious trajectory is Wisdom. In biblical and later Jewish discourse, Wisdom is not merely an abstract human quality. It can be presented as a formative, ordering reality closely associated with God's creative work. Proverbs 8 is especially important here, not because it settles the meaning of Genesis 1:1, but because it shows that Jewish Scripture can speak of creation through a register that is both intimate to God and distinguishable in discourse. Such language need not imply a second deity. It can instead mark a mode of divine self-expression: God's wise ordering rendered conceptually and rhetorically visible. Under that analogy, a *Bereshit*-subject reading would not stand outside Jewish thought.

A second trajectory is Torah. In later Jewish reflection, Torah is not only a body of instruction given in history; it can also be described as fundamental, primordial, or creation-related. Derashic traditions that

read *rē'šīt* in relation to Torah or Israel do not amount to grammatical proofs for Genesis 1:1, but they do show that Jewish imagination was prepared to hear the language of “beginning” in more than a purely temporal sense. If Torah can function as a privileged medium of divine ordering and instruction, then the conceptual distance between “beginning,” “wisdom,” and “effective divine word” is not as wide as later rigid categories may suggest.

A third trajectory concerns the divine Name. Jewish tradition places unusual weight on the relation between God’s Name and God’s action. The Name is not a mere label. It signifies presence, authority, revelation, and covenantal efficacy. God acts “for His Name,” causes His Name to dwell, or makes His Name known in ways that bind revelation to agency. Here again, one does not leave monotheism behind. Rather, one enters a form of discourse in which God may be named under aspects of disclosed action without implying that the name is a second being. This is important for the present study, because the proposal advanced here is similarly bounded.

A fourth Jewish trajectory concerns the divine Word, especially as effective speech and, later, as *Memra*<sup>4</sup> in the Aramaic Targums. In prophetic discourse, “the word of the LORD” is the event of divine address: the message comes to the prophet, speaks with divine authority, and often culminates in the recognition formula, “you shall know that I am the LORD.” This does not require the Word to be treated as a second deity. The simplest reading is that YHWH speaks through the word-event. Yet the formula is theologically weighty because the word is not merely information. It comes, commands, warns, judges, promises, and accomplishes.

The Targumic use of *Memra* develops this pattern in another register. *Memra* means “word,” but in the Targums it can function as a reverential way of speaking about God’s manifestation, agency, or effective presence, especially where direct anthropomorphic language about God would be difficult. For the purposes of the present article, the importance of *Memra* is limited but real. It shows that Jewish tradition already possesses language in which God’s Word may manifest and mediate divine action without being treated as a rival deity. This trajectory must not be collapsed into Christian Logos theology, but neither should it be ignored when testing whether a designated form of divine agency is intelligible within Jewish categories.

These trajectories together support a broader category of mediating agency within Jewish discourse. The mediation in view is not ontological separation from God, but the textual, conceptual, or revelatory form in which divine action is rendered intelligible. Wisdom orders, Torah instructs, the Name discloses, and Word/Memra accomplishes or manifests divine action. These are not interchangeable terms, and Jewish traditions handle them differently. Yet they share a family resemblance: each names or frames divine efficacy without requiring polytheism.

At the same time, Jewish tradition also supplies the necessary cautions. Precisely because the language of divine agency can become theologically volatile, rabbinic tradition often regulates how far such language may be pressed. Concerns about ambiguity, mediation, or the appearance of multiple authorities show that Jewish interpretation was aware of the risks involved in overly independent readings of divine action. That caution is relevant here. It explains why a Bereshit–subject reading, even if grammatically admissible and historically conceivable, would not have been received neutrally.

The cumulative result is therefore bounded but real. A Bereshit–subject reading does not require one to claim that Judaism secretly taught a hidden hypostasis in Genesis 1:1. Nor does it require collapsing Wisdom, Torah, Name, and Word/Memra into a single system. It is enough to observe that Jewish discourse already possesses several ways of speaking about God’s effective self-expression in creation

4 <https://jewishencyclopedia.com/articles/10618-memra>

and revelation without violating monotheism. Within that field, *Bereshit* can plausibly be heard as a revealed designation of God's originating creative agency.

#### 4. Christian Trajectories: Logos, Word, and Personal Enactment

If the Jewish trajectories surveyed above show that divine agency can be named without violating monotheism, the Christian question is whether the *Bereshit*-subject reading can be received within the church's language of Logos, Word, and divine mediation without turning Genesis 1:1 into a forced proof-text. The answer proposed here is again bounded. Christian theology does not need Genesis 1:1 to say everything later doctrine says. Nor does the present study claim that the Hebrew clause, by grammar alone, yields the full content of Johannine or Nicene theology. Its narrower claim is that, if *Bereshit* is read as subject, the verse becomes newly intelligible within a Christian field of reflection that already speaks of creation through God's Word.

The central Christian trajectory is the Logos language of John 1. There the Word is not merely spoken sound or written command, but God's effective self-expression in personal form. Yet even here caution is required. The present argument does not say that John directly interprets the consonantal sequence בְּרֵאשִׁית as **Bereshit**, a proper-name or title-like subject in Genesis 1:1, nor that Hebrew grammar compels Johannine christology. What it does say is more limited. If Genesis 1:1 may be read as naming divine creative agency in subject position, then Christian Logos theology encounters an unexpected point of contact: creation is understood not only as an act of God, but as an act mediated through God's own self-expression.

This becomes clearer when one distinguishes Word from second deity. In classical Christian theology, the Logos is not a rival god set alongside the Father. Rather, that tradition speaks of the Word as from God, with God, and sharing in the divine identity while remaining relationally distinguished. The present study need not adjudicate later doctrinal formulations in detail. It is enough to note that Christian discourse, like the Jewish trajectories examined above, already contains ways of speaking about divine mediation that do not require polytheism. Within that framework, a *Bereshit*-subject reading becomes theologically intelligible as a designation of divine creative agency rather than as the introduction of another creator.

Christian reception intensifies this pattern by moving from agency-language to personal enactment. In Jewish Wisdom, Torah, Name, and Word/Memra trajectories, divine agency can be rendered conceptually, textually, liturgically, or reverentially. In Christian usage, that same divine self-expression becomes personal in the Logos and historical in Jesus Christ. For the purposes of the present study, that development should be described rather than presupposed. It is a reception trajectory, not a grammatical conclusion. Yet it matters because it shows how a designated form of divine agency can become theologically thick without ceasing to be monotheistic.

This also explains why Christian theology has often heard Genesis and John together. The opening of Genesis names creation; the opening of John names the Word through whom all things came to be. The present study does not collapse the two texts into a single exegetical statement, but it does note their conceptual proximity. If *Bereshit* in Genesis 1:1 can designate God's originating creative agency, then John's Logos theology may be read not as a foreign imposition upon Genesis, but as a later Christian articulation of a possibility already latent in Scripture's opening threshold.

At the same time, the Christian trajectory also poses a risk of overreach. Because Christian theology possesses a more developed doctrine of the Word, it can be tempted to read Genesis 1:1 too quickly

through later categories, as though the verse were simply a concealed statement of christology awaiting disclosure. That is not the claim of this article. The Hebrew clause does not by itself identify *Bereshit* with the incarnate Logos, nor does it settle the later doctrinal relations between Father, Word, and creation. What it may do, if the subject–reading is granted, is to open a theologically coherent space in which Christian readers can recognize a designated form of divine creative agency at the head of Genesis.

The Christian plausibility of the proposal therefore lies not in proof but in fit. A *Bereshit*–subject reading fits a theological world in which God creates through His Word, reveals Himself through His Word, and, in Christian confession, personally enacts that Word in history. That fit is real, but it must remain secondary to the philological argument.

## 5. A Bounded Synthesis: *Bereshit* as Divine Creative Agency

The preceding sections have argued that a *Bereshit*–subject reading can be received within both Jewish and Christian theological trajectories without requiring a second deity or violating monotheistic constraint. The present section draws those lines together in a more limited synthesis. Its claim is not that Jewish and Christian theology become identical, nor that Genesis 1:1 yields a complete doctrine of mediation. Its narrower proposal is that, if *Bereshit* is read as the subject of *bara*’, the most coherent theological construal is that *Bereshit* designates God’s own originating creative agency.

This synthesis remains bounded by the same methodological restrictions established earlier. It does not infer ontology directly from grammar. It does not require that *Bereshit* be treated as an independently existing being. It does not identify *Bereshit* exhaustively with Wisdom, Torah, Name, Memra, Logos, or any other single category. Rather, it observes that each of those categories, in different ways, preserves a conceptual place for God’s effective self-expression in creation. If *Bereshit* occupies the subject position in Genesis 1:1, then it is most plausibly heard within that family of discourse: not as a rival to God, but as the named form of God’s own creative action at the threshold of Scripture. The strength of the synthesis is that it does not require choosing only one register. Name, Principle, and Word/Memra each illuminate part of the proposal, while the broader term “creative agency” holds them together without collapsing them.

Such a construal has several advantages. First, it preserves the primacy of God. The proposal does not relocate ultimate origin away from God to some intermediate power. Instead, it identifies the subject–reading as a way of presenting God’s action in named form. The creator remains God alone. Second, it preserves the distinction between designation and mechanism. On this reading, Genesis 1:1 names the agency by which creation comes to be, but it does not pretend to explain how creation occurs. The clause presents divine efficacy, not a cosmological manual. Third, it respects the textual position of the verse. At the opening of Scripture, one might expect compression, density, and threshold language. A designated form of creative agency is more fitting to such a position than a merely chronological adverb if the subject–reading is otherwise grammatically and historically available.

This synthesis also clarifies the relation among the descriptors Name, Principle, Word, and epithet. *Bereshit* may be understood as a Name insofar as it functions as a revealed designation. It may be understood as a Principle insofar as it names originating firstness or creative primacy. It may be understood as Word insofar as it presents God’s effective self-expression in action. It may also be understood as an epithet, provided that epithet is not taken to mean a merely ornamental label, but a meaningful title that encodes role and action. These descriptors should not be treated as identical in every respect. Yet under the present proposal they converge functionally. Each marks an attempt to

speak of God's originating action in a way that is more than decorative and less than polytheistic duplication.

At this point the phrase divine creative agency can be stated more exactly. In the present study it does not mean a separate agent to whom God delegates creation, nor a secondary being who assists God from alongside Him. It means God's own effective agency in bringing creation into being, as named in the text. The distinction matters because it prevents the proposal from exceeding the evidence. Genesis 1:1, on this reading, would not reveal an additional being hidden behind the grammar. It would instead designate the one God's creative efficacy under a form that is active, elevated, and incipit-like.

This bounded synthesis also helps explain why the proposal may be more hospitable across traditions than first appears. Jewish readers may recognize in it a way of speaking about divine Wisdom, Torah, Name, Word, or agency without abandoning divine unity. Christian readers may recognize in it a way of speaking about the Word through whom all things come to be, without requiring Genesis 1:1 to serve as a concealed dogmatic formula. In both cases the key is restraint. The verse need not be made to say everything later theology says. It need only be allowed to say what the grammar and historical evidence now leave open: that creation may be named in relation to God's own effective self-expression.

Under those limits, the constructive proposal of this study can be stated plainly. If *Bereshit* is read as the subject of Genesis 1:1, then *Bereshit* is most plausibly understood as the revealed designation of God's own originating creative agency: not a second being alongside God, not a decorative epithet, and not a mechanism analytically disclosed, but the named form of divine creative action at the threshold of Scripture.

## 6. Falsifiers and Limits: What Would Count against Theological Overreach

The constructive proposal of this article is intentionally bounded. If *Bereshit* is read as the subject of Genesis 1:1, then *Bereshit* is most plausibly understood as the revealed designation of God's own originating creative agency. That proposal does not claim more than the earlier articles permit, and it must therefore remain open to falsification. The present section identifies the limits beyond which the argument may not responsibly proceed, and the kinds of findings that would weaken or overturn its theological plausibility.

The first limit is philological. The theological proposal depends entirely on the prior grammatical and historical claims. If the subject-reading of Genesis 1:1 were shown not to be grammatically admissible after all, or if the historical argument for its pre-stabilization conceivability were substantially weakened, then the theological synthesis developed here would lose its basis. Theology in the present study is derivative, not foundational.

The second limit is monotheistic coherence. The proposal fails if it requires *Bereshit* to function as a second deity, an independent creator, or a rival center of divine agency alongside God. Its viability depends precisely on preserving the unity of God while naming divine creative action in a designated form.

The third limit concerns designation versus ontology. The article has deliberately argued at the level of textual designation and functional coherence rather than metaphysical taxonomy. If the argument were made to depend on a fully specified ontology—whether angelic, hypostatic, emanational, or otherwise—it would move beyond what Genesis 1:1 can bear. The clause may name divine agency without explaining its internal structure. Theological overreach begins when the text is made to disclose more than it actually says: a mechanism of creation, an inventory of subordinate agents, or a developed

metaphysical theory of divine self-expression.

The fourth limit is receptional. Jewish and Christian trajectories have been used descriptively, to test intelligibility, not to supply proof of original meaning. Wisdom, Torah, Name, Word/Memra, and Logos language can show that the *Bereshit*-subject reading is not theologically alien; they cannot by themselves establish that the ancient author intended those full associations. The theological plausibility argued here remains downstream from the Hebrew text rather than imposed backward upon it.

The fifth limit is semantic inflation. Because the proposal is suggestive, it can easily accumulate more meaning than the text warrants. One may be tempted to say that *Bereshit* already contains a full doctrine of Wisdom, Torah, Memra, Logos, incarnation, revelation, or ecclesial mission. Such claims are stronger than the present argument allows. The article's constructive claim is narrower: that *Bereshit*, if read as subject, plausibly names God's originating creative agency. Everything beyond that must remain provisional, analogical, and tradition-specific.

These limits imply several practical falsifiers. The proposal would be weakened if a stronger philological case emerged requiring the consonantal sequence בְּרֵאשִׁית to be read only as the pointed Masoretic *berē'šît*, whether temporal or construct, in Genesis 1:1. It would likewise be weakened if the only way to make *Bereshit* theologically meaningful were to posit an independent being or a second creative center. It would also fail if Jewish and Christian categories of divine mediation proved unable, on closer analysis, to accommodate this form of designated agency without contradiction. Finally, the proposal would exceed its bounds if it could not be stated coherently without importing later doctrinal content as though it were already explicit in the Hebrew clause.

Conversely, the proposal remains viable so long as it satisfies four tests: it must remain dependent on the grammatical and historical arguments rather than replacing them; it must preserve divine unity; it must treat *Bereshit* as a designation of agency rather than as an independently demonstrated ontology; and it must keep reception history descriptive and analogical, not probative. Under those conditions, theological plausibility remains a legitimate and bounded outcome of the earlier studies rather than an uncontrolled expansion beyond them.

## Conclusion

This study began with a question left open by the first two articles in the project. If *Bereshit* in Genesis 1:1 is grammatically admissible as a nominal or onomastic subject and historically conceivable prior to later stabilization, then what theological construal becomes plausible? The answer proposed here has been deliberately bounded. The article has not argued that grammar proves doctrine, nor that later reception can be read backward as direct proof of original meaning. Its narrower claim has been that, once grammatical exclusion and historical implausibility are set aside, a specific theological reading becomes responsibly thinkable: *Bereshit* may be understood as the revealed designation of God's own originating creative agency.

That conclusion depends on the sequence established by the trilogy as a whole. The first article argued that Biblical Hebrew grammar does not exclude a subject-initial reading of Genesis 1:1 with the consonantal sequence בְּרֵאשִׁית, here designated **Bereshit**, as a nominal or onomastic subject. The second argued that such a reading was historically conceivable before its public stabilization through translation, rabbinic memory, Masoretic vocalization, and vernacular tradition. The present article has taken the next step by asking what theological construal fits those results without violating

monotheistic constraint or outrunning the evidence. Its answer has been that the most coherent construal is neither that of a second deity nor that of a merely ornamental epithet, but that of divine creative agency named in textual form at the threshold of Scripture.

Within that bounded frame, both Jewish and Christian trajectories prove more relevant than either polemics or reductionism would suggest. Jewish categories of Wisdom, Torah, Name, and Word/Memra show that the one God may be spoken of through designated forms of agency without compromising divine unity. Christian categories of Logos, Word, and personal enactment show that creation through divine self-expression can be developed further without requiring Genesis 1:1 to function as an explicit dogmatic formula. The article has not claimed that these trajectories are identical, nor that either one is recoverable in full from the Hebrew clause itself. It has argued only that both contain conceptual room for receiving *Bereshit*, if read as subject, as the named form of divine creative action.

The importance of that proposal lies partly in what it does not claim. It does not identify the mechanism of creation. It does not specify the internal constitution of divine agency. It does not infer a hidden ontology from syntax alone. And it does not ask the text to disclose more than it says. Rather, it suggests that Genesis 1:1 may name God's creative action without analytically explaining it. In that sense, the first word of Scripture may do more than establish temporal setting. It may present creation under a designated form of divine efficacy: not simply as something that happened "in the beginning," but as an act brought forth through God's own originating agency.

The result is therefore one of plausibility, not compulsion. A *Bereshit*-subject reading does not force a single theological system, and it should not be made to carry claims greater than its philological base can support. Yet neither should it be dismissed once the grammatical and historical grounds for dismissal have been substantially weakened. If the reading stands, then a bounded theological conclusion follows: *Bereshit* can plausibly be heard as the revealed designation of God's own creative agency in creation. That is enough to reopen a field of interpretation long narrowed by stabilization, and enough to explain why Jewish and Christian readers alike may find in this proposal a more intelligible form of creative mediation than they might initially have expected.

The trilogy therefore ends where it began: with Genesis 1:1 itself. The first article asked whether the clause could bear the reading. The second asked whether history had entirely foreclosed it. This third article has asked what the reading could mean if granted. Taken together, the three studies do not deliver dogmatic finality. They establish something both more modest and more durable: that a *Bereshit*-subject reading of the consonantal text of Genesis 1:1 is grammatically admissible, historically conceivable, and theologically intelligible under explicit constraint. Under those conditions, *Bereshit* may be understood as the revealed designation of God's own originating creative agency: the named form of divine creative action at the threshold of Scripture.

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