

CCT: A Genetic Analysis of TS, RC. Pericope 19.

WR	SR	TB	WW	WC	GL1	TS	RC
– Doctors say.– created the earth out of nothing. Borau. –create.– it means to organized.– God had materials to organize the world. Element =¹ nothing. can destroy. no beginning no end.–²	Create (Burrau, in Hebrew,) which means organize from Element Chaos, or Element,	now I ask all the learned men who hear me wher. the learned men who are preaching Saln. say that God created the Heavens & the Earth out of nothing & the reason is <i>that</i> they are unlearned & I know more than all the world put togr. & <i>If</i> the H. G. in me com: more than all the world I will associate with it–<i>What</i> does <u>Boro</u>³ mean it means to organize same as <i>you</i> wod. organize a Ship.– God <i>himself</i> had materials to org. the world out of chaos which is Element & in which dwells all the glory– <i>that nothing can destroy they never can have an ending</i>	An other thing the learned Dr says the Lord made the world out of nothing, you tell them that God made the world out of something, & thay think you are a fool. But I am learned & know more than the whole world, the Holy Ghost does anyhow, & I will associate myself with it. Beaureau, to organize the world out of chaotic matter, element they are cannot be dissolved they may be reorganized.	Learned <i>Doctors</i>⁶ tell <i>us</i> God created the heavens & earth out of nothing They account it blasphemy to contradict the idea–They will call you a fool– <i>You ask them why they say don't the Bible say he created the world & they infer that it must be out of nothing.</i>⁷ The word create came from the word Barau–don't mean so–it means to organize–same as man would <i>use to</i> build a ship– hence we infer that God had materials to organize <i>from</i>–chaos–chaotic matter. –element had an existence from the time he had. The pure principles of element are	But says the English translation, in the beginning God created all things out of nothing, but there was never anything yet that was made of nothing. Shame to such logic. The word in the Hebrew is thus; when the Gods counseled together they rolled this earth in existence. the great Elohim in the Hebrew meaning the God of all Gods, called a Grand Council and counseled to form that planet on which we do now dwell. They spoke and earth from chaos sprang	Now I ask all the learned men who hear me, <i>why</i> the learned men who are preaching¹⁰ salvation say, that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing,¹¹ and the reason is they are unlearned,¹² they account it blasphemy¹³ to contradict the idea, they will call you a fool.^{14–15} I know more than all the world put together and the Holy Ghost¹⁶ <i>within</i> me comprehends more than all the world, and I will associate with it.¹⁷ The word create came from the word <i>baurau</i>;¹⁸ it does <i>not</i> mean so; it means to organize; the same as a man would organize a ship. Hence we infer that God had materials to organize	Now I ask all²¹ who hear me, <i>why</i> the learned men who are preaching salvation say, that God created the heavens and the earth out of nothing? the reason is that²² they are unlearned <i>in the things of God</i>,²³ and have not the gift of the Holy Ghost; they account it blasphemy <i>in any one</i> to contradict their idea. <i>If</i> you tell them that God made the world out of something, they will call you a fool. But I am learned, and know more than all the world put together; the Holy Ghost does any how, and he is <i>within</i> me,²⁴ and comprehends more than all the world; and I will associate myself with Him.²⁵ You ask the learned doctors why

they⁴ coexist
eternally⁵

principles **that** never
can be destroyed—
they may be
organized and re
organized—but not
destroyed.

by their
workmanship.
Chaos being made
into element.⁸
They saw till time
should be no more
...⁹

the world¹⁹ out of
chaos;²⁰ chaotic matter,
which is element, and in
which dwells all the
glory. Element had an
existence from the time
he had. The pure
principles of element,
are principles that can
never be destroyed.
They may be organized
and re-organized; but
not destroyed.

they say the world was
made out of nothing?
and they will answer
'don't the bible say he
created the world'? and
they infer from the word
create that it must have
been made out of
nothing. Now the word
create came from the
baurau, which does not
mean to create out of
nothing;²⁶ it means to
organize, the same as a
man would organize²⁷
materials and build a
ship. Hence we infer
that God had materials
to organize the world
out of chaos- chaotic
matter, which is
element, and in which
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Element had an
existence from the time
He²⁸ had. The pure
principles of element
are principles **which** can
never²⁹ be destroyed;
they may be organized
and re-organized but not
destroyed; **they had** no
beginning, **and can have**

no end.

¹ WR's use of over-under dashes does not indicate an “equals” sign.

² WR's inclusion of what may be an instance of the “NBNE axiom” (the No Beginning, No Ending axiom - an oft repeated assertion of JS) is not attested by the other sources at this point. Instead, they place the NBNE somewhat later in the sermon, suggesting that it may have been referenced more than once.

³ This is the second Hebrew word of Gen. 1:1. For an analysis similar to JS's, see Berger, *Wozu ist der Teufel da?*, 112-4.

⁴ That is, God and “element.”

⁵ While WC reads “element had an existence from the time he had,” TB's phrase was probably part of the archetype, based on its coherence with later statements in this sermon. Note also the JS diary at this point.

⁶ The JS diary and WW attest to “doctors” here.

⁷ This passage is not attested in the other reports, but it is accurate as a measure of the basis of creation “*ex nihilo*” (from nothing) doctrine. Grimshaw uses it as a transition (with modifications) to introduce the second brief discussion of Hebrew in Gen. 1:1. See the following notes.

⁸ Laub is contra the other sources, which identify “element” and “chaos.”

⁹ The idea that time would cease to exist at some point is a Platonist idea that was used by Jewish and Christian teachers and apologists. JS's teaching of a material God seems to prevent God from being timeless. A materially embodied, in the sense of physical matter, Deity moves, and therefore time passes for such a God. JS's Book of Abraham is quite clear that God has a life trajectory full of change, motion and action (and even a calendar), something JS has already amplified in this sermon. Yet, these ideas are far more complex when placed in the context of modern knowledge (see chapter 4 for example). JS's readings of Hebrew seem to be the basis for his urgent claim that creation from nothing is false. His confidence in his odd readings as foundational for doctrine is interesting but reflects his habit of using texts and experiences to buttress his ideas.

¹⁰ The VOT reads [preachi g].

¹¹ See Hubler, *Creatio ex Nihilo*; Bonting, *Chaos Theology*; Westermann, *Genesis*, 108ff; May, *Creatio Ex Nihilo*; Ostler, “Out of Nothing;” Paulsen, “Corporeal Deity,” for further discussion.

¹² This is hyperbole. There is intended humor in this assertion at the expense of his Nauvoo critics, moreover JS was certainly aware of a nascent U.S. “anti-Mormon” movement in the east, but the real meaning of the statement is coming: JS assigns his truth-claims to the Holy Spirit. Later in the sermon JS responds to Alexander Campbell, a consistent critic of Mormonism and the Book of Mormon.

¹³ It is generally acknowledged that *creatio ex nihilo* is not a biblical in its earliest context. The notion was unknown among the first Christians and does not surface in Judaism for hundreds of years after Jesus. Its later advocates found the idea protected the sacred space between profane and divine and shielded religion from attacks that suggested Christians in particular had many gods. To have “something” existing alongside God from eternity placed God in a comparative state rather than a supreme one. Early advocates in the 2nd century AD, liked the idea for similar reasons, but not just to protect the sovereignty of God, but the doctrine of resurrection. Matter was regarded as too changeable and fleeting to house the eternal soul (and in a modern sense, one can sympathize).

Hence the need for a special creation of the resurrected body as part of an attack on the Greek-based views (matter is evil) in the larger world where converts were sought and critics lurked. Making matter dependent on God, ensured its incorruptibility in the eyes of early *ex nihilo* advocates like Tatian. See Hubler *Creatio ex Nihilo* chapter 4; May *Creatio Ex Nihilo*. However, JS is about to introduce another Book of Abraham idea in his remarks, one which is not new to his preaching, but seems on the surface to provide a double offense to the “otherness” of the orthodox God. See note 23 below.

¹⁴ WW attests to this wording.

¹⁵ VOT has no dash.

¹⁶ This phrasing attested by WW.

¹⁷ Attested by WW. The sense of the statement in TB is a conditional. That is changed here.

¹⁸ Perhaps a spelling suggested by Bullock’s April 25 consultation with *Times and Seasons* editor John Taylor. See Barney *Hebrew Genesis 1:1*. Compare WC here.

¹⁹ “God . . . world” attested by WR.

²⁰ Webster’s 1828 American dictionary defines chaos as (1) That confusion, or confused mass, in which matter is supposed to have existed, before it was separated into its different kinds and reduced to order, by the creating power of God. “Rudis, indigestaque moles.” (2) Any mixed mass, without due form or order; as a *chaos* of materials. (3) Confusion; disorder; a state in which the parts are undistinguished. Compare 2 Nephi 2:11-13 which appears to rely on both the idea that the creative act leads out of chaos and that passing from existence to nothingness is paradoxical. JS was influenced by Charles Buck’s popular *A Theological Dictionary* (Philadelphia: Whitehall, 1807), 126. Buck wrote: “CHAOS, the mass of matter supposed to be in confusion before it was divided by the Almighty into its proper classes and elements. It does not appear who first asserted the notion of a chaos. Moses, the earliest of all writers, derives the origin of this world from a confusion of matter . . . Moses goes no farther than the chaos, nor tells us whence its confused state; and where Moses stops, there precisely do all the rest.”

²¹ GM1 reads [all ~~the learned men~~ who].

²² GM1-RC may follow Bullock here rather than VOT.

²³ Without challenging the truth of this phrase, JS intended to confront the idea based on an argument from Hebrew. The reason for this approach was already given, he felt his critics would swallow an appeal to extra-biblical sources. On the other hand, it is the Book of Abraham that most clearly asserts a creation from *something* rather than from *nothing* or *ex nihilo*. JS addressed the topic of creation from nothing on several occasions. “Next Subject was—Did the Lord God make the Earth out of Nothing; By D. Ells. say he [Joseph] God did not make the earth out of Nothing; for it is contrary to a Rasanall [rational] mind & Reason. that a something could be Brought from a Nothing; also it is contry to the principle & Means by witch God does work; for instance; when God formed man, he made him of something; the Dust of the Earth, & and he allways took a something to affect a something Else;” (William P. McIntire notebook, January 5, 1841, CHL, (<http://boap.org/LDS/Parallel/1841/5Jan41.html>)). JS had been teaching that matter is eternal well before Nauvoo. John Corrill who left the Church during the Missouri period writes in his *History of Church of Christ*, that “They believe that matter is eternal, and that nothing of all God’s works will ever be destroyed or lost; but in the end all things will be restored to their proper place, and the sons of perdition alone will endure the lowest hell, or lake of fire and brimstone.” (page 47). The issue of the sons of perdition was a deeply important one for JS and he addresses it once more in this sermon.

²⁴ GM1 reads [and he ~~being~~ is within me ^{and} comprehends more than all the ~~the~~].

²⁵ GM1 reads [associate myself with ~~it~~^{Him}].

²⁶ GM1 reads [to create[^] out of nothing].

²⁷ GM1 reads [organize ~~the~~ materials].

²⁸ GM1 reads he.

²⁹ The word order here and in TS is the reverse of Clayton (never can vs. can never).