

Preface

This book is the product of five years' intensive research. The motivation to write it came from a realization that many evangelicals — from the professional biblical scholar down to the average parishioner — no longer read the early chapters of Genesis as a straightforward historical account of the creation of the universe and the formation of everything in it. Instead, evangelicals have tended to follow more liberal theologians in reinterpreting the creation narrative as either a metaphor for 'God-directed' evolution, or some kind of analogical story, or, more recently, as a 'literary framework.' Despite being the orthodox and dominant interpretation throughout church history, the straightforward historical account is now a minority view — at least among trained theologians and pastors.

I believe the main reason for this theological and hermeneutical reorientation is due to a general ignorance of either theology or science — or both! Having talked with many Christians with a scientific background, they seem to have very little grasp of the philosophy of science, and very little appreciation of the epistemic basis for both scientific knowledge and biblical revelation. In other words, they have a philosophical blind-spot: they cannot see that scientific knowledge is not the absolute truth they think it is or wish it to be. Yet many Christians — and especially those with theological training — seem completely intimidated by scientific data and the truth-claims of leading scientists. It is almost a case of 'scientists say ...' equals 'God says ...' and theologians, lacking the confidence to question these truth-claims, just accept them at face value. Moreover, Christians who hold to the ultimate authority and inerrancy of Scripture feel that the creation and flood accounts must be reinterpreted to fit the scientific consensus, lest their high view of Scripture be undermined by 'scientific fact.' In other words, it is their desire to save the Bible from being contradicted by scientific fact that has led them to reinterpret the early chapters of Genesis.

Those Christians who feel the need to do this, however, are rarely ever consistent. The same hermeneutic is never applied to the gospels. Like the creation account, the virgin birth, Christ's miracles, and His bodily resurrection are also scientifically impossible, yet evangelicals have no problem accepting the record of these events as straightforward historical accounts. Christians need to realize that all science is provisional. The history of science reveals that scientists are often wrong — indeed, spectacularly so! Furthermore, science is confined to revealing truth about the *natural* world. Science is, by definition, incapable

of revealing truth about the *supernatural* world. Science is not the enemy of Scripture — it just complements it.

This book, however, is not just concerned with the defence of the traditional orthodox interpretation of the creation and flood accounts. It also looks at our present relationship with the created order and our role as God's stewards of His creation. This is particularly topical at present in light of the earth's increasing population and associated pollution, and the allegations of human-induced 'climate change' and its detrimental effects. Furthermore, it looks at the future of the created order and its eventual restoration at the consummation of the kingdom of God.

It should be noted that this book is first and foremost a theological and exegetical work that directly deals with the text of Scripture and presupposes that it is authoritative and inerrant in the autographs. I have chosen to leave the science to the scientists. Apart from a few passing references where relevant, it does not deal with any scientific arguments.

It should also be noted that although I am critical of many of my fellow Christians' views on these topics, it is not at all my intention to cast doubt on their salvation or their devotion to Christ. My objections are aimed at their ideas, not their persons. I have made every attempt to accurately represent their views and present their arguments in the strongest terms possible. I have read far too many works that totally misrepresent the traditional orthodox young-earth creationist position and I do not wish to commit the same error.

Finally, I would like to thank Dr Carl Wieland and Dr Jonathan Sarfati from Creation Ministries International for their encouragement and support, and Dr William Barrick from The Master's Seminary for his substantial feedback on an earlier draft of this work. Any errors, of course, are my own.

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November 2008
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