



# The Sword & The Plow

Newsletter of the Bimillennial Preterist Association

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## The Day-Age Theory is Leading Preterists Astray

*So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God. Rom. 10:17*

The modern day Preterist movement was born out of intense Biblical study; it's *only* inducement is the Bible. Although secular history corroborates and provides information of events after the close of the New Testament canon, they say nothing to the validity of Preterism itself. No one ever became a Preterist from reading the histories of Josephus, Tacitus, Suetonius, or Dio Cassius. Debates affirming the Preterist model never rely, and rarely introduce, extra-Biblical material in evidence of its truth. *We stand upon the word of God.*

In contrast, Old Earth Creationism (OEC) was born as an apologetic attempt to reconcile the Bible with the claims of naturalistic science. This is not an accusation, but a universally admitted *fact*. The sole inducement to OEC is *exterior* to the Bible; no one ever became an OEC based on reading Genesis or the Bible. Debates affirming OEC rely *heavily*, if not exclusively, upon extra-Biblical material; demonstrations of its "proofs" are *long* on naturalistic science and its dating methods, and *short* on Bible. Indeed, not *one word* can be produced from the Bible dating the earth to millions, let alone billions of years. The validity of OEC exists only by imposing upon the silence of the scripture. *To be an OEC, one must be willing to believe what the Bible does not say, and contradict much of what it does.*

How strange that some should attempt to wed these very different disciplines together. The one rooted in the Bible and supported exclusively by the word of God; the other rooted in atheistic science. One system is founded upon numerous, express statements placing the eschaton in the life of the apostles; the other has not a single verse that can be produced affirming its basic assumptions, and exists only in the space between the lines. Ask a Preterist to place upon paper all the verses affirming Christ returned in the events culminating in A.D. 70 and he will fill pages. Ask an OEC to place on paper all the verses demonstrating the earth is billions of years old and the paper will remain forever blank. And yet, there are those that would tell us that OEC is the logical consequence and bedfellow of Preterism; that Preterism actually proves OEC and *vice versa*!

### Two Basic Models of OEC

There are two basic models of OEC: the "gap theory" and the "day-age" theory. We have dealt with the gap theory at length in an earlier article. (Sword & Plow, Oct. 2007) Briefly stated, this theory was developed in the early 19<sup>th</sup> century by Scottish theologian, Thomas Chalmers, in response to naturalistic theories regarding earth's age based upon the so-called geologic column. In attempting to reconcile the Bible to naturalistic science, Chalmers proposed that

there is “gap” between Gen. 1:1 and 2. Chalmers suggested that the earth was inhabited by man and animals hundreds of millions of years ago, but perished in a world-wide deluge, and that Adam is but the first man of the present, 2<sup>nd</sup> creation, which was accomplished in the space of six literal, twenty-four hour days. All the rage in its day, this theory has all but been abandoned by OEC’s who now opt for the “day-age” theory.

In the mid 19th century, American geologist Arnold Guyot sought to harmonize science and scripture by interpreting the "days" of Genesis 1 as epochs in cosmic history. Similar views were held by a protégé of Lyell, John William Dawson. Together these men are attributed with development of the “day age” theory. According to the day-age theory, the six days of creation are interpreted as vast ages, consisting of millions and billions of years. Justification for this is purportedly found in the Hebrew word *yom*. Proponents argue the term *can* mean an indistinct period of time. Hence, OCE’s argue that billions of years may be comprehended within the term. Here is how *yom* is defined:

**Yom 1)** day, time, year; a) day (as opposed to night); b) day (24 hour period); 1) as defined by evening and morning in Genesis 1; **2)** as a division of time; a) a working day, a day's journey; c) days, lifetime (pl.); d) time, period (general); e) year; f) temporal references; 1) today; 2) yesterday; 3) tomorrow

### **Day-Age Theory: A Belief in What the Bible Does Not Say**

Here, basic rules of hermeneutics and principles of translation enter in. Moses distinctly qualifies *yom* by the phrase “and evening and morning” followed by ordinal numbers - “*And the evening and the morning were the first day.*” (Gen. 1:5) A five year old could not mistake Moses’ meaning. Only someone unwilling to receive the truth would attempt to avoid the obvious meaning of these terms. Outside of Genesis, every time *yom* is used with a number (410 times), it refers to a *literal day*. Elsewhere, “evening” and “morning” show up with *yom* 23 times, and by themselves 38 times--each time referring to a literal 24-hour day. The term “night” is used with *yom* 53 times, similarly indicating a 24-hour day. Other Hebrew words (*olam* and *qedem*) could have been used to

indicate periods of time here, but neither was used even once.

Faced with the complete inability to skirt the meaning of the term, OEC’s dismiss it as a mere symbol. They admit that a literal twenty-four hour day is signified, but interpret it as a *symbol* for something else instead; *viz.*, geologic ages consisting of billions of years. However, here again basic rules of interpretation and hermeneutics frustrate their purpose. Before one thing may be made the symbol of something else, the author must so *intend*. So, what was Moses’ intension? Did he intend us to understand *yom* as a symbol, or did he intend it to be taken according to its normal meaning and purport? Here, there can be no mistake. The Jewish Sabbath stood as a testimony to the *literalness* of the creation account. The Jews were commanded to rest the seventh day just as God had rested: “*For in six days the Lord God made the heaven, the earth, the sea, and all that in them is.*” (Ex. 20:11) One could just about debate the whole question of the day-age theory on the strength on this one verse. There is virtually no avoiding its meaning; however cleverly some may argue for a figurative or poetic meaning in the Genesis, Moses here makes plain that the creation account was intended to be understood literally. The weekly Sabbath could have *no meaning* if the days of creation spanned billions of years, or the “seventh day” was an age that was on-going still. Certainly, four thousand years of sacred history show the creation account has nearly always been taken literally by God’s people, Jews and Gentiles. To cite just a couple examples:

**Philo Judaeus** – “And he said that the world was made in six days, not because the creator stood in need of a length of time (for it is natural that God should do everything at once, not merely by uttering a command, but by even thinking of it); but because the things created required arrangement...And he allotted each of the six days to one of the portions of the whole.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Philo, *De Opificio Mundi*, III. Philo is sometimes cited by OEC’s as proof that the days of creation may be understood other than literally, but this is wrong. Philo was from Alexandrian school of interpretation, which treated the scriptures allegorically. In the allegorical part of his work, he gives the creation a mystical sense. For example, the mind he says is referred to under the image of heaven, and the senses under the image of the earth, and so forth. When he says, therefore that it is “a sign of great simplicity to think that the world was created in six days, or indeed in time at

**Flavius Josephus** – “Accordingly Moses says that in just six days the world and all that is therein was made; and that the seventh day was a rest, and a release from the labour of such operations; - whence it is that we celebrate a rest from our labours on that day, and call it the Sabbath; which word denotes *rest* in the Hebrew tongue.”<sup>2</sup>

**Epistle of Barnabas** – “The Sabbath is mentioned at the beginning of the creation: ‘And God made in six days the works of His hands, and made an end on the seventh day, and rested on it, and sanctified it.’”<sup>3</sup>

**Clement of Alexandria** – “For the creation of the world was concluded in six days. For the motion of the sun from solstice to solstice is completed in six months--in the course of which, at one time the leaves fall, and at another plants bud and seeds come to maturity.”<sup>4</sup>

To this short list may be added many dozens of others,<sup>5</sup> all testifying to the traditional (historical) teaching from the time of Moses until now, that the chronology of Genesis is to be read *literally*. This does not prove the traditional interpretation is correct, but it does demonstrate circumstantially that the motive for *reinterpreting* Genesis stems from the claims of modern science, and not the scriptures themselves; for if the idea that billions of years had elapsed from the beginning was truly in the text, men would not have waited almost eighteen hundred years to discover it; the idea would have been present with men from the start, just as Preterism has been.

### Creation According to Day-Age: Evolution Wrapped Up in Biblical Garb

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all,” he is not denying the literal days, anymore than time or the literal heavens and earth. Rather, he is to be understood as attempting to make a clever point that time exists only in relation to the world, hence the world could not be made in time, but it is the world that in a sense made time: “Time is a thing posterior to the world...the world was not created in time, but that time had its existence in consequence of the world.” *Legum Allegoriae*, II. In no event can Philo be cited on the side of OEC.

<sup>2</sup> Josephus, *Antiquities*, I, i, 1; Whiston ed.

<sup>3</sup> Epistle of Barnabas, XV

<sup>4</sup> Clement of Alexandria, *The Stromata*, Bk. VI, *The Fourth Commandment*.

<sup>5</sup> For a more complete compilation on-line, see <http://www.creationism.org/articles/EarlyChurchLit6Days.htm>

In treating the days of creation as geologic ages, the day-age theory is guilty of embracing a type of theistic evolution. Moreover, it implicitly denies Adam’s universal, biological priority. Here is a sketch of typical day-age approach to creation; judge for yourself if we are not correct:

**Day One:** 10-20 billion years ago the “big bang” occurred, creating the universe. The universe today continues to expand due to that explosion. The earth was formed by a process called “accretion.” Matter that revolved around the young sun soon began to accumulate into a distinct body. About 4.5 billion years ago, our world finally became a distinct planet; it was also uninhabitable. Around four billion years ago, the earth cooled to the point where steam could liquefy. This precipitated a great deluge. For millions of years, torrential rains poured down upon the surface of the earth, eroding the volcanic mountains and cutting valleys. Stable mountain ranges as we recognize them today did not exist at that time, because the process of plate tectonics had not yet begun. The surface of the earth was relatively smooth, and was soon covered by a global ocean. The precursors to life - and maybe the first simple life - appeared at about that time, possibly extending as far back as 3.85 billion years ago. As the torrential rains continued to fall upon the earth, the atmosphere slowly dissipated, and light reached the watery surface of our world for the first time.

(Note: the Bible says it did not rain upon earth until the time of Noah’s flood. (Gen. 2:5) Thus, there may be added to its other contradictions the idea that it rained for billions of years before the sun appeared.)

**Day Two:** Approximately two billion years. The hydrologic cycle (or water cycle), creating the atmosphere was accomplished. The sun is the catalyst of the hydrologic cycle, and light was finally visible on the surface of the earth when the second day began. Since the deluge of the first day, water existed in both its liquid and gaseous states. Science tells us that a stable water cycle began at that time.

(Note: This evening and morning is somewhere between 8-18 billion years shorter than the one before, yet both are supposedly described as a single “evening and morning.” Notice, also, that it is “science” that purportedly tells us these things, not the Bible.)

**Day Three:** 2.5 billion years ago the continental plates emerge from the oceans; plants in the seas (seaweed, algae, and plankton) established. 476 million years ago, rudimentary plant life on land appears. However, plants probably did not achieve prodigious success on land until the Devonian Period. This was a period that extended from 412 to 354 million years ago.

(Note: The phrase “rudimentary life” is a complete accommodation of evolution. The Bible nowhere allows room for this sort of evolutionary process, but affirms that God specially created grass, herbs, and trees with seeds bearing their own kind. I personally would be interested to learn how natural processes developed the first seed. Wonder how plants and trees reproduced for billions of years before the first seed came along?!)

**Day Four:** Celestial bodies arranged for purposes of guiding times and seasons on earth. No length assigned.

**Day Five:** 600 million years ago multi-cellular creatures were flourishing in the seas, but no life of any kind had appeared on the land. By 530 million years ago, the seas literally teemed with all manner of life. The extinct trilobites were the most prevalent species of life that existed at that time, but primitive clams and snails had also appeared. By 520 million years ago, the first vertebrates made their appearance. Jawless fish soon followed by the Ordovician Period - about 500 million years ago. Jawed fish arrived by 460 million years ago. Around 400 million years ago, larger marine creatures such as sharks followed them. Amphibians would venture onto dry land during the Devonian Period (between 412 and 354 million years ago) The Mesozoic Era - or the "Age of Dinosaurs" (250 million to 65 million years ago) - saw the rise of enormous marine creatures such as the Ichthyosaurs, Plesiosaurs, Mesosaurs, and giant crocodiles. In the air, flying insects were the first to appear, about 300 million years ago. The reptilian Pterosaurs filled the skies during the "Age of Dinosaurs," while birds finally appeared some 150 million years ago

(Note: Day three ended 412-354 million years ago; but day five began 600 million years ago, and therefore overlaps days three and four: a strange “evening and morning” to say the least!)

**Day Six:** 1.4 million years ago; Mammals appear and ultimately mankind.<sup>6</sup>

### **Implicit Denial of Adam’s Universal, Biological Priority**

This brief survey reveals that the day-age theory is based upon the supposition that God accomplished the creation of the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that are in them by *natural processes over long periods of time*. Life first appears in the form of simple algae and plankton and develops through natural, evolutionary processes into more complex forms. Clearly, with this basic premise in mind, there is *no room for the special, instantaneous creation of the first man Adam*. The whole day-age theory is a complete accommodation of Darwinian naturalistic evolution, and therefore implicitly *denies* the instantaneous creation of the first man, as well as all other life forms!

Faced with this, some advocates of the day-age theory make an exception in the case of Adam, allowing that he was specially and instantaneously created. But notice the incongruity this compromise introduces in the overall paradigm. Surely, the concession that God created Adam instantaneously disproves the idea that his creation of everything else required billions of years. Why did it take billions of years to create the planet and hundreds of millions of years to develop other life forms? What power did God possess in creating Adam that allowed this to be accomplished instantaneously that he did not possess in creation of everything else? Moreover, at what point in “day six” was Adam made? Was Adam made instantly on the last day of this figurative day-age, which they tell us lasted 1.4 million years? And if he was made in *one day* based upon the Genesis record, why then was not everything else? How can the disparity be accounted for? If to avoid the implications of long ages in the creation of man OCE’s allow that Adam was made instantly, by what principle of interpretation do they deny the instantaneous creation of all else?

These are but a few of the manifold objections that show the complete absurdity and

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<sup>6</sup> Taken from an article “*A Day Age Creation Theory*” by Jim Schicatano.  
<http://home.att.net/~jamspsu84/ttocdayage.html>

impossibility of the day-age theory. One must virtually abandon his critical faculties to maintain this theory. Alas for sorrow; men are not always logical.

### Leading Preterists Astray

The time has come to realize that either we must accept the Biblical account of creation or reject it altogether. It is foolish to attempt to bend the Biblical account to accommodate the discredited theories of unbelieving men. The two begin at completely different starting points and therefore cannot be harmonized or made to agree. One assumes all things occurred in a completely closed system without the benefit of supernatural forces; the other begins with God (“In the beginning God”). Attempts to wed these systems together can only result in hopeless contradiction. Those who accept the atheistic model end up rejecting the word of God. One proponent of the day-age theory is on record denying the universal parentage of Adam and Eve:

*“Why preterists would insist on a biological reading of ‘Eve the mother of all living’ in Genesis 3 baffles me. Eve is prophetic of the Church, just as Adam is prophetic of Christ. Genesis 3 is about covenant not biology.”*

I think we can all agree that these are the words of someone who (at least as regards the question of origins) has *left the word of God* and started down the long road of Biblical liberalism. This process has played out in many churches and denominations that take a low view of inspiration and the Bible; it begins with dismissing the integrity of the scriptures and the historical accuracy of its claims, and ends up allowing women preachers and homosexual marriages. In most denominations, the incentive to begin this journey has historically been the very question before us: Can the Christian put implicit trust in the Biblical creation account or must we fudge to make accommodations for the claims of science?

The journey from Biblical conservatism to liberalism is not a process that happens overnight, but the end of the road is clear and unmistakable. Once the Bible is set aside as the rule of faith and practice, and other considerations allowed to dictate how we interpret scripture, cultural norms and traditions

quickly take root and subvert the faith once for all delivered to the saints. We have seen the process all too many times before. Visit any Methodist or Episcopalian or Congregationalist church and you will recognize it immediately. Just ask the woman preacher if she believes in Genesis’ literal creation account. Ten to one says she is an OEC! *Virtually all the liberal churches deny the historical accuracy of the literal Genesis creation account.*

Beloved brethren, this is not a road Preterists want to go down!

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## Question & Answers

*Editor’s Note: The following question was sent to us regarding a local creation/regional flood. Our answer follows.*

**Question:** Kurt, Long Time no talk to!  
Do you remember me?

I looked at an article you wrote against Old Earth Creationism and a regional flood. I’ve been forced into looking at this in a different light of things. I’d rather you call me, but I do have a question of diagnosis for you. Please explain Eze.Chapter 31 using proper methods of Biblical interpretation.

Ezek 31:8 The cedars in the garden of God could not hide him; the fir trees were not like his boughs, and the chestnut trees were not like his branches; nor any tree in the garden of God was like unto him in his beauty.

Question: How is it that these trees in the garden can be compared to this man? How was he in the garden hiding when the only one I see hiding LITERALLY was Adam & Eve!

Ezek 31:9 I have made him fair by the multitude of his branches: so that all the trees of Eden, that were in the garden of God, envied him.

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Question: Now, how do we get trees in Eden being envious?

Ezek 31:18 To whom art thou thus like in glory and in greatness among the trees of Eden? Yet shalt thou be brought down with the trees of Eden unto the nether parts of the earth; thou shalt lie in the midst of the uncircumcised with them that be slain by the sword. This is Pharaoh and all his multitude, saith the Lord GOD.

Question: Why are the trees of Eden being brought down to the pit?

Question: Where is[sp]Genesis do we find Pharaoh in the Garden of God or Garden of Eden???

Kurt, being that you reject spiritualizing Genesis, then I think there are some questions that need to be answered!

Don't misunderstand me, I'm not set in concrete as of yet, but the literal interpretation of Genesis is falling on it's face in view of proper methods of Biblical interpretation!

If the flood was indeed global, then it is totally unsubstantiated to use that event to compare it with the fall of Jerusalem in 70ad. Are you able to show me anywhere in Scripture where God does indeed go outside the boundaries of the Empires that Israel existed??? I find He does not. Only the known world or Empire in which the people of God existed. Daniel substantiates this in the vision of the four beasts or the image of Gold/Silver/bronze/iron. We don't find prophecy going before or past these Kingdoms, nor do we see God working outside these Kingdoms. Help me out here!

**Answer:** Ezekiel 31 is an allegory. Allegories, by definition, are based upon, and abstracted from, actual, literal facts. Abraham's two wives are made the basis of an allegory by Paul in Galatians 4:21-31; obviously Hagar and Sara were real people. He simply uses these facts from sacred history to make an analogy to teach a spiritual lesson. The same is true of Ezekiel 31. He is using Pharaoh and the nations of the whole Mediterranean world in a sort of analogy, likening them to trees in the garden of God, comparing the greatness of Assyria to a mighty cedar, which nevertheless God fell. There is

nothing in this analogy or allegory that stands in denial of the literal facts of Genesis' creation account. If you think it does, then I would encourage you to try and defend it in a debate and see how insubstantial the premise truly is. I say that in a brotherly way. I think you would then find there is nothing in Eze. 31 that helps the notion of a regional flood or local/covenantal creation account in Genesis.

Your argument about Matthew twenty-four and the flood assumes that, in using the flood to warn his disciples, Jesus intended to compare *size and scope*, rather than *suddenness and completeness* of destruction. I think this is a very dubious premise. The point of comparison is clearly to the unexpectedness and swiftness of the destruction. Jesus is warning his disciples to be alert and watch; he says in effect that when the Jews say "peace, peace," then destruction would take them unawares. There is no suggestion that the scope of the eschaton was in view at all. Indeed, it is clear that the eschaton included the known world; Rome, Asia, Egypt, Europe all suffered a time of judgment from Christ for rejecting his gospel and persecuting his church. Acts 17:31 makes this abundantly clear, as do many other passages of scripture. Indeed, the image in Nebuchadnezzar's dream shows the eschaton on a world-wide basis, and does not even mention Jerusalem at all! The same with Daniel chapter seven.

Does God ever mention nations outside the boundaries of the empires described in Daniel? Yes! Paul expressly mentions the Scythians. (Col. 3:11) These were barbarous, cannibalistic peoples living in northern Europe who were never conquered by any of the four world empires mentioned. Darius attempted to conquer them and led armies into Europe, but they were a semi-nomadic peoples and just kept avoiding a fixed battle until Darius was forced to return to Asia. So, yes, the Bible definitely speaks of peoples beyond those contained in the kingdoms of which Israel was part.

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**Our Challenge:** We will meet any proponent of OEC, the local/covenantal creation, and regional flood theory in written debate. I begin the challenge by placing an imaginary circle on this page and asking anyone that believes in these theories to produce a single verse that unequivocally demonstrates 1) the earth is billions of years old, 2) Moses intended Genesis

creation account to be understood locally and not cosmologically, and 3) Moses intended the flood to be understood locally, rather than universally. Until it can be shown Moses intended these historical accounts to be understood allegorically, mythologically, or in other non-literal terms, these opposing theories MUST be rejected as the product of *human invention*.

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## Some Reasons Why Humanists Reject the Bible

By Joseph C. Sommer

Introduction: <sup>7</sup> This article sets forth some reasons why Humanists assert that the Bible is not the word of God. Humanists are convinced that the Bible was written solely by human beings who lived in an age that was ignorant, superstitious, and cruel. Humanists also believe that, because the writers of the Bible were people who lived in an unenlightened and barbaric era, they produced a book which contains many erroneous statements and harmful teachings.

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Teachings Inconsistent with the Laws of Nature:

A further reason that Humanists reject the Bible is that it contains numerous statements that are inconsistent with the laws of nature. Humanists also believe that the promotion of those statements as being true has caused tremendous harm to humanity.

In this world, the evidence is overwhelming that physical events occur according to natural laws that are immutable in their operation. As a result, an increasing knowledge of the workings of nature enhances our ability to predict future events and to shape the course of those events.

*The teachings of the Bible are, however, diametrically opposed to the fundamental scientific principle of the uniform operation of*

*natural laws. Consequently, belief in the Bible is inconsistent with a scientific outlook and has served to discourage the development of a scientific approach to dealing with problems. (Emphasis added.)*

In the Bible, we are told stories involving a talking snake (Genesis 3:4-5); a tree bearing fruit which, when eaten, gives knowledge of good and evil (Genesis 2:17; 3:5-7); another tree the fruit of which gives immortality (Genesis 3:22); a voice coming from a burning bush (Exodus 3:4); a talking donkey (Numbers 22:28); rods turning into serpents (Exodus 7:10-12); water changing into blood (Exodus 7:19-22); water coming from a rock (Numbers 20:11); a dead man reviving when his corpse touched the bones of a prophet (II Kings 13:21); and other people rising from the dead (e.g., I Kings 17:21-22; II Kings 4:32-35; Acts 9:37-40).

There are also accounts of the sun standing still (Joshua 10:13); the parting of a sea (Exodus 14:21-22); iron floating (II Kings 6:5-6); the shadow going back ten degrees (II Kings 20:9-11); a witch bringing the ghost of Samuel back from the dead (I Samuel 28:3-15); disembodied fingers writing on a wall (Daniel 5:5); a man living for three days and nights in the belly of a fish (Jonah 1:17); people walking on water (Matthew 14:26-29); a virgin impregnated by God (Matthew 1:20); blindness cured by spit (Mark 8:23-25); a pool of water that can cure the ailments of those who dip in it (John 5:2-4); and angels and demons intervening in earthly affairs (e.g., Acts 5:17-20; Luke 11:24-26).

Clearly, such stories are totally at variance with any sane person's experience of the way this world operates, and are therefore *completely at odds with the scientific view* as to the consistent and unvarying operation of natural laws. These *biblical fables* are instead supportive of the idea, which has been commonly held by primitive and illiterate people throughout history, that supernatural beings frequently and arbitrarily intervene in the affairs of this world.

When examined in the light of experience and reason, the Bible's claims of suspension of the laws of nature do not warrant belief. Our experience is that the natural world operates according to principles of regularity which are never violated. It is further our experience that people are frequently mistaken or dishonest.

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<sup>7</sup> From an article appearing at <http://www.holysmoke.org/sdhok/hum20.htm>

*Thus, it is far more likely that the authors of the Bible either erred or lied than that the laws of nature were violated as is alleged in so many nonsensical biblical stories.*

A terribly harmful effect of the belief that supernatural beings intervene in worldly affairs has been that people have often misdirected their energies in attempting to solve the problems of this world. Instead of studying the natural world to discover facts that could be used to develop scientific solutions to their problems, they engaged in religious activities in an effort to obtain the assistance of benevolent supernatural beings or to thwart the influence of malicious preternatural beings.

An example of such a misdirection of energies can be seen in the history of the attempts to prevent the outbreak and spread of diseases in Europe. The historian Andrew White states that, during many centuries in the Middle Ages, the filthiness of European cities repeatedly caused great pestilences that sent multitudes to their graves. Based on the teachings of the Bible, Christian theologians during those centuries believed that the pestilences were caused not by lack of proper hygiene, but by the anger of God or the malevolence of Satan.

Due to their belief in spiritual causes of illnesses, the theologians taught people that the plagues could be averted or alleviated by religious acts such as repentance from sin; the provision of gifts to churches, monasteries, and shrines; participation in religious processions; attendance at church services (which often only increased the spread of disease); and the killing of Jews and witches (since it was believed that Satan used Jews and witches as his agents in causing illnesses). The possibility of physical causes and cures of diseases was largely ignored by the theologians.

White states that, despite all the prayers, rituals, and other religious activities that were performed in an effort to influence the activities of spiritual beings, the frequency and severity of plagues did not diminish until scientific hygiene began to make its appearance. In speaking of the hygienic improvements that occurred during the second half of the nineteenth century, White says: "[T]he sanitary authorities have in half a century done far more to reduce the rate of disease and death than has been done in fifteen hundred

years by all the fetiches which theological reasoning could devise or ecclesiastical power enforce."

*The superior results of relying on the assistance provided by science rather than on the supernatural aid promised by religion can also be seen in other fields. As a result, Humanists accept **the scientific view** that the world operates according to unvarying natural laws which can never be suspended by the performance of religious rituals or by any other means. Furthermore, Humanists believe that those persons who have sought to increase understanding of this world -- and not the theologians who focus on influencing supernatural powers -- have enabled humankind to make the greatest strides in terms of alleviating suffering and increasing happiness.*

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## A Reformed Confession Regarding Hermeneutics

By Dr. Greg Bahnsen

### The Historico-Grammatical Method of Interpretation

WE AFFIRM that God's verbal revelation in Scripture is intended as a public communication and must be properly understood according to the same principles of interpretation which apply to any human, non-esoteric, literary work.

WE AFFIRM that the Scripture is interpreted correctly only when interpreted according to its letter ("literally") in the normal, historical and grammatical sense, taking account of a text's literary genre (whether figurative or not, etc.) and the author's intent (as determined semantically, and by the local and broader literary contexts).

WE DENY that Scripture contains secret wisdom or hidden, subtle meanings which are ascertained by approaching the Bible on some supposed higher or Spiritual plane.

WE DENY that deeper, creative insights and artistic connections in Scripture should be maximized by lines of interpretation which

follow no objective, definite, or consistent rule of interpretation which would make publicly predictable and correctable conclusions possible.

WE DENY that Scripture is properly handled by any "prooftexting" method which fails to consult a text's local context as well as the entire teaching of Scripture as it pertains to any particular text.

WE DENY as well that any theological or moral truth (including the larger theme or thrust of the Bible as a whole) can be established without adducing texts from Scripture which prove it or without showing that it follows by sound logical inference from such.

WE DENY that Scripture, as some would allege about any literary work, is empty of fixed and objective meaning so that its language makes no unchanging disclosure, its authorial intent is inaccessible, and every reading of a text constitutes a misreading.

WE DENY that literary evidence of stylized expression, order or balance in a text of Scripture precludes its historicity or factuality.

WE DENY that the Biblical authors invented illustrative stories or traditions and then narrated or presented them as though they were actual historical events.

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## The World God Created

*By Ed Stevens*

In our last two articles, we surveyed the big picture of redemption by studying the Scriptures which affirm that God planned redemption before He created the universe. This lesson builds on that redemptive theme by looking at the world God created and attempting to discover the identity of the world with which Genesis 1-3 deals, as well as the nature of that world before the fall of Adam into sin.

This is important to study because there are some within the Preterist movement who suggest that the creation account of Genesis is nothing more than an allegorical description of Israel's covenantal "world" created during its exodus out

of Egypt. This concept of covenantal "creation" is then used to build a "collective body" model of redemption and resurrection. Fortunately, very few advocates of a "collective body" resurrection view take this approach to Genesis. Thus, our focus here is not on those who hold a "collective body" resurrection view, but rather on those who deny a literal, historical Genesis account of creation, either because of an allegorical or an evolutionary approach. As such, I will be following a more traditional approach, which views Genesis as affirming the creation of the visible, physical realm (the earth) and all it contains, including plants and animals, the first two humans (Adam and Eve), and an actual physical Garden in which they were to dwell.

This does not mean, of course, that the original, physical creation cannot be used as types for eschatological antitypes, for the physical creation has been applied typologically in the New Testament (e.g., 1 Cor 15). Instead, what I am affirming is that any typological use of Genesis in the New Testament presupposes a real, historical creation of the physical earth, including Adam and Eve as the first two created (not evolved) human beings, a real Garden of Eden, a real Tree of Knowledge and Tree of Life, and a real, historical appearance of Satan in the form of a serpent to deceive Eve.

The main problem with both the allegorical and evolutionary approaches to Genesis is that they attack the credibility of Jesus and the New Testament writers who clearly interpreted Genesis literally and historically. So let's look at some New Testament teaching about the world that God created:

**Colossians 1:16-17** - Jesus never gives the slightest credence to evolution or long ages (both of which were taught by Greek philosophers at that time). Jesus was certainly in a position to know how the universe came to be since Colossians 1:16-17 says He existed before all things and created all things.

**Mark 13:19** - Jesus taught that the universe was created by God, not the product of blind chance or natural processes ("the creation which God created").

**Matthew 24:21** - Jesus believed the world had a beginning ("since the beginning of the

world”), rather than always existing and finally evolving into what we see today.

**Matthew 19:4-6** - Jesus quotes from both Genesis 1:27 and 2:24, showing that Jesus believed the “male and female” created on the sixth day (in Gen 1:27) to be none other than Adam and Eve (mentioned in Gen 2). Jesus also states (v. 6) that marriage between the very first “male and female” was instituted at the very beginning of creation, a marriage identified by His quote of Genesis 2:24 to be that of Adam and Eve. Jesus takes the account of Adam and Eve literally and historically and bases the sanctity of marriage (“let not man put asunder”) upon that first union which God arranged (“what He has joined”).

**Mark 10:6** - Here Jesus teaches that Adam and Eve were created at “the beginning of the creation” (at the beginning of the world, not the beginning of the human race), right after everything else had just been created—not millions of years later after everything else had long been in existence! (See also Mark 13:19.)

**1 Timothy 2:13-14** - Both Adam and Eve are mentioned as historical persons. Paul says Adam was created first, implying his acceptance of Genesis’ account of Eve’s creation from Adam’s rib as historical fact. Then he mentions the deception of Eve and her fall into transgression. Mentioning the serpent’s deception of Eve in 2 Corinthians 11:3, Paul must have considered Genesis 1-3 to be historical narrative, not allegorical or mythological.

**1 Corinthians 15:21-22, 45** - Sin and death came through one man (Adam). Paul accepts as historical the Genesis account of the fall of Adam into sin, which brought some kind of death to him and all of his descendants. It also proves that Adam was the first man, since it was through him that death spread to all mankind afterwards. Adam cannot be allegorical with no basis in history, otherwise the antitype (Christ) would have no historical precedence. The typology (Adam the type and Christ the antitype) presupposes a literal, historical Adam who fell into sin and brought his whole family of descendants under condemnation, so that

they needed the Last Adam to bring redemption (cf. Rom 5:12-15).

## Conclusion

If we removed Genesis (which depicts Creation, the Fall, the Flood, the genealogies, the Tower of Babel, the Table of Nations, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph) from our Bibles and considered it as either unreliable mythology or unhistorical allegory, it would destroy the foundation for the rest of the Bible, making it unintelligible and inapplicable. The New Testament bases its moral, ethical, and redemptive teaching directly on the people and events mentioned in Genesis. The whole focus of the New Testament is on Christ’s sacrifice to cover the sinfulness of mankind which was introduced by Adam and Eve. If Adam and Eve never existed, then mankind never fell into sin, rendering meaningless Christ’s death and the plan of redemption. This would remove the essential historical fabric of the Bible through which the moral, ethical, and redemptive content is interwoven. Marriage and family—the most fundamental institutions of mankind—are based directly on literal, historical people, as well as the events mentioned in the first three chapters of Genesis.

In view of the above New Testament affirmations of the historicity of the Genesis account of Creation, all conservative Christians should back away from any view of Genesis which teaches that it is nothing more than mythology, or an allegory using fictitious names of people who never really existed to represent the creation of the nation of Israel.

Genesis is an account of God creating the visible universe and all that it contains, including: the earth with all its plants and animals; and the first two humans—Adam and Eve; and an actual, physical Garden in which they were to dwell. This is the kind of world that God created. It would discredit both Christ and His apostles to teach otherwise, since it is clear from their teaching that they took Genesis literally.

As we go further in our studies of redemption, we will notice how a literal interpretation of Genesis, along with the appropriate applications of typology, will solve all of the difficult eschatological problems which are encountered at the other end of the Bible (i.e., the book of Revelation). Stay tuned.