

Adam's Day

Reading Genesis 1–2: An Evangelical Conversation

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Hendrickson Publishers, Peabody, MA, 2013

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“It is not necessary”, contends Tremper Longman, “that Adam be a historical individual for [Genesis 1–2] to be without error in what it intends to teach” (p. 122). “If the first Adam is not really historical”, Todd Beall responds, “then how can we insist that the second Adam is?” (p. 135).

Reading Genesis 1–2 is structured as a written ‘conversation’, with each of five evangelical scholars contributing a chapter on Genesis 1–2, as well as responses to the other four views. Todd Beall masterfully advances the traditional plain-language view of Adam and creation while the other four scholars advance non-traditional views forged from some composite of authorial intent, audience relevance, scientific (particularly genetic) conclusions, ANE parallels, genre studies, and/or analogical days. Richard Averbeck advocates a ‘schematized’ interpretation of Genesis somewhat akin to that of the Framework hypothesis, C. John Collins analogical days, Tremper Longman III a figurative view of Genesis 1–2 based on the Framework hypothesis, and John Walton a non-material, ‘functional’ understanding of creation. Editor J. Daryl Charles provides the Foreword, Victor Hamilton the Introduction, and Kenneth Turner and Jud Davis round out the volume with contrasting ‘reflective essays’ on the theme ‘Reading Genesis Now’.

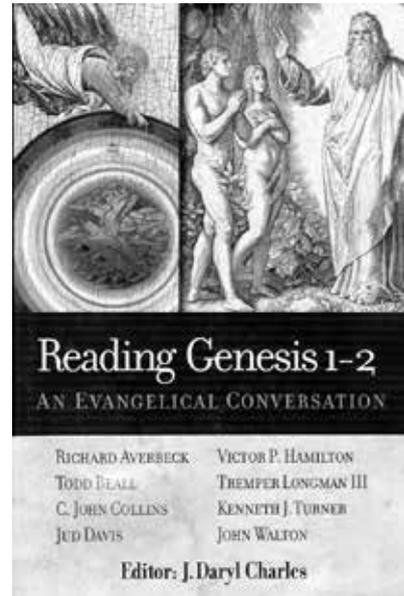
A brief synopsis of the seven chapters

Richard Averbeck—“A Literary Day, Inter-Textual, and Contextual Reading of Genesis 1–2”

Averbeck recognizes that “there are good substantial reasons for reading Genesis 1 to refer to six literal days of creation and a seventh day of rest” (p. 7), and “for many years was satisfied with this reading” (p. 7), but he now contends that the literal view is “a misreading that does not properly allow for the genre and intent of the text and the figurative use of language” (p. 7). Instead, Averbeck now asserts that Genesis 1 is “schematized, not meant to be read in a literalistic way even by the ancient Israelites, and they would have known that” (p. 31), since “the author (whether we have the divine or the human author in mind) shaped the story of creation around what was observable and understandable to the ancient Israelites” (p. 8). This includes both the creation “backdrop” of the “deep, dark, watery abyss” (p. 12) as well as the “three-level universe” (heaven, Earth and subterranean waters/heaven, Earth, underworld/the three daughters of Baal) which “have parallels in the creation account in Gen 1” (p. 14). Indeed, Averbeck suggests that “the first set of three days in Gen 1 corresponds to the names of Baal’s three daughters” (p. 14). Although Averbeck recognizes “a necessary structure and sequence” (p. 31) to the six days of creation, he contends that “the seven days are not to be taken literally and are not intended to tell us how long God took in actually creating the cosmos or how old the earth is” (p. 31).

Todd Beall—“Reading Genesis 1–2: A Literal Approach”

Todd Beall asserts that “Genesis 1 should be read (along with all of Gen 1–11) as historical narrative that



is meant to be taken literally” (p. 46). In addition, there are structural and syntactic indications that “Gen 1–11 is to be understood in a similar way to Gen 12–50” (p. 47). Regarding ANE parallels, Beall points out that although “there are similarities between the biblical record in Genesis and ANE myths, there are far more significant differences” (p. 52). Indeed,

“... the Lord continually tells the children of Israel in the OT *not* to be like all the other nations in their worship of other gods, in their worldview. ... Far from following the thinking of the ancient Near East, Israel was told to reject it categorically [emphasis in original]” (p. 52).

Moreover, Beall points out that “time and again the NT writers refer to the details, not just the concepts, of Gen 1–11” (p. 54), and that “at least twenty-five NT passages refer to Gen 1–11, and all take the accounts literally” (p. 53). Beall contends that “many scholars propose nonliteral interpretations of Gen 1–2 in order to harmonize the biblical text with current scientific theory” (p. 56), and that “the continual teaching of evolution in public schools and universities for decades has taken

its toll. There is more evidence than ever against Darwinian evolution, but many evangelical scholars do not seem to be current on the subject” (p. 57). Beall concludes that “the simplest and correct approach to Gen 1–2 (as well as Gen 1–11) is to take it as a literal, historical account, just as Jesus and the NT writers did” (p. 57).

John Collins—“Reading Genesis 1–2 with the Grain: Analogical Days”

Collins asserts that Genesis 1–2 should be read “along its own grain” (p. 74) but also “as a part of a larger whole, that is, Gen 1–11” (p. 73). He views the purpose of Genesis 1–11 as providing “history without undue literalism” (p. 77) like the ‘prehistory’ (p. 77) and ‘protohistory’ (p. 77) of the Mesopotamians, who based “their stories on what they thought were actual events, albeit told with a great deal of imagery and symbolism” (p. 77). He understands the genre of Genesis 1 as ‘exalted prose’ (p. 83). Although Collins contends that Genesis 1–2 is one creation account and that “Gen 2 elaborates the events of the sixth day of Gen 1” (p. 82), he states that “the six ‘creation days’ are not necessarily the first actual days of the universe” or “necessarily the first days of the earth itself” (p. 85), and that based on Framework considerations (particularly Genesis 2:5), Creation Week lasted for “a year or longer” (p. 89). Regarding the meaning of Genesis, “we only need to consider how the farmers and nomadic shepherds who first heard this might have understood it” (p. 86), and “what Moses had in mind when he wrote Gen 1–2” (p. 90).

Tremper Longman—“What Genesis 1–2 Teaches (and What It Doesn’t)”

Longman contends that “the biblical text is not at all interested in telling us how God created the cosmos and humanity” (p. 103). Indeed, “the

absence of the sun, moon, and stars until the fourth day means that this pictorial description of creation as taking place during a week is not describing what actually happened” (p. 105). Longman views the creation account as structured as a ‘framework’:

“... the first three days of creation describe the creation of realms or habitats that are filled by the inhabitants of those realms in days 4 through 6, so that day 4 (sun, moon, and stars) fills day 1 (light and darkness), day 5 (birds and fish) fills day 2 (sky and sea), and day 6 (animals and humanity) fills day 3 (land)” (p. 105).

Regarding authorial intent, Longman writes, “it is important to recover the ancient context of a biblical text in order to understand its message according to its original intention” (p. 107). He views “two different accounts of creation” in Genesis 1–2, and states that “the most striking difference between Gen 1 and Gen 2 is in the area of the sequence of creation” (p. 108). Genesis “intends to teach us much about the nature of God, humanity, and the world, but not about how God created creation, including the sequence of creation” (p. 108). Indeed, “the intense use of obviously figurative language, the lack of sequence between the two creation accounts, and the text’s pervasive interplay with ANE creation accounts indicate that we are not getting a literal or precise depiction” of creation (p. 109). Longman, identifying himself as “an advocate of theistic evolution,” urges “responsible exegetes” to “go back and reconsider traditional interpretations in light of scientific discoveries and theories” (p. 121).

John Walton—“Reading Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology”

Walton asserts that “the Bible, though written for us and all humanity, was not written to us” (p. 141). In order to properly understand Scripture we must “understand the words

as an Israelite would have understood them; that we think of the cosmos the way that an Israelite would have thought of it” (p. 141). Indeed in Walton’s view, “the biblical author is approaching cosmology in a way that was familiar in the ancient world and not at all the way we would approach cosmology” (p. 152). From this perspective, “the interest of the text is functional throughout, with no interest in material origins” (p. 150). He contends that “Hellenism obliterated ANE ways of thinking” and, as a result, the “intertestamental literature, the NT, and writings of both the Church Fathers and rabbis all suggest a material understanding of Gen 1” (p. 157) erroneously. Walton also posits that “in Gen 1–2 the cosmos is viewed as sacred space [or temple] in which God rests” (p. 160).

Kenneth J. Turner—“Teaching Genesis 1 at a Christian College”

Turner observes that the controversy over Genesis has “only intensified since mapping of genome in 2001” (p. 188) and contends that “interfacing the Bible with modern science ... should be viewed as a hermeneutical issue not one about ultimate allegiance or authority”. In addition, “scientific understanding has rightly influenced re-examination and reinterpretation of several biblical descriptions” (p. 202). He states that in order to properly understand Genesis 1, “we must seek to enter the verbal and conceptual world of ancient Israel to find out how they spoke and thought about the interrelationships of deity, humanity, and the rest of creation” (p. 201). Nonetheless, with regard to Genesis 1, Turner writes: “Why would the moon be called a ‘light’ anyway, since we know from modern science that the moon only reflects the light from the sun? Why are the stars given a tertiary position? Isn’t the sun a star?” (p. 198). With respect to authorial intent, Turner asserts that

“the reader should assume that the human authorial intent approximates, or serves as the starting point for, the divine intent” (p. 200). In sum, “it is difficult to match the description and terms of days 1 and 4 with the world as we (and ancient Israel) know it, both phenomenologically and scientifically” (p. 198).

Jud Davis—“Unresolved Major Questions: Evangelicals and Genesis 1–2”

With regard to theology and exegesis in general, Davis observes that “everyone missed it before me” is a problematic position (p. 215) and that “there is no paleo-orthodox support for the view that Gen 1–3 should be interpreted to allow for long periods of time” (p. 216). Davis asserts that “if Jesus taught a view, I am bound to follow that view” (p. 211), and that “a prima facie case appears for understanding Jesus’ teaching: he

excludes the idea of the evolution of Adam and Eve from previous biological ancestors, and he positions their creation chronologically near the beginning of the universe” (p. 210; see figure 1). He concurs that “if therefore Christ was a historical individual, Adam himself must have been historical” (p. 213). Davis contends that any DNA similarities recognized by modern studies indicate a common Designer (p. 227). With respect to authorial intent, Davis notes a distinction between the “foreshadowed meaning” and the “initial meaning of Gen 1–2” (p. 230). For instance, “Gen 1–3 contains elements meant to foreshadow Christ and the new covenant” (p. 230) as revealed in Ephesians 5:31–32. Moreover, “is the chosen seed of the woman, which is initially Seth, meant [to the human author and the initial audience] to foreshadow the greater seed of Abraham and then ultimately David and even David’s heir, Christ?”

Some recurring topics

Genetics and genomics

“What is one to make”, Victor Hamilton inquires in the introduction to Reading Genesis 1–2, “of the conclusions of the mapping of the human genome project (under the direction of the cutting-edge scientist and evangelical believer Francis Collins) that the human race began with a colony of ten thousand and not with one male human and one female human?” (p. 3). Longman asserts: “Biologists now tell us that the origins of humanity do not go back to a single pair but rather to a breeding population of about ten thousand individuals. This conclusion raises the question of the historical Adam” (p. 121).

But how firm is this conclusion? The hypothetical breeding population of ten thousand derives from a landmark 1998 paper.¹ It is worth pointing out that the very first sentence

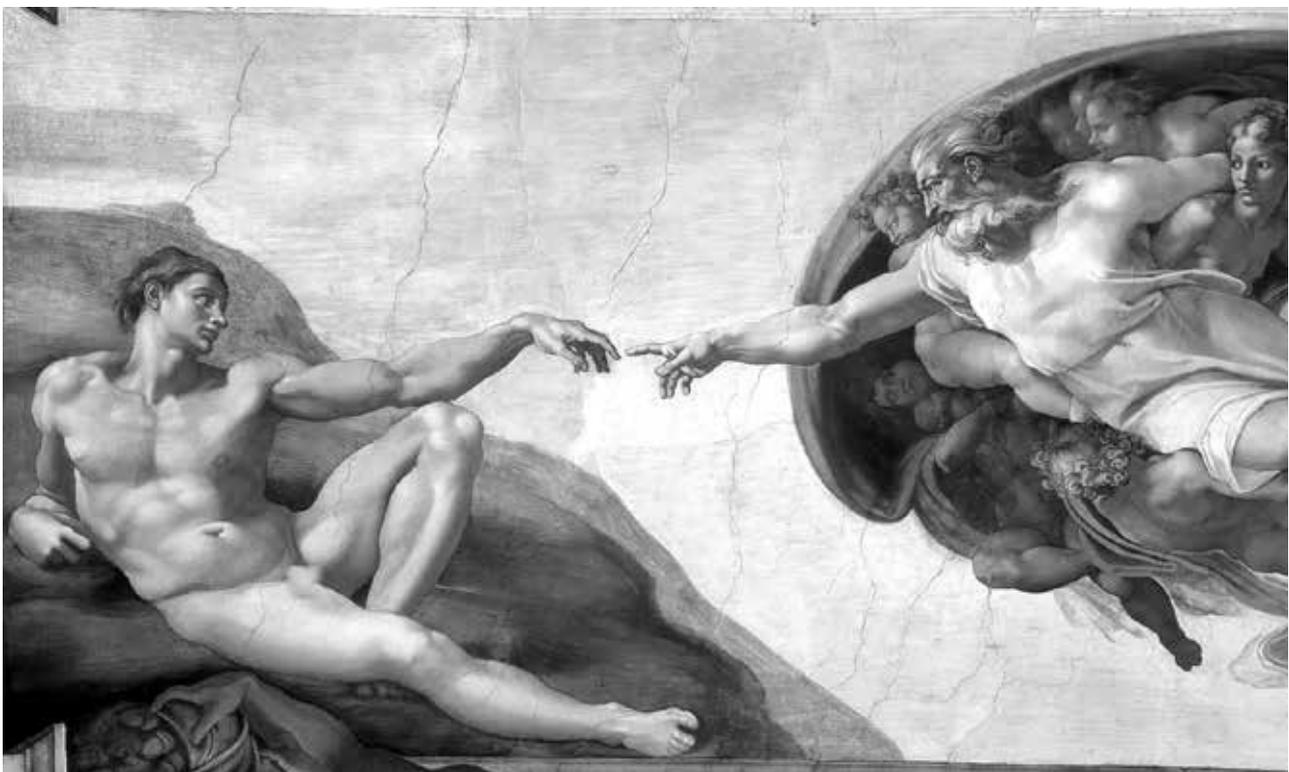


Figure 1. Michelangelo's "The Creation of Adam".

of the article after the abstract is: “When and where did humans evolve?” and that the methodologies and mathematical calculations utilize variables based on this assumption. Logically, the values chosen for the variables cannot prove evolution since they first presume it. As the first sentence demonstrates, the possibility of the biblical Adam is eliminated right from the gate, so it should not surprise us that the subsequent inferences, estimates, implications, and calculations yield a result entirely unfavourable to Adam. Even so, Longman posits that “the mapping of the human genome ... has produced, according to my Christian friends who are research biologists, overwhelming evidence in favor of evolution [emphasis added]” (p. 121). Let the reader note that the hypothesis of ten thousand breeders, rather than proving evolution, is itself founded upon evolutionary presuppositions.²

Copernicus

Although it is widely asserted that Copernicus proved empirically that the earth revolves around the sun, the simple fact is that he did not. Copernicus first assumed that the earth revolves around the sun, and then tailored his mathematical model to fit. As he points out toward the end of his monumental *De revolutionibus orbium coelestium*, “we have indicated to the best of our ability what power and effect the assumption of the revolution of the Earth has in the case of the apparent movement in longitude of the wandering stars and in what a sure and necessary order it places all the appearances”.³ South African cosmologist George Ellis, in a 1995 *Scientific American* interview, asserts that:

“... people need to be aware that there is a range of models that could explain the observations For instance, I can construct you a spherically symmetrical

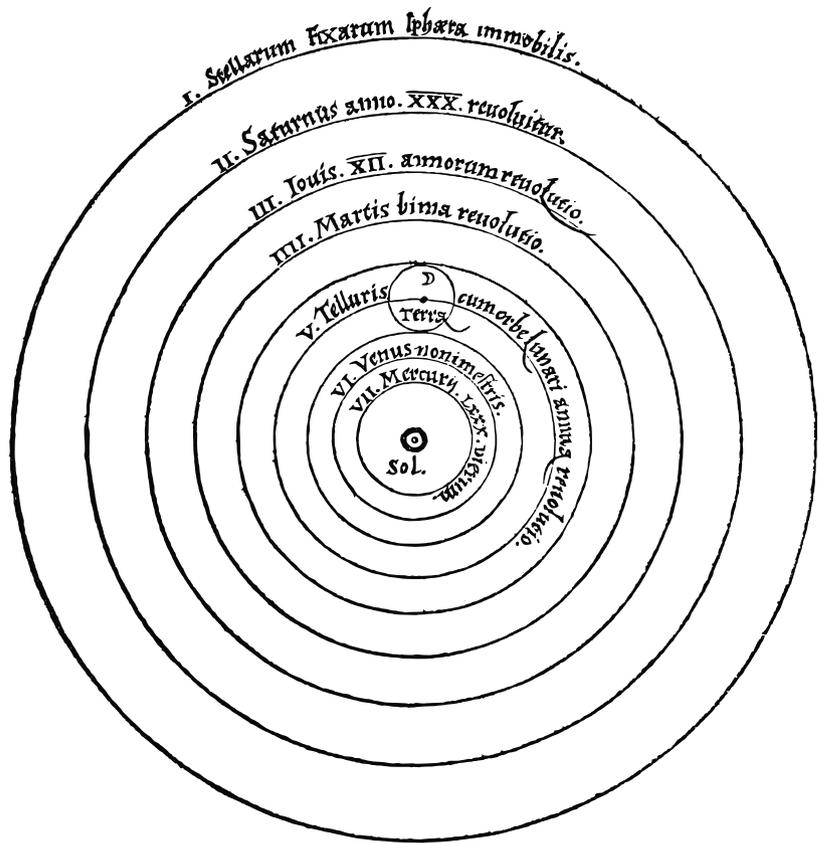


Figure 2. Copernicus' renowned heliocentric diagram.

universe with Earth at its center, and you cannot disprove it based on observations ... you can only exclude it on philosophical grounds. ... What I want to bring into the open is the fact that *we are using philosophical criteria* in choosing our models. A lot of cosmology tries to hide that.”⁴

Nonetheless, throughout *Reading Genesis 1–2*, Copernicanism is referred to not only as fact, but also occasionally as hermeneutical principle. For instance, Kenneth Turner, in his penultimate chapter “Teaching Genesis 1 at a Christian College”, regards Copernicanism “as a prelude and parallel to understanding the days of creation in Genesis” (p. 202, note 29). Similarly, Longman writes: “Everyone today recognizes the error of the church at the time of Galileo in constraining its scientists’ understanding of cosmology. Are we at a similar transitional moment

in connection to evolution?” (p. 129). Likewise, Walton writes: “Sometimes new advances in science do make us go back to the biblical text to see if we have been working on some wrong assumptions. Otherwise we would still believe that the sun revolved around the earth” (p. 72).

But let the reader note that, as Ellis indicates above, Copernicus’ cosmology has a philosophical rather than empirical basis. The ‘Copernican revolution’ was not, as Longman contends, an epochal instance of “science purifying religion” (p. 119), but rather the ascendancy of a particular philosophical worldview. It is plausible that Copernicus was deeply affected by the Hermetic writings that were first made available to Europe in Latin two years before he was born (these writings were extremely influential among the intellectuals of Copernicus’ day). It is worth pointing out that in

De revolutionibus, 1) Copernicus references Hermes Trismegistus (the latter name spelled without the first ‘s’) reverently beneath the renowned heliocentric diagram (figure 2) and 2) Copernicus’ heliocentric model matches the antecedent hermetic model *exactly*, from the sun unmoving at the very centre of the universe to the circular orbits, to the “sphere of the fixed stars”. *Hermetica XVI*, written long before Copernicus’ day, contends that “the sun is situated at the centre of the cosmos, wearing it like a crown”⁵ and that “around the sun are eight spheres that depend from it: the sphere of the fixed stars, the six of the planets, and the one that surrounds the earth”⁶. To my mind, this could amount to more than mere coincidence. Moreover, scientists from Hubble to Hoyle to Einstein to Hawking to Krauss have all admitted the overall lack of empirical, observational, and numerical proof for the Copernican position.

The Framework interpretation

Another recurring topic in *Reading Genesis 1–2* is the Framework interpretation, which derives from the work of Arie Noordtzij in the 1920s.⁷ The Framework interpretation regards the six days of Genesis 1 as a non-literal and non-sequential arrangement of creation events aligned topically within two parallel triads of figurative ‘days’— rulers (days 1–3) positioned alongside realms (days 4–6). There are several exegetical problems with the hypothesis, among them that, as Beall indicates:

“... the so-called pattern between days 1–3 and 4–6 does not hold up well under scrutiny. For instance, the ‘lights’ of day 4 are put in the ‘expanse’ created on day 2, not day 1; the sea creatures of day 5 were told to fill the ‘water in the seas’ created on day 3, not day 2; and man was created on day 6 to rule over the land animals (also created

on day 6) and sea creatures and birds (created on day 5), not over the vegetation created on day 3” (p. 133).

Moreover, the plants mentioned in Genesis 2:5 (the verse which Meredith Kline considers the *crux interpretum* of the Framework interpretation and the “decisive word” against the straightforward reading of Genesis⁸) do not self-evidently comprise a merism (such as David’s “when I sit and when I rise” in Psalm 139), which would represent all vegetation. Rather, the “shrub” (חִשְׁבִּיל *sīach*) is a desert shrub (the word occurs not in Genesis 1 but three other times in the Hebrew bible, all in contexts of desiccation and desperation) and the phrase “plant of the field” (עֵשֶׂב הַחַסְדֵּה *‘ēseb hassādeh*) also appears not in Genesis 1 but rather next in Genesis 3 as a component of the curse upon Adam (and thrice more during the Exodus plagues upon Egypt). The terminology and phrasing regarding vegetation in Genesis 2:5 do not plausibly encompass the lush fruit trees of Genesis 1 and instead more feasibly describe certain post-Fall plants which recur in contexts of toil, anguish, and disaster. Lexically and contextually, it is likely that Averbeck is correct in asserting: “These verses [Genesis 2:5–6] were meant to tell the Israelites that the conditions before the fall were not the same as after the fall. The struggle for existence that the curses in Gen 3 imposed was not a part of the original circumstances of humanity” (p. 29).

In addition, the Framework perspective on Genesis 2:5 necessitates that the first verb in Genesis 2:6 is translated with an ‘inceptive nuance’, such as: “So a rain-cloud began to arise from the earth. ...”⁹ Mitchell Dahood considers ‘rain-cloud’ a ‘tentative definition’ based on his comparison of two calendars from Tel Mardikh/Ebla,¹⁰ and implementation of this translation into biblical Hebrew includes understanding the preposition ‘ל’ (*le*) in Job 36:27 as ‘from’ rather than ‘to’—which is

potentially problematic, but let us not digress. Kline explains that, “the first verb [in Genesis 2:6] is a Hebrew imperfect and the inceptive nuance—‘began to’—is legitimate for that form and is *required in this* case if verse 6 is not to neutralize the first clause in verse 5b”¹¹.

But this translation requirement violates the principles of biblical Hebrew syntax, for the first verb of Genesis 2:6 occurs within a circumstantial clause (*waw* + noun + verb: וַיִּבְרָא אֱלֹהִים), which as Gesenius pointed out long ago, “always describes a state contemporaneous with the principle action” (§141e)—a conclusion not supplanted, but indeed strengthened, by subsequent investigations into ancient Semitic syntax. In other words, the biblical Hebrew circumstantial clause does not communicate ‘so’ or ‘then’ or ‘next’—events logically/temporally subsequent—which would instead be expressed by the Hebrew narrative preterite. Nonetheless, the Framework perspective requires the circumstantial clause in 2:6 to denote *subsequent* rather than contemporaneous action, since in order to maintain the Framework exegesis of 2:5, there cannot already be water available for vegetation to grow. The Framework rendering of Genesis 2:5–6 conflicts with the foundational principles of biblical Hebrew syntax.

Genre

Also recurring throughout *Reading Genesis 1–2* is the question of genre. Averbeck asserts that “Gen 1–2 constitute observational cosmogony and cosmology” (p. 31). Beall identifies Genesis as “narrative prose” (p. 49). Collins considers the creation account to be “exalted prose” (p. 83), whereas Longman opts for “theological history” (p. 110) and Turner for “doxological narrative” (p. 191). Walton asserts that “it is not important to label the genre (at least according to modern categories)” (p. 145), although he

considers Genesis to be “narrative” (p. 145) and “cosmology” (p. 145).

Genre theory is certainly not an ‘exact science’ and from ancient times it has been widely acknowledged that a text can simultaneously occupy more than one genre category—for instance, Aristotle considered the *Iliad* to be both epic and tragedy (*Poetics*, §24). With regard to Genesis, Beall points out that “there is no convincing genre category into which Gen 1 fits” (p. 62) and that “subjective genre definitions run the risk of assuming the conclusion and engaging in confirmation bias” (p. 177). In light of the Hebrew verbal syntax (Beall indicates that Genesis 1 contains 50 narrative preterites distributed among 31 verses), it is widely agreed by biblical scholars that Genesis 1–2 is narrative prose, but as Walton correctly points out, “proving it is narrative falls short of therefore identifying it is historical” and that even “as narrative prose, there are still a lot of genre options” (p. 70).

Nonetheless, Beall demonstrates exegetically that “Jesus and the NT writers” understood Genesis 1–2 “as a literal, historical account” (p. 57). To my mind, Beall’s discussion of New Testament views on Genesis 1–2 (pp. 53–56) is of exceeding importance and merits close study and reflection. As Davis astutely points out: “If Jesus taught a view, I am bound to follow that view” (p. 211). And yet, significantly, there is but one (!) New Testament citation in the four major non-literal chapters combined. I think that for proper biblical exegesis, it is crucial to remain consistent with what Scripture says about itself.

Instead, in some cases, the opposite seems to be true—for instance, in advocating his non-material view of Genesis creation, Walton writes: “I contend that Gen 1 has chosen to provide an account of functional origins, as would be typical in the ancient world, rather than an account of material origins,” but “a perusal of intertestamental literature, *the NT*, and writing of both the church fathers

and rabbis all suggest a material understanding of Gen 1, at least in part [emphasis added]” (pp. 156–157). Walton, it seems, is stating that his functional view of Gen 1 is correct and that the material (in part) view of the New Testament is incorrect. Let the reader be aware of the implications of such a position.

Audience relevance

Also recurring throughout *Reading Genesis* is the concept of ‘audience relevance’. John Walton asserts, “we must understand the words [of Genesis] as an Israelite would have understood them” (p. 141).

One obvious difficulty with this ‘relevance’ approach to Scripture is that we are simply not ancient Israelites, and thus any assertions as to what an ancient Israelite may or may not have known (insofar as these ideas are unexpressed in the biblical text) are speculative, and can lead to hermeneutical errors. For instance, Collins, in considering the use of the word ‘kind’ in Genesis 1, writes: “Now, the word ‘kind’ is not the same as ‘species’, nor is it even the question about whether one kind can turn into another. We only need to consider how the farmers and nomadic shepherds who first heard this might have understood it” (p. 86). But why are the farmers and nomadic shepherds all we need to consider? Surely God knew—indeed ordained—that his future people would also need Genesis to construct a worldview. Moreover, what if farmers and nomadic shepherds did sometimes wonder whether a sheep could give birth to something else?

Similarly, in defending his ‘analogy’ view of the seven days of Genesis 1, Averbeck writes: “The chapter is schematized, not meant to be read in a literalistic way even by the ancient Israelites, and they would have known that” (p. 31). But how does Averbeck know what the ancient Israelites would have known about schematization? In a similar way, John Walton, advocating

his view of ‘functional’ rather than ‘material’ creation in Genesis 1 writes, “why should Israel be interested in material origins when no one else in the ancient world was?” But what if Israel, uniquely chosen by a unique God, was also granted a unique answer regarding material origins—after all, even to the current day there is no logically compelling non-biblical answer to “where did everything come from?” (Lawrence Krauss effectively redefines ‘nothing’ as ‘something’ in his 2012 *A Universe From Nothing*.) Beall points out that “most of the terms” in Genesis 1 “are quite normal (words for heaven, earth, water, darkness, light, day, evening, morning, birds, fish, sea, man, beasts, and so forth)” (p. 97) and universal, suggesting that the creation account was not merely intended for a specific ancient Near Eastern generation.

Walton contends that “the Bible, though written *for* us and all humanity, was not written *to* us” (p. 142, my emphasis). Although certain parts of Scripture are addressed to specific individuals or groups, the book of Genesis contains elements clearly identified in Scripture as addressed to people across the ages. For instance, in Galatians 3, Paul writes: “The promises were spoken to Abraham and *to* his seed If *you* belong to Christ, then *you* are Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise” (Galatians 3:16, 29, my emphasis). It is clear that the Abrahamic promises are spoken directly *to*, and not merely *for*, the heirs across time. In addition, Jesus, when asked about divorce, responds (to people who lived thousands of years after Moses): “What did Moses command *you*?” (Mark 10:3, my emphasis), citing Genesis 1 and 2 in his answer, and demonstrating that the creation account carries direct and diachronic covenantal consequences.

Authorial Intent

Related to the concept of ‘audience relevance’ is that of ‘authorial intent’.

Longman asserts that “inerrancy concerns what God *intends to teach* in a passage” (p. 104, my emphasis). But this is not correct—inerrancy regards not intent but rather the physical text itself. Similarly, Walton writes that “our biblical hermeneutics is designed to help us get at what the author intended to say” (p. 68), but this also does not seem to be quite correct. Hermeneutics strives to understand what a text means—not only what a text ‘intends’ to say but does not express (although there certainly are instances of figurative language in Scripture, in which denotation and connotation do not precisely overlap). The ‘locus of authority’ derives from the text itself and not from our speculations regarding the author’s unexpressed thoughts and intentions. The dangers of the ‘intent’ approach are exemplified by Longman’s subjective contention that “it is not necessary that Adam be a historical individual for the text to be without error in what it intends to teach” (p. 122). On the contrary, I think that it is absolutely necessary for Adam to be a historical individual in order for him to commit historical sin resulting in historical curses reversed by the historical life and death of a historical Saviour.

Turner states that “the reader should assume that the human authorial intent approximates, or serves as the starting point for, the divine intent” (p. 200), but this does not seem consistent with what the apostle Peter encourages: “Above all, you must understand that no *prophecy of Scripture came about by the prophet’s own interpretation*. For prophecy never had its origin in the will of man, but men spoke from God as they were carried along by the Holy Spirit [emphasis added]” 2 Peter 1:20–21; Moses identifies himself as a prophet in Deuteronomy 18:15). It is not the human writer’s own interpretation and ‘will’ which ultimately undergird the composition and meaning of the biblical text.

Reflections

Reading Genesis 1–2 provides us with a fascinating and comprehensive survey of contemporary views on the Genesis creation account. Not surprisingly, the non-literal interpretations of Genesis harmonize with modern scientific perspectives on origins. I would have liked to see more interaction (or indeed any interaction at all) with primary scientific literature such as the recent genetics studies which purportedly eliminate the possibility of the historical Adam. Moreover, I would have liked also to see, in the ‘non-literal’ chapters, interaction with New Testament texts which evidently depict Adam and the creation account to be historical realities. Throughout much of the book, Copernicu and Darwin serve as gatekeepers of acceptable inquiry, and I hope that the reader is inspired to conduct additional due diligence regarding the methodological, logical, and empirical underpinnings of the associated landmark theories. During my reading of the book I was continually amazed at Dr Beall’s “getting away with” his straightforward view of Genesis, given the current academic and intellectual climate—and I laud his courage, integrity, and insight. Overall, I highly recommend *Reading Genesis 1–2* to those interested in the question of origins and in the imponderable connections between premises and perceptions.

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