

the considerable amount of research done by creationists and ID proponents—considering their limited resources (i.e. they must persuade people to support them, while evolutionists often make use of money coerced from taxpayers). Miller is also protesting too much, in view of the ways that evolutionists have gone far beyond the evidence to make slick presentations to the public—something which has been included under the rubrics of ‘junk science’ and ‘The Carl Saganization of science.’

In conclusion, Miller’s book is nothing new. It tells us more about his rationalistic preconceptions than about ID.

References

1. See also the review of Miller’s previous anti-creationist tirade *Finding Darwin’s God* (2000): Mutilating Miller, *J. Creation* 15(3):29–35, 2001; <creation.com/miller>.
2. CMI article, Arguments we think creationists should NOT use, <creation.com/dontuse#just_theory>.
3. For an illustration of the vacuity of the ‘God used evolution’ position, see Woodmorappe, J., The horse and the tractor, *Creation* 22(4):53, 2000; <creation.com/horsetractor>.
4. See Weinberger, L., Harmony and discord: A review of *The Language of God: A Scientist Presents Evidence for Belief* by Francis S. Collins, *J. Creation* 21(1):33–37, 2007; <creation.com/collins>.
5. See Sarfati, J., Church of England apologises to Darwin: Anglican Church’s neo-Chamberlainite appeasement of secularism, 20 September 2008, <creation.com/anglican>.
6. Behe, M., *The Edge of Evolution: The search for the limits of Darwinism*, Free Press, NY, 2007; see review by Batten, D., Clarity and confusion, *J. Creation* 22(1):28–33, 2008.
7. Fan, Y., Linardopoulou, E., Friedman, C., Williams, E. and Trask, B.J., Fusion site in 2q13-2q14.1 and paralogous regions on other human chromosomes, *Genome Research* 12:1651–1662, 2002.
8. From a transcript of the ABC TV science program Catalyst, episode titled ‘Genius of Junk (DNA)’, broadcast 10 July 2003, <www.abc.net.au/catalyst/stories/s898887.htm>.
9. Doyle, S., Large scale function for ‘endogenous retroviruses’, *J. Creation* 22(3):16, 2008.
10. See Kulikovskiy, A., The Bible and hermeneutics, *J. Creation* 19(3):14–20, 2005.

God-centred or man-centred?

A review of
***Redeeming Science: A
God-Centered Approach:***
by Vern Poythress
Crossway Books, Wheaton,
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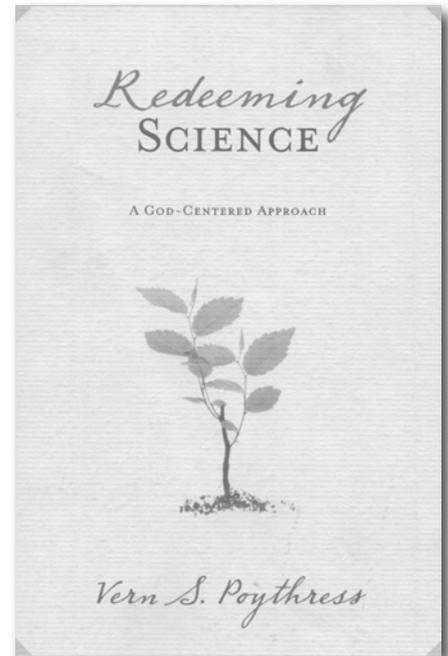
Vern Poythress has a reputation as a conservative Bible scholar who has written previous influential works on hermeneutics (the interpretation of the Bible), including *The Shadow of Christ in the Law of Moses*. So when this book came out, readers expected an important work on interpreting the early chapters of Genesis. Unfortunately, it contains highly questionable interpretations and ends up opposing the creationist view.

Divinizing nature?

Redeeming Science becomes disturbing early on, with its peculiar view of scientific law. Under the section heading ‘Divine Attributes of Law’, Poythress makes it clear he is describing ‘scientific laws’ (p. 17). He then writes, ‘the law is omnipotent’ (p. 18). He goes further, stating that scientific law is ‘transcendent and imminent’ (p. 19) and freely acknowledging these are ‘characteristics of God’ (p. 19).

To all appearances, Poythress is divinizing nature. Aware of this possible accusation, he denies it, saying he is discussing ‘real laws’ (p. 21). He gives his definition by stating, ‘So-called “law” is simply God speaking, God acting, God manifesting himself in time and space’ (p. 21).

Even granting that Poythress is describing laws as known to God, he does not seem to realize the scientific



laws he is so concerned with in this book are formulated by man, not God. At one point he acknowledges that scientific laws are a ‘human approximation’ (p. 45), but that does not make him retract all his previous statements.

Having laid down his general beliefs about science, Poythress goes on to interpret specific parts of the Bible, in particular the Creation and the Flood.

Dismissing creation

For the creation account, Poythress announces he will discuss four views: 24-hour day, mature creation, analogical day, and framework (p. 111). But he lumps the 24-hour day view and the mature creation view into one chapter, chapter 9. And he does not really cover the 24-hour day view. He dismisses the subject by stating, ‘But besides the issue of the Sabbath, what else do we gain from thinking that God created the world in the space of 144 hours, instead of 24 hours, or one hour, or 48 hours, or

3 years—or a billion years? Not much, really. The exact amount of time makes no difference theologically’ (p. 114).

This is an astounding statement. It is completely man-centred. (And when one thinks about it, this is the opposite of the subtitle of *Redeeming Science*, which is *A God-Centered Approach*.) If God deigns to give us his inerrant revelation, should man shrug and say, ‘what else do we gain’ from it? Poythress does not realize we gain insight into how God spoke, acted and manifested himself, which was supposedly so important earlier in the book. If man shrugs at the importance of God’s revelation on how he created, we lose the foundation for science.

Further, we lose an inspired weapon against the false teaching of evolution. If the creation account is taken seriously, the universe was created in six days. This is either true or not. If it is not true, we not only do not gain ‘the issue of the Sabbath’ from it, we cannot rely on any of it to be the inerrant word of God. But if it is true, it destroys any possibility of evolution. There simply would not be enough time, whether one is considering a big bang cosmology for the universe, geological evolution for the earth, or biological evolution for plants, animals and man. Under the heading of ‘what else do we gain’, Poythress should have placed the refutation of evolution.

He spends the rest of the chapter describing a mature creation position in which God creates a world that looks billions of years old. He does not seem to realize that means accepting uncritically the long age dating methods. There is no attempt to find where God’s speaking leaves off and human approximation begins. (Poythress covers the analogical and framework views in chapter 10, and indicates he prefers the analogical day view—p. 146).

A snowy Flood

Poythress’ hermeneutic is at its most grotesque when he argues for a

local flood. He freely acknowledges the frequent use of the word ‘all’ when Genesis chapters 6–9 describe the worldwide nature of the Flood, including ‘all the high mountains under the whole heaven were covered’ (p. 127, referring to Genesis 7:19). Then he qualifies this, not based on the text, but by his opinion of the level of intelligence of the people being addressed by God. He writes, ‘Genesis 6–9 addresses the ordinary person—in particular, the ordinary person in the ancient Near East. The ordinary person does not think in terms of “the globe.” That is a foreign concept’ (p. 128). This is simply bringing out the old saw that people living back then were too ignorant to understand the size and shape of the earth, and that modern people can assume the word of God is limited to the understanding of such ignorant people. Poythress in his modern way then states, “Everything” may not be literally everything, but “everything pertinent to the discussion” (p. 128).

What does that mean? He redefines ‘earth’ in Genesis as ‘the land as far out as one can see’ (p. 129). He does not do any exegetical study of the text to come up with this new definition. He does not do any linguistic study of ancient Hebrew to come up with this new definition. No, he just redefines ‘earth’ the way he wants to, because he is so sure the Bible was written for ‘ordinary’ (by which he means ‘ignorant’) people, and that is what an ignorant person would have thought.

His attempt at a *coup de grace* comes when he tries to figure out how this local flood of his managed to cover the mountains. Incredibly, he gives the criticism that ‘one has assumed that the “water” in question all has liquid form’ (p. 129). Where is he going with this? ‘Is it not possible that, on the mountains, we might find snow, sleet, and ice?’ (p. 129). Therefore, lowlands covered with water and mountaintops covered with snow can be substituted for the Flood in this view. It is extremely difficult to see how such a

flood would be a miracle, given this kind of fanciful hermeneutics.

Beyond that is the problem of whether this very limited flood undermines God’s purpose for it. God was explicit when he said, ‘I will destroy man whom I have created from the face of the earth, both man and beast, creeping thing and birds of the air, for I am sorry that I have made them’ (Genesis 6:7 NKJV). How could any local flood accomplish this, when man and beast could simply walk out of the Mesopotamian area in far less time than it would take to build an ark? This would especially be true of Poythress’ version of the Flood, since leaving the area would be far better than building a large seagoing barge to protect them from snow possibly coming down the mountains.

And why wouldn’t the birds have flown away from the snow? Noah did indeed take birds into the ark (Genesis 7:8), including the raven and the dove that he later released (Genesis 8:6–12). It would certainly have been safer for representatives of every kind of bird in Mesopotamia to have flown outside a local flood area, than to try to keep them in the ark to simply shelter them from some groundwater and some snow. This attempt to find some way to portray the Flood as merely local makes God’s command to build an ark nonsensical.

Conclusion

Poythress’ *Redeeming Science: A God-Centered Approach* is not a credible work on understanding either the Bible or science. He dismisses the 24-hour day view with no serious discussion, and he reinterprets the Flood as local in a way that cannot be accepted by people who take the Bible seriously. All in all, this is a disappointment to any readers who were looking for a hermeneutical guide to the early chapters of Genesis.