obvious that Shoshenk seized only one Judean fortification—Aijalon. Apart from that, the Pharaoh’s army swept across the central highland, north of Jerusalem, before capturing one Israelite location after another.

The Bible states that Shishak’s objective was Judah and its capital city, whereas Shoshenk’s objectives were the Transjordan region and the Jezreel Valley—Jerusalem does not feature in his itinerary.

The Bible is inerrant, therefore whatever Shishak’s real identity was, he had an interest in Judah, and Judah alone. Biblical scholars and biblical archaeologists may claim that they believe the Bible to be inerrant, yet they are all too often influenced by secular dating and secular archaeological discoveries; when the secular states one thing and the Bible another, it is the Bible that suffers much emendation.

The book you mention by Köstenberger and Patterson has generally been positively reviewed. However, the section you quote illustrates the common tendency for writers in this field to regurgitate subject material without checking to see if new discoveries have challenged the established position.

You mention that “In the article by Clarke he also relies on Breasted, Ancient Records of Egypt for some of his conclusions.” Not so. Egyptologists frequently refer to Breasted—I do it all the time. However, over a century has passed since Breasted first produced his Ancient Records. Discoveries since have rendered some of his work as outdated; the linking of Shishak to Shoshenk I being an obvious one. Any competent Egyptologist, or historian for that matter, would take pains to check the validity of work by any of the early pioneers in this field. It’s one reason why Budge is treated with much caution nowadays. My conclusions come primarily from the inerrancy of Scripture and secondarily, where relevant, from carefully researched records.

Flood models and biblical realism

I thoroughly appreciated Jonathan Sarfati’s recent viewpoint (Flood models and biblical realism, J. Creation 24(3):46–53, 2010), concerning Flood models. And I agree wholeheartedly that we ought to hold the Bible strongly, while at the same time holding scientific models loosely.

Nevertheless, I have some concern regarding his section about the rainbow, and specifically with this statement: “There are plenty of examples in Scripture where God took pre-existing objects or actions and bestowed a new covenantal meaning on them. For example, bread and wine obviously pre-dated the Lord’s Supper.”

While I don’t consider this a matter of utmost importance, I do believe we must tread very carefully here.

Bread and wine themselves were not invested with any covenantal meaning outside of a certain context, and to this day have no covenantal meaning outside of the act of the celebrating the Lord’s Supper, a church ordinance. As a believer, I can eat bread and drink wine at any
meal, but they only take on covenantal meaning when a body of believers breaks and eats the bread and drinks the wine while gathered, specifically to remember the Lord’s death and resurrection until He comes again.

The language used by Jesus and Paul in laying forth this covenantal meaning (“Take this bread …”, “Do this …”) is quite different from the language used by God to describe the covenant sign, the rainbow, given to Noah after the Flood (“I have set My bow …”, “I will see it and remember …”). I claim no expertise in Hebrew, but in all the English translations, the plain reading of Genesis 9:8–17 hardly supports the investment of new meaning into a pre-existing object. This is important if this is to be a sign to every living creature1 from that point on, unlike the Lord’s Supper, which is only for the church; and there, again, the bread and wine only take on covenantal meaning within that specific context, not simply by virtue of their very existence.

The importance here is that the identical argument, in principle,2 that Sarfati makes about investing pre-existing elements with new meanings could be just as easily made by old-earth apologists about the concept of death as the wages of sin.

The most central, non-negotiable point made by biblical young-earth apologists is that death could not have existed before sin. New Testament passages such as Hebrews 9:22, Romans 6:23, and Romans 5:12 are typically laid out to support this point.

But one could just as easily argue that God invested death with a new meaning after the Fall, the new meaning being the wages of sin. The argument could easily proceed: whereas before sin, death was merely a natural occurrence in the progress of life; after the Fall, God invested death with a new meaning: the consequence of sin. At that time, He instituted the ritual of the blood sacrifice to atone for sin. All the aforementioned New Testament passages could be understood in this light.

If one wants to argue that such an interpretation is not consistent with the plain biblical statement that God’s original creation was very good, and Scripture must interpret Scripture, I would heartily agree. To argue that God invested new meaning after sin into pre-existent death does not line up with the plain reading of Scripture. At that point, then, I would point out that the proposal that the rainbow was brand new (as opposed to pre-existent) would agree most readily with the plain meaning of both Genesis 2:5–6 and Genesis 9:8–17, while it appears to be stretching things to say that the rainbow is being invested with new meaning after the Flood.

While Sarfati rightly points out that no mention is made in Scripture of different ‘laws of nature’ operating before the Flood, it is argued repeatedly in creationist literature that many things did change after the Fall.3 Since the record is silent on exactly what laws of nature did or didn’t change after the Fall or after the Flood, it seems consistent that God may have simply ever-so-slightly altered or ‘switched on’ an aspect of differential refraction to intentionally allow for the rainbow after the Flood, even if it had previously rained.

Again, my desire is not to argue trifles. I fully agree that we ought to hold scientific models loosely. But my main concern is one ramification of stating or implying that the rainbow pre-existed the Flood and that God merely invested it with new meaning afterwards. As pointed out, this identical argument in principle could be applied to death and sin. That reasonable leap of logic could easily undermine the more foundational scriptural truth of no death before sin.

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References
1. Something God states no less than seven times (in various ways) within those 10 verses.

2. Sarfati himself warned about the dangers of arguments identical, in principle, to the arguments of local flood compromisers in the Meteorite impact section of the very viewpoint under discussion.

3. For example, the information for animal attack/defense mechanisms and poisons being ‘switched on’, like the stinging cells of jellyfish that Sarfati mentions in the catastrophic plate tectonics section of this same viewpoint.

Errata
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On p. 59, column 2, the first two paragraphs should read:

... could have seen) the source on the sixth day is the original state (plus two days) in which it was created. But Lisle wouldn’t call it a supernova remnant under those circumstances, since there was no actual supernova. It’s an expanding nebula that sort of resembles a supernova remnant. Of observed supernova remnants, for which age has been estimated from actual expansion rates, all are less than about 10,000 years or so.

Only time dilation could overcome an assumption of initial mature creation, especially if you can make an argument that the expanding cloud really did come from a star that exploded, and that the process (at today’s rates) would vastly exceed 6,000 years. Then you’ve got a good argument for time dilation. For example the antennae galaxy is a colliding pair of galaxies that, at constant measured rates, would have taken millions of years to merge to the observed state. If that process is real, only a time-dilation model could account for the required time, assuming the galaxies were not created in a colliding condition.