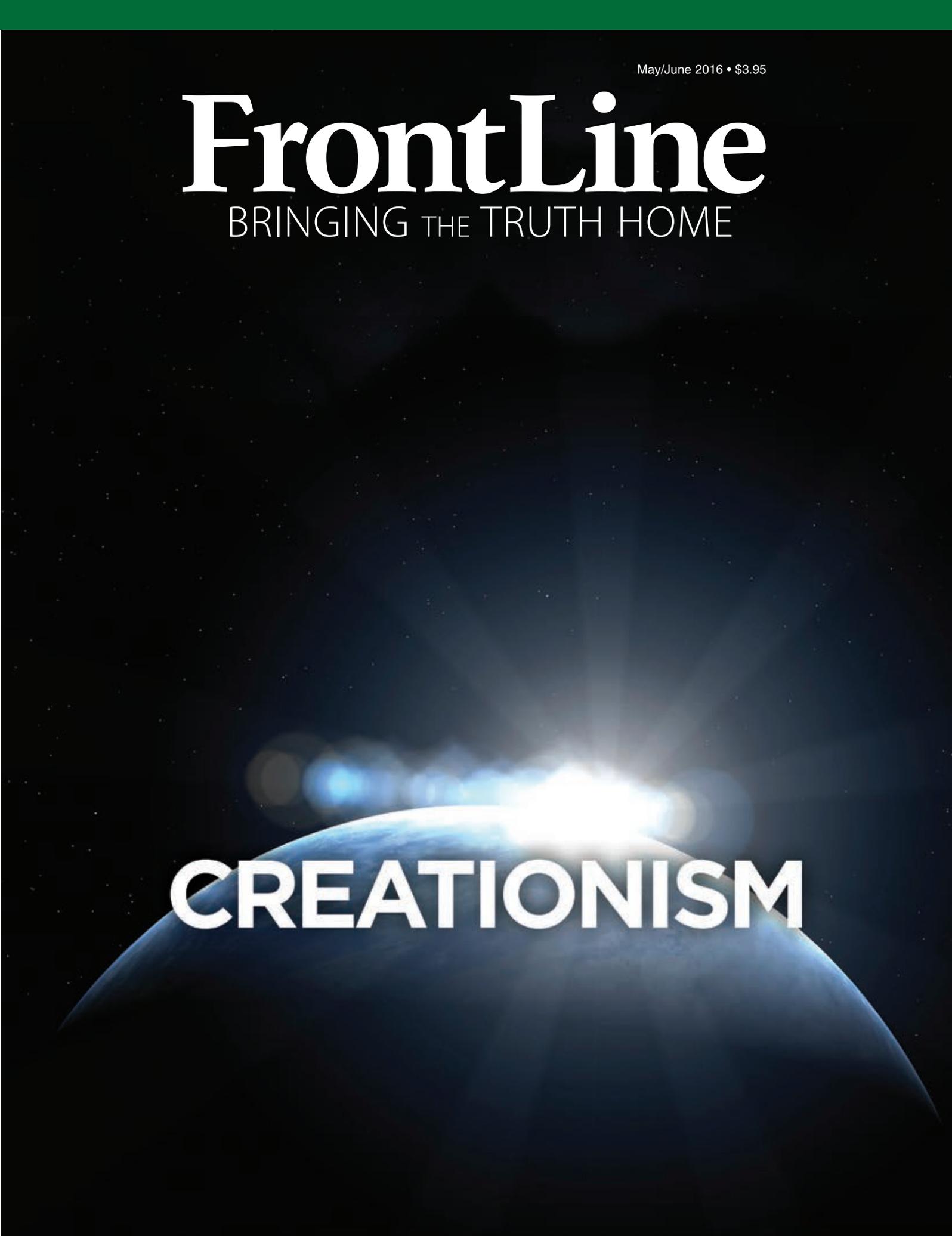


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FrontLine

BRINGING THE TRUTH HOME



CREATIONISM

Creationism



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Our sincere thanks to Dr. Larry Oats for coordinating this issue of *FrontLine* magazine.

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Larry Oats

The Truth of Scripture Concerning Creation

Dennis Venema is a senior fellow at BioLogos Foundation, a Christian group that attempts to reconcile faith and science. In an August 9, 2011, interview he told Wisconsin National Public Radio that there is no possibility that humans can be traced back to a single couple. With the mapping of the human genome, he argues that modern humans emerged from other primates as a large population—long before the Genesis timeframe of a few thousand years ago. Given the genetic variation of people today, he says scientists cannot get the original humanoid population size below 10,000 people at any time in our evolutionary history. To get down to just two ancestors, Venema says, “you would have to postulate that there’s been this absolutely astronomical mutation rate that has produced all these new variants in an incredibly short period

of time. Those types of mutation rates are just not possible. It would mutate us out of existence.”*

This is the state of much of the unbelieving world and, sadly, part of the Evangelical world as well. Science is viewed as absolutely true, while Scripture is, at least in the early chapters of Genesis, unreliable. In this issue of *FrontLine*, Maranatha Baptist University seeks to focus our attention on the truth of *Scripture* concerning creation. Science frequently changes its mind, although after each shift, the new truth is now the only truth. Scripture remains constant. Yes, it does require faith to accept the truth of God’s Word, especially in light of the “truth” of science, but faith is at the heart of fundamental Christianity. We trust that these articles will strengthen your faith.

*www.npr.org/2011/08/09/138957812/evangelicals-question-the-existence-of-adam-and-eve



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Dr. Vaughn,

I received, read, and thoroughly enjoyed your book [*Courage and Compassion*]. Thank you for sending it to me. In fact, I will be referring to and sharing your book with several, both in the ministry and in the Sheriff's Dept. Thank you for holding strong and continuing to preach and teach His Word!

*Tom Bauder
Sun Lakes, Arizona*

I just wanted to thank you for the article that was posted on the Proclaim and Defend website today entitled "The Fundamentals of Worship." Like you said, worship is for God, not for us. It's pretty easy to tell when we make it more about our pleasure than His. Knowing Him is the key. Thank you for your teaching.

*Jim Wingate
Greenville, South Carolina*

Dear Dr. Vaughn,

We so appreciate the time and effort you gave. . . . Thank you . . . for taking the time to talk to us. We loved learning from you and from the whole [South Regional] FBFI. We saw so much gracious wisdom in the group. FBFI is truly the best in Fundamentalism!

*Matthew and Rachel Potter
Greenville, South Carolina*

Malinda,

Thank you for the great faithfulness you have offered this endorsing agency. I was very encouraged by the privilege to travel with Dr. Vaughn.

Please let Dr. Vaughn know, though they have

Continued on right

It was announced on Sunday, April 10, that beginning the end of this school year **Captain Wayne Bley** will become the Chief Academic Officer at International Baptist College and Seminary in Chandler, Arizona. This will be in addition to continuing to teach. Dr. Bley says, "I'm excited about this opportunity."



On April 3, 2016, **Northwest Valley Baptist Church (Glendale, Arizona)** celebrated their groundbreaking service for a new auditorium/office/classroom building. This facility will allow members to worship together in one service rather than two and will provide needed space for outreach ministries. The church is praising the Lord for His faithful provision and will continue to move forward "Together by Faith," as stated by the building program theme.

probably sought his permission, his dissertation is required reading in the Virginia Beach Theological Seminary Military Chaplains MBS class.

*Bret Perkuchin
MAJ USAR
48TH Combat Support Hospital*



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Beware the Hermeneutics of Accommodation



It is undeniable that the history of interpretation includes numerous examples of commentators benefiting from insights garnered from general revelation. Historical discoveries have shed light on various passages, sometimes causing adjustments to interpretations.¹ Similarly, each generation reads Scripture in light of its current scientific perspectives.² It is, therefore, naïve to say that biblical interpretation should never be accommodated to extrabiblical data. The controlling factor, however, must always be the biblical text understood according to a normal hermeneutic.³ It is the contention of young-earth, six-solar-day creationists that the series of accommodations to science that has occurred over the last two hundred years in the interests of evolutionary development allows science—rather than the text—to be the controlling factor. Conservatives, because of their commitment to biblical authority, should reject these hermeneutics of accommodation. While we do not wish to demonize advocates of alternatives to the six-solar-day view, many of whom express loyalty to a high view of Scripture, including inerrancy, this article will seek to briefly show that accommodating the interpretation of Genesis 1 to current science has tended to take the

conversation ever further from a literal reading of the text. Detailed refutations are beyond the scope of this article, but it will survey the history of various accommodations to science by evangelical Christians with the purpose of demonstrating the trajectory of these efforts over the last two hundred years.

The Gap Theory

It is noteworthy that this discussion begins during the so-called Age of Enlightenment. Despite efforts to find support for modern innovations among various Church Fathers,⁴ before about 1800 the consensus reading of Genesis 1–2 in all Christian theological traditions was to take these chapters as a normal historical record of creation in six solar days about six thousand years ago. This consensus came under attack when James Hutton, the father of modern geology, challenged young-earth catastrophism and proposed a uniformitarian approach that necessitated millions (later, billions) of years of earth history. Charles Lyell advanced Hutton's theses in the 1830s, and Lyell's friend, Charles Darwin, produced the most compelling arguments for natural selection, a process requiring the millions of years Lyell's theories provided.⁵ Obviously,

such theories militated against the historic reading of the creation account. How were Christians to respond?

Thomas Chalmers was a dynamic Scottish Presbyterian who led in the great Disruption of 1843, guiding nearly five hundred ministers out of the national Church of Scotland to form the Free Church of Scotland. Unfortunately, despite his many outstanding qualities as a pastor and theologian, he enters this story as the popularizer of the Gap Theory. In the late eighteenth century, several Christian geologists had proposed that Genesis 1:1 spoke of an initial creation of the world, and verse 2 described its catastrophic destruction millions of years later. The remainder of Genesis 1 and 2 then gave an historic account of the re-creation of the world. Chalmers appears to be the first significant *theologian* to adopt this view; he advanced it in an 1814 lecture, "Natural Theology."⁶ About a century later, Scofield taught it in his celebrated reference Bible,⁷ and through that instrument, the view became enormously popular in English-speaking countries in the first half of the twentieth century.⁸ It is much less popular now, although Christian geologist John Clayton has been attempting to promote a "Modified Gap Theory" over the last few decades.⁹

The Day-Age Theory

Just a decade or so after Chalmers' historic lecture, G. S. Faber, an Anglican churchman, suggested that the geologic record could be reconciled with Scripture in a new way: the days of creation were not solar days but rather lengthy epochs, within which considerable geologic and evolutionary development could take place. Evangelicals gave Faber's view little credence until *Testimony of the Rocks* by Scottish evangelical geologist Hugh Miller advocated it in 1856.¹⁰ This theory has found many advocates, including in recent decades the formidable evangelical theologian Millard Erickson.¹¹

Two interpretative schemes were now available to theologians eager to avoid conflict with science and to evangelical scientists striving to reconcile their craft with Scripture. Exegetically, the Gap Theory sought justification in the unusual wording of Genesis 1:2 and its echoes in Isaiah 24:1, 45:18, and, especially, Jeremiah 4:23–26. The prophets spoke of the earth undergoing judgment with the result that it was *without form and void*. Thus, Genesis 1:2 must reflect a result of judgment as well. Without pausing for a thorough refutation, let us note that this interpretation is remarkably fragile. The Gap Theory did not arise from a natural reading of Genesis 1 but rather from a desire to accommodate modern geology. The virtue of the Gap Theory is that it allowed for a normal reading of the rest of Genesis 1–2.

The Day-Age Theory finds support in the metaphorical use of *day* throughout Scripture—notably, in Genesis 2:4—and in the awkward fact that a literal reading has to account for the creation of the sun four days after light appears. However, Day-Age proponents struggle to find other uses of *day* in the Pentateuch occurring with either ordinals or cardinal numbers as metaphors for lengthier periods of time. Furthermore, while the creation of the sun on the fourth day *may* signal the reader that the author

intended something other than a strictly literal reading,¹² it is not at all clear how extending the days into ages helps with *that* problem. The theory also struggles with the repeated refrain "evening and morning," elsewhere always a Semitic way of referring to a solar day. In short—books have been written on these issues¹³—science, not exegesis, appears to be driving the theory.

The Framework Hypothesis

In 1924 University of Utrecht professor Arie Noordtzij argued that the structure of the Genesis 1 account, in particular the parallelism of days 1–3 with days 4–6, presents a theological rather than historical or scientific account of the origin of the earth. The human author of Genesis produced a literary work that provides a framework for creation but did not intend to recount actual historical events. Herman Ridderbos, in 1957, developed this Framework Hypothesis in *Is There a Conflict between Genesis 1 and Natural Science?* Lee Irons, with assistance from Meredith Kline, produced a substantial defense of this view in his contribution to *The Genesis Debate*.¹⁴ It is quite common now for old-earth creationists to appeal to various poetic structures that they find in Genesis 1 in order to argue that attention to the "literary, thematic, and theological aspects of the creation narrative" frees interpreters from the "unexamined assumption that the text addresses the earthly sequence and chronology of origins."¹⁵ The recent "Temple Inauguration View" of John Walton probably fits in this category. He employs his enormous knowledge of the Ancient Near East (ANE) to convince his readers that Genesis 1 is "ancient cosmology," not "modern cosmology."¹⁶ In other words, young-earth creationists find history and science in Genesis 1 only because they look for them there. One gets the impression that Bible readers for the last two thousand years had no hope of properly interpreting the first chapter of the Bible because they lacked the advantage of Dr. Walton's unfolding of ANE cosmology.

Seeing a Pattern

While additional efforts have been made to accommodate Genesis 1 to modern science,¹⁷ this brief survey suggests a pattern. Early old-earth science elicited a simple attempt to find vast swaths of time in the first two verses of Genesis 1. As science accumulated more "evidence" and opponents debunked the Gap Theory, the Day-Age View gained in popularity. While exegetically slightly more viable than the Gap Theory, it took even less of Genesis 1 literally. Finally, science seemed to have won the day culturally, and even the Day-Age View seemed insufficiently sophisticated to deal with the challenges being mounted against Genesis 1; interpreters now developed various literary views of the creation account. While often impressive in their intricate handling of textual details, these views effectively removed all science and history from the only historic and scientific account of creation available to mankind. Young-earth creationists continue to insist that a normal, literal-historical reading of Genesis 1 leads to the affirmation of creation in six twenty-four-hour days and

Continued on page 37

Imago Dei and the (Re)

Society embraces a rather incongruous mix of beliefs relating to the value of mankind. Evolutionary ideas simultaneously degrade the value of humans (“man is merely an evolved animal”) and elevate humans to quasi-divine status (“man is god”). All such attempts are really about dismissing God from our lives while claiming self-sovereignty. Man’s view of humankind has been severely distorted by the foolish thinking that he himself deems to be wise. Unfortunately, Christians have sometimes exhibited similar paradoxical beliefs, either degrading the value of humankind (“worm theology”) or elevating individuals beyond what the Scriptures teach (“self-esteem theology”). The pendulum appears to have swung in the direction of the latter for now.

The problems with self-image manifest themselves in multiple ways in our world. Mankind often expresses its discomfort with our image by disfiguring, altering, self-identifying (“reassigning”), enhancing, augmenting, sculpting, and pretending that we are not who we really are—anything to become more comfortable in our own skin. Undercutting who we are has led to a multitude of unbiblical responses—driven by our desire to improve, we resort to measures that actually deface, diminish, and even destroy who we are. These extremes show in practices such as abortion, eating disorders, addictions, euthanasia, murder, sex changes, self-injury, and the like. These distortions, however, are merely a symptom of the rebellion we manifest toward God. It is this rebellion that makes us uncomfortable with who we are.¹

A Christian worldview, however, should endeavor to maintain a view of man that neither degrades nor elevates but rather adheres to the biblical norm. The Genesis creation account reveals a deliberate work of God to fashion a creature class in His likeness that would rule as God’s own vice-regent on earth—a way to extend God’s rule into a visible presence. God’s sovereign choice for this dominion position was mankind. In Genesis 1:26–27² Moses describes God’s deliberate work in creating mankind to be His vice-ruler. The purpose of this article, therefore, is to demonstrate that the *imago Dei* provides mankind with a theology that values man at a level sanctioned by God—neither too high nor too low.

The Divine Plan of God—1:26

First, God describes His act of creating mankind as a deliberate creation. The words “let us make”³ show a divine determination concerning mankind that is absent with the sea and land animals. God’s crowning achievement shows the unique relationship mankind has with its Creator-God as well as the ruling function we have over His creation. The blessing of verse 28 further highlights this special relationship over other land creatures over whom no blessing is pronounced (vv. 24–25).

Second, God describes His act of creating mankind as a deliberate design. God not only deliberates with careful attention to the creation of mankind, He also has a special design feature for humans. Both of these creative purposes show divine intentionality for His most unique of creations. Moses describes this uniqueness with two words that overlap in meaning, an apparent hendiadys (“image” and “likeness”). Although some see a distinction between these words, the terms are often synonymous in usage (cf. 1:27 and 5:1).

There are three primary positions on what the *imago* means theologically for mankind.⁴ Since space does not permit a thorough treatment, we will view these positions in broad categories as follows:

- The structural view (man reflects God’s image in his substance, i.e., intellectual, emotional, and volitional structures);
- The relational view (man reflects God’s image in his relationships to God and others, i.e., a social aspect); and,
- The functional view (man reflects God’s image in how he functions in the dominion role, i.e., a telic aspect).

Although it is possible to see these various views represented in the unfolding of the Scriptures, in Genesis 1:26 Moses does not actually explain what the concept means as much as he shows the results via the dominion mandate that follows. In other words, in Genesis 1:26–28 Moses focuses upon how the first couple functions in light of the *imago Dei* that God placed within them. Therefore, it seems here that God has in mind a particular function the image enables. What is certain in the *imago* is that man both *reflects* and *represents* God (His character and ownership, cf. Mark

Shaping of Our Image

12:13–17) to the world around us through the image and dominion motifs.⁵

Third, not only does Moses describe God’s deliberate creation and design, he furthermore describes the deliberate purpose that God has for mankind—filling and ruling. Herein is where function follows form. The design features that God has included in mankind’s structure now enable him to fulfill God’s mandate as vice-regents over the creation, over all the created animals and earth. It is this lofty position that gives mankind a derived value and purpose from God that should lead men both to submit to and reflect the sovereignty of God in their lives (cf. Ps. 8).

The common belief in the Ancient Near East was that the divine essence would empower the image to carry out the former’s will in his place.⁶ Kings would erect monuments of their visage as a reminder that the sovereign was still present in all of their territories. Nebuchadnezzar expected his subjects to bow to his image as a loyalty test (Dan. 3). In the creation account, God equips and appoints mankind to stand in His place as a living and breathing vice-regent through whom He displays His own character and manages His creation. That God created all humans with this function (plural “them,” v. 26) shows that God did not intend any one human or group of humans to stand above all others in this role (leadership positions notwithstanding) but that each should participate in exercising God’s dominion, including both “male and female.” This truth militates against racism, sexism, class warfare, discrimination, and the like.

The Divine Creation of Man—1:27

What God deliberates over in verse 26 He now completes in verse 27. God’s plan was not simply wishful thinking or a plan He lacked the power to impose, but it was an actual purpose He built into His creation. The structure of this verse demonstrates the focal point of the theology—the image of God. Moses writes this text in a chiastic structure:

- A: So God created man
- B: in his *own* image,
- B': in the image of God
- A': created he him;
- C: male and female
- A": created he them.

This short poem summarizes God’s care in creating mankind—the deliberate creation of mankind in His image extending to both males and females of all people.

Since the Genesis creation account reveals a deliberate work of God to fashion a creature class in His likeness that would rule as God’s own vice-regent on earth, humans should avoid pride in who we are. In light of the *imago Dei*, humans should maintain, on the one hand, a humble posture towards our Creator, since the value we have either physically or spiritually is derived from God Himself as a gracious and deliberate gift. All the value we need is found in how He has created us and how He relates to us—all of which is of God. On the other hand, humans should also avoid too low of a view of mankind, since God has bestowed such a high position to man in the creation. To devalue men and women of any kind is to devalue the image that they possess, regardless of the level to which that image has been marred by sin.

A biblical balance, therefore, helps us avoid the extreme attitudes that often result in extreme behaviors towards God, ourselves, or others. This balanced approach should result in praise for the God who made us.

Dr. Bruce Meyer is professor of Bible and Biblical Counseling at Maranatha Baptist University in Watertown, Wisconsin.



¹ All such attempts at self-redemption, similar to the tower of Babel rebellion, result in an enslaving cyclical downward spiral. The more man attempts to solve his own problems his own ways, the more guilt and shame the person experiences resulting in more attempts to self-redeem (cf. Rom. 1 “given over” motif). The prophets of Baal (1 Kings 18) are a good example.

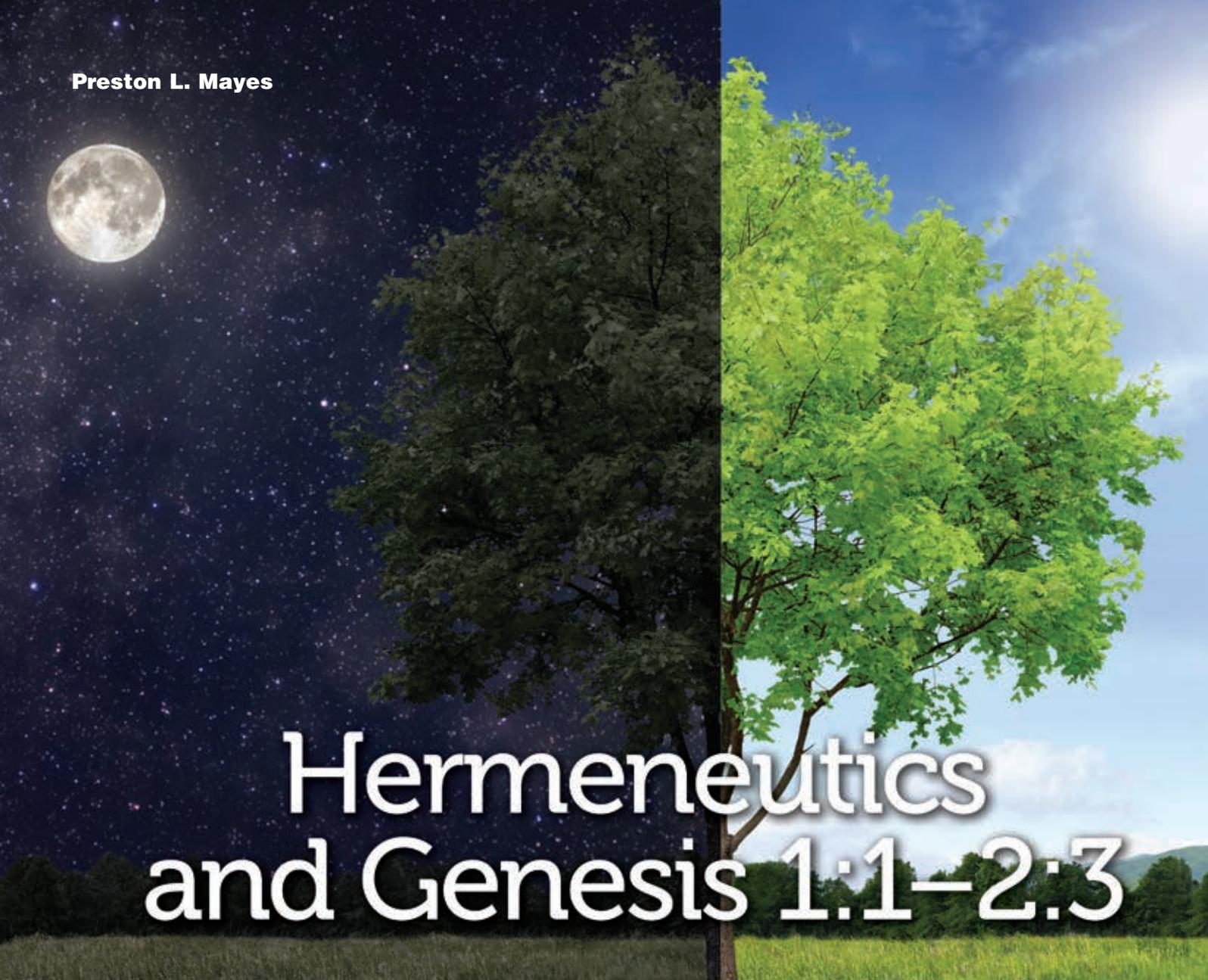
² Dr. Fred Moritz published an article previously in *FrontLine* providing a brief but useful biblical theology on the Image of God: “What Is the Image of God,” 2014.

³ The use of the plural pronoun warrants another study at another time since it’s outside the scope of this article.

⁴ Space does not permit a discussion on the merits or demerits of these positions. For a thorough treatment on this subject see Anthony Hoekema, *Created in God’s Image* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994) and Ronald Allen, *The Majesty of Man* (Grand Rapids: Kregel, 2000).

⁵ The entrance of sin has significantly distorted the image but not completely eradicated it (Gen. 9:6; James 3:9); through salvation and sanctification the image in believers is restored (2 Cor. 3:18).

⁶ John H Walton, *Zondervan Illustrated Bible Backgrounds Commentary (Old Testament): Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy*, Vol. 1 (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2009), 21.



Hermeneutics and Genesis 1:1–2:3

At first glance, Genesis 1:1–2:3 reads like a straightforward narrative of historical events from a single week. It signals the reader that the account is historical by using the normal Hebrew grammatical form for a narrative.¹ Genesis 5 and 10 continue this historical interest by connecting Adam with his descendants from Seth all the way down to Abraham. Those genealogies, so often overlooked by the modern reader, indicate both ancient man's concern with identifying "an accurate and orderly sequence of ancestors" and Genesis' concern with history by "focusing on the origins of Israel back to Adam and Eve."² This historical impulse to show Abraham's relationship to Israel and the world is no small matter, either, for God's covenant with the patriarch led to the blessings that Christians now enjoy.

Genesis 1:1–2:3 also indicates that these historical events took place during six calendar days. Though the Hebrew word for day (*yom*) can indicate a general period of time, the repetition of the phrase, "the evening and the morning were the first day, second day," etc., after each creative day strongly suggests that God created the world during that one week. The summary statement in Genesis 2:3 that on the seventh day God "rested from all his work" further suggests that all His creative activity was confined to this period.

This seemingly certain conclusion, however, has been debated by many who identify Genesis 1:1–2:3 as something other than historical narrative. Arguments differ in some details, but most conservative interpreters taking an alternate view conclude that Genesis 1:1–2:3 was concerned only with displacing ancient polytheism in favor of monotheism.³ They propound that it was not intended

to address questions about the length of the creation week or the order in which everything was created.

The New Hermeneutic

The hermeneutical key to this argument is that the church misread Genesis 1:1–2:3 because it did not understand its genre.⁴ Proponents of this position argue that Genesis borrowed ancient Near Eastern creation myths and reworked them, changing only enough to undermine polytheism and promote monotheism. For example, in the Babylonian epic *Enuma Elish* the gods were generated out of the original primeval sea/mother god, Tiamat. Matter, not the gods, came first, and the gods were dependent on it. The myth then describes how the god Marduk created the heavens and mankind after putting down a rebellion in the god pantheon. He “[split] Tiamat’s corpse in order to create two spheres of water, reminiscent of the divided waters of the firmament on the second day of creation.”⁵ He then formed the sun, moon, and stars, designating them as the calendrical markers of years and months in the process. Finally, he created man from the blood of Tiamat’s co-conspirator, Qingu.⁶ Among the theological implications of *Enuma Elish* are the dependency of the gods on the material creation, the creation of man with the same sin nature as the gods, and the use of one living being to create other types of living beings.⁷

Genesis 1 contradicts the theology of polytheistic myths, and this new hermeneutic correctly identifies these major

points of disagreement. But in light of the similarities between Genesis and certain details of the myths, these new approaches relabel Genesis 1 as an “Ancient Near Eastern Cosmogony.” “These ancient cosmogonies—including that of Genesis 1—do not ask or attempt to answer scientific questions of origins: the material, manner, or date of the origin of the world and its species.”⁸ Adherents of this viewpoint believe that the Jews borrowed certain details of the accounts, contradicting them only in terms of the identity of the Creator and His relationship to His creation. As Peter Enns explains,

It is a fundamental misunderstanding of Genesis to expect it to answer questions generated by a modern worldview, such as whether the days were literal or figurative, or whether the days of creation can be lined up with modern science, or whether the flood was local or universal. The question that Genesis is prepared to answer is whether Yahweh, the God of Israel, is worthy of worship. . . . To do so borders on modern, Western arrogance. Rather, Genesis makes its case in a way that

ancient men and women would have readily understood—indeed the *only* way.⁹

From this new hermeneutical platform, certain individual details of the creation are then reinterpreted as metaphors, the most prominent example being days. “The narrative represents the events . . . that marked new beginnings in this creative activity by the anthropomorphic term ‘day.’ By this metaphor our literate theologian lays the foundation for Israel to keep the Sabbaths.”¹⁰ But each of these “days” may actually represent an extremely long period during which God created man through an evolutionary process (theistic evolution). As Waltke concludes, “Within his providence [God] allowed the process of natural selection and of cataclysmic interventions—such as the meteor that extinguished the dinosaurs, enabling mammals to dominate the earth—to produce awe-inspiring creatures, especially [man].”¹¹ So this new reading of Genesis can assert that the monotheistic God of Scripture truly exists but that He never intended the details of the creation account to be taken as factual.

Problems with the New Hermeneutic

The first problem with relabeling Genesis an “Ancient Near Eastern Cosmogony” is that genre identification should be guided by Scripture primarily and by the ancient Near East secondarily. Kenton Sparks, who takes a more liberal approach than that critiqued in this article, correctly concludes that “there are no texts from the ancient world that stand generically close in all respects to either the Bible as a whole or to the Book of Genesis. Like all texts, the Bible is ultimately *sui generis*—its own genre.”¹² So ultimately the Bible must be interpreted in its own context. It is possible that interpretive mistakes can be made by either misunderstanding or misidentifying a genre, but a fuller understanding of the canon of Scripture often identifies such errors. The wisdom literature of the Old Testament is a primary example. When one reads, “The wicked are overthrown, and are not: but the house of the righteous shall stand” (Prov. 12:7), it is possible to conclude that obedience is always blessed and wickedness is always punished in this life. This incorrect conclusion can be traced to a flawed hermeneutic, one that misunderstands proverbs. Proverbs are generally true statements or observations, not inviolable laws. The key point is that Scripture itself corrected the misconception that righteousness and wickedness are always rewarded immediately through Job and Ecclesiastes. If other portions of Scripture corrected our “misunderstandings” of Genesis, then we would doubtless need to correct our understanding of Genesis 1:1–2:3. The rest of Scripture, however, confirms the perspective of Genesis, particularly when it asserts that death, an integral part of any evolutionary perspective, did not enter the creation until Adam’s sin (Rom. 5:12). So if Genesis communicates that creation took a week using the “evening and morning” qualifier within standard narrative conventions, should it not be allowed to have its say without having to endure a mugging by a gang of genre reassignment?

A second problem with dismissing supposedly incidental details from the creation account is that the dismissal implies ancient civilizations could understand that God

was radically different from pagan gods but could not understand that He created by changing one creature into another. The reverse is actually the case. Ancient man already believed the difficult part of evolutionary thinking, that the gods had somehow magically appeared from matter and had then been either made (Tiamat) or transformed (Qingu) into something else. If God had used a process of theistic evolution to create man, He could have simply indicated that man came from animals and was the result of a series of changes. This concept would not have been revolutionary and may have made monotheism *easier* to accept. Polytheists already worshipped representations of animals and called them gods. Would it really have been difficult for ancient people to believe humans also came from animals?

Finally, the conclusion that Genesis borrowed from the myths is an unproven assumption. This argument assumes that the myths existed first and that Genesis 1:1–2:3 borrowed from them. But Noah and his sons certainly passed the stories of the flood and creation down to subsequent generations. Such transmission is almost certain in that culture. Is it not just as likely that the myths borrowed the details of the truth but repackaged them through a process of gradual theological erosion in polytheistic dress? This process of theological corruption is aptly illustrated by Old Testament history. At the end of Joshua’s life, Israel had a good understanding of God and His Word. But throughout the period of Judges, the nation’s theological understanding eroded to the low point portrayed in Judges 17–21, even with the written Mosaic Law. Sinful men tend to fall into theological chaos the further removed they are from God’s revelatory activity. In similar fashion, the ancient Near Eastern myths are theological cubic zirconia—a cheap knockoff that looks similar in the incidental details while differing in what is most important.

Dr. Preston Mayes is professor of Old Testament at Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.



¹ Steven W. Boyd’s study of this construction, the *wayyiqtol*, concludes that there is a 99.5% probability Genesis 1:1–2:3 is historical narrative (Steven W. Boyd, “The Genre of Genesis 1:1–2:3: What Means This Text?” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury [Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008], 174–76). See also Robert McCabe’s “A Critique of the Framework Interpretation of the Creation Week,” 218–23, in the same volume.

² James K. Hoffmeier, “Genesis 1–11 as History and Theology,” in *Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither*, ed. Charles Halton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 31–32.

³ For a survey of other hermeneutical approaches to the creation account see Todd S. Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1–11,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, ed. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 131–62.

⁴ Regardless of the position taken on the creation account, a number of interpretive questions regarding Genesis 1–2 must be resolved. This article will focus only on the hermeneutical foundations of the argument. *Coming to Grips with Genesis*, cited above, contains excellent discussions of specific interpretive issues.

⁵ Bill T. Arnold and Bryan E. Beyer, eds., *Readings from the Ancient Near East* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2002), 32.

⁶ “Epic of Creation,” translated by Benjamin R. Foster (*The Context of Scripture* 1.111:391, 398–401). For a concise discussion, see Kenneth A. Mathews, *Genesis 1–11:26*, *New American Commentary* 1A (Nashville: Broadman & Holman, 1996), 119–20.

⁷ For a helpful discussion of pagan myths, see Yehezkel Kaufmann, *The Religion of Israel*, translated by Moshe Greenberg (New York: Schocken, 1960), 21–59.

⁸ Bruce K. Waltke, *An Old Testament Theology* (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2007), 202.

⁹ Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation* (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker, 2005), 55.

¹⁰ Waltke, 194.

¹¹ Waltke, 202–203.

¹² Kenton L. Sparks, “Genesis 1–11 as Ancient Historiography,” in *Genesis: History, Fiction, or Neither*, ed. Charles Halton (Grand Rapids, MI: Zondervan, 2015), 117.

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Incompatible Trajectories



Recent days have seen numerous attempts to harmonize the creation account in the Bible with the evolutionary science accepted by most of the scientific community. These attempts to harmonize creation and evolution have come primarily from the Christian community. Atheists either ignore or summarily dismiss creation (and creation science) because they view the Bible as a fairytale. They have no interest in harmonizing science with a fairytale. Christians, on the other hand, have a vested interest

in the Bible. Therefore, many want to accept both science and the Bible (dismissing neither).

Most young-earth creationists begin with the authority of Scripture. Then they proceed to evaluate scientific data in a way that is consistent with Scripture. Any element of evolutionary thought that contradicts the Bible is rejected. Most young-earth creationists are not anti-science. They see great value in the contributions that science makes to everyday life. They reject only those scientific conclusions that are not supported by a literal reading of the Bible. In this way, most young-earth creationists view the Bible and correctly interpreted scientific conclusions as compatible.

Most old-earth creationists begin with the authority of science. Then they proceed to evaluate the interpretive conclusions of the Bible made by believers. Any interpretation of the Bible that is contrary to the “facts” of science is rejected. Most old-earth creationists are not anti-Bible. They see great value in the truths of Scripture for everyday life. They reject only those interpretations of the Bible that are not supported by an evolutionary approach to science. In this way, most old-earth creationists view science and correctly interpreted Bible conclusions as compatible.

As a result, most old-earth creationists reject a literal interpretation of the creation account in the Book of Genesis. Instead, they prefer an interpretation of Genesis 1–11 that is in some way figurative. If, as scientists suggest, the earth is billions of years old, one cannot accept the six days in Genesis 1–2 as literal. This approach is championed by individuals and groups such as BioLogos. On the main page of its website, “BioLogos invites the church and the world to see the harmony between science and biblical faith as we present an evolutionary understanding of God’s creation.”¹ The president of BioLogos, Deborah Haarsma, says, “We are working to show Christians (especially Evangelicals) better ways to understand the harmony between God’s Word and God’s world—including a clear presentation of the evidence in God’s world for evolution and age, and a serious discussion of what the Bible really teaches on these topics.”² For Haarsma, it is the interpretation of the Bible that needs to change, not the interpretations of the scientific data.

In order to justify a figurative interpretation to Genesis 1–11, some claim that the early chapters of Genesis are simply a poem or myth or fable. These chapters have some spiritual purpose (to communicate a message of faith) but are not written to provide any scientific information. A more recent figurative approach to the Bible appeals to the concept of accommodation. Proponents of this view say that the Holy Spirit accommodated the revelation in Scripture to the scientific understanding of the human author at the time of writing. For example, Denis O. Lamoureux writes that when Moses spoke of the waters above the firmament in Genesis 1:7, he “believed the blue of the sky was a body of water that God made on the second day of creation. But today modern science has determined that this is a visual effect due to the scattering of short-wave light in the upper atmosphere.”³ Because Moses did not understand short-wave light, the Spirit moved him to write about a water canopy (which he could understand). Lamoureux goes on to explain, “Despite these radically different understandings of the physical work, the inerrant Message of Faith remains steadfast: the blue body/effect overhead was created by God.”⁴

Most old-earth creationists reject a literal interpretation of the creation account in the Book of Genesis.

Bible. As a case in point, consider what accepting the inherent upward trajectory of evolutionary theory does to the downward trajectory of God’s inerrant theological message.

Biblical Trajectory

The Bible presents a downward trajectory for God’s creation. God created the heavens and the earth and all that is in them and pronounced His creation “very good” (Gen. 1:31). God’s original creation was not marred by sin. It was the best it would ever be. When sin entered the human race, all creation was impacted negatively. Sickness and death came into the world, and God cursed His creation (Gen. 3). Now all creation is in bondage to corruption and is subjected to futility (Rom. 8:20–22). Because of the bondage to corruption the earth is wearing out like a garment (Heb. 1:11). God created man as a healthy, intelligent being. After sin entered the human race every aspect of man is corrupted by sin: his body, his soul, and his mind. Nothing God created is getting better. It is decaying and getting worse.

Evolutionary Trajectory

Science presents an upward trajectory for the earth and its inhabitants. Life began with single-cell creatures. Through billions of years of evolution those single-cell creatures eventually evolved into more advanced plants and creatures. Eventually, Neanderthals evolved and then primitive man. Man continued to evolve upwards into a more sophisticated social being. While scientists do not all agree on the path of evolution, the consensus is an upward path: simple to complex, primitive to advanced. Nothing that evolved is getting worse. This may be a bit of an oversimplification, but it accurately describes the overall trajectory of evolution.

Examples of Incompatibility

The biblical and evolutionary trajectories are not compatible. Creation cannot be getting better and getting worse at the same. A couple of examples will clarify this conflict.

Based on this concept of accommodation, proponents argue that every time Moses wrote something that is different than the modern scientific consensus, it was just an accommodation to Moses’ limited thinking of the day. However, it did nothing to threaten the inerrant theological message that Moses communicated via the Holy Spirit.

It is noble to claim that God’s inerrant theological message remains steadfast. However, one must consider whether adjusting the interpretation of the Bible so it harmonizes with current evolutionary consensus ever threatens the inerrant theological message of the Bible. If God’s message is changed, it does threaten (even damage) the theology of the

First, there are different views of civilization. Richard Leakey describes an evolutionary view of civilization.

For perhaps 100,000 years *Homo sapiens* were successful hunters and gatherers, living in small bands, part of larger social and political alliances. Their material worlds were surely limited, but their mythic worlds undoubtedly were rich, and these treasures passed from generation to generation. Then, between twenty thousand and ten thousand years ago, people began to organize their practical lives differently, sometimes exploiting plentiful food resources in a way that allowed less mobility, more stability, perhaps more possessions. Finally, from ten thousand years onward, food production—as against food gathering—became more common, villages sprang up, small towns, cities, city-states, and eventually nation-states. What we call civilization had arrived, founded on generations of slow cultural changes.⁵

The trajectory of evolution is upward: from primitive to civilized. And this upward trek took 100,000 years.

The Bible presents a view of civilization that is quite different. The first two people in the Bible were married (a mark of a civilized society). Their children were not hunters and gatherers. Abel was a shepherd and Cain was a farmer (Gen. 4:2). Cain's son built a city (Gen. 4:17). Genesis 4 also mentions dwelling in tents, raising livestock, playing musical instruments, and iron and bronze workers. The very first humans mentioned in the Bible are already "advanced" in their civilization. The Bible presents mankind as "civilized" from the moment he was created.

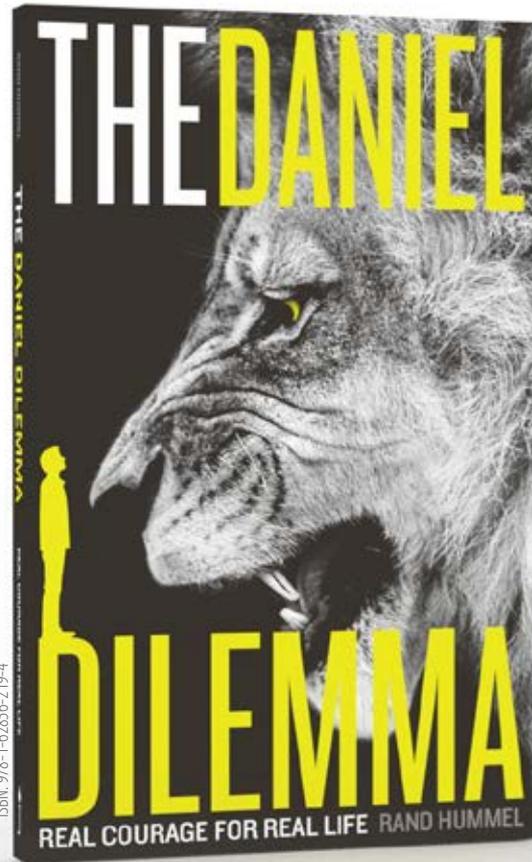
It is incompatible to believe that man spent 100,000 years before he became civilized *and* to believe that the very first men who lived were civilized. These trajectories clash. Evolution and the Bible cannot both be right. In addition, there is no accommodation here. When the Bible says that Abel was a shepherd, he knew what a shepherd was. We do not have any advanced science today that makes Moses' view of keeping sheep limited in any way.

Second, there are different views of the origin of religion. Robert Bellah, introducing a chapter entitled "Religion and Evolution," says,

Chapter 1 was about religion and ontology. It was not an effort to understand the development of religion in

the life course of the individual, though that would be a valuable undertaking; instead its purpose was to look at human development as the acquisition of a series of capacities, all of which have contributed to the formation of religions. This chapter is about religion and phylogeny, religion in deep history. When did religion begin? If we assume, as I do, that religion as defined in the Preface and Chapter 1 is confined to the genus *Homo* and perhaps even to the species *Homo sapiens*, where do that genus and species stand in relation to the

Continued on page 35



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1 Corinthians 15:20–50: Adam Is Dead

Years ago the God-Is-Dead Movement began. This theological position did not argue that God had died; it was more the idea that man had created God (or gods) in the past, and now we had become intelligent and sophisticated enough that we no longer need a god. Similarly, and sadly, for some segments of Evangelicalism, science has left us with an Adam who is merely a convenient religious symbol of God as Creator. Science has convinced many that we no longer need Adam.

In 1 Corinthians 15 Paul lays out the doctrine of the resurrection, using Adam in verses 20–26 and again in verses 45–50 as part of his theological foundation. This article is not going to examine Paul's arguments for the resurrection, but it will examine the theology that formed the foundation for his arguments.

In our churches, colleges, and seminaries we routinely teach theology like a collection of bread sticks—the doctrine of Christ lies next to the doctrine of the Bible which lies across the basket from the doctrine of sin; we take one doctrine out of the basket to examine it, study it, taste it, and the rest remain undisturbed. We understand the reason for so doing: because our finite minds can grasp only so much at one time, we tend to separate theology into its constituent elements and focus on them one at a time. That is not how the Bible presents theology, however. A bowl of spaghetti would better illustrate the biblical approach. The Bible weaves its truths through the pages of Scripture and intertwines them so much that you cannot move one strand of spaghetti without affecting numerous others. This article argues, therefore, that one cannot remove the literal Adam from Scripture without affecting other doctrines. Paul clearly demonstrates this truth in 1 Corinthians 15.

Doctrines of Inspiration and Man

One theological foundation to Paul's view of the resurrection is the doctrine of **inspiration**. In verse 45 Paul uses the word *gegraptai*, "it is written" or "it has been written and remains so to the present." He refers to the end of Genesis 2:7: "And man became a living soul." Paul is not quoting directly, for he adds the "first" to distinguish the first Adam from Christ, the "second Adam." Paul uses "it is written" over thirty times in his epistles. Each time he uses the word to initiate, support, defend, or expand an argument that he is making. In each case he assumes the truth of what he is quoting. The truth of a literal Adam, described in the opening chapters of Genesis, provides the rationale for the necessity of the Second Adam, as is shown in the following theological points.

A second theological foundation to Paul's view of the resurrection is the doctrine of **man** (verses 45–49). Paul repeats the term "earthly" (or "clayey") to emphasize the terrestrial nature of humanity. It seems very unlikely that Moses or Paul was considering whether or not Captain Kirk would find any other humans in the universe; that is not the focus of this passage. Paul is arguing that all humans are in the image of the One who was formed from the earth. The word is used only here in the New Testament. It is a word that vividly expresses the earthliness of man's nature. Because Adam is from the earth, his nature and activities are earthly. Even before the fall, man's primary duties were physical—care for the garden, eat of the fruit of his labor, and populate the earth. Only after a day of physical labor did Adam and Eve spend time with their Lord.

In addition, Paul identifies five truths about Adam in this section of the passage. First, Adam, upon the joining of the breath of life and the body formed by God, became a living soul. This separates humanity from the animal world. Second, the natural Adam came before the spiritual Adam; the incarnation of Christ was some four thousand years after the creation of Adam and Eve. Third, the first Adam was from the dust; the Second Adam was from heaven. This distinguishes Christ from humanity. While He was truly human and his humanity came long after Adam, his origin was not ultimately Adamic. He was already existent before His incarnation. Fourth, while the natural man is like the earthly man, the regenerate man is like the heavenly, Jesus Christ. All humans in their natural state are terrestrial; all believers in their spiritual state are heavenly. Finally, all people bear the image of Adam, i.e., the sinfulness that all humans have received because of the fall.

The Doctrines of Sin and Salvation

Third, Paul's view of a literal Adam was critical to his doctrine of **sin** (vv. 21, 22, 26, 49, 50). Paul argues that death came by Adam because sin came by Adam. Death is a result of sin. It appears that Adam was initially created as a mortal being. Immortality was promised if he would eat from the tree of life. Theologians routinely argue that Jesus' human body was like Adam's before the fall. Christ's body was mortal. While no human could take His life, He could sacrifice His physical body; Jesus died. So Adam's body was capable of both eternal life and death; it was his to choose which it would be. His lack of faith in and obedience to God's commands resulted in sin, which then brought death. If Adam did not exist, then sin either entered into the world through some unmentioned mechanism or was part of the original order, a part of God's evolutionary process. If so, then sin is natural, a normal part of the world. If that be true, then sin is not really sin; it is not an aberration of

what ought to be. If there is no sin, however, then we must conclude that death is not the result of sin. If death is not the result of sin, then death, as well as sin, must be a normal part of the world as God created it. Instead, however, Paul argues that death is an enemy.

Millard Erickson is representative of those who argue for the truth of creation but also the truth of evolution. "Fundamentalism stresses that God is transcendent and works in a direct or discontinuous fashion [creation]. Liberalism, on the other hand, emphasizes that God is immanent, working through natural channels [evolution]. Each view regards the other as inappropriate. Since God is both transcendent and immanent, however, both emphases should be maintained, that is, to the extent they are taught in the Bible."^{*} He proceeds to argue for long eons of evolutionary activity punctuated by God's intervention along the lines of Genesis 1, creating certain kinds of life until ultimately creating Adam and Eve (what he calls "progressive creationism"). This approach maintains the historicity of Adam and the actuality of God's specific creation of the human race. The problem with this approach, however, is that death must be seen as a normal part of this evolutionary process for the millions of years of life on earth prior to the fall of Adam.

Fourth, Paul's view of a literal Adam was essential to his doctrine of **salvation** (vv. 22, 49–50). Do we need to be saved? If there is no sin and if death is a normal part of the world, then why be saved? Paul concluded that flesh and blood, the perishable physical bodies that people receive from Adam, cannot inherit the kingdom of God, which is imperishable. This is the culmination of Paul's argument for the resurrection. God designed something greater than his creation of Adam—the resurrection of the bodies of every believer. Bodies inherited from Adam cannot inherit the kingdom of God. The final blessing of the gospel is the reception of a resurrected body.

Adam was essential to Paul's theology of the resurrection, for the truth of Adam's existence was a foundation of his doctrines of inspiration, man, sin, and salvation. Resurrection is the logical outworking of the preceding doctrines. According to the Scriptures (inspiration), a literal Adam (man) literally disobeyed God in the garden (sin) and brought about death. As a result, God in His graciousness provided a solution of the sin problem (salvation). Paul references Adam so frequently in this section of 1 Corinthians because he is foundational to the doctrine of the resur-

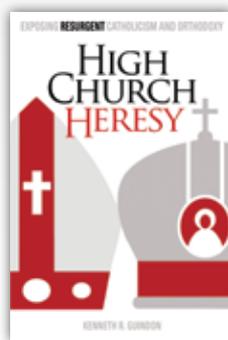
rection. If Bible-believers give up a literal Adam, they suffer theological loss. It will affect inspiration, anthropology, hamartiology, soteriology, and even the doctrine of the resurrection. Theology is integrated; one doctrine cannot be separated from the rest. So when we look at the early chapters of Genesis, we need to remember that if we give up a literal Adam, if we allow some to declare that Adam Is Dead, we give up too much of Christianity.

Dr. Larry Oats is dean and professor of Systematic Theology at Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.



^{*} Millard Erickson, *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2013), 443.

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SOUND WORDS

HOLD FAST THE FORM OF SOUND WORDS—2 TIMOTHY 1:13

First Partaker

And it came to pass, that, as he was praying in a certain place, when he ceased, one of his disciples said unto him, Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples (Luke 11:1).

One of our beloved hymn writers, Isaac Watts, once taught a series of prayer studies to a small group of young men who wanted to learn to pray. Eventually he put these lessons into print. You can still buy a nice hardback copy of them, something I heartily recommend.¹ Watts entitled his last chapter “Persuasive Arguments to Learn to Pray.” It’s easy to miss where its emphasis lies. It isn’t, “Persuasive Arguments to Pray,” but “Persuasive Arguments to **Learn** to Pray.” The accent is on our being personally persuaded of our need to learn.

Why?

Doesn’t every child of God already pray? Why would he need to be taught? Watts explained that good praying is a *piece of Christian skill*. In other words, though it is true that any believer can and does pray, that doesn’t necessarily mean that he prays well. Good praying, or what Christian writers used to call, *the gift of prayer*, is, Watts said, a *Christian skill to be learned*. I’d like to share with you one of Watts’ arguments for enrolling in the school of learning to pray. If you find it to be even half as persuasive as I did, I think that you’ll be convinced to look for help.

The Dignity of Praying

Watts’ first argument for *learning* to pray has to do with what he calls the *dignity* of prayer. What he means by this is that because of the great majesty of who God is, there is a kind of language which is the most highly appropriate for conversing with Him. That language, he

says, is the speech which the sons of God use in talking with their heavenly Father.

Now we know, and Watts knew, that God hears every prayer that we ever make, regardless of the words we use. He tells us that He hears His children even when they pray only in their hearts without making any sound at all (1 Sam. 1:13), or when the only sound they can make is a groan (Rom. 8:26). But Watts drew a helpful analogy to encourage us to want to learn to pray with spiritual maturity.

“The husbandman that laboreth must be first partaker of the fruits” (2 Tim. 2:6)

There are children who can only cry after their father and stammer out a broken word or two by which he can understand their meaning. But these are ungrown infants. The father would rather see his children advancing to manhood and occupying themselves daily with that broad and free conversation with himself which he allows and to which he graciously invites them.²

Every parent understands what Watts is talking about. My wife, Linda, and I have three daughters. Like all parents, we doted over their first words. But today it’s deeply satisfying to hear them initiate and discuss all kinds of subjects on an adult level, complete with the appropriate vocabulary, sentence structure, and insight that makes mature conversation between two people so pleasurable. As delightful as it is to remember their first infant words or the funny things that they said as children, we wouldn’t for anything want to turn the clock back and return to conversing with them in baby talk. We much prefer adult talk! There’s a great delight in being able to engage in *broad and free conversation* with our children on a more and more adult level.

The Subjects

Have you ever considered the possibility that there are divinely favored subjects that God would take great satisfaction in hearing us pray about in a spiritually grownup way? Every day, in His Word, He

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initiates communication with us about these topics in a vocabulary of His own choosing. Apart from knowing that vocabulary, we can't even grasp the subjects, let alone talk with Him about them. It isn't possible, for instance, to pray well any one of the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer without understanding the meaning and scriptural application of terms such as *hallowed, thy name, kingdom come, thy will, glory forever*. If you doubt that, try giving the Lord's Prayer to a baby Christian and ask him to explain what he's supposed to be praying about!

In addition, God talks to us about His chosen subjects in their relationships to each other. We can't really speak to Him with any maturity apart from knowing something about those as well.

For instance, how could we possibly pray well about the coming of His kingdom apart from knowing something about its relationship to this present Church Age? Or to the nation Israel? Or to the coming Tribulation and the eternal state?

How many prayers must there be about this one subject, God's kingdom, which are going unanswered for the simple reason that those praying are unwittingly talking to God unscripturally? They're sincere. They may even know the right terms. But nevertheless, they know not what they pray. They pray for things that God could never answer because they aren't really the things He's talking about. They may be the very opposite!

There is a dignity to prayer because of whom we are speaking to and because of the subjects about which we are praying. And being able to speak with the Lord about those in completely accurate terms is a learned behavior.

Some Room for Growth

Watts was right, wasn't he? There is a dignity to prayer because of whom we are speaking to and because of the subjects about which we are praying. And being able to speak with the Lord about those in completely accurate terms is a learned behavior. Just like knowing how to study the Bible, or teaching a Sunday school lesson, or evangelizing the lost.

However, don't conclude that you haven't ever prayed correctly just because you've never made some kind of formal study of how to do it. That, of course, isn't true. But you probably have some room for growth. John's disciples did. So did the apostles.

*Prayer is so great and necessary a part of religion that every degree of assistance in it will always be acceptable to pious minds.*³

We need to *learn* to pray. Well, what is prayer? For

centuries an excellent answer to this question has been memorized by children schooled in various catechisms, especially the *Westminster Shorter Catechism*.⁴ It would be impossible to say how many young people have learned this answer, but certainly they would number in the millions. That staggering fact alone warrants our considering it.

Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will, in the name of Christ, with confession of our sins, and thankful acknowledgment of His mercies.⁵

You can see from the way the commas divide them that there are five parts to that definition. The *Larger Catechism*, done a year later (1648) adds a sixth, *by the help of His Spirit*.⁶ For now we'll look at just the first part. It's the definition's core, its heart. *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God*. That's simple. Say it to yourself a couple of times. *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God*.

Now that may not sound quite right. We can immediately think of several other things that we're supposed to do in prayer besides requesting our desires. But believe it or not, the Lord Himself taught that praying is primarily asking. Let me give you four confirmations of that.

(1) ***The Lord's Prayer***. When the disciples asked, *Lord, teach us to pray*, Christ responded, *When you pray, say. . . . Say what? What He taught us to say is what we now call "The Lord's Prayer."* Let's just go ahead and pray it from memory out loud right now. *Our Father, which art in Heaven. . . .*

What did we just pray? Think about it. We mainly prayed requests. We *asked* for things. That's because the Lord's Prayer consists almost entirely of petitions. Our Lord gave five on this occasion, but earlier He had included still another one when He taught this same prayer in the Sermon on the Mount (see Matt. 6:9–13). The point is that when Christ told people what to say when they prayed, He taught them to fill their praying with asking.

(2) ***The Lord's Sermon on the Mount***. That praying is primarily asking is also confirmed by what our Lord taught about prayer later in that same sermon (Matt. 7:7–11). I've highlighted the relevant terms in **bold**.

Ask, and it shall be given you; **seek**, and ye shall find; **knock**, and it shall be opened unto you: For every one that **asketh** receiveth; and he that **seeketh** findeth; and to him that **knocketh** it shall be opened. Or what man is there of you, whom if his son **ask** bread, will he give him a stone? Or if he **ask** a fish, will he give him a serpent? If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your Father which is in heaven give good things to them that **ask** him?

Notice the conspicuous absence of any other kinds of praying. Hearing our Lord talk about it here, you'd go away thinking that praying is entirely a matter of asking.

(3) *The Lord's Illustrations.* Here's another confirmation to think about: Christ's illustrations. To take just one,⁷ He portrayed prayer as being like a needy someone pounding doggedly upon a sleepy friend's door, concluding

I say unto you, Though he will not rise and give him, because he is his friend, yet because of his importunity he will rise and give him as many as he needeth. And I say unto you, **Ask**, and it shall be given you (Luke 11:8–9).

The early church father Augustine drew upon this illustration in a rather shrewd way in a friendly letter to a widow named Proba. He asked her rhetorically, *If one who was asleep is constrained to give even in spite of himself . . . how much more will he who never sleeps give, who rouses us from sleep that we may ask from him?*⁸

You might need to read that again. Augustine is saying that the way things really are is the reverse of the Lord's parable. God isn't asleep and reluctant to give. We are asleep and failing to ask! God is the one shouting for us to wake up! Why? To arouse us to ask!

But there's even more that our Lord said to urge our asking. He used verbs of repeated action. The marginal notes of some versions call this to our attention by translating, *Keep asking . . . keep seeking . . . keep knocking* (Matt. 7:7; Luke 11:9). Don't ask just once; keep it up!

(4) *The Lord's Upper Room Discourse.* Maybe you're still having trouble feeling right about this, that at its core prayer is *an offering up of our desires*. But for a fourth confirmation, look at what our Lord taught in His only other sermon addressing prayer at any length. We call it the "Upper Room Discourse" (John 14–16). In those parts of the discourse where Jesus teaches something about prayer, He uses the word *ask* eight times (14:13, 14; 15:7, 16; 16:23, 24 [twice], 26). Here are the first two occurrences.

And whatsoever ye shall **ask** in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If ye shall **ask** any thing in my name, I will do it.

Notice the process. (1) We ask, and (2) Christ gives, (3) so that *the Father may be glorified*. So our constant asking isn't wrong. In fact, it ignites the warm process by which our Heavenly Father is glorified. How important is that? The *Westminster Shorter Catechism* begins famously, *Man's chief end is to glorify God*. If that's our chief end, then much asking so that our Heavenly Father gets much glory sounds right!

You'd probably be encouraged by reading the rest of those Upper Room Discourse verses on prayer. Perhaps you could underline each of them so that you'll be reminded to start **asking** every time you reread those chapters. You and I need that encouragement. It's not only all right with the Lord for us to fill our prayers with asking; it's what He commanded, illustrated, and constantly encouraged. According to Him, prayer is largely *asking*!

But what kinds of desires are we permitted to offer up? We know, of course, that we should not request anything unscriptural. If His Word already forbids something, the answer is *no*! But what about desires that aren't absolutely wrong? Maybe they're just a bit self-serving or not entirely wise. Here's a frightening fact: God does sometimes answer these with a *yes*. Did you know that God may yield to you something that you really shouldn't be asking for?

Sobering Examples

For instance, during their early months in the wilderness, the Israelites complained and wept because they were bored with manna. So God gave them meat. And He gave it in no ordinary way (Num. 11:31–32). He gave it miraculously! They, no doubt, took this for the proof that their asking was approved. After all, look at the miracle!

But here is what was really going on. They *lusted exceedingly in the wilderness, and tempted God in the desert. And he gave them their request; but sent leanness into their soul* (Ps. 106:14–15).

Here's another example. The elders of Israel came to Samuel and demanded a king. Samuel was displeased, but he took the matter to the Lord, and the Lord replied revealingly, *They have rejected me*. But do you know what God told Samuel to do? He said to *hearken unto their voice* (1 Sam. 8:9), and then God gave them Saul.

Notice the process. (1) We ask, and (2) Christ gives, (3) so that the Father may be glorified. So our constant asking isn't wrong. In fact, it ignites the warm process by which our Heavenly Father is glorified.

God may even grant Satan's requests, malicious and vicious though they are (Job 1:11–12; 2:5–6), or those of demons who are conniving only mayhem and terror (Luke 8:33).

Undoubtedly it's examples like these that compelled the Westminster divines to add an immediate, critical qualifier to their definition of prayer. *Prayer is an offering up of our desires unto God, for things agreeable to His will*. If we are scriptural, selfless, and wise, the will of our Heavenly Father must be the intentional winnower of any desires which we're thinking about offering up to Him.

Luther's Counsel

That's why the magisterial German reformer Martin Luther (1483–1546) counseled his barber the way he did. Peter Beskendorf, the town's master barber, had asked for some elementary help with praying. Luther

responded kindly with a thirty-four page book that has come down through history as one of the world's classics on prayer. It's entitled *A Simple Way to Pray*.⁹

Luther begins, *I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I!* The bulk of what he then relates consists of running examples of how he prayed over each one of the Ten Commandments or through each of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer. For instance, he encouraged Peter to pray, *Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven*, and then to say,

O dear Lord, God and Father, thou knowest that the world, if it cannot destroy thy name or root out thy kingdom, is busy day and night with wicked tricks and schemes, strange conspiracies and intrigue, huddling together in secret counsel, giving mutual encouragement and support, raging and threatening and going about with every evil intention to destroy thy name, word, kingdom, and children. Therefore, dear Lord, God and Father, convert them and defend us. Convert those who have yet to acknowledge thy good will that they with us, and with them may obey thy will and for thy sake gladly, patiently, and joyously bear every evil, cross, and adversity, and thereby acknowledge, test, and experience thy benign, gracious, and perfect will. But defend us against those who in their rage, fury, hate, threats, and evil desires do not cease to do us harm. Make their wicked schemes, tricks, and devices to come to nothing, so that these may be turned against them, as we sing in Psalm 7[:16].

Luther begins, I will tell you as best I can what I do personally when I pray. May our dear Lord grant to you and to everybody to do it better than I! The bulk of what he then relates consists of running examples of how he prayed over each one of the Ten Commandments or through each of the petitions in the Lord's Prayer.

With some characteristic humor, Luther explained that he wasn't suggesting that Peter pray these words mindlessly or even verbatim. In fact, he told Peter that good praying was like good barbering. *A good and attentive barber keeps his thoughts, attention, and eyes on the razor and hair. . . . If he wants to engage in too much conversation or let his mind wander or look somewhere else, he is likely to cut his customer's mouth, nose, or even his throat. (!)*

Dr. Mark Minnick serves as senior pastor at Mount Calvary Baptist Church in Greenville, South Carolina. To access Dr. Minnick's sermons, go to mountcalvarybaptist.org/pages/sermons.

Therefore, Luther asked, *How much more does prayer call for concentration . . . ?* Nevertheless, he urged that his barber, and all God's people, pray the Lord's Prayer constantly. Not simply reciting its petitions, but enlarging upon them with ever-increasing spiritual understanding. Why?

Why Pray the Lord's Prayer

Many years before he advised Peter about praying the Lord's Prayer, Luther published a series of sermons on it. Among his reasons, he included the observation that it was the Lord Himself who taught this prayer. *If he, the good and faithful Teacher, had known a better one, he would surely have taught us that too.*

Luther hastened to clarify, *This should not be misunderstood to mean that all other prayers which do not contain these words are worthless.* After all, the Bible itself contains hundreds of prayers (especially in Psalms) which don't use the exact words of the Lord's Prayer. But, Luther said (and here's the key to understanding the unique and irreplaceable value of the Lord's Prayer), *What we do mean to say is that all other prayers that do not understand and express the content and meaning of this one are untrustworthy.*¹⁰

That may be a new thought to us. But could we ask things any more agreeable to His will than the six petitions of the Lord's Prayer? ☞

¹ Isaac Watts, *A Guide to Prayer* (Edinburgh: Banner of Truth, 2001).

² Watts, 169.

³ Watts, 1.

⁴ This document was printed in 1647 by the theologians and pastors who made up the famous Westminster Assembly appointed by Parliament to reform the doctrines and practices of the Church of England. Their work, though Presbyterian in its ecclesiology and presentation of the ordinances, was nevertheless foundational to Baptist and Congregational catechisms. The earliest Particular Baptist Confession, known as the *London Confession*, predates the Westminster documents. But it contained no definition of prayer in either its first (1644) or second (1646) editions. Nor did the first General Baptist Confession (1651). It was not until the Baptist Catechism of 1677, composed by the London Baptist Benjamin Keach, that there is a definition of prayer proposed in a Baptist confession or catechism. In answer to Question 109, *What is prayer?* Keach repeats the *Westminster Shorter Catechism's* definition almost verbatim.

⁵ In answer to Question 98, *What is prayer?*

⁶ In answer to Question 178.

⁷ This is the story of the unkind friend. For the same focus upon asking, see also Christ's stories of the unnatural father (Luke 11:11–13) and the unjust judge (Luke 18:1–8).

⁸ Letter CXXX.

⁹ "A Simple Way to Pray," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 43, ed. Carl J. Schindler (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1968).

¹⁰ "An Exposition of the Lord's Prayer for Simple Laymen," *Luther's Works*, Vol. 42, ed. Martin O. Dietrich (Philadelphia: Fortress Press, 1969), 21.

Bring . . . the Books

A Labor of Love, Puritan Pastoral Priorities by J. Stephen Yuille

George Swinnock (1627–73), a faithful minister, educated at Oxford and Cambridge, was part of the Great Ejection of 1662. Swinnock wrote the book *The Christian Man's Calling* in which he articulated sixteen wishes or prayers for the pastor.

Dr. J. Stephen Yuille, in his book *A Labor of Love, Puritan Pastoral Priorities*, has taken the work of Swinnock and dissected it into sixteen brief chapters (Part 1) on pastoral duties, and a sermon (Part 2) entitled *A Pastor's Farewell* to his church. With a doctorate from London School of Theology, Yuille is the pastor of Grace Community Church in Glen Rose, Texas, and serves as associate professor of Biblical Spirituality at the Southern Baptist Theological Seminary in Louisville, Kentucky. Dr. Yuille writes in his introduction, "I've written this book out of concern for the church's clouded perception of pastoral ministry. This condition has arisen—at least in part—from our failure to differentiate between success and excellence." Here's a sampling of the sixteen pastoral priorities, each beginning with a quote from Swinnock.

A Sincere Suitor. "I wish that the spring of my actions, and the principle of my work, might be love for my Master and not the expectation of temporal reward. Let me not, through covetousness, turn inestimable souls into mere merchandise." We must build our people spiritually, not use them to build church programs. We are not to use our position to draw attention to ourselves or use our pulpits to promote ourselves in the assembly or among our fellow pastors.

A Tender Mother. "I desire to be tenderly disposed toward all the souls under my charge. . . . Make me such a tender and affectionate mother that I patiently bear their offences. . . . May they know that my anger against their sins proceeds from a tender love for their souls." This is the attitude that the apostle Paul had toward those who were under his ministry (1 Thess. 2:7–8). The minister must not be critical of his flock or think of himself as spiritually superior, but love them tenderly like a mother.

A Ceaseless Intercessor. "I wish that my people might have so deep a share in my affection that I always make mention of them in my prayers." There are many good things for us to do—study, preach, teach, organize and administrate—but prayer must be preeminent (Acts 6:4). Oh, that our churches would have praying ministers! Brethren, do we pray earnestly and faithfully for our people?

A Powerful Example. "May I never direct others in the right way, while failing to walk in it O that I might preach as powerfully with my life as with my lips. May I avoid those things, although lawful, that will prove a hindrance to others Lord, enable me to be

an example of good works to my people (Titus 2:7)." What kind of example are we to our church? Are we loving, tender, kind, patient, accepting and longsuffering with our flock even as we deal with their problems, failings, and sins?

“. . . when
thou comest,
bring with thee
. . . the books”
(2 Tim. 4:13)

A Skilled Physician. "Since I am a steward of the mysteries of Christ, I wish that I might be true to the souls of my people. . . . Although my patients might become angry when I probe their infected wounds, they will thank me when they recover. If I am afraid to tell people about their sins, I murder their souls." As physicians of souls, whether visiting in homes or in the pulpit, we are to warn, exhort, and comfort (Ezek. 3:18; 2 Tim. 2:24–26). With the Word of God, we expose the heinous nature of sin coupled with God's abounding grace that promises forgiveness and cleansing from sin and its guilt.

A Diligent Student. "Surely, if anyone should study hard, read hard, and pray hard, it should be those who feed God's children." Dr. Yuille writes, "As pastors, this is crucial. In the first place, we don't devote ourselves to Scripture in order to prepare sermons and write books or teach classes. We devote ourselves to Scripture in order to grow. . . . Our ministries are shaped by the condition of our hearts. Whatever rules our hearts controls our ministries." Diligent students not only exegete carefully but also pray consistently over the Scriptures.

A Humble Instrument. "Oh, that I might never be so ungrateful as to dishonor Him by thinking of myself above what is proper. May all my services magnify His name and glorify His praise." Are we as humble as we ought to be? Arrogant preachers are a terrible example to the church: "Not a novice, lest being lifted up with pride he fall into the condemnation of the devil" (1 Tim. 3:6).

Swinnock's farewell sermon, based on Acts 20:32, shows us how we should leave our church, whether we are called to minister elsewhere or to retire. We must give our people to God and His care. Doing so keeps us from meddling in the affairs of the church after we have left. God will care for them through their new pastor.

Men, I would that we might be pastors of deep piety who pray often, study and meditate deeply on the Scriptures, and preach with the Holy Spirit's conviction. Whether you are a seminary student looking forward to your first pastorate, a young preacher starting out, or a thirty-year veteran, this book will impact your life spiritually, equip you to be a true man of God, and help you to labor among your flock in love. ☞

Tony Muniz has pastored in Ohio and South Carolina, and since 2014 he has ministered at Ridge Baptist Church in Lubec, Maine.

Genesis 2:5–6 is a difficult and controversial text. Critical scholars have claimed that these verses begin a second creation account that conflicts with the first. They say Genesis 2:5 teaches that no plants existed at the time that mankind was created, contradicting Genesis 1:11–13, which teaches that the plants were created on the third day. Some old-earth creationists argue that these verses teach that the creation of man occurred long after the creation of the earth. According to this view man was created at the end of the dry season when a mist (understood as a rain cloud) was forming. They claim a functional hydrological cycle, with dry seasons and wet seasons, was already in place before the creation of man. Placing the creation of man prior to the coming of the rainy season was a polemic against Baal worship. It showed that Yahweh was in control of such matters, not Baal.¹

A better reading is that Moses moved from the broad creation account of Genesis 1 to a more specific account of the creation and placement of man within the world beginning with 2:4. Thus Moses is not saying in chapter 2 that no plant life existed on the earth before the creation of man. He is focused in on a particular land (the Hebrew word *'erets* can be translated either “earth” or “land”; “land” fits this context). So Moses is saying that in a particular land the kind of plants that need to be cultivated by a farmer were not yet growing.

Two reasons are given for why these plants are not growing in this land. First, God has not made it rain there. This could indicate that this will be the kind of land that does not receive much rainfall. Second, there is no man to work the ground. These two reasons raise a conundrum: Why is lack of rain given as the reason that these certain plants have not yet sprung up (2:5) given that the *'ed* “watered the whole face of the ground” (2:6)?

Answering this conundrum involves determining the nature of the *'ed*. This Hebrew word occurs only in Genesis 2:6 and Job 36:27. In both passages, however, different translations of the word are possible.² The old-earth creationists noted above argue forcefully for the translation “mist” or “cloud.” But the ancient translations favor the understanding that the *'ed* is water that springs from the earth. E. J. Young notes that two Greek translations of the Old Testament read *pēgē* (“fountain”) and *epiblusmos* (a “gushing forth”). The Latin Vulgate uses the word *fons* (“fountain”), and the Syriac is similar.³ Research in Semitic languages similar to Hebrew confirms these translations.⁴ Finally, it is worth noting that verse 5 says the *'ed* waters the ground and verse 10 says the river from Eden waters the Garden.

If this data is pointing us in the right direction,

the *'ed* is water that springs from the earth. Since Genesis 2:5 says that it “watered the whole face of the ground,” Moses may well be describing a river that gushes from the ground and inundates the land. For this inundation to be beneficial for the plants mentioned in 2:5, the inundation must be managed. This is why two reasons are given for certain kinds of plants not growing in that land. First, this is the kind of land which is watered by inundation rather than rainfall. Second, a man is needed to manage the inundation.

This interpretation has the advantage of explaining why lack of rain and lack of a man are reasons why certain types of plants are not growing in a land that has the entire surface of the ground watered. In addition, with this interpretation Genesis 2 can be understood as an expansion on the climax of Genesis 1, namely, verses 26–30. The first part of chapter 2, verses 4–16, deals largely with the rule that mankind is to exercise over the earth. This begins with managing the Garden and cultivating plants (2:4–8). In addition, the same river that waters the Garden also provides highways into the lands beyond Eden. These lands have other resources that that humans will harness to extend their rule over creation. The latter part of the chapter, verses 18–25, focuses more on the need for a helper who will not only aid in wise rule over the earth but who will also enable the fulfillment of the blessing to be fruitful and multiply. At the center of the chapter, verses 15–17, we have a command that will test whether or not man will be blessed by ruling the earth under God or whether he will be cursed for rebelling against God.

This is a difficult passage, not least because several words can bear different meanings. But this interpretation provides a plausible alternative to interpretations that doubt the historicity of the creation account. What is more, it shows a greater cohesion between Genesis 1 and 2 and within Genesis 2 that both of these other interpretations miss. ☞

“Rightly
dividing
the Word
of Truth”
(2 Tim. 2:15)

¹ The two main proponents of this view are Mark D. Futato and C. John Collins.

² Job 36:27 could refer to rain returning to streams or rivers (*'ed*) (Elmer B. Smick, “Job,” in *Expositor's Bible Commentary*, ed. Frank E. Gaebelein [Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1988], 4:1026).

³ E. J. Young, “The Days of Genesis: First Article,” *Westminster Theological Journal* 25, no. 1 (November 1962): 20, n. 50.

⁴ David T. Tsumura, “Genesis and Ancient Near Eastern Stories of Creation and Flood: An Introduction Part II,” 9, no. 2, *Bible and Spade* (Winter 1996): 37.

Author's Note: The July/August 1998 issue of *FrontLine* included an article entitled "Reclaiming the Lord's Day for the Lord." This edition of *Windows* features illustrations on this same subject, compiled to aid the pastor in restoring for his people the scriptural view of the Lord's Day reflected by previous Christian generations, who referred to it as "the soul's market day."

Perversion of God's Intent

Unquestionably, it is possible to skew Christian observance of the Lord's Day into a legalistic distortion of God's intent. This is what Jewish Rabbinism did to the Sabbath. In the Babylonian Talmud there are twenty-four chapters (156 double-column pages) enumerating and discussing possible cases of violating the prohibition against working on the Sabbath. The rabbis catalog thirty-nine categories of work which must not be done on the Sabbath (sowing, plowing, reaping, sifting, baking, building, etc.). These categories are called "fathers." Listed under the "fathers" are hundreds of "descendants," or applications which must not be violated. For instance, a radish could be dipped in salt on the Sabbath, but it must not be left in the salt too long, since this would make it pickle. No one was to spit on the ground on the Sabbath, lest he be guilty of watering a seed. And if a woman spilled water on her dress, she could shake the garment but not wring it out lest she violate the law against washing clothes on the Sabbath (Alfred Edersheim, *The Life and Times of Jesus the Messiah*, Appendix XVII).

It was this kind of perversion that Martin Luther preached against when he said, "If anywhere anyone sets up its observance on a Jewish foundation, then I order you to work on it, to ride on it, to dance on it, to feast on it, to do anything that shall remove this encroachment on Christian liberty" (quoted in *From Sabbath to Lord's Day*, D. A. Carson, ed., p. 314).

But as the Puritan James Janeway warned, "To argue from mercy to sin is the devil's logic" (I.D.E. Thomas, ed., *A Puritan Golden Treasury*, p. 168). Charles Haddon Spurgeon warned against this perverse logic when he told of a traveler who encountered on the road a poor man in distress. Although having but seven shillings himself, the exceedingly generous traveler gave the poor man six. But when the wretch had scrambled to his feet, he followed his benefactor to knock him down and steal the seventh shilling from him. "How many do this!" Spurgeon exclaimed. "The Sabbath is their day for sport, for amusement, for anything but the service of God. They rob God of His day, though it be but one in seven. This is base unthankfulness" (*Metropolitan Tabernacle Pulpit*, Vol. 38, pp. 245–46). The

point is, the New Testament explicitly designates this day as "The Lord's Day."

Robbery of God's Intent

In contemporary American culture, Sunday is the great day of hedonism. The malls are packed, grocery stores are jammed, sporting stadiums are bursting, and churches have accommodated the feverish devotion to pleasure by holding Saturday-night and early-Sunday-morning services. Even men who are not Fundamentalists are disturbed by the degree to which Christians have been diverted away from the Lord on the Lord's Day.

For instance, James Montgomery Boice relates a little-known fact about the bombing of the Pacific Fleet that claimed 2403 young lives. After the defeat of Japan in 1945, General Douglas MacArthur confiscated the archives of the Japanese War Department. It was discovered that in the years prior to the war, the Japanese had sent professors to the United States to study our national character to determine at what point we would be most vulnerable to attack. Their reports judged that our guard would be the lowest on a Sunday morning following a Friday on which both the Army and the Navy had a payday. Consequently, the Japanese launched their attack on Pearl Harbor early Sunday morning, December 7, 1941. The day intended by God to be for our blessing had become a national hangover, and God turned this former blessing into a curse. That weekend at Pearl Harbor was a debauch of vast proportions, leaving us unprepared and unable to meet the attack of the enemy (*Romans*, Vol. 3, pp. 1317–18).

Again, R. Kent Hughes, pastor of College Church in Wheaton, Illinois, and noted Evangelical author, writes,

Here I am compelled to say that there is no better way to erase worship than to turn on the TV when you walk in the house after church. Sunday afternoon football, and sports in general, with the incessant beer commercials and inane chatter, is a sure-fire way to flatten out one's spiritual brain waves.

And the whole family will suffer—"You want daddy to look at your Sunday school paper? In a moment, son, . . . at half-time maybe." Men, if you're the kind who sits in church fretting because you've already missed the first quarter of the game and wondering when the preacher is going to end, you will rarely get anything out of the service!

"To every preacher of righteousness as well as to Noah, wisdom gives the command, 'A window shalt thou make in the ark.'"

Charles Spurgeon

Indeed, the cultivation and preservation of the spiritual benefits of the Lord's Day demands thoughtful discipline and sacrifice (*Disciplines of Grace*, p. 83).

Observance of God's Intent

Lyman Stewart, president of the Union Oil company, and his brother, Milton, paid for the publishing and free distribution in 1909 of twelve volumes titled *The Fundamentals*. This classic work included an article titled "Why Save the Lord's Day?" The writer, Rev. Daniel Hoffman Martin, used an interesting analogy to explain the difference between the Old and New Testament observances of the Sabbath and the Lord's Day:

Jesus rescued the Sabbath from its burial under a mass of ceremonialism, and revealed its true spirit and meaning. Jesus did for the Sabbath what a skipper does for his ship, when she comes laboring into port, unable to make headway, because her hull is covered with barnacles. He puts her into drydock, and scrapes off the barnacles. He does not scuttle the ship. So our Lord does not repeal nor annul the Sabbath law when He strips it of the intolerable burdens which the ceremonialists had heaped upon it.

George Herbert, the seventeenth-century English poet, expressed in rhyme the Christian spirit towards the anticipated blessings of the Lord's Day when he wrote:

Sundaies observe:
think when the bells do chime,
'Tis angels musick;
therefore come not late.
God then deals blessings:
If a king did so,
Who would not haste,
nay give, to see the show?
("The Church Porch," lines 388–90)

Herbert was reflecting the view of the early Christian church, which employed the Lord's Day for gathering, giving, and serving. Justin Martyr (AD 100–165), one of the earliest noncanonical Christian writers, explained the practices of the early Christian church in a letter to the emperor, Antonius Pius, about AD 152.

Upon the day called Sunday all who live in cities or in the country gather together in one place, and the memoirs of the apostles or the writings of the prophets are read. . . . Then, when the reader has ceased, the president verbally instructs and exhorts to the imitation of these good things. Then we all rise together and pray. . . . And those who are well-to-do and willing, give what each thinks fit; and what is collected is deposited with the president, who succours the orphans and widows, and those who through

sickness or any other cause are in want, and those who are in bonds and the strangers sojourning among us, and in a word takes care of all who are in need. But Sunday is the day on which we all hold our common assembly because it is the 1st day on which God, having wrought a change in the darkness and matter, made the world; and Jesus Christ our Savior on the same day rose from the dead (*I Apology*, 67:7).

It was partly owing to their desire to observe the Lord's Day in this way that the Pilgrims ventured out upon the Atlantic in 1620 to settle on these American shores. Years later, D. L. Moody warned, "You show me a nation that has given up the Sabbath, and I will show you a nation that has got the seed of decay" (*12,000 Religious Quotations*, Frank S. Mead, ed., p. 389). And Daniel Webster wrote, "Sunday is nature's law as well as God's. No individual or nation habitually disregarding it has failed to fall upon disaster and grief" (*Ibid.*, p. 390).

What a difference it would make if Christian fathers would exhibit the kind of spirit on the Lord's Day that John Paton, pioneer missionary to the New Hebrides, remembers his father showing in their godly Scottish home.

Oh, I can remember those happy Sabbath evenings . . . a holy, happy, entirely human day for a Christian father, mother, and children to spend. How my father would parade across and across our flag-floor, telling over the substance of the day's sermons. . . . He would entice us to help him to recall some idea or other, praising us when we got the length of "taking notes" and reading them over on our return; how he would turn the talk ever so naturally to some Bible story or some Martyr reminiscence, or some happy allusion to the "Pilgrim's Progress"! . . . There were eleven of us brought up in a home like that; and never one of the eleven, boy or girl, man or woman, has been heard, or ever will be heard, saying that Sabbath was dull or wearisome for us, or suggesting that we have heard of or seen any way more likely than that for making the Day of the Lord bright and blessed alike for parents and for children (*John G. Paton*, by John Paton, p. 17). 

*"I was in the Spirit on
the Lord's day"*

Revelation 1:10

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Science and the scientific method do support creation, but can never either prove creation or disprove evolution. . . . The Bible is explicitly clear on these issues, however.
—Henry M. Morris

So let no one think that there is anything allegorical in the works of the six days. No one can rightly say that the things pertaining to these days were symbolic.
—Ephrem the Syrian (ca. AD 306–373)

It may however be safely asserted, that whoever professedly, before men, disbelieves the inspiration of any part of Revelation, disbelieves, in the sight of God, its inspiration altogether.
—Henry Cole

Nor does the sacred history written by Moses cover any more than six thousand years. . . . Greek history scarcely contains the history of two thousand years.
—Francis Turretin, 1679

Evolution [is] a theory universally accepted not because it can be proven by logically coherent evidence to be true, but because the only alternative, special creation, is clearly incredible.—D.M.S. Watson, (biased) biologist

The fact is that scientists are not really as objective and dispassionate in their work as they would like you to think. Most scientists just get their ideas about how the world works not through rigorously logical processes but through hunches and wild guesses. As individuals, they often come to believe something to be true long before they assemble the hard evidence that will convince somebody else that it is.
—Boyce Rensberger, antirevolutionist science writer

I fully agree with your comments about the lack of direct illustration of evolutionary transitions in my book. If I knew of any, fossil or living, I would certainly have included them. . . . I will lay it on the line—there is not one such fossil for which one could make a watertight argument.

—Dr. Colin Patterson, paleontologist, British Museum, author of *Evolution*

A bicycle thus may be a conceptual precursor to a motorcycle, but it is not a physical one. Darwinian evolution requires physical precursors.
—Michael J. Behe

Linguists tell us that languages get more and more complex the farther back they trace them. The older (“more primitive”) a language is, the more complex it appears to be. This is powerful evidence against evolution.
—Jobe Martin

There is a total absence of partially inclusive or intermediate classes, and therefore none of the groups traditionally cited by evolutionary biologists as intermediate gives even the slightest hint of a supposedly transitional character.
—Michael Denton, PhD

Evolution seems to be going in reverse as you look at the ability of human babies to survive, compared to the primates. Human babies are totally helpless at birth and for months afterward. Baby apes are ready to run to safety or climb onto their mother’s back for a ride soon after birth.
—Jobe Martin

Compiled by Dr. David Atkinson, pastor of Dyer Baptist Church, Dyer, Indiana.

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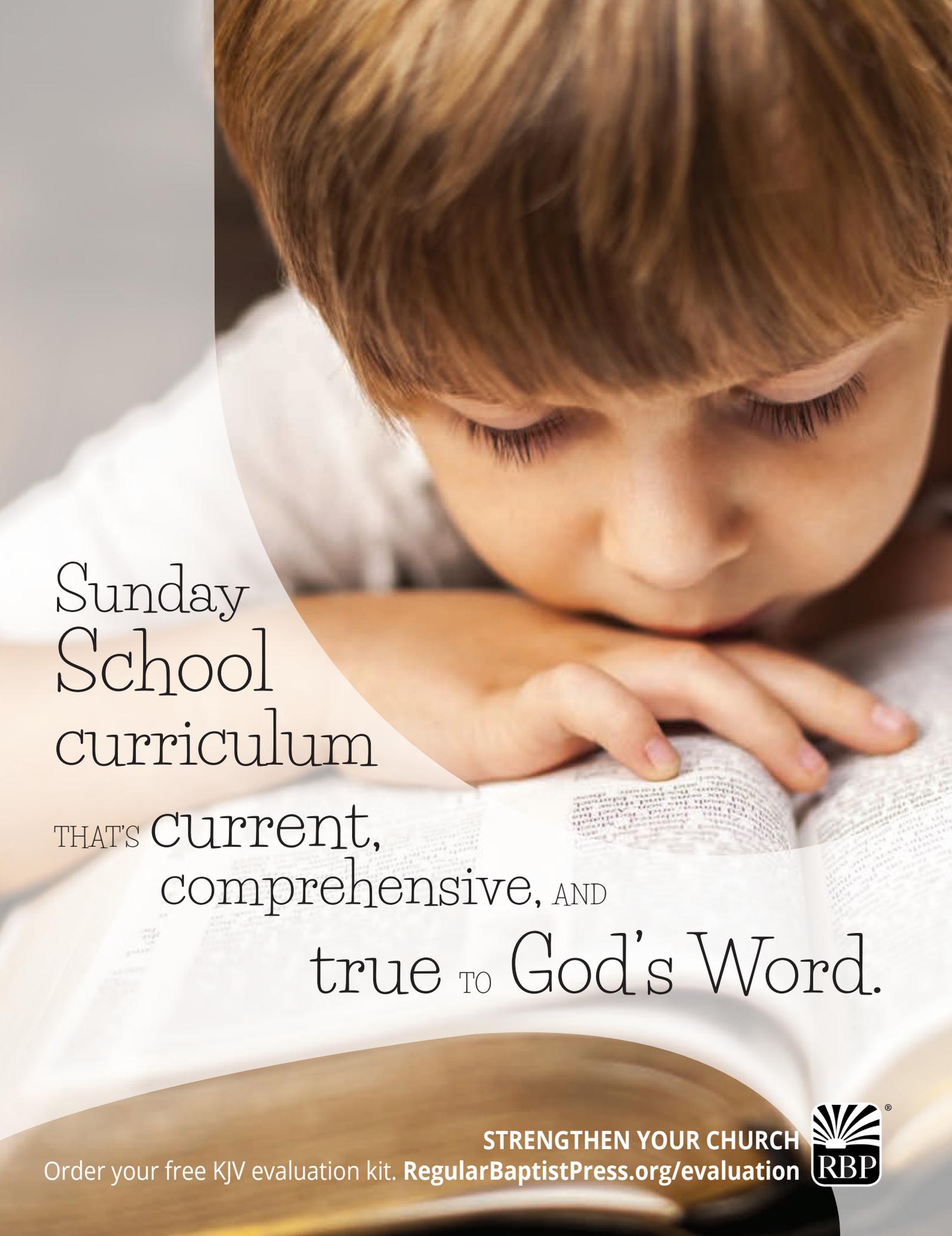
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Written and Compiled by Dr. Layton Talbert

HIS GRACE, KING DAVID, MEETS

The conquest and establishment of Jerusalem as the capital (5:1–5) came in the first decade of David’s reign, after his first seven and a half years in Hebron. The building of the royal palace (with the generous help of King Hiram of Syria) in Jerusalem and the bringing of the ark into Jerusalem appear to occur in the last decade of his reign. Of even greater importance than these events, however, was the covenantal relationship God established with David.

God Grants David a Perpetual Dynasty

The Setting

Chapter 7 carries the reader into a defining moment not only in the history of David’s reign but in the history of the Davidic dynasty, of Israel’s history, and of world history. The setting is while David “sat in his house, and the LORD had given him rest round about from all his enemies” (7:1). This appears to be the “house of cedar” that Hiram had built for him; meanwhile, God’s ark still dwells in a tent. David wants to remedy that incongruity (7:2). Nathan the prophet urges the king to act on his noble desires, for God was surely with him and would prosper his plans (7:3). You’d think a godly, spiritually minded prophet would have the Lord’s mind about such a momentous decision, but God came to Nathan that night and said He had other plans in mind (7:4ff.).

Sometimes there’s a big difference between godly counsel and counsel from God. It’s one thing to get godly counsel; I don’t want to say anything to diminish the value and appropriateness of that. God certainly uses that in directing His people. But it may be something else entirely to get counsel from God. David still gets the godly counsel through Nathan, but Nathan has had to alter his counsel to be in keeping with what God subsequently made clear to him.

God’s Covenant

Second Samuel 7 records one of the most important covenants in all the Bible. Interestingly, the word “covenant” never appears in this chapter, yet no one disputes that that is exactly what is going on here.

There are different kinds of covenants. One class is called a *parity treaty*, which can be either bilateral (a conditional agreement between equals, such as the one between Jacob and Laban) or unilateral (a conditional agreement between unequals and imposed by the superior, such as the Mosaic Covenant). But another class of treaty is known as a *royal grant*—“a disposition by a superior to an underling on no other ground than the good will of the benefac-

tor” (e.g., the Abrahamic Covenant). This kind of treaty “was fundamentally a matter of grace in its bestowal and perpetuation” (Merrill, *Old Testament Theology*, 435).

This Davidic Covenant is a royal grant. Read 7:5–17 and see if you can pick out the leading features—the central topic, rationale, and promise—of this covenant.

Central Topic—*a house* (7:5, 6, 7, 11, 13). This is something of a play on words; David wanted to build a house (a temple) for God, but God instead says that *He* will build a *house* (a dynasty) for *David* (7:5, 11). You can see this focus on the same topic in David’s reaction (7:18–29).

Central Rationale—*God’s attributes*. In explaining His reason for establishing this covenant, God actually displays two radically paradoxical attributes. To begin with, God explains, He doesn’t *need* a house (7:5–7). Moreover, David didn’t choose God, God chose him (7:8). What’s more, God is the one who has favored, protected, and blessed David (7:9) and who will appoint a permanent place for His people to dwell securely (7:10). What two major attributes does God demonstrate here? One seems pretty clear: *sovereignty*. But what’s the other? What word can we use to describe Yahweh’s determination to bless and secure His people *as a priority over seeking and displaying His own glory in a magnificent temple*? What comes to mind most readily may be the attribute of grace. But I want to offer a more specific word that we rarely think about as an attribute of God—yet it is a characteristic that He displays more magnificently than anyone else: *humility*. Because this covenant will be a means of displaying His unique glory as a God of grace even to the point of *self-sacrifice*. “You may be forced to revise your theology if you think deity and humility are mutually exclusive categories. But if you’ve really paid attention to 2 Samuel 7:6–7 you are not surprised at Philippians 2:5–8” (Davis, *2 Samuel*, 86). This covenant is not a reward for anything David has done. All of this has to do with God, God’s purposes, and God’s character. It is much bigger than David, or Solomon, or the temple itself.

Central Promise—*an eternal grant*. We already noted that the central subject under discussion is a *house* (a dynasty) from David’s line. What does that entail? He elaborates: (1) the establishment of David’s line (7:12); (2) the eternity of that line (7:13, 16); and (3) a faithful, fatherly relation to that line forever (7:14). In fact, that word “forever” peppers the covenant (7:13, 16, 24, 25, 26, 29). Any individual Davidic king may meet disaster because of his sin or infidelity, but that cannot overthrow the promised perpetuity

HIS GRACE (2 SAMUEL 7)

of the Davidic dynasty. That is what is behind repeated references to God's doing or not doing something "for my servant David's sake" (e.g., 1 Kings 11:32; 15:4; Isa. 37:35).

The thoughtful reader of this promise to David might find one phrase rather disturbing. God assures David that He will not remove His loyalty from David and his heirs as He removed it from Saul (7:15). So God can promise His loyalty when He wants and just abandon His loyalty when He feels like it? Doesn't that seem to imply a kind of unpredictable capriciousness on God's part? The difference between God's promise to David and God's promise to Saul lies in *the nature of their respective covenants*. The promise to Saul was explicitly conditional; you can see that in the "if . . . then" construction in 1 Samuel 12:14–15 (cf. 1 Sam. 13:13–14). In other words, the Saulide Covenant was a *unilateral-conditional parity treaty* that could be forfeited by the failure or disobedience of the inferior. But the Davidic Covenant is a *royal grant* that goes out of its way to specify that if David's seed fails and sins, God will chasten the failure, but He will never abandon His loyalty to the promise of an unending Davidic dynasty.

The nature of this covenant has been aptly condensed into one word: *indefectible*. Death cannot annul it (7:12–13). Sin cannot negate it (7:14–15). Time cannot exhaust it (7:16). The covenant is built on, and is an extension of, the equally eternal Abrahamic Covenant. Paul argues that the singular "seed" in the Abrahamic Covenant is ultimately fulfilled in Christ (Gal. 3:16). Likewise, the ultimate referent and recipient in the Davidic Covenant is Christ. Though the immediate referent of the "seed" in 7:12 is Solomon, the *ultimate* referent is Christ (Heb. 1:5). It is Christ who will build a spiritual house for God's name (Eph. 2) and Christ's throne that will be established by the Father forever (Dan. 7:14ff.; Luke 1:32–33; Matt. 28:18).

David's Response

Praise (7:18–24). Don't miss the impact of the opening image—*King David went in and sat before the Lord* (7:18). Do you ever do that? Not rush into the Lord's presence and immediately begin pouring out everything you need or want to say, but *just sit*. And not just sit, but sit *before the Lord*. Sometimes that is the best possible preparation for genuine communion/conversation with the Lord. He is neither offended nor impatient with empty verbal space, stretches of silence. Many a pause might keep us from sinning in prayer, by praying wrong things or, perhaps worse, praying "right" things without heart or saying right things without meaning. David then begins by raising the ques-

tion of why God would do this for *him* (7:18–19). And he comes to the same conclusion we did—it has nothing to do with *him* and everything to do with God and His sovereign pleasure and grace (7:20–22).

Petition (7:25–29). This might initially sound like a strange prayer, almost an unbelieving prayer. David asks that God would do everything He just said He would do (7:25). Is David afraid that He might not? That He might change His mind? No, David simply asks God to do all exactly as He has said for His own glory (7:26–29). This is David's submissive acceptance of God's gracious purpose.

A rejection of God's grace because we are not worthy is not humility; it is a false pride that insists we must do something first to earn, to merit, to in some small way deserve what He offers. But then, as Paul says, grace is no more grace. And the Davidic Covenant is all about God's grace, not just to David but to us.

Conclusion

Psalm 89 is both a celebratory (89:1–37) and poignantly prayerful (89:38–52) reminder to God of the eternal promises of the Davidic covenant. The traditional author of the psalm was Ethan the Ezrahite, a contemporary of David. That raises a problem. How could the second half of the psalm, lamenting the loss of the Davidic throne, reflect Davidic times? One possibility is that Ethan penned it under the duress of David's exile during the rebellion of Absalom (2 Sam. 15–19), when consternation, humiliation, uncertainty, and the sudden dominance of one's antagonists make every day feel like a month. Even amid circumstances suggesting that God had renounced the covenant He had made with David (89:39), the psalmist maintains a bulldog grip on the impossibility that God could ever abandon His promises, however much it may look like it at present. That's why the psalmist grounds his confidence in God's own words and His loyalty and faithfulness to them. In fact, twenty-one verses of the psalm (89:3–4, 19–37) are a direct quotation from God. They are the psalmist's reverent reminder to the Lord of what He has promised. It is a classic example of praying God's words back to Him.

God relishes such prayers, because they reveal a life-or-death reliance on His words and give Him the opportunity to display the reliability of His promises. Not surprisingly, a postscript (89:52) ends the psalm on a note of triumphant confidence that God will unquestionably do what He has said: *Amen and Amen!*

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Wall of Separation or One-Way Mirror?

In March of this year Georgia's Republican governor, Nathan Deal, vetoed Georgia's "Pastor Protection Act," or HB 757. This bill has been described as legislation designed to keep the state from punishing churches or pastors for opposition same-sex marriage.

The bill passed both legislative houses in Georgia, but opponents claimed that it opened the door for the discrimination in tax-funded institutions. Immediately public financial pressure was exerted by Marvel and Disney, who threatened to boycott filming in Georgia if the bill was signed into law. The NFL threw its weight around, suggesting the Super Bowl may not be played there in 2019 or 2020. Actors Seth MacFarlane and Anne Hathaway threatened to boycott filming there. The Georgia governor caved to the pressure.

"I do not think," Deal stated, "that we have to discriminate against anyone to protect the faith-based community in Georgia, of which I and my family have been a part of for all of our lives."

Ironically the "wall of separation" that has been the foundation for antireligious propaganda appears to be only a one-way mirror.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/georgia-governor-veto-pastor-protection-act-disney-marvel-nfl-nathan-deal-160271/#hPuefiDy97K1Thil.99>.

Religious Liberty under Siege

Dr. Eric Walsh is a bivocational pastor who also served as a district health director under the Georgia Department of Public Health. After Walsh was hired in May of 2014, the department assigned workers to review Walsh's sermons that deal with the topics of health, marriage, sexuality, world religions, science, and creationism. As a result of statements he had made in the pulpit, Walsh was terminated from his position with the public health department.

Walsh has enlisted the help of the law firm First Liberty and has filed a federal suit against the Georgia Department of Public Health. "No one in this country should be fired from their job for something that was said in church or from a pulpit during a sermon," states Jeremy Dys, a First Liberty attorney.

Evidence is being presented that Walsh was a model employee and that his termination is based entirely on statements made in his service as a minister. The plaintiff argues that even unnamed sources inside the department of public health warned that the department's actions were "impossibly [blown] out of proportion."

This article can be referenced at <http://www.foxnews.com/opinion/2016/04/20/fired-for-preaching-georgia-dumps-doctor-over-church-sermons.html>.

Buried Alive

Ding Cuimei, the wife of house church leader Li

Jiagong, was buried alive while protesting the demolition of her church building.

Beitou Church in Zhumadian, Henan Province, was ordered by local authorities to be razed because Li Jiagong refused to hand the property over to local developers. Li and Ding stood in front of the demolition equipment to protest the government's actions.

"Bury them alive for me. I will be responsible for their lives." This was shouted by one of the demolition team members. They were both shoved into pit and both were covered with soil by a bulldozer. Li was able to dig himself free, but Ding suffocated before she could be rescued. Local authorities have detained two members of the demolition crew.

This incident demonstrates the rising intolerance against Christians in China.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/china-church-leaders-wife-buried-alive-killed-for-protesting-church-demolition-162067/>.

Resurrection Seeds

Health-and-prosperity televangelist Paula White claims that "God instructed her" to teach her listeners about a miracle of resurrection God wants to perform in their lives. Using John 11, she urged her listeners to sow a seed in faith, and deliverance would come.

Deliverance from what? The answer to that question was left open ended.

Interestingly, the revelation also came with a price tag. For \$1144 White

will send an anointed and prayed-over prayer cloth—which could be a source of "special miracles, signs and wonders." Those who cannot afford that can send \$144 or even only \$44—"but stand on John 11:44," said the televangelist.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/televangelist-paula-white-hawks-resurrection-life-1144-dollar-seed-162088/>.

Social Media Trap

Is social media a place for the candid expression of what you believe? Perhaps it depends on what you believe.

Felix Ngole is a father of four and a second-year graduate student working on a master's degree at the University of Sheffield in South Yorkshire, England. His student status was terminated when he posted on Facebook his views consistent with the Bible's teaching on homosexuality. Though Ngole's Facebook posts were private (and thus could be seen only by his friends), someone brought the post the university's attention.

Ngole was brought before the school's "Fitness to Practice" committee. They determined that his religious convictions negatively impacted his "ability to carry out his role as a social worker" and his post "transgressed boundaries which are not deemed appropriate for someone entering the social work profession."

Felix sought legal help and filed an appeal. His appeal was denied. He now

is seeking legal action against the school.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/christian-student-expelled-quoting-bible-opposition-gay-marriage-face-book-loses-appeal-161402/>.

Is Mormonism Moving towards Orthodoxy?

Richard J. Mouw, who was an Evangelical professor and president at Fuller Theological Seminary, is now arguing that Mormons are moving toward a more orthodox Christian faith.

His conclusions have been reached not by any public announcement of theological shift or by any word of theological change on the part of the LDS. He has drawn his conclusions based on private discussions as well as on leadership and on the songs Mormons use in their worship.

Mouw has been open to dialoging with Mormons for sixteen years. His present dialog is covering issues such as authority, sin and grace, the atoning work of Christ, and how doctrinal matters get decided in Mormonism. However, without a repudiation of blatant false teachings within the LDS, it is hard to see any genuine progress.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/former-fuller-seminary-president-argues-mormons-may-be-approaching-orthodoxy-161827/>.

Indiana Lawsuit

Both Planned Parenthood of Indiana and Kentucky and the ACLU have filed suit against the State of Indiana and specifically the House Enrolled Act 1337.

HEA 1337 was designed to protect the rights of the unborn in two specific ways. First, no one may intentionally terminate a pregnancy after twenty weeks because the child is diagnosed with Down syndrome. Second, no one

NOTABLE QUOTES

The pious fellowship permits no one to be a sinner. So everybody must conceal his sin from himself and from the fellowship. We dare not be sinners. . . . The fact is that we are all sinners!—Dietrich Bonhoeffer

We look for no other inspiration than Divine grace to make his word clear and impressive. Every verse read and meditated on opens a mine of “unsearchable riches,” with a light from above, more clear and full than the most intelligent exposition.—Charles Bridges

You are but a poor soldier of Christ if you think you can overcome without fighting, and suppose you can have the crown without conflict.—John Chrysostom

Do not pray for easy lives, pray to be better men and women. Do not pray for tasks equal to your powers; pray for power equal to your tasks.—Phillips Brooks

The further a society drifts from the truth, the more they will hate those that speak it.—George Orwell

I am bold in saying this, but I believe no one is ever changed, either by doctrine, by hearing the Word, or by the preaching and teaching of another, unless the affections are moved by these things. No one ever seeks salvation, no one ever cries for wisdom, no one ever wrestles with God, no one ever kneels in prayer or flees from sin, with a heart that remains unaffected. In a word, there is never any great achievement by the things of religion without a heart deeply affected by those things.—Jonathan Edwards

may intentionally terminate a pregnancy based on “race, color, national origin, or ancestry of the fetus.”

Indiana governor Mike Pence signed the legislation, saying, “I believe that a society can be judged by how it deals with its most vulnerable—the aged, the infirm, the disabled, and the unborn. By enacting this legislation, we take an important step in protecting the unborn, while still providing an exception for the life of the mother. I sign this legislation with a prayer that God would continue to bless these precious children, mothers, and families.”

Planned Parenthood responded, “The law imposes unconstitutional restrictions on women seeking abortions and their health care providers. This law does not value life. It only values birth.”

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/planned-parenthood-sues-indiana-abortion-syndrome-babies-mike-pence-161224/#ry84ICA1C1VAjQjS.99>.

Whole Foods Countersuit

A Whole Foods store in Austin, Texas, is suing a homosexual pastor for “intentionally, knowingly and falsely” implicating the store in homophobic defamation on a cake it sold.

Texas pastor Jordan Brown claims that the store sold him a cake decorated with a demeaning slur, but the store says surveillance video demonstrates that the box had been tampered with and that the real perpetrator was Brown.

This article can be referenced at <http://www.christianpost.com/news/whole-foods-sues-gay-pastor-for-100k-after-homophobic-cake-allegation-162206/>.

Newsworthy is presented to inform believers. The people or sources mentioned do not necessarily carry the endorsement of FBFI.

Compiled by Robert Condict, FBFI Executive Board member and pastor of Upper Cross Roads Baptist Church, Baldwin, Maryland.

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ON LANGUAGE & SCRIPTURE

In my last column I raised a question: what changes in language count as “progress,” and what features of language should we “conserve”?

We Fundamentalists are, in my experience, constitutionally conservative. We conserve—we guard, we tend, we protect—the fundamentals of biblical faith, and we tend to be conservative in other areas of our lives too.

But you can't always be conservative in a fallen world because you'll end up conserving fallen and twisted things. Sometimes the world needs progress.

Some Christians are absolutely “conservative” when it comes to language: they think every change to English is, by definition, bad. They so quickly forget that literally every single word in every language represents a change from whatever language (or version of the same language) preceded it. They also conveniently forget how much language has changed in their own lifetimes. I'm young, but I remember when some (older) people still said “gay” to mean “lighthearted” or “carefree.” Even the most linguistically conservative Christian in America today is unlikely to use the word that way now. He implicitly knows that he will be misunderstood.

Some Christians, on the other hand, are constitutionally “progressive”; if there's a linguistic means by which they can demonstrate how hip they are, they will pick it up immediately. Language has fads, and some Christians have an unerring ear for them. *Because Facebook!*

I'm not saying that you can never be a linguistic curmudgeon or indulge in slang. I think both responses are entirely appropriate in different situations.

I endeavor to avoid being either a conservative or a progressive when it comes to my use of the English language. I try to be guided by a higher principle: *love your neighbor as yourself*. There are situations when pedantic attention to grammatical detail is the best way to serve the people to whom you are speaking, such as in a ninth-grade grammar class. The way you love those young neighbors is to be linguistically conservative; they can't break “the rules” wisely until they know them.

But if you do know them, you most certainly ought to break them—when that is the best way to love and serve your neighbor. You can insist all you want that “he” is the correct gender-neutral third-person-singular pronoun, but if you're in the middle of an evangelistic conversation with an ardent feminist, give it up. The offense is not worth it. Say “they.” Love for your neighbor demands it.

Conserve what's beautiful in English, sure. But see language as what it is: a tool for loving your neighbor. That would be true progress.

Dr. Mark L. Ward Jr. works for Logos Bible Software; he is also the author of *Biblical Worldview: Creation, Fall, Redemption*, published by BJU Press.



Regional Reports

Alaska and Arizona

Although not affiliated with FBFI, the Alaska Baptist Association (ABA) featured Dr. Vaughn as their speaker on March 3 and 4. Many of the pastors from the Alaska region attended and evidenced enthusiasm for the upcoming Twenty-Fifth Anniversary Regional FBFI scheduled for July 25–27 at Maranatha Baptist Church in Anchorage hosted by Pastor Charles England.

Following the Alaska meeting, many of the FBFI Board members and other pastors attended the Gospel Proclaimed Conference (GP) held at Tri-City Baptist Church in Chandler, Arizona, hosted by Pastor Mike Sproul. The GP Conference was enjoyed by leaders from all the major Independent Baptist groups, with speakers from each of them. It was an incredible blessing to have Independent Baptists fellowshipping together and affirming their mutual convictions without focusing on the issues that make them distinct.

FBFI Winter Board Meeting

This year, we moved our Winter Board Meeting (WBM) date from mid-February to early March to dovetail with the GP Conference in Arizona. We met at Northwest Valley Baptist Church in Glendale, Arizona, where host pastor Dr. Kevin Schaal and his people welcomed not only the FBFI Board but also a good group of FBFI chaplains who held a second session of Annual Training. (See “FBFI Chaplains” on page 36.)

The FBFI Winter Board Meeting is always more than a review of normal business items; it is an opportunity to assess the status of the FBFI Regions and a time to finish planning the Annual Fellowship in June, which will be hosted by FBFI vice-chairman Dr. Chuck Phelps and the Colonial Hills Baptist Church in Indianapolis. Focusing on “Declarations from our Designer,” this year’s annual meeting will feature well-known creationist Dr. John Whitcomb, author of *The Genesis Flood*. Dr. Whitcomb (who is nearly 92 years old!) attends Colonial Hills.

In addition to Dr. Phelps’ many other duties as a pastor and leader in FBFI, he is now taking full leadership of the Regional Coordinators to insure that all regions have the support they need, especially as several of our regional leaders have changed ministries and locations.

We can now report joint meetings of the leadership of both FBFI and the New Testament Association (NTA), which share a common heritage and take the same stand. It has been agreed that the 2017 FBFI Annual Fellowship will be held in conjunction with the Annual Conference of NTA, hosted by Maranatha Baptist University and meeting at Calvary Baptist Church in Watertown, Wisconsin. That event will be called the “New Testament Baptist Fellowship—A Joint Meeting of the FBFI and NTA.” The chaplains-endorsing agencies of both groups are in ongoing discussions of ways we can provide mutual support to our chaplains, and depending on the effectiveness of the NTBF meeting in Wisconsin, we may have periodic joint meetings in the future.



Bolivia Regional Fellowship

In its sixth year, the Bolivia Regional meeting is one of the spinoffs of the Caribbean Regional Fellowship. With the help of Caribbean Regional Coordinator Dr. Johnny Daniels of Calvary Baptist in Carolina, Puerto Rico, Bolivian pastor Franz Carreon has built an effective and wide-reaching group of pastors, representing men whose heritage rests on four other Independent Baptist groups and includes much fruit from several fundamental mission boards and their missionaries, many of whom attend these meetings. With approximately eighty pastors in attendance the services saw an average of over three hundred in total with enthusiastic singing and Bible preaching. After repeated requests to come, Dr. Vaughn was able to attend and speak four times at the 2016 Bolivian Regional held in Santa Cruz on March 15–18.



South Regional Fellowship

Held this year at The Anchorage Camp on the shores of beautiful nine-thousand-acre Lake Waccamaw, North Carolina, the South Regional—under the leadership of Camp Director Dave Ulrich and Regional Coordinator Dr. Mike Yarborough—was a great blessing. The beauty of the location and the beautiful spring weather created a perfect setting for pastors and couples to relax, renew friendships, sing and hear preaching and workshop presentations. From the porch of the main lodge of The Anchorage, overlooking the lake, Director Ulrich told Dr. Vaughn, “We have seven acres of land, but we like to tell folks we have a 9007-acre camp!”





Northwest Regional FBFI Fellowship

Galilee Baptist Church in Kent, Washington, hosted the Northwest Regional FBFI Fellowship on March 14-16. Pastor Steve Hicks and the church family did an outstanding job feeding and making everyone welcome at the Puget Sound area. The attendees represented ministries from Washington, Oregon, Idaho, and British Columbia.

The theme this year was "Renewing the Vision," taken from Proverbs 29:18. Dr. Mike Privett and evangelist

Monte Leavell served as keynote speakers with regional pastors conducting the workshops on Tuesday and Wednesday. Duane Smith, a church-planter from South Carolina, was here, looking over this corner of the harvest field for a new work to begin in the future.

We were challenged, refreshed, and motivated by the messages we heard and went home with a "renewed vision," anticipating what great things our Lord will do in the coming days.



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Incompatible Trajectories

Continued from page 15

whole story of evolution as far back as we can go? And what do I mean by evolution as a process that includes everything from single-cell organisms to contemporary human society and culture? That is what this chapter is about.⁶

While there are various explanations among evolutionists regarding how man developed religion, Bellah illustrates what is common. Original man was incapable of religious thought. Man had to acquire the capacities necessary before he could develop religions. As man evolved, he gained the capacities necessary to create and worship gods. The trajectory is upward. After man evolved to a higher level, he became capable of religious thought and worship.

The Bible presents a different view of the origin of religion. Adam and Eve were communicating with God on a regular basis in the Garden of Eden from the moment they were created (Gen. 1–3). Their children Cain and Abel were offering sacrifices to God (Gen. 4). Man was created with the capacities necessary for religion and worship. By Genesis 6 man had abandoned worship of God and was living only evil continually. This is a downward trajectory.

These two views of religion are not compatible. Either the first humans could worship or the first humans were not capable of worship (because they had not yet evolved the necessary capacities). This trajectory cannot be explained with an appeal to accommodation in language either. The Bible and scientific consensus cannot be harmonized on this point.

Conclusion

The trajectories of the Bible and evolution are not compatible. If one takes the Bible seriously, he will admit that it presents a downward trajectory. If one is honest with evolutionary thought, he will admit it presents an upward trajectory. In fact, an upward trajectory is inherent to evolutionary theory. Logic dictates that both of these trajectories cannot be true at the same time. Either Adam and Eve were worshipping, civilized human beings or they were cave-men that had not yet developed the capacities necessary for worship. We must choose whether we are going to trust the Bible or evolutionary consensus. Harmonization is not possible here.



Dr. Andrew Hudson is professor of New Testament at Maranatha Baptist Seminary in Watertown, Wisconsin.

¹ <http://biologos.org>, accessed February 8, 2016.

² <http://biologos.org/blogs/deborah-haarsma-the-presidents-notebook/new-pew-poll-shows-that-strongly-religious-americans-see-less-conflict-with-science>, accessed February 8, 2016.

³ Denis O. Lamoureux, "Evolutionary Creation: Moving Beyond the Evolution versus Creation Debate," *Christian Higher Education* 9 (2010), 40.

⁴ Ibid.

⁵ Richard Leakey and Roger Lewin, *Origins Reconsidered: In Search of What Makes Us Human* (New York: Anchor Books, 1992), 351–52.

⁶ Robert N. Bellah, *Religion in Human Evolution: From the Paleolithic to the Axial Age* (Cambridge, MA: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2011), 44.



FBFI Chaplains—An Increasing Influence

The FBFI Chaplaincy continues to grow and increase in influence. As mentioned in *Regional Reports*, a second Annual Training session was held in conjunction with the Winter Board Meeting for those who were unable to attend in June 2015. A good complement of chaplains participated. Annual training is a Department of Defense (DoD) requirement for military chaplains, and FBFI requires all community chaplains to participate as they can. One of the most common concerns of DoD regarding chaplains is the lack of practical ministry experience held by newly accessioned chaplains and the lack of current best practices by experienced chaplains, who are often isolated from civilian peers or unable to attend refresher or advanced courses in exposition and counseling.

DoD requires two years of full time “Post MDiv” ministry experience for accessioning, but the simple “two year” requirement does not guarantee competency. What happens during those two years depends on the mentor under which the chaplain candidate serves. It is up to the endorser to insure that he gain the specific experience he has two years to gain. FBFI takes training seriously and strives to provide meaningful and effective training under its own auspices and through pastors willing to share ministry responsibilities with young ministers in training for chaplaincy. FBFI is developing a comprehensive study plan for seminarians who need to find a civilian mentor with whom they can gain the needed practical experience.

Training for veteran chaplains includes updates on what is communicated to the endorser from the Armed Forces Chaplains Board (AFCB), what the FBFI position is on various social issues that impact chaplaincy ministry, and guidance on mentoring younger FBFI chaplains. It is common to hear younger chaplains seeking “career path” counsel from the seasoned men, or even for the higher-ranking men to counsel and encourage each other.

Associate Endorser Chaplain Joe Willis led the “make-up” training in Arizona. Navy Chaplain (LCDR) Rob Johnson conducted a workshop, as did Police Chaplain



CH (MAJ) Roger Rodriguez, Deputy Chaplain for Clinical Pastoral Division, Landstuhl Regional Medical Center in Germany, shares a Bible bought with funds given by Faith Baptist Church, Taylors, SC.

Mike Ascher, who was the host pastor of the 2015 Annual Fellowship.

In Indianapolis, FBFI chaplains will enjoy a compressed training schedule that will save them time and money and allow them to hear Dr. John Whitcomb and to participate in the Thursday excursion to the Creation Museum. As well, we have invited a special speaker to address the chaplains who we pray will be able to attend. We can't announce his name at this time, but if he can come, you will be greatly blessed by his presentation and by him personally.



Beware the Hermeneutics of Accommodation

(Continued from page 7)

that general revelation—while important and helpful—cannot assume the role of absolute authority for conservative Christians.

About two decades ago, church historian Mark Noll spoke of the scandalous rejection of modern science in Fundamentalism/Evangelicalism and urged Evangelicals to rethink their stance. Retreating to a position so hopelessly out of touch with the massive modern scientific consensus, he argued, essentially ends our dialog with modern man from the start.¹⁸ Such reasoning has driven two centuries of accommodationist hermeneutics, but where would such reasoning lead? If we adjust Genesis 1 to allow for millions of years, must we adjust Genesis 2–3, which modern man will surely find equally unsatisfactory both scientifically and historically? Can we keep the normal reading of Joshua’s long day, Jonah’s adventure in the great fish, Jesus’ resurrection from the dead? At which of these points is there *not* a massive secular consensus that these must be sheer fiction?¹⁹

We must acknowledge that general revelation—both history and science—is to be taken into account as we handle the Scriptures, but God forbid that we embrace an accommodationist hermeneutic that cedes “an equal authority . . . to nature (as observed by sinful man) as to Scripture.”²⁰ The Bible, including Genesis 1, must be our sole authority.

Dr. David Saxon is professor of Bible and Church History at Maranatha Baptist University, in Watertown, Wisconsin.



¹ For instance, discovery of the Nabonidus cylinders at Ur in the 1850s shed light on the reign of Belshazzar in Babylon. Commentators on Daniel now routinely refer to this data to explain Belshazzar’s offer to Daniel to be “third ruler in the kingdom” (Dan. 5:29). Prior to these discoveries, exegetes were hard-pressed to explain the expression. The data from general revelation is not inspired, but it can nevertheless shed light on inspired texts enabling exegetes to interpret more accurately.

² A schoolboy today no doubt grasps the revolution of the earth around the sun more clearly than did any human biblical author. So expressions such as “the sun rose” or the “the sun set” are today informed by a more scientific worldview. One of the miraculous things about Scripture is that premodern writers were supernaturally preserved from scientific *error* when they described phenomena from their relatively primitive worldviews.

³ Lee Irons, while advancing a literary framework view of Genesis 1, nevertheless is precisely correct when he writes, “Scripture has hermeneutical and presuppositional priority over our fallible study of general revelation” (David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation* [Mission Viejo, CA: Crux Press, Inc., 2001], 218).

⁴ See Jonathan Sarfati’s thorough refutation of Hugh Ross’s attempts to enlist a number of Church Fathers in support of the Day-Age Theory in *Refuting Compromise: A Biblical and Scientific Refutation of “Progressive Creationism”* (*Billions of Years*), as Popularized by Astronomer Hugh Ross (Green Forest, AZ: Master

Books, 2004), 107–22. For instance, Augustine is routinely cited as favoring the day-age view. On one hand, it is certainly true that he rejected solar days (because of the creation of the sun on day four); on the other hand, he believed in a young earth. In other words, he rejected a literal understanding of Genesis 1 not in order to insert millions (or even thousands) of years into the text but for literary reasons. Complicating the discussion is the extensive use of allegorical interpretation by many Church Fathers. In this writer’s opinion, appeal to Church Fathers to establish the Day-Age View is at best anachronistic and at worst special pleading.

⁵ Since that time scientists in a variety of fields have found what they believe to be corroborating evidence for a very old earth. Young-earth creationists argue that much of this science operates under wrong presuppositions.

⁶ Numerous works cite Chalmers’ lecture and its subsequent influence. See, for example, Bert Thompson, *Creation Compromises* (Montgomery, AL: Apologetics Press, Inc., 1995), 158.

⁷ *Scofield Reference Bible* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1917), 3, notes 2–3.

⁸ In *The Christian View of Science and Scripture* (1955), after citing the advocacy of the Gap Theory by Scofield and Harry Rimmer, Bernard Ramm complains that “the gap theory has become the standard interpretation throughout hyper-orthodoxy, appearing in an endless stream of books, booklets, Bible studies, and periodical articles. In fact, it has become so sacrosanct with some that to question it is equivalent to tampering with Sacred Scripture or to manifesting modernistic leanings” (135).

⁹ See discussion in Thompson, 194–206.

¹⁰ Sarfati, 135–36.

¹¹ *Christian Theology* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 1983), 382. Erickson gives a brief but helpful survey of attempts to reconcile Scripture and science and opts for the “age-day theory” as the most likely, although he eschews dogmatism.

¹² On the other hand, the presence of light without a sun in the New Jerusalem, the restored Eden, in Revelation 21:23 suggests that this may not be so great a difficulty as is often alleged.

¹³ See the very helpful discussion in David G. Hagopian, ed., *The Genesis Debate: Three Views on the Days of Creation*, 121–214.

¹⁴ *Ibid.*, 217–56.

¹⁵ Irons, *The Genesis Debate*, 252.

¹⁶ John Walton, *The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 2009).

¹⁷ Notable among which is the “Historic Creationism” of John Sailhamer. See his *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Colorado Springs, CO: Multnomah Books, 1996). Ken Ham categorizes this as a “modified gap theory” (*The Lie: Evolution/Millions of Years* [Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2012], 213), although Sailhamer’s exegetical approach is quite different from that of most advocates of the classic Gap Theory.

¹⁸ Characteristic of Noll, the argument is considerably more complex than this brief summary suggests, but I have attempted to capture its essence. For details, see *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1994), 177–208.

¹⁹ See a similar argument in J. Ligon Duncan III and David W. Hall’s refutation of the Framework View in *The Genesis Debate*, 257–58.

²⁰ *Ibid.*, 169.



Preparing to Pray

In Daniel 6:10 we read of this man of God, “He kneeled upon his knees three times a day, and prayed, and gave thanks before his God, as he did aforetime.” It is obvious that this man had a plan in praying to the Lord. Probably one of the most neglected areas in the lives of the Lord’s people is in the area of prayer. So many of us are so busy in our responsibilities, ministries, and obligations that we have not made time for being alone with our Lord. This is not right! We must weigh this matter heavily, ponder it, and then take deliberate action in our daily lives.

The first thing we need to consider is making prayer a priority in our lives. We read in Psalm 119:164, “Seven times a day do I praise thee because of thy righteous judgments.” Here the psalmist had a plan in his daily walk with the Lord; he praised the Lord seven times a day. I will never forget my godly mother who had such a powerful prayer life. By the way, she was one of the most active persons you could have known, but she was not too busy to pray.

One time I was bringing her from West Virginia to spend a week with us in South Carolina. As we began our trip I said, “Mom, what do you say we pray on the hour every hour until we get to South Carolina?” She thought that was a tremendous idea, and we did that for the entire trip. It is still a very precious memory in my heart, since my mother is now in heaven.

Many of us are too busy. We are too much like Martha in Luke 10:38–42.

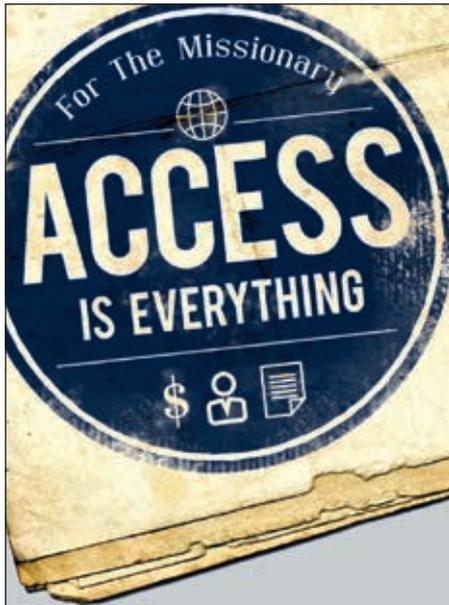
Now it came to pass, as they went, that he entered into a certain village: and a certain woman named Martha received him into her house. And she had a sister called Mary, which also sat at Jesus’ feet, and heard his word. But Martha was cumbered about much serving, and came to him, and said, Lord, dost thou not care that my sister hath left me to serve alone? bid her therefore that she help me. And Jesus answered and said unto her, Martha, Martha, thou art careful and troubled about many things: But one thing is needful: and Mary hath chosen that good part, which shall not be taken away from her.

I wonder sometimes if the Lord does not say to me, “Jerry, Jerry, you are so careful and troubled about many things.” You see, all of us are running full-speed in our duties, but we forget that one thing is needful. We need to spend time with our wonderful, kind, gracious, loving Savior alone in prayer.

The second thing we need to consider is planning a place of prayer. Of course, we know we can pray anywhere and as often as we desire. First Thessalonians 5:17 instructs us to “pray without ceasing.” However, we also ought to have a specific place to pray. We read of the Lord Jesus in Mark 1:35, “And in the morning, rising up a great while before day, He went out and departed into a solitary place, and there prayed.” Our Lord had a place where He loved to pray, and we also should find a quiet place to pray. I live out in the country in South Carolina, and my solitary place to pray is the road in front of my house; I love to walk down the road and pray to my Lord! It has been a special place to me since I started out in evangelism. I can recall those early years when I would walk the road and pray aloud, “Lord, You have to open doors for meetings.” I can recall several times returning from my prayer time to see my wife standing on the front porch with the telephone in her hand, waving me to come quickly because there was a pastor on the phone wanting us for meetings. What precious memories those are! I cherish this time of prayer. What a great Heavenly Father we have who wants to meet every need of our lives. The Lord says in Jeremiah 33:3, “Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.”

The third thing we ought to consider is sharing with others how the Lord has answered our prayers. I have a dear friend who is now in heaven, Charlie Kittrell, with whom I had many meetings. He once told me he promised the Lord that whenever He answered a prayer request, Charlie would brag on the Lord to others. And brother Kittrell kept his word! In Psalm 57:9 David said, “I will praise thee, O Lord, among the people.” Let us do the same! Let us praise the Lord for meeting our needs and then broadcast it to others with a heart full of gratitude.

Evangelist Jerry Sivnksty may be contacted at PO Box 141, Starr, SC 29684 or via e-mail at evangjsivn@aol.com.



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