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## AP Content :: Scripturally Speaking

### Genesis 1 thru 11--Mythical or Historical?

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#### INTRODUCTION

On November 24, 1859, J.M. Dent & Sons of London released for distribution Charles Darwin's book, *The Origin of Species*—a volume that would change forever the perceptions held by many people regarding their ultimate origin. However, long before Darwin wrote his book, he had seen his own perceptions of origins change as well. When he was but a young man, his parents sent him to Cambridge University to become a minister. In fact, somewhat ironically, the only earned degree that Charles Darwin ever held was in theology. But while studying theology, he also was studying geology and biology. After his graduation, and a subsequent five-year voyage at sea aboard the *H.M.S. Beagle*, Darwin's attitudes and views had changed drastically.

In 1959, Nora Barlow edited Darwin's autobiography, and included additional material that previously had been unavailable. In that volume, this amazing statement can be found:

I had gradually come, by this time, to see that the Old Testament from its manifestly false history of the world and from its attributing to God the feelings of a revengeful tyrant, was no more to be trusted than the sacred books of the Hindoos, or the beliefs of any barbarian (pp. 85-86).

Before Darwin could give himself over wholly to the doctrine of evolution, he first had to abandon all confidence in the historicity of the Old Testament and any belief in its teachings on origins. That accomplished, he then was able to imbibe evolutionary scenarios without obvious discomfort.

There is an important moral to this real-life, historical account. The Genesis account—taken at face value—stands in stark contradistinction to evolutionary theory. Thus, for people who claim to view the Bible as the Word of God (as Darwin himself once did), and yet who are determined to retain a belief in evolution (in whole or in part), there is a very real conflict that must be resolved.

In an attempt to resolve this conflict, some have gone so far as to suggest that Genesis contains **no world view at all**. Donald England, a distinguished professor of chemistry at Harding University in Searcy, Arkansas, took just such a position in his book, *A Christian View of Origins*:

I recognize certain irreconcilable differences between the pronouncements of science concerning origins and the general impressions a person gets from reading Genesis 1. However, I feel that this dissonance need not necessarily be disturbing to a Christian's faith.... **[T]here is no world view presented in Genesis 1**. I believe the intent of Genesis 1 is far too sublime and spiritual for one to presume that it teaches anything at all about a cosmological world view. **We do this profound text a great injustice by insisting that there is inherent within the text an argument for any particular world view** (1972, pp. 102,124, emp. added).

Dr. England has acknowledged the "irreconcilable differences" between Genesis and what he terms "the

pronouncements of science," but he feels no discomfiture over this "dissonance" because he disavows **any** world view whatsoever in Genesis, thereby leaving himself completely free to accept whatever happens to be in vogue scientifically at the time.

For those who wish to retain some semblance of a world view in Genesis, however, what kind of amalgamation of the "irreconcilable differences" between Genesis and evolution can be effected? John Rendle-Short discussed the solution suggested by many today.

Theistic evolutionists generally believe that God has revealed all that can be known of the world and man in two books, the book of Nature and the book of Scripture. Since both originate from God they must be compatible; there can be no final disagreement. Evolution, they believe, is a scientifically accepted fact (granted the proviso that God, not chance, was in control)....

Theistic evolutionists are well aware that in Genesis 1 and 2 the creation of man is recorded as having taken place in six days after the "beginning." They also know that according to evolution man was created millions of years after the origin of life. Here is the discrepancy. How to resolve it? Since there can be no discordance between the book of Nature and the book of Scripture, and since both appear true, the error, they feel, must lie in our interpretation and understanding of the Genesis account (1984, p. 13, parenthetical comment in orig.).

Once evolution has been accepted as factual, then it is the "interpretation and understanding of the Genesis account" that must be addressed. Therefore, theistic evolutionists (and their counterparts—progressive and old-Earth creationists) must find a way to reinterpret the biblical account of origins in order to accommodate it to various evolutionary scenarios. The first step in achieving this goal is to "reevaluate" the literary style of Genesis. As Zimmerman observed:

In asking whether or not theistic evolution may be found in the text, we must come to grips with the question as to what kind of literature we have in Genesis 1. Unless we decide the kind of literature we are dealing with, we cannot perform good exegesis. If it is historical prose, that is one thing. If it is poetry or myth or saga or symphony, that is quite another (1972, p. 102).

The question then becomes: "What kind of literature **is** the Genesis account of creation? May we accept it at face value as literal history—i.e., representing events that took place exactly as described? Or, should we view the creation account simply as poetic mythology—i.e., a beautiful story (on the level of a pagan myth, for example), but certainly not literal history?"

### **IS GENESIS 1-11 MYTHICAL OR HISTORICAL?**

#### **Is Genesis 1-11 Mythical?**

If one accepts that Genesis contains at least **some** world view, then the creation account must be either literal or non-literal. For the theistic evolutionist, of course, that question already has been answered. There is no possibility whatsoever that a theistic evolutionist will accept the Genesis account as literal history, since to do so would align it squarely against evolution. Eventually, then, the events recorded in the first eleven chapters of Genesis somehow must be relegated to the status of a myth or an allegory; they **cannot** be viewed as literal, historical events that actually transpired. This simply is not an option for the theistic evolutionist.

The literature produced by those supporting theistic evolution proves this to be the case. In fact, it did not take long after the publication of *The Origin of Species* for compromise to occur. As early as 1923, William W. Keen wrote the following in his book, *I Believe in God and in Evolution*:

In this age of general education, I can hardly believe that the most sincere literalist can insist that while Adam was made unconscious, an actual rib was taken from his body and out of it was fashioned a woman; and that Eve and a serpent actually conversed together in intelligible speech. To those who are familiar even in a general way with Oriental literature, all this is clearly to be understood figuratively and not literally (p. 8).

John L. McKenzie, writing on "Myth and the Old Testament" in *The Catholic Biblical Quarterly*, stated: "It is not a tenable view that God in revealing Himself also revealed directly and in detail the truth about such things as creation and the fall of man; the very presence of so many mythical elements in their traditions is enough to eliminate such a view" (1959, 21:281).

In referring to the creation account in Genesis, A.M. Ramsey, one-time Archbishop of Canterbury and a former president of the World Council of Churches, concluded: "It is the story of disobedience of Adam. There is no necessity for a Christian to believe it to be history; indeed, there are reasons **why it cannot be literal history**" (as quoted in Hedegard, 1964, pp. 190-191, emp. added). The authors of the popular *Westminster Dictionary of the Bible* asserted: "The recital of the facts of creation is obviously not a literal, historical record" (1944, p. 119).

Bernard Ramm, in his influential book, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, suggested that Genesis "is a purified ancient world myth. But through it shines the truth that God as Lord is God as Creator" (1954, p. 222). Well-known, neo-orthodox theologian Rudolf Bultmann spoke of the Israelites as a nation that, "like other nations, had its creation myths. God was depicted as the workman, forming the earth and all that is therein out of pre-existent matter. Such myths lie behind the creation stories of Genesis 1 and 2" (1969, p. 16).

Albert Wells, in *The Christian Message in a Scientific Age*, attacked the literal nature of the Genesis record when he wrote: "It is hardly necessary to regard the Genesis account of creation as literal truth in order to obtain its true meaning and relevance" (n.d., p. 113). In fact, Wells even went so far as to question the inspiration of the account by suggesting: "The fact of creation is thus not to be considered a direct revelation from God, unconditional by historical contingencies. It was, rather, an essential component of both the prophetic and the priestly mind" (n.d., p. 121). In his text, *Adam and the Ape: A Christian Approach to the Theory of Evolution*, R.J. Berry stated:

The creation of woman from Adam's side need not be interpreted literally; the teaching of Genesis 2:21-22 is obviously about the complementarity of the sexes and the meaning of marriage rather than the evolution of sex or mechanisms of sexual differentiation (1975).

J. Frank Cassel, a member of the *American Scientific Affiliation*, wrote in that society's professional journal:

The sequence can be explained as spiritual. Whether this is true or a dodge is of course an academic question, for is it not the spiritual message which God seeks to impart to us? Then why worry about what passages are to be interpreted literally and which figuratively? Look, rather, to God to reveal himself more fully and more directly to you from each passage according to your

need (1960, 12:2).

M.H. Hartshorne believed: "The Biblical account of creation is a myth, which means that it expresses the fundamental assumptions concerning the nature and meaning of human existence that the men of the Bible held" (1958, p. 85).

In 1981, Neal Buffaloe and N. Patrick Murray co-authored a booklet, *Creationism and Evolution*, in which they addressed the type of literature they perceived Genesis 1-11 to be.

In other words, the Genesis poems are significant not because they tell us how things **were**, or the way things happened long ago. Rather, they are talking about man's situation **now**—the eternal importance of man's relationship to God, and the primordial disruption of that fellowship that lies at the root of human nature and history. When we read the ancient Hebrew accounts of the creation—Adam and Eve, the Garden of Eden, man's "fall" by listening to the seductive words of a serpent, and God's Sabbath rest—we must understand...that "these things never were, but always are.... The stories are told and retold, recorded and read and reread not for their **wasness** but for their **isness**" (p. 8, emp. in orig.).

In speaking of Exodus 20:11, which records God's creation of "the heavens, the earth, the seas, and all that in them is" in six days, John Clayton remarked that the acceptance of this verse by Christians as literal history is "a very shallow conclusion" that is "inconsistent with the Genesis record as well as other parts of the Bible" (1976, 3[10]:5). This is the case, he explained, because "Exodus 20:11 is a quote of Genesis 2 and **Genesis 2 is not a historical account**" (1979a, 7[4]:3, emp. added).

Two years before making that statement, in speaking of Genesis 2 Clayton had written: "This is, incidentally, why the order of life in Chapter II is different than in Chapter I—**it has a different non-historical purpose**" (1977, 49[6]:7, emp. added). When both the radical nature and the accuracy of that statement were challenged (see Jackson and Thompson, 1979), Clayton then went on the defensive in an attempt to "explain" what he "really" meant.

First of all, I believe Genesis 1 is a literal, historical account. Its purpose is to tell us the history of the earth. But I do not believe that Genesis 2 is that kind of historical document.... Now **it is historical, and it is historically correct. But it is not primarily a historical document** the way Genesis 1 is, in my view (1980).

So Genesis 2 is historical. And it is historically correct. But it is not primarily a historical document? Some "explanation"! [One of John Clayton's errors is his inability to recognize that an account may be presented **out of chronological sequence** and yet still be **literal and historical**. Acts 10, regarding the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon Cornelius, is not totally chronological in arrangement (cf. Acts 11, especially vs. 4), but what Christian would go so far as to deny that it is **literal history**? Similarly, the fact that Genesis 2 is not arranged from a strictly chronological viewpoint **has nothing to do with the fact that it is literal history**.]

This extremely unorthodox (and completely illogical) assessment by Mr. Clayton then led him to offer a discussion on the difference, as he saw it, between Genesis 1 and Genesis 2. In speaking of Moses, he said: "**Only an idiot would write a history and then rewrite it—and especially rewrite it backwards**" (1980, emp. added).

The implication of such a statement is crystal clear: If both Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are the same kind of literal, historical narrative, then an idiot's mentality is reflected! Here, in summary form, is Clayton's argument.

- (1) Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 are the same kind of literal, historical documents, then they are contradictory and reflect an idiot's mentality.
- (2) But they are not really contradictory (hence, not idiotic) since they are not the same kind of writing; Genesis 1 is literal history, Genesis 2 is not.
- (3) Since Genesis 2 is not a literal, historical account, if Exodus 20:11 is taken from Genesis 2 (as Clayton wrongly suggests it is), then it is not literal history either.
- (4) But Exodus 20:11 **is** based on Genesis 2 (his wrong assumption).
- (5) Therefore, Exodus 20:11 is **not literal history** and we are not obliged to believe that the creation occurred in six, literal, historical days.

From the biblical perspective, however, the Mosaic affirmation—that in six days Jehovah made the heavens, the earth, the seas, and everything in them (Exodus 20:11)—is a clear reference to Genesis 1, **not Genesis 2**. And so, if Exodus 20:11 is based on Genesis 1 (which it is), and if Genesis 1 is literal history (which Clayton admits), then Exodus 20:11 **is a literal, historical account**. If Genesis 2 is not historical, these questions are appropriate.

- (1) Did God literally form Adam from the dust of the ground?
- (2) Was the Garden of Eden a real, historical place?
- (3) Was there an actual tree of knowledge of good and evil?
- (4) Did Adam really name all the animals?
- (5) Was Eve really made from Adam's side?

If Genesis 2 is not historical, none of these questions can be answered with certainty. Clayton's position is nothing short of rank modernism.

Approximately a decade after John Clayton began calling into question the historicity of the Genesis account, another progressive creationist, Davis A. Young, joined in the fray when he wrote: "I suggest that we will be on the right track if we stop treating Genesis 1 and the flood story as scientific and **historic** reports" (1987, 49:303, emp. added). Three years later, in 1990, he added:

The most acceptable view of Genesis 1 does not regard it as a chronicle of successive events during the first seven days (however long) of cosmic history. Rather, Genesis 1 should be regarded as a highly structured theological cosmology that extensively employs a royal-political metaphor because of the great importance of kingship in the world of ancient Israel. In contrast to the pagan, polytheistic myths of the cultures that surrounded the infant nation of Israel,

Genesis 1 portrays God as the sovereign King who calls into existence by his royal decrees those creatures that the nations sinfully worshiped and the myths deified. The days are part of the literary portrayal of the royal council of divine creation and may be employed analogously to a temporal succession of decrees by an earthly kind. The days are days in the sphere of divine action, a sphere that transcends time, not the first seven days of cosmic history. Genesis 1 is therefore a theological statement and should not be used to answer scientific questions about the age and historical unfolding of the cosmos that would have been alien to the Israelites. Genesis 1 tells us that God is the Creator, but it does not tell us when or how he created (pp. 58-59, parenthetical item in orig.).

Six years later, in 1996, two important books were produced by leading authors and subsequently published by highly respected companies. The first was by Karen Armstrong, the *New York Times* best-selling author of *A History of God*. In her book, *In the Beginning: A New Interpretation of Genesis* (published by Ballantine), she defended the standard Graf-Wellhausen *Documentary Hypothesis*, which suggests that the Pentateuch was not written by Moses, but instead was produced by a multiplicity of authors and/or redactors, including those known as J,E,D, and P. When writing about those authors' attempts to produce the book of Genesis, she stated:

The authors of Genesis do not give us historical information about life in Palestine during the second millennium BCE. In fact, as scholars have shown, they knew nothing about the period. **Frequently, they made mistakes.... Our authors are not interested in historical accuracy....** The tales of Genesis have a timeless quality because they address those regions of the spirit that remain opaque to us and yet exert an irresistible fascination.... Yet precisely because the authors of Genesis are dealing with such fundamental and difficult matters, they give us few precise teachings. There are no glib or facile messages in Genesis. **It is impossible to find a clear theology in its pages.**

...[T]he editors of Genesis seem to have introduced their readers to P's version of a serene and omnipotent deity only to dismantle it in later chapters. The God who dominates the first chapter of the Bible has disappeared from the human scene by the end of Genesis. Story after story reveals a much more disturbing God: as we shall see, the omnipotent God of the first chapter soon loses control of his creation; the immutable deity is seen to change his mind and even to feel threatened by humanity. The benevolent Creator becomes a fearful Destroyer. The impartial God who saw all his creatures as "good" now has favorites and teaches his protégés to behave in an equally unfair manner to their dependents. **It is impossible to come away from the Book of Genesis with a coherent notion of God** (1996, p. 13, emp. added).

The second significant volume published that year, *The Bible as Literature*, was authored by John B. Gabel, Charles B. Wheeler, and Anthony York, and was published by Oxford University Press. Gabel and his co-authors likewise accepted the Graf-Wellhausen documentary hypothesis, and therefore wrote:

This hypothesis explains certain obvious repetitions and contradictions.... We are not citing these problems to undermine the authority of scripture, as used to be the fashion when professional skeptics would lecture to audiences on "the mistakes of Moses" [a reference to the famous, nineteenth-century infidel Robert Ingersoll—BT]. We are merely supplying some of the data on which the documentary theory rests. Efforts to reconcile contradictions or explain away problems have been made and will be made by persons who feel that the integrity of the text (which for

them means its divine authority) must be preserved at all costs. The costs, however, tend to be rather high. Whenever there are contradictions or other problems, the documentary theory usually presents a more reasonable alternative, and it is accepted by a great many scholars who do not feel their faith threatened by the possibility that the Bible text, being a product of human history, experienced some adventures in reaching the point where it is now... (1996, pp. 112-113, parenthetical comment in orig.).

They then asserted that there are two completely different (and contradictory) "creation accounts" in Genesis 1 and 2, and that the Genesis "stories" drew from a "shared tradition" with earlier works (such as the so-called Gilgamesh epic and the Babylonian *Enuma Elish*). The authors continued:

Until archaeology and the recovery of ancient languages made it possible to go behind biblical narratives, there was no way for a reader of, say, Genesis 8:6-12 to know that the author was drawing upon an older narrative tradition for details in his story....

Since the detail about sending out birds from the ark is found in none of the earlier narratives except the Gilgamesh epic, **we know that this is the version adapted for the Hebrew Bible**, where all the key elements of the tradition are found.... **The use of a shared tradition, and especially its adaptation to the new use, is perhaps best shown in the creation story of Genesis 1. This is a reworking of the Babylonian creation "Enuma Elish,"** sometimes called the "*Babylonian Genesis*" (pp. 49,50, emp. added).

Then, late in 1999, Jeffery L. Sheler, a religion writer for *U.S. News & World Report*, authored a significant—and highly publicized—volume, *Is the Bible True?* He, too, defended the Graf-Wellhausen position, and suggested:

Nowhere has the question of literary genre been more central than in the wrangling over the Bible's veracity than in regard to what many scholars refer to as the "primordial history" in the opening chapters of Genesis. What are we to make of the stories of creation and of Noah's ark and the worldwide flood? Should they be taken as literal history, as religious myth, or perhaps as some kind of literary hybrid that combines features of both?...

While most biblical scholars consider the story of the flood a myth or a folktale or assign it to some other category of literature that allows for an allegorical interpretation, many conservatives have little difficulty imagining that an omnipotent God could pull off precisely what the Genesis story describes. **As with the creation narrative, however, the evidence and arguments from science stack up overwhelmingly against a literal interpretation of the flood story.... [T]here is little doubt that a lack of compelling evidence makes a purely literal reading of the Bible's primordial history a most difficult position to sustain....** Today, a growing number of conservative scholars, harking back to Augustine, are convinced that more **nuanced views of the biblical creation account are required to accommodate the knowledge revealed in science** (pp. 48,54,55,52, emp. added).

The positions of the theistic evolutionist, and those sympathetic with him, are quite clear. Genesis 1-11 cannot be accepted as literal history, but must be "reinterpreted" as: (a) mythical; (b) spiritual; (c) a royal-political metaphor; (d) a discussion of "things that never were"; (e) a commentary on man's condition **now**; (f) a "priestly discussion" for the Israelite people **then**; (g) etc.

## Is Genesis 1-11 Literal?

Contradictory claims of theistic evolutionists aside, the question remains: "Is the material contained in the first eleven chapters of the Bible mythical or literal?" Zimmerman has commented:

We cannot make any progress in answering the question until we decide whether or not Genesis is patently unscientific. By this I do not mean to deal with the question of whether or not it is a scientific textbook. This red herring ought to be buried permanently. The question rather is, "Does it contain information which is correct in substance?" (1968, 1:55).

It is my contention that **the material in Genesis 1-11 is historically true**, and that it represents believable, literal history that is "correct in substance." I share the view of the eminent Old Testament scholar, Edward J. Young, when he wrote:

The position adopted in this article is that the events recorded in the first chapter of the Bible actually took place. They were historical events, and Genesis one, therefore, is to be regarded as historical. In employing the word "historical," we are rejecting the definition which would limit the word to that which man can know through scientific investigation alone. We are using the word rather as including all which has transpired. Our knowledge of the events of creation we receive through the inscripturated revelation of God (1964, pp. 50-51).

Before I present the evidence documenting Genesis 1-11 as literal history, I would like to comment on the statement that the Bible should be accepted as "literally" true. Oftentimes, creationists are asked: "Do you believe that **everything** in the Bible is **literally** true?" The answer to such a question depends on the definition of the word "literally." In his book, *Christ and the Cosmos*, E.H. Andrews presented an excellent discussion of this issue. Although it is somewhat lengthy, I wish to present it here because of its clarity.

First of all, creationism does not insist on a completely literal interpretation of the Bible. It calls rather for a **literary** interpretation. Let me explain. The word "literal" creates all kinds of difficulties in people's minds. Usually, those who oppose the creationist viewpoint attach the label "literalist" to the creationist and then use this assignation to ridicule him. But this is wholly unfair, for the creationist makes no such claim. Indeed, if we try to interpret the Bible literally at all points we find ourselves in all kinds of trouble, for a literal statement is a statement of precise fact, or as close to that as human language will allow....

We see, therefore, that there are different literary forms employed in Genesis 1 and 2. We recognize that the Bible uses literary devices such as metaphor, simile, anthropomorphism and dramatic forms to convey its message....

Having established, then, that we do not necessarily interpret Scripture in a slavishly literal manner, but rather according to its literary genre and therefore according to the intention of the author, we nevertheless insist that those passages where the form and content are historical must be interpreted as genuine history....

When we turn to such passages as Genesis 1 to 3, and to the flood narrative, for example, we find that their contents are presented plainly as historical fact. Those facts may be expressed using a variety of dramatic and literary devices, but the author nevertheless claims to be relating

events that actually took place. The narratives are accounts, not of myth, but of reality. So then, creationism adopts a historical approach to these historical portions of Scripture (1986, pp. 80-83, emp. in orig.).

For generations biblical creationism has adopted a historical approach to the first eleven chapters of Genesis, and for good reason—**these chapters discuss real, literal, historical events**. There is nothing in the biblical record that suggests Genesis 1-11 should be viewed as containing mythical or allegorical material. And such a claim is supported quite adequately by the available evidence. Here is a portion of that evidence.

1. The style of these early chapters of Genesis does not suggest a mythical or allegorical approach. Thomas H. Horne, in his classic, multi-volume set, *An Introduction to the Critical Study and Knowledge of the Holy Scriptures*, wrote: "The style of these chapters, as indeed, of the whole book of Genesis, is strictly historical, and betrays no vestige whatever of allegorical or figurative description; this is so evident to anyone that reads with attention as to need no proof " (1970, 5:6). In his work, *Genesis: Historical or Mythological?*, Edward C. Wharton commented in the same vein.

From the outset, the Bible is written in the context and appearance of sane and sober history. There is not the slightest intimation that these Scriptures contain myth. The historical and literal nature of the Record is easily determined in contrast to the parables, allegories, and symbolisms which are usually defined within the context. We know, for an illustration, that Luke 8:4-15 is a parable for it is so stated at the beginning. We know that Galatians 4:21-31 is an allegory for the same reason. Where the Bible teaches by allegory or parable or symbolism it is distinctly so labeled or otherwise easily understood in the context. To read the Bible's parables, allegories, etc., and then to read Genesis is to know that Genesis bears no faint resemblance to any of these, but that it appears to be what it asks us to believe it is—historical fact (n.d., p. 2).

Edward J. Young declared:

Genesis one is not poetry or saga or myth, but straightforward, trustworthy history, and, inasmuch as it is a divine revelation, accurately records those matters of which it speaks. That Genesis one is historical may be seen from these considerations: (1) It sustains an intimate relationship with the remainder of the book. The remainder of the book (i.e., The Generations) presupposes the Creation Account, and the Creation Account prepares for what follows. The two portions of Genesis are integral parts of the book and complement one another. (2) The characteristics of Hebrew poetry are lacking. There are poetic accounts of the creation and these form a striking contrast to Genesis one (1964, p. 105).

Concerning Dr. Young's final point, Raymond Surburg wrote:

To discern the difference between the historical narrative of Genesis 1:1-2:3 as a prosaic account and a truly poetic version of the creation miracle, the reader needs only to compare Genesis 1 with Psalm 104:5-9; Psalm 12; Job 38-39; Proverbs 8:23-31. These are extremely poetic in character. In Psalms 8 and 19 poetic statements describe the heavenly bodies but there is a real difference between these statements and Genesis 1-2 (1969, p. 2).

In his book, *The Biblical Basis for Modern Science*, Henry Morris commented:

Genesis 1-11 is certainly recorded as serious and sober history, and it leads directly and naturally into Genesis 12 and the rest of Genesis. Genesis in turn is the necessary foundation for all the rest of Scripture. If these first eleven chapters are not historical, then our entire Biblical foundation has been removed (1984, p. 116).

2. The Genesis narrative is to be accepted as literal history because this is the view adopted by Jesus Christ. As Whitcomb has said:

...It is the privilege of these men to dispense with an historical Adam if they so desire. But they do not at the same time have the privilege of claiming that Jesus Christ spoke the truth. Adam and Jesus Christ stand or fall together, for Jesus said: "If ye believed Moses, ye would believe me. But if ye believe not his writings, how shall ye believe my words?" (John 5:46- 47). Our Lord also insisted that "till heaven and earth pass away, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law (**and this includes Genesis**) till all things be accomplished" (Matthew 5:18) [1972, pp. 110-111, emp. and parenthetical comment in orig.].

In Matthew 19, a discussion between Christ and the Pharisees is recorded, the topic of which was marriage, divorce, and remarriage. The passage makes it clear that the Pharisees' intent was to trick the Lord into contradicting the Law of Moses and thereby turn the people against Him, because most of the Israelites viewed Moses with great respect—and rightly so. On that occasion, however, the Lord did not fall prey to the Jewish leaders' trap because He understood their strategy. Instead, He pointedly asked those hypocrites: "Have ye not read [citing Genesis 1:27 —BT] that He who made them from the beginning made them male and female?" (Matthew 19:4). Concerning this discourse, Wayne Jackson observed:

Here Jesus plainly affirms that: (1) There was a **beginning**, (2) The first couple was **made**, (3) They were **male and female**. When Christ spoke of Adam and Eve being "made," He used the aorist Greek verb *epoisesen*, stressing the fact that this pair was made by **single acts** of creation. Had the Lord subscribed to the notion that the first humans evolved over vast ages of time, he would have employed the Greek imperfect tense, which is designed to emphasize **progressive** action at some time in the past. Thus, Christ actually verbally refuted the concept of evolutionary development. And certainly the Lord was in a position **to know** what took place in the beginning, for He was there (John 1:1), and was the active agent of creation (Colossians 1:16) [1974, pp. 26- 27, emp. in orig.].

In the words of Henry Morris: "Denying the historical validity of the Creation account also undermines the authority of the New Testament and of Christ Himself!" (1966, p. 92). Whitcomb concluded: "If Genesis is not historically dependable, then Jesus is not a dependable guide to all truth, and we are without a Savior" (1972, p. 111).

3. The Genesis narrative is to be accepted as literal and historical because inspired writers of the New Testament not only referred often to the narrative, but also made doctrinal arguments that depended upon the historical validity of the Genesis account. Paul contended that woman was "of " (*ek*—a Greek preposition meaning "out of ") man (1 Corinthians 11:8,12). He called Adam and Eve by name in 1 Timothy 2:13, and based his instructions to Christians for woman's work in the church on the actual **order** of creation. The apostle considered Adam as historical as Moses (Romans 5:14), and he clearly said that "the serpent deceived Eve by his craftiness" (2 Corinthians 11:3).

The creation itself is attributed to the word of God (Hebrews 11:3), and Peter referred to the emerging of the Earth as an event that actually occurred (2 Peter 3:5b). There was no question in Paul's mind about God's fiat creation (2 Corinthians 4:6). Likewise, in 1 Corinthians 11:7 the apostle stated that man had been made in the image of God, and he spoke specifically about man's creation in Matthew 19:4 and Mark 10:6. Christ was called by Paul "the last Adam" (1 Corinthians 15:45). If the **first** Adam was a myth, then is the **last** (Jesus Christ) also a myth? Will theistic evolutionists actually be willing to go this far? Alan Hayward wrote:

Worse still, if we treat the Fall of Adam as a piece of religious fiction we strike at the very heart of the Christian gospel. The liberal is forced to reinterpret Paul's teaching about salvation through Christ's Cross in this fashion:

For as in [the fictitious] Adam all die, so also in the [real] Christ shall all be made alive.... Just as we have borne the image of the [fictitious] man of dust, we shall also bear the image of the [real] man of heaven (I Corinthians 15:22,49).

If, because of one [fictitious] man's trespass, death reigned through that one [fictitious] man, much more will those who receive the abundance of grace and the [real] free gift of righteousness [truly] reign in life through the one [real] Jesus Christ (Romans 5:17).

Such a blend of fact and fiction is a flimsy foundation on which to build a doctrine of eternal life. Observe how Paul weaves Adam's sin and Christ's righteous death together into the very fabric of salvation. Paul evidently regarded Adam and Christ as the two key characters in human history, each playing a vital role in the destiny of mankind. But if Paul was mistaken, and Adam's fall is actually little more than a touching tale for tiny tots, then why should we believe Paul when he tells us that Christ rose miraculously from the dead? And "if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile," Paul warns us (I Corinthians 15:17) [1985, p. 191, bracketed items in orig.].

4. The Genesis narrative is to be accepted as literal and historical because any attempt to "mythologize" it represents an overt attack upon God's nature. Wayne Jackson has explored this concept.

The Bible teaches that the creation of the heavens, the earth, and the inhabitants thereof, was for the glorification of Almighty God. Any attempt, therefore, to nullify the doctrine of **creation** is in reality an assault upon **God Himself**. "The heavens declare the glory of God and the firmament showeth His handiwork" (Psalms 19:1). "Even everyone is called by My name, for I have created him for My glory. I have formed him, yea, I have made him" (Isaiah 43:7). "For in Him, and through Him, and to Him, are all things; to whom be glory forever!" (Romans 11:36) [n.d., p. 10, emp. in orig.].

5. The Genesis narrative is to be accepted as literal and historical because genuine science has not discredited, and from the very nature of the scientific method cannot discredit, the Genesis account of origins. George Howe has discussed this point.

The topic of origins is usually treated as if it lay exclusively in the domain of science. Such classification is unfortunate and erroneous when the limitations of the scientific method are evaluated. Science is properly equipped to cope with problems of "how" here and now. For example, such matters as: "how chromosomes migrate in dividing cells," "how water ascends in the trunks of trees," and "how sugars move in phloem tissue" fall clearly in the sphere of science.

Yet none of these sample problems has been thoroughly and absolutely settled. If scientific methods as yet cannot completely solve contemporary problems, how can these same methods be expected to yield absolute answers about origins? This does not belittle the amazing achievements of experimental science, but throws the limitations of the method into full focus (1964, p. 24).

Many theistic evolutionists have concluded that "science" has proven evolution true, and in turn has disproven the biblical account of creation. But their beginning premise is incorrect; science has not proven evolution true. Nor will it ever do so, for such a task falls far beyond the scope of the scientific method.

6. The Genesis narrative is to be accepted as literal and historical because:

Denying the historical accuracy of the Bible in the account of creation leads to a doctrinal position known as **modernism**. If men evolved from the beast, the sin nature is an inherited animal characteristic and cannot be due to the fall of man through disobedience. This denies the need of a Redeemer, and thus the atonement of Christ is neglected or denied (Davidheiser, 1969, pp. 168-169, emp. in orig.).

Or, as Culp stated:

One who doubts the Genesis account will not be the same man he once was, for his attitude toward Holy Scripture has been eroded by false teaching. Genesis is repeatedly referred to in the New Testament, and it cannot be separated from the total Christian message (1975, pp. 160-161).

For many Bible believers today, the rebuke offered by the Lord to the two on the road to Emmaus is applicable: "O fools and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken" (Luke 24:25). Jesus accused some of His day of erring because "ye know not the Scriptures, nor the power of God" (Mark 12:24). Thomas Whitelaw summarized the issue well.

If we are to listen to many expositors of no mean authority, we must believe that what seems so clearly defined in Genesis—as if very great pains had been taken that there should be no possibility of mistake—is not the meaning of the text at all.... A person who is not a Hebrew scholar can only stand aside and admire the marvelous flexibility of a language which admits of such diverse interpretations (n.d., 1:4).

If we are unwilling to accept Genesis 1-11 as historical, how, then, will we be able to accept: (a) **any** biblical concept of man's origin; (b) the unifying concept of both Old and New Testaments (i.e., the need for a coming Redeemer, which is based on information found in Genesis 3); (c) God's personally designed plan of salvation; (d) the Sonship of Christ (since Jesus so often testified to the accuracy of the Genesis account); (e) the truthfulness of the Old and New Testament writers; and (f) the overall authority of the Scriptures as the inspired Word of God?

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