

## A Brief Critical Analysis of *Beyond Creation Science: Some Preliminary Concerns*

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The following article will be a bit technical, but I will try to explain definitions as best I can as I go along. This response to an issue that has been clouding up the horizon, in my opinion, for some time and has not yet been adequately answered from a Biblical Preterist perspective.

Tim Martin and Jeff Vaughn have written a book (*Beyond Creation Science: New Covenant Creation From Genesis to Revelation*. Apocalyptic Vision Press, 2007) which makes the bold claim that unless Preterists of all forms accept its premises, then Preterism as we know it will simply fall apart. It claims to solve the problem of the so called "Genesis debate" concerning science and the supposed discrepancies with reading *Genesis* "literally." It also makes the bold claim that those who hold to a "young earth" are naïve, ill-informed, and, as Preterists, inconsistent.

It is not the intention of this article to answer every argument the book proposes. Instead, I want to focus on a few arguments that, if found to be false, seriously damage much of the enterprise of Martin and Vaughn. This is not a happy task since 1), these are brothers in Christ; 2), they are Preterists with which I have much in common; and 3), we would all like to see unity in such matters so that the larger community can continue to grow. However, over the years of surveying Preterist conferences, letters, e-mails, etc., in spite of unity in all points of doctrine, preterism is growing all over the world – little by little.

It is my hope that those who endorse Martin and Vaughn will seriously read the following pages with an open and cautious mind. That they will consider the arguments I raise and the sources from which they are noted (Martin and Vaughn even credit me on page 18 for being critical). It is also my hope that I will be as fair in my treatment as possible, steering away from a diatribe. However, I write this with the conviction that much of the methodology found in *Beyond Creation Science* (BCS) is unbiblical, unsound, and goes against the founded principles of logic and biblical hermeneutics. As such, BCS, *while valuable in many regards to the Preterist community as a major stride in purely fulfilled eschatological studies*, is not "the future of Preterism." It is merely one attempt at many, and that is why we should not shut ourselves off to criticism to this view – but rather embrace criticism of this view in the hopes that a synthesis will occur that we can all agree upon, that correction in each other's approach to *Genesis* (and

issues surrounding the role of science and epistemology) will bring about a greater understanding for all involved.

### I. The Source

Milton Terry was a nineteenth century Methodist Episcopalian who graduated from Yale University. He had various pastorates before becoming a renowned teacher at Garrett Biblical Institute. In 1884 he left the pastorate and became Professor of Greek and Hebrew Exegesis at Northwestern University. It was part due to the success of his book *Biblical Hermeneutics* (1883) and later *Biblical Apocalypics* (1898). Both of these works have played an enormous role for Preterists. I first came to read both of the first reprinted Baker Books editions in the late 1980's and have consulted them ever since.

Terry was not a "full" Preterist, but his exegesis of *Matthew 24* and *Revelation* as a whole was, for all intents and purposes, ninety-five percent preteristic. His view of the millennium was more or less Amillennial, in that it spoke of the entirety of the "church age." Terry largely derived his material from J.S. Russell, a Congregationalist minister, who wrote, *The Parousia* (Baker Books, reprint 1887, 1985) – and he was not a "full" Preterist, either.

Terry lived in the age when science was booming. Darwinism was now permanently on the scientific scene, as well as other large "breakthroughs" in earth sciences. I mention Terry because, 1), his association with the Preterist community; and 2), the influence he has on Martin and Vaughn. If one reads the Author Index in BCS (509) one can see that next to Henry Morris, Milton Terry is quoted sixty-one times. In other words, many of the more important points BCS makes is derived largely from the material found in the two books by Terry.

### II. The Problem

The problem is that Milton Terry, being virtually alone in his opinion (since he cites few to defend his view on this matter ), was, as far as I can tell, the first to suppose that *Genesis 1-11* is largely to be classified as "apocalyptic" in genre. Hermman Gunkel, who wrote *Schopfung und Chaos in Urzeit und Endzeit: Eine religionggeschliche Untersuchung uber Gen 1 und Ap Joh 12* in 1895 (12 years after Terry) was "the first modern scholar to have seriously attempted to trace the roots of apocalyptic literature in ancient texts" (*The Encyclopedia of Apocalypticism: Volume 1 – The Origins of Apocalypticism in Judaism and Christianity*, Ed., J. Collins, Continuum, 2003, 3). Gunkel's work was and is a landmark, but very liberal.

The *reason* Terry applied apocalyptic to *Genesis* is *not* on the basis of Preterism and *not* on the basis of pure exegesis. He stated his reason quite plainly:

...the discoveries of science have effectually exploded the old notion of the creation of earth and the heavens in six ordinary days" (*Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 40).

Terry all but repeated this earlier in *Biblical Hermeneutics* (Ch. 31, "Alleged Contradictions of Science", 583-ff). Two things are to be mentioned here: 1), Terry, writing in 1889, spoke of the "old notion" of the Young Earth Creation view (YEC), yet one of the premises of Martin and Vaughn is that YEC did not exist prior to Ellen G. White. That premise alone is false, but must be explored in another article. Second, Terry was an empiricist. He believed in scientific methodology for discovering truth (and yet held to a high reverence for the Bible). Therefore, *the overwhelming evidence of science became the basis for his rejection of Genesis 1-11 as an account of detailed history*. If, after all, empirical earth sciences have "effectually exploded" the notion of a young universe, then it follows quite logically that *Genesis* cannot be talking about creation that would impact Science at all. Of course, the scientific theories in vogue during his day have been "effectually exploded" as well! Terry never heard of the little German theorist that would come on the scene in a few decades.

It may not be the case that Martin and Vaughn start with Science, but argue, rather, that they start with the Bible (in fact, they deny that they start with the word of God – instead they start with "the Trinitarian nature of God himself" – this rather problematic epistemic must be countered separately –p. 383). However, one cannot fail to mention the sixty-one times Terry is referred to in their work and the fact that Terry, Martin and Vaughn classify *Genesis* as "apocalyptic." Either Terry is inconsistent, or Martin and Vaughn are – or perhaps, both parties are.

## II. A. Classifying "Genre."

Genre is defined as "A classification of a written form that is used in literature as studied in form criticism. Examples include historical narrative, didactic, prophetic, apocalypse and the like" (*Pocket Dictionary for the Study of Biblical Hebrew*, Murphy, Todd J., IVP, 2003, "Genre").

Prose is straight historical narrative. It is a "just the facts, ma'am" approach to writing. *I Kings* and *II Kings* are prose; historical narratives. In fact, they are classified as Historical Books in the Bible. This classification is based upon two major considerations: the information the books contain, and the style of writing. In Hebrew there are marked differences of style, structure, syntax and vocabulary between *Psalms*, *Job*, *Wisdom of Solomon*, *Proverbs* and the Prophets (Wisdom Literature) and the Historical Books. Prose is "straight monologue" and "any type of writing that is not poetic" (*op cit.*, "Prose").

More technically, "A Hebrew narrative is typically initiated with a wayyiqtol form, often *vayehiy*. A succession of wayyiqtol verb forms constructs the framework or main line of the

narrative" (*A Workbook for Intermediate Hebrew*, Chisholm Jr., Robert B., Kregal Pub., 2006. 11). What this means is that in Hebrew we see, "And David said....and David went....and David saw...then Absalom said.... then Ruth went...." (this formula is called the "wayyiqtol" pattern) It is "straight monologue." There are no breaks.

"The structure of Hebrew poetry differs significantly from prose. The backbone of Hebrew narrative is the succession of wayyiqtol (imperfect/preterite with *waw* consecutive) verbal forms. The dominant structure in Hebrew poetry is parallelism" (*ibid.*, 12). A few definitions are needed here. "Parallelism" is a sentence followed by a somewhat similar sentence: "The Lord rescued me from my enemies/He delivered me from those who hate me." It is an immediate occurrence in the text and is not to be confused with repeated patterns in a given story or stories. For example, Abraham "goes down" to Egypt; Jacob "goes down" to Egypt; Joseph "goes down" to Egypt, etc. Repetitions or parallel patterns is not the same as parallelisms. *Waw* is the word for "and", "but", "then" in Hebrew. A *waw* consecutive is a series of "ands" attached to various imperfect verbs ("went down", "saw", "ran" etc.) in a successive order. Poetry is void of this phenomenon.

What is interesting is that Terry made the same distinctions in *Biblical Hermeneutics* (pp. 82-106). However, "apocalyptic" can use the wayyiqtol forms though it contains the elements of poetry as well. Apocalyptic genre often occurs in poetic structures (parallelism). *Psalms* 18 is a fine example of both apocalyptic imagery (exaggerated image of God as a thunderous, mountain smashing, cloud riding warrior) set in parallelisms.

Secondly, apocalyptic is heavily laden with gross and fantastic symbols, often void of any absolute interpretation (interpreters tend to become lost in the details). Apocalypses have been defined as "historical" (like *Revelation* or *Daniel*) or completely otherworldly (*I Enoch*, even though here Enoch relates the history of *Genesis*). Collins wrote that it is a "genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework...disclosing a transcendent reality..." (Collins, *op. cit.*, xiii). Now, this might sound like a definition that one could fit the narrative of *Genesis* in. However, marked features occur in this genre:

1. There is a mediator of the "heavenly vision."
2. It is called a "dream" or a "heavenly vision" at the outset.
3. The recipient of the dream or vision is usually "caught away".
4. The recipient is usually identified, so as to give weight to the visionary writing. Like, "I, John wrote the things I saw," or "I, Daniel, was given a vision," or "This is the vision given to Isaiah concerning," etc.,
5. The images require interpretation which is usually given by an angel.
6. The images are often grossly fantastic and mysteriously clouded by enigma, followed by puzzlement and wonder.

7. They are a classification of Prophetic Literature, using a historical narrative frame, but largely peppered with poetical structure (parallelisms) – in other words, not straight forward, but often broken lines, independent nouns, verb-less stanzas, etc.

“Prophecy records its message in poetry; apocalyptic in narrative accounts of visions and heavenly journeys full of mystery....The events described in apocalyptic literature are often presented with literary techniques found more commonly in poetry: metaphor, hyperbole, personification, irony, numerical patterns and so forth” (*Dictionary of Biblical Imagery*, Eds. Leland Ryken, James C. Wilhoit, Tremper Longman III, “Apocalypse, Genre of”, IVP, 1998, 36).

An honest reader of the opening narrative of *Genesis* will find none of these elements that are so consistently found in apocalyptic literature. If only we had, “I, Moses, was carried away into thick darkness, where there was formlessness and void, to the beginning of heavens and land, and I saw and looked...” There is none of that here. There is, however, every element of “straight monologue.” In other words, historical narrative. To ignore the overwhelming definition and classifying elements that make an apocalypse what it is, and continue to insist that *Genesis* is apocalyptic, is mistaken.

## II. B. Examples

In *Genesis* I will give two examples of what I mean exactly. First, in *Genesis* 2.18-23a we find a straight forward wayyiqtol narrative structure: “and...and...and...and...” etc. However, when we come to 23.b this feature ends:

“This! At last! Bone of my bones! And flesh of my flesh! To this will be called, “woman”! Because out of man was taken this! Therefore man leaves his father and his mother and cleaves (*waw* with perfect verb) to his wife and they become (*waw* with perfect) one flesh” (my translation).

Note the breaks. No verbs except two (“called” and “taken”) without the *waw*- consecutive. The verbs that have *waw* are perfects, not the wayyiqtol form. After this eruption of poetic intimacy, the text once again turns to straight monologue, “And both of them were naked” using the wayyiqtol form (*waw* with the imperfect form). This is standard Hebrew. Poetry is clearly marked off in the text.

The second example involves apocalyptic style. It is found in *Genesis* 15. There, from 15.1-12a we find a few *waw* consecutives. But, in 12b the text becomes broken into a series of different syntactical structures: “As the sun was going down (*waw* with imperfect) and a deep sleep fell (perfect) on Abram. And behold! Dread! Great darkness fell (perfect) upon him...” God begins to speak to him using only one *waw* consecutive (13-16). Then, picking up parallelism, verse 17 starts with a *waw* consecutive, and then moves right into poetry again:

“And when the sun had gone down, and dark it was (“and” is added to the noun, not the verb)...And Behold! Fire pot! Smoking! Torch! Flaming! which passed (perfect) between the pieces.”

This irregularity continues until 16.1,2 where a new story begins and the *waw* consecutive continues throughout with no breaks. Why, then, is the structure in chapter 15 irregular? 15.1 tells us: “After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram *in the vision*...” Chapter 15 is a *vision* and the text explicitly tells us so. It shows us the recipient (Abram). It has fantastic imagery. It is given as “the word of the Lord” (a typical phrase in prophetic-apocalyptic works). Following the definition of Collins, the apocalyptic vision of Abram does indeed occur with very few *waw* consecutives; that is, *within* a narrative framework. However, the text is so marked by parallelisms and broken sentence structure that it meets the criteria of apocalyptic. It makes the point that when Hebrew wants to express apocalyptic or poetry it is so marked *within* the text that it is unmistakable. *Genesis* 1 hardly meets any of these demands (This chapter contains fifty-one *waw* consecutives. 1.27 being the exception of parallelism). Even where poetry occurs in *Genesis*, as in the example of chapter 2, it is clearly marked out *within* the historical narrative so that it is easily seen for what it is: poetry. Countless examples of this could be given.

### III. C. Martin and Vaughn Answer

Martin and Vaughn are quite aware of the issue of “genre” in *Genesis*. From pages 265-306 they attempt to give a plausible reason as to why *Genesis* 1-11 should be taken as “apocalyptic.” I believe that *some* of the things that are written in this section are true and actually supports the case I make. *Some* of the things they write about are false, or do not follow and suffer from reading apocalyptic genre into every aspect of 1-11. In other words, in seeking to demonstrate that 1-11 does indeed contain “poetry”, “prophecy”, “symbols” and “apocalyptic” (as I have already noted that it does), this does not mean that *all* of 1-11 is purely symbolic or apocalyptic. It appears to me that their argument here becomes somewhat jumbled.

First off, and why I, too, began with this issue, is that they clearly demonstrate its *first importance*: “Our first question to answer, if we wish to understand *Genesis* on its own terms, is this: **What kind of literature do we find in early *Genesis*?**” (267 – bold theirs). This is drawn from a quotation given by Terry. There can be, then, no argument that this is the first issue to deal with, and if this first issue “determines” (Terry) how *Genesis* is to be interpreted, and if this first issue they delineate is wrong, then what follows from this is not necessarily true, either. In the words of the philosopher, Ludwig Wittgenstein, “Ich darf mir nicht den Ast absagen, auf welchem ich sitze” (“I must not saw off the branch on which I am sitting”) – (*Philosophical*

*Investigations* Germ. and Eng. trans. Oxford: Blackwell 2d ed. 1997, sect. 55). The “branch” that Martin and Vaughn sit on is that *Genesis* 1-11 is apocalyptic.

First, drawing from David Chilton (*Days of Vengeance*, Dominion Press, 1987 – 29), they note the “presence of prophecy in *Genesis* 3.15” (268). I have already noted the presence of poetry in *Genesis* 2. Remember the definition of Collins: a “genre of revelatory literature with a narrative framework...disclosing a transcendent reality” (see above). No one is denying that apocalyptic literature contains narrative frameworks. Poetry, prophecy, symbolism, etc. can be contained *within* a historical narrative. This does not mean, however, that *all* of that narrative is non-historical or purely symbolic.

For example, citing *Genesis* 3.15, we find *waw*-consecutives throughout 3.1-14 – straight forward historical narrative, then, as we should expect, if 3.15 is “prophetic”, it will be marked *within* the framework as being such. And it is. 3.15 begins with a conjunction (*waw*) and a noun followed by a verb (“And enmity I will put between you and between the woman and between your seed and between her seed. He shall bruise (imperfect, no conjunction) you. Head! And you (conjunction with noun) shall bruise him (imperfect, no conjunction). Heel!” (my translation). This proves my point above about the nature of Biblical Hebrew. It marks out poetry, prophecy *within* a historical narrative so that we understand *this is not necessarily literal, but could be metaphorical at this spot*. The syntax here is notably broken from the flow of the *waw* consecutive narrative.

What Martin and Vaughn want us to conclude, however, is false. They move from this verse and conclude that the *whole* literary style of *Genesis* 1-11 is apocalyptic! This is just bad logic. In logic, *Some* A is B does not mean that *All* A is B. We are not to conclude, and there is no textual reason to conclude, that just because 3.15 introduces poetry (in this case prophecy) and symbolism (“head” “heel” “seed”) that Adam, Eve, Serpent, Tree of Good and Evil, Garden of Eden and the command not to eat were not real, historical events (Martin and Vaughn do not argue that Adam was non-historical, but we must deal with that issue later below).

*Luke* 3.37 traces the genealogy of Jesus to Adam, which means that Jesus was indeed the “seed” of the woman, Eve. They really existed. *Symbolically* Jesus did bruise the head of Satan (notice Paul, alluding to this prophecy, wrote, “and soon he shall crush Satan under your feet” (*Rom.* 16.20). Paul does not say, “the serpent” but “Satan.” The serpent was Satan, not just a non-historical symbol for “man’s evil conscience”. Paul is clearly alluding to 3.15, and interpreting it. For metaphor to work, there must be a concrete and tangible object that it is representing. If not, then it is a metaphor for nothing.

Next, Martin and Vaughn take on the definition of apocalyptic genre given above and attempt to use Chilton to prove their point (269-270). The distinction Chilton makes between

“apocalyptic genre” as defined by modern scholarship and “biblical apocalypics” as he defined it is not due to the description given above. It is due to Chilton’s postmillennialism (which he adhered to when he wrote *Days of Vengeance*). Typically, intertestamental apocalypics and even second century Christian ones, foretold of doom and destruction. For Chilton, God’s judgment in A.D. 70 served as a gateway for postmillennial victory over the earth. Of course, then, Chilton would make such a distinction! What Chilton does not express, and what he does not get into with detail, is that the *description* of apocalyptic material, whether biblical authors or pseudepigraphal ones, matches. Of course, the main difference between them is that the biblical authors are inspired, whereas the others are merely fictional works.

*I Enoch* (and most pseudepigraphal writings) follow the pattern of the biblical apocalyptic prophets. They make their name known, “I, Enoch, was caught away...” or, “I, Daniel, had a dream...” or “I, John, saw a vision...” They generally have an “angel” interpreting their visions. They interweave historical reality with poetry. Secondly, *I Enoch* does not end in doom. It ends with a new heavens and a new earth. It ends with victory – just not *postmillennial* victory. This follows simply because of the fact that the pseudepigraphal authors *copied* the style of the biblical apocalyptic authors. The biblical authors came *first* and set the *standard* for what would be termed “apocalyptic” so that we would expect similarities. To state that modern criticism of apocalypics, and the definition afforded by that criticism, is off limits as to what constitutes biblical apocalypics is unfounded.

Martin and Vaughn *have* to make this accusation because they know that *Genesis* 1-11 does not meet the 7 fold criteria given above, and this virtually explodes their argument as a whole. I firmly believe that *some* aspects contained *within* a historical narrative are poetic. No Hebrew scholar would deny this. But to make *all* of *Genesis* 1-11 “apocalyptic” because there are *some* elements of poetry, prophecy, etc., is a logical leap that cannot be made.

Martin and Vaughn, it appears, do not even follow their own advice. On pages 249-252 they spend a good deal of time trying to convince us that “day” is a symbol for an “undefined amount of time”. But, why is this the case? If apocalyptic, why can’t “day” be a simple 24 hour period of time? It is, after all, a *symbol*, right? It is not a *literal* 24 hour day. This would be like saying the “sun” is a symbol for an unspecified amount of heat and light! It would be more in keeping with saying something along the lines like, “the 24 hour day and week days of *Genesis* 1 do not represent what literally took place. It is a symbolic Worship Week, ending in Sabbath. By this common representation (for every school boy knows what a “day” is), God is saying that he ordered creation in terms of Worship, regardless of how many eons it took for God to *really* make the universe.” If “day” is symbolic of “unspecified time”, then Martin and Vaughn have fallen into the same trap as the “day-age” theorists, who *do* believe that *Genesis* is speaking in terms of a scientific cosmogony (that is, they try to fuse *Genesis* 1 with science)!



They should, rather, follow Terry's advice, who did not seek to take "day" as the "day-age" theorists did in his own time. It's a "day" defined by the number, "1" and further delineated by the phrase, "evening and morning." You cannot get any more specific than that. It's not an "age", and if *Genesis* is not at all concerned with the origins of the universe in a real, historical, scientific sense, there would be no harm whatsoever in taking "day" as a 24 hour period, symbolically speaking, of course.

While I am on this matter of "day" the exegesis given by Martin and Vaughn in other passages is not too impressive. In fact, it violates the rules of grammar that are uniformly in agreement. They want to make the phrase "evening and morning" mean an "undefined amount of time" (251). They ask the question, "How do you have a literal evening and morning without a sun?" Ask God. The fact that "light" was separated from "darkness" should answer that question – and time is determined by God. But this wades into matters no scientist can answer. Let us stick with the text (as if the author of *Genesis* never wondered if anyone would catch his goof!).

First, they use *Ex* 27.21. Well, they quote only part of that verse. "In the tent of meeting outside of the veil which is before the testimony, Aaron and his sons, from evening to morning shall tend it before the Lord – a statute for ages, throughout their generations..." It is an instruction of what Aaron and his sons are to do *daily* (tend) for *ages* and *generations* (lots of days). How they get that "evening and morning" here means "undetermined time" strains the credibility of sound exegesis. Rather, the phrase can be dynamically understood as "every day you shall tend in the Tent of Meeting."

Moving on, they go to *Pss* 90.5-6. First off, we are in poetry (a simile is used). Men are like grass which grows and flourishes in the morning and fades in the evening and withers. Martin and Vaughn want us to think that "grass" here is one lawn, so that the grass in your lawn grew up in one morning, then fades again that very evening. "Does grass grow up to maturity in one day 24-hour day (sic)?" (251). The psalmist does not say "grow up to maturity" – it says "flourishes" and "is renewed." That's what dew does to my lawn in the morning. But, I can point to another lawn that was green in the morning, and brown by the next day. I live in Florida. The psalmist lived in the desert. Nonetheless, this is poetic and a simile – either way, it does not prove that "evening and morning" in *Genesis* 1 means unspecified time.

*Pss* 55.17 does not support their case, either. The text reads, "Evening and morning and at noon I will pray." Their exegesis: "David refers to constant prayer and petition before God. He gives no defined time statement of 24 hours" (251). Again, this psalm explains what David does on *each* given day (every day): evening, morning, and noon. Are we seriously to believe that

“noon” is not a specific time? How much more specific can David be? Daniel prayed “three times a day”. How would they define that symbolic day and the number three?

The above examples are easy to dismiss, but some may be convinced by the next example found in *Da.* 8.26. They offer very little exegesis to prove their point. The verse reads, “The vision of the evenings and the mornings which has been told is true...for it pertains to many days.” Now, the Hebrew here has “evening and morning” as singular, but most translations give the plural rendering. Martin and Vaughn try to make that case that since “days” is plural and “evening and morning” is singular, then evening and morning refer to an unspecified amount of time. They offer no exegesis, no grammatical reason, no footnotes.

However, as one that is familiar with Hebrew, their conclusion here violates a well known rule. In 8.14 we have 2,300 “evening and morning” (singular). The number 2,300 is actually three Hebrew words: 2,000 (dual noun) – 3 (adjective construct) – 100 (plural noun). The number is adjectival (an adjective describes a noun – which in this case is “evening and morning”) and occurs *after* the singular phrase “evening and morning.” Rule: “the absolute number is used with a singular noun” (*Biblical Hebrew Syntax* – Bruce K. Waltke, M. O’Connor, Eisenbrauns, 1990, 277). This is an adjectival use of a number. The plurality of the number transfers to the singularity of the noun, therefore, the translations, “evenings and mornings” (plural) are grammatically correct.

We see the same in *Genesis* 46.27. “And the sons of Joseph who were born to him in Egypt were two persons. All the persons of the house of Jacob that came into Egypt were seventy.” Good translation. But, see the words “persons”? The word is “nepesh” (soul) and it is singular: “two person...and all the person...” is the *literal* Hebrew. The same rule applies as above: the absolute number is used with a singular noun. If Martin and Vaughn were correct, “two soul” would mean that one soul could be two people since they reason that one “evening and morning” can be 2,300 hundred days! I do not point this out to be overbearing, but this is just incorrect Hebrew exegesis, plain and simple.

#### IV. Alleged Contradictions: *Genesis* 1 and 2.

Another major point in the work of Martin and Vaughn is that there is a contradiction between the sequence of creation events in *Genesis* 1 and chapter 2. No small amount of ink has been spilled over this concern in the past and this paper is certainly not going to solve all the issues involved. However, Martin and Vaughn provide no real material that proves their case; that because there is contradiction, the texts at hand demonstrate that *Genesis*’ early chapters are to be read as an apocalypse. In fact, it actually hurts their case and helps make mine.

First, to be fair, Martin and Vaughn will be quoted: “Young-earth creationism implies that Genesis 1 *literally* contradicts Genesis 2.” Martin and Vaughn note the order of creation in Genesis 1 and quote a fair portion of Genesis 2, concluding, “Notice the order of creation is entirely reversed in Genesis 2. Man was made *first*. Then a garden was planted for him...Then the Lord God formed “every beast of the field” and “every bird of the air.” If both passages were meant to be plain literal historical narratives, they reveal a direct contradiction. Literalism pits Genesis 1 against Genesis 2” (254-255 – *ital.* theirs).

They offer no real meticulous exegesis of the Hebrew text. They quote one solution to the apparent contradiction from Dispensational author Dick Fischer, which in itself is inept and rightly deserves to be dismissed. But this is a straw man. One is lead to believe that this is all there is to the matter. A blatant, obvious contradiction –plain and clear to anyone – occurs between 1 and 2. They say it is there, so it must be there! However, Martin and Vaughn are not the first ones to notice these two chapters .

Secondly, there is no contradiction when one considers the Hebrew text itself (which I shall). Third, they seek to resolve the contradiction by making both 1 and 2 “apocalyptic”. But, this does not do away with the contradiction at all. “Speaking scientifically, this order in Genesis 2 contradicts the order of Genesis 1. Either God made the animals first (Gen. 1), or he made man first (Gen. 2): it cannot be both. If Genesis 1 is a historical narrative , then Genesis 2 cannot be (or vice versa)...The truth is that neither account is plain historical narrative. Apocalyptic is known for repeating the same ideal picture in a different order...” (295). They give no examples for this assertion, and I can find none. *The fact of the matter is that the contradiction is not resolved by making both chapters apocalyptic.* In fact, their own logic would dictate this. If a contradiction arises by making both chapters historical (“they cannot be both”), then how does making both apocalyptic resolve the contradiction? It is still a contradiction! In Genesis 1 man is created before the animals, and in 2, he is not – it cannot be both regardless of how one classifies the text. This assumes that contradictions are not real contradictions in apocalyptic literature – that is, they are contradictions, but contradictions are perfectly valid in apocalyptic literature! I point the reader again to the fact that they provide no example of contradictions occurring in *Daniel*, *Revelation* or any other universally designated texts that are styled after the apocalyptic.

It is of utmost importance that I maintain the inerrancy of Scripture and that the Bible contains no contradictions whatsoever. The Bible does use *paradox* which is defined as a *seeming* contradiction, but can be straightened out with a little logical elbow grease. “He who seeks to gain life, must lose his life.” This is a paradox. “Life” is defined in two different ways. The first “life” is eternal life. The second is “worldly life”. This resolves the seeming contradiction. Several examples like this occur in the Bible.

#### IV. A. Exegetical Considerations between *Gen 1* and *2*.

*Genesis 2* is an expansion of *1*. This is typical in biblical literature. Chapter *1* is a bold, universal stage of the universe – all that we see around us – as far as the eye can see. The author does not use the language of modern science (thank God!), but this is not to say that the author is not aware of the universe and world around him. It is also not to imply that the biblical authors are “pre-scientific” – less dim in thinking than us modern sophisticates. The author was a man, and since the dawn of man, we have sought to understand the origins of the world – how we got here – what it all means. Most major cultures have cosmogonies – ancient accounts of how it all began – and *Genesis* is no different. I will discuss this more further in the paper.

First, it is supposed that the order between *1* and *2* is “entirely reversed.” *Gen 2.4b* begins with the *toledot* (“this is the *account*”), which I follow the majority of critical scholars as meaning both a reference back to *and* a reference forward (Eds., A. Beck, A. Bartelt, P. Raabe, C. Franke, *Fortunate the Eyes that See: Essays in Honor of David Noel Freedman*, Eerdmans, 1995 – Joseph Blenkinsopp, “P and J in Genesis 1:1-11:26: An Alternative Hypothesis” – pp.5-ff). “The *toledot* formula is followed either by a genealogy or by a narrative account” (Childs, Brevard S., *Introduction to the Old Testament as Scripture*, Fortress Press, 1979 – pp. 145-ff). “Thus, a genealogy is introduced in 5.1; 10.1; 11.10; 25.12 and 36.1(9), and a narrative in 2.4; 6.9; 11.27; 25.19 and 37.2” (*ibid.*, 145). Finally, “The role of the *toledot* formula in 2.4, which introduces the story of mankind, is to connect the creation of the world with the history which follows” (*ibid.*, 148). Childs, for those who may not know, is a noted Hebrew scholar (Yale).

*Toledot* as a word has been subjected to much scholarly scrutiny. In the Dead Sea Scrolls it is found as meaning “generations” or “origin” (*Dam.*, *IQM* and *IQS*, respectively). A genealogy is a history of sorts, or an “account” of a family line. However, as Childs has shown, it precedes narrative as well. This means that this word functions *according to the context* and what lies at the heart of the meaning is an “account” of something (see Koehler & Baumgartner, *The Hebrew and Aramaic Lexicon of the Old Testament*, vol. 2, 1699, 1700). Fuerst listed it as, “an account, a history (of the rise or development of a thing)” (Fuerst, Julius, *A Hebrew & Chaldee Lexicon to the Old Testament*, trans. Samuel Davidson, 1867). This is in keeping with the lexical consensus.

Martin and Vaughn do not spend much time on defining this term. They do quote from Hugh Ross, who makes an unwarranted point that because the plural form is used (*toledot* is always in the plural form, like “*elohim*” is for “God”) it means, “multiple generations have passed” by the time we get to *Genesis 2.5* (257). He is defining the term exclusively by human generations, and this the context does not warrant. The plural “these” points to what is

explicit, whereas the supposed “generations” are strangely omitted! Does that not strike the reader as odd: “generations” or a genealogy that mentions no genealogy or account of “multiple generations” that have passed?

The Septuagint (LXX) translated 2.4 as, “This is the book of the generation...” using the singular form of the word “*genesis*”. Martin and Vaughn try to link this word to the *other* Greek word found in the phrase, “this generation,” but that word is *genea*. They both have the same stem, “*gen*”, but they are two different words. The Hebrew translators of the LXX knew better. The word *genesis* means, “origin” or “birth.”

Even if the plural is granted, 2.4a refers back to the Creation account, which is certainly an account of the origins (plural) of *things* and *man*. For me to give a complete account of *Genesis 2*, I must first give a translation:

*“These are the origins of The Heavens and The Earth in their being created.  
When the LORD God made an earth and a heavens:*

These two sentences refer to two acts (Skinner, Speiser, NEB, JB, GNB). The first sentence, as the NIV rightly notes, ends with “created” and refers back to the narrative of chapter 1. The second sentence looks forward. This is noted because of the textual inversion of “heavens and earth” to “earth and heavens.” The emphasis in the first sentence, which has the article “the” on both nouns, is The Heavens and The Earth, using the verb *bra* with the prefixed preposition *b*. In 1.1 we find, “in beginning (*b* preposition attached), God made (*bra*) The Heavens and The Earth...” At the end of this account we find the same structure and vocabulary, forming an *inclusio* (the thing at the beginning is the thing at the end). Thus, 1.1-2.4a forms one unit.

2.4b starts another narrative, a narrative *not about* The Heavens and The Earth, but *earth* and *heavens*. It is an account of *when* God made *an* earth and *a* heavens distinct from The Earth and The Heavens. By the syntactical unusualness, the Hebrew text is pointing that something different is taking place here (see Blenkinsopp article cit. above). When we read the account of the Garden of Eden (“garden” in the LXX is “paradeisis” or “paradise” – God made a paradise on earth) we find that “shrub of the *field*” is used, not “shrub of The Earth” as used in *Genesis 1*. We find “beasts of the *field*” not “beasts of The Earth” as in 1. Other scholars have noted this as well: “...the following narrative does not deal with the heavens and the earth but only with the earth, *and one bit of it in particular*” (ital. mine, *op. cit.* Blenkinsopp, 7). The commentary of Keil and Delitzsche also made similar notes (*Commentary on the Old Testament*, vol. 1, The Pentateuch, Eerdmans, 1981). This “one bit” in particular is Paradise on The Earth. A heavens that mirrors the true heavenly abode of God – and which will later match the description of the Tabernacle and Solomon Temple (and Herodian Temple, for that matter).

Preterists have long drawn off of the scholarship that has noted the similarities of the Paradise of Eden and the Tabernacle/Temple. These are types of the true heavenly abode of God. This is where God comes down and dwells with man. In the first instance, it is the Paradise of God. There are beasts of the field, shrubs, rivers of water, gold, onyx, etc. In the Mosaic Tabernacle we find the same items occurring. Only, in the Paradise of God, no animals of the field are required to be slain. This does not happen until Adam and Eve sin. And, note, the animal that is slain for their sins is *slain inside the Paradise of Eden* not outside. This follows, as much does, that the animals were brought *into* the Tabernacle area to be slaughtered, not outside.

2.5-ff relates the “making” (*ash*) of an earth and a heavens, not the “creating” (*bra*) of The Heavens and The Earth. There was “not a man to serve the *ground*” (not Earth – *eretz* – but “ground” *adamah*). As noted Hebrew scholar Keil remarked, “The creation of the plants is not alluded to here at all, but simply the planting of the garden in Eden” (*op. cit.* Keil, 77). This is a specific *making* of the Garden *within* the domain of The Heavens and The Earth. Therefore, the “plants of The Earth” had already been made, but shrubs for the field, the Garden, had not – and no man was in the Garden to serve it.

God makes the Man (*adam*) on day six and “puts him” in this specifically “made” (not “created”) Paradise/Temple. The verb used of man “serving” the ground is the same Levitical term for service in the Temple. God’s Temple/Paradise is the first “coming down” of God out of The Heavens to The Earth; it is the first occurrence of *on earth as it is in the Heavens*.

It is here that we find the making of two *specific* trees (not “every tree of The Earth”). The commandment is given to God and mirrors, again, the Torah (Law) that enforced Temple duties. Man is confronted with Law, Evil, Good and Service. In the service of the Paradise/Temple the Man needed a helper.

It is here that another supposed contradiction occurs. Many translations have, “now the LORD God made out of the ground all the beasts of the field.” Several notes are to be made. First, it is “beasts of the *ground*” not “beasts of The Earth.” Second, the NIV has “now the LORD GOD *had formed* out of the ground...” The translators use the pluperfect which is an aspect of the imperfect verb that means a *previous* action (*Biblical Hebrew Syntax, op. cit.*, 33.2.3); Gesenius, *Hebrew Grammar*, 111.a-q). Keil agreed (87). There are several examples of this in the Hebrew Bible: *1 Kings* 7.12-ff cf. to 6.9-ff; *Num.* 1.47-49; *Ex* 4.11-12, etc. Hebrew verbs are very fluid in aspectual nuances, and context determines their function syntactically. Here, unless we are to submit an obvious contradiction (which we cannot allow), the beasts of the field were already made before the creation of the Man.

*Genesis 2*, therefore, is not an *entire reversal* according to Martin and Vaughn. It is not a recapitulation of chapter 1. It is not a retelling or a different version of chapter 1. *It is the specific formation (not creation) of the Paradise of God on The Earth on the sixth day.* It is God's *capstone* achievement at the *end or last day* of creating – heaven coming to earth/God dwelling with Man – the *Glory of the Lord coming down on the last day* to raise man *from the dust* and place him in His Temple/City/Paradise followed by a *rest from works*.

This Paradise had specific animals (note the fish are not mentioned – the Levitical sacrifices did not have fish offerings, but they did have “birds” and various “animals”). We are not to suppose, then, that every single genus of the first animals and fish entered into this Garden – and neither are we to suppose that this was the case with Noah's Arc. The arc also is a type of “coming in” from the “outside” with “clean and unclean” animals – after all, it called an *arc* – a word used solely for the Arc of the Covenant.

The Hebrew Bible uses the word “all” or “every” either logically or rhetorically, more often the latter. Context determines. The Literalists, as Martin and Vaughn correctly point out, make too much of a case with these adjectives. However, that does not mean that the events in *Genesis 1,2* are non-historical.

Now, Martin and Vaughn wrote that it would be impossible for God to have accomplished all of this in one ordinary day – day six in this instance. But, they give absolutely no reason why other than an appeal to common sense empiricism. James Jordan has shown most rationally how such things in *Genesis 2* could have occurred on day six (Jordan, James B., *Creation in Six Days: A Defense of the Traditional Reading in Genesis One*, Canon Press, 1999, 47). Perhaps a coincidence, but Martin and Vaughn, who reference this book in BCS, make no note of Jordan's rather brilliant answer. There can be no objection to it other than an appeal to empiricism: things like that just don't happen. Well, we are dealing with God, right? How long does it take God to make a tree?

There is much more that can be said concerning the supposed “contradiction”. There is no contradiction whatsoever. There is no reversal of order. It has not been proven by Martin and Vaughn, and, in fact, their view *still leaves one with the supposed contradiction!*

#### **IV. B. *II Peter 3* Considered.**

One of the more glaring contradictions, I believe, is found in how Martin and Vaughn lay another foundation of *why* they consider *Genesis 1-11* as apocalyptic. Textually considered, it can be shown that their methodology here is quite impossible.

"An important question to ask is simply: "What is the first heaven and earth that John saw passing away?" The answer seems obvious enough. *John's vision makes reference to the first biblical mention of heaven and earth*" (ital. theirs, 343). This is a bold leap. This boldness, however, runs right into a destructive contradiction.

Martin and Vaughn move right into the text of *II Pe* 3.5-7 and note, "Notice how Peter references the *original creation* when he says the heavens existed and the earth, *ge*, was formed..." Further, [the Flood] destroyed this covenant world" (346 – ital. theirs). But this is precisely what creates the problem. If the first heavens and earth is *Genesis* 1.1, then what "heavens and earth" was destroyed in Noah's day? Would that not logically demand that Noah's destruction was the *first* destruction? This is an inescapable conclusion. *Rev* 21.1 cannot, then, be a reference to *Genesis* 1.1, because, according to Martin and Vaughn, the 1.1 heavens and earth was "destroyed" according to their own exegesis!

Not only is the Greek text of *II Pe* 3 difficult, but commentators have stumbled greatly as to what to make of its meaning. The text itself reads:

"For this is concealed from them willingly: that a heavens were of old and an earth by water and through water, having been held together by the word of God, through which things the then world being inundated by water perished, but The Now Heavens and The Earth by the same word are kept in store reserved for fire..."

Peter then states, "be not ignorant" which is the same word he used for "concealed." "Do not let this stand concealed to you, brothers..." The meaning of "this is concealed from them" is something they forget to notice – something in the text escapes them. Peter then alludes to the Noachic story. Several problems occur at this point.

What we have here is 1), the then heavens and earth. 2), the Now heavens and the earth. 3), the new heavens and the new earth (3.13). Now, if the *first* heavens and earth is the *Genesis* 1.1 heavens and earth, then, clearly, it did not "perish" if the meaning is the Universe. The same sun Noah saw is the same sun we see. However, Peter clearly states that it "perished" or was "destroyed." The Literalists have a hard time with this because they are following the same line as Martin and Vaughn: the *first* heavens and earth is the *Genesis* 1.1 heavens and earth.

What has deliberately been *concealed* is that God *made a heavens and an earth* upon The Heavens and The Earth. Peter's Greek is right in line with the Hebrew text: that *a heavens* were of old and *an earth* by water and through water, having been held together by the word of God..." We discussed this at length above concerning the lack of the article in *Genesis* 2.4b.



*There are two heavens and earths in the Genesis account, just as there must be two heavens and earths in Peter's account. The Paradise of God is what "perished" in the flood: the Garden, the Tree of Life, the gold, the East Gate all "perished" and was "destroyed."*

Further, the Paradise of God was not the "first heavens and earth", either. If we went by numerical order, *Genesis* 1.1 would be the first, the Garden would be the second, the Temple/Tabernacle would be the third. But, this is far too much. The Garden of Eden is what "perished" during Noah's day, and the heavens and the earth that "now" existed in Peter's day *was the first heavens and the first earth* that was reserved for fire. The *same* heavens and earth that were reserved for fire is the same as in *Rev* 21.1 – and Peter clearly does not identify that with *Genesis* 1.1

The Garden of Eden was formed "out of" water. The LXX reads, "and there arose a fountain out of the earth (*ek tes ges*) and watered the face of the earth" (*Gen.* 2.6). "The earth" that is spoken of here is the Paradise of God – it was formed by four rivers, a midst, and a fountain of water – it was formed *by* water and *through* water: "and a river flows *out of* Eden to water the Paradise..." This description of the formation of *an* earth – Paradise – continues with the four rivers that *form* the Garden (2.8-14). We can, therefore, by all means conclude that *this* heavens and earth was *certainly* destroyed and perished. But, as we have seen above, *this* earth and heavens is *not* the same The Earth and The Heavens of *Genesis* 1.

What, then, is the *first* heavens and earth? As I have already noted, Paradise was a type of heaven on earth, and as such, mirrored the true heavenly tabernacle in The Heavens. However, Adam did not enter into a blood covenant with God for the establishment of Paradise. Paradise was given to him as a gift of God. When we come to Moses, though, the "gift" of the Tabernacle/Temple is through blood covenant. Moses' Tabernacle/Temple is the *first covenantal Temple/Tabernacle/Paradise on earth*. It is the *first* attempt of God to *restore* the relationship God naturally had with Adam in the original Paradise through blood. It is the *first* attempt to *rebuild* what had been "destroyed" through the waters of Noah's day.

The New Testament bears this out in the letter to the Hebrews. In theology there are two covenants that manifest the one, eternal covenant. The author of *Hebrews* draws from the Prophet Jeremiah (31) where he exegetes this idea from that text. Jeremiah spoke of two covenants: "I will make a new covenant...it will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers..." (31.32). Thus, the author concludes, "In that he says a new covenant, he has made the *first* covenant *old*..." (*Hebr* 8.13, see also 8.7). This "first" and "second" designations continue throughout (9.1; 9.8; 9.15; 9.18 and 10.9). 9.8 specifically identifies "the *first* tabernacle" and confirms the idea that the Paradise of God was not the *first* in the order of covenants.

The Paradise of God, to reiterate, mirrors the heavenly abode of God, as the Tabernacle mirrored the Paradise of God. The Tabernacle was the *first* covenantal “heavens and earth.” When we put all of this together, *II Pe 3* makes complete sense:

1. They were ignorant of a previous heavens and land (surely Peter is not suggesting that they were ignorant of Noah’s Flood! But, notice their accusation: “all things continue on *since the beginning*.” Peter counters this by bringing up a destruction of *a* heavens and *an* earth – the Paradise of God, which by all means was totally eradicated.
2. Peter speaks of a “now” heavens and earth which is reserved for fire and this, rightly so, Martin and Vaughn would see as the Temple in Jerusalem.
3. The Temple in Jerusalem is explicitly called “the first tabernacle” as it is related to the “first covenant”. It’s demise would be a destruction by fire – a destruction of heavens and earth, covenantally speaking. It is this “first heavens and first earth” that John saw as “passing away.”
4. The New Heavens and New Earth is the true abode of God in Christ by which man now has access to the very throne of God Himself in righteousness by faith. It surpasses the Paradise of God on earth and surpasses the First Tabernacle under Moses. The dwelling of God is no longer in a covenant of types and shadows, gardens and temples, rivers and bowls of water (“the Sea” in Solomon’s Temple). It is in the true reality of the things these merely pointed to.

Therefore, what we have is this:

1. Genesis 1.1 – The Creation of the Universe, of all there is in its original genus.
2. Genesis 2.4b – The formation of Paradise on The Earth where God dwells with Man and Man with God.
3. The Law – The First Tabernacle/First Heavens and Earth through which God reestablished “heavens on the land” through a covenant by which Man can dwell with God.
4. The New Heavens and the New Earth – the real, invisible realm of God the Father dwelling in righteousness with Man on The Earth – the ultimate goal between Man and God.

Number 1 is where *all of this takes place*: the universe. Number 2 was “destroyed” by waters. Number 3 is the first heavens and first covenanted land (Israel) and was destroyed by fire in A.D. 70. Finally, number 4 is the Age to Come realm in Christ wherein we dwell with him in righteousness.

By this, we can see that the universe is the created stage upon which all these things occur. It maintains the integrity of Scripture in that *Genesis 1.1* is certainly speaking of the

Universe. The scheme of Martin and Vaughn leads to a violent contradiction and hopeless confusion as to the identification of heavens and the land. The Hebrew and Greek syntax actually bears out the fact that a heavens and an earth *within* The Heavens and The Earth is the case of the matter.

The Universe was never promised destruction. In this way the Preterist can easily point out the contradiction even the Literalists face when they, too, try to compare *Rev. 21.1* to *Genesis 1.1*. As it fails for Martin and Vaughn, it *also fails for futurists!* They cannot reconcile the “destruction” of heavens and earth in Noah’s day with the word “first” since, obviously, the same moon, stars, earth, sun, etc. were not “destroyed” in Noah’s day! They are forced to take the phrase in Peter’s letter as *something else*, for what was destroyed in Noah’s day *cannot* be the Universe of *Genesis 1.1*! This, coupled with John’s mention of “the first heavens and earth” utterly bankrupts a futurist eschatology.

Now, it is here that much good can be extracted from Martin and Vaughn. Their understanding of covenantalism as it relates to how the Bible *sometimes* uses the heavens and the earth imagery is right on target. I think, however, that *it is misapplied, or applied too much* when taken to the extreme of making *Genesis 1-11* as some sort of covenantal code book. I have argued that these texts are written in the style of the Historical Narrative. This view outlined above is a *synthesis* of Martin and Vaughn. It understands the covenantal aspects and symbolic aspects of *Genesis* without surrendering the conviction that what we have here is, indeed, a divinely revealed cosmogony. The history of the covenants in the Bible takes place *within* the Universe, or Stage of God’s Creation – and this includes the new heavens and the new earth.

Finally, by noting the distinction between the physical creation of God as the Stage upon which redemptive history occurred, we are forced to note that *this planet* is distinguished from the true heavenly reality of what the Bible calls the “new heavens and new earth.” The Kingdom of God is spoken of in the Bible as “eternal.” It always has been. The earth has always been subjected to God’s Kingdom. After all, the judgment in the Fall of Adam was *God’s judgment* – issued from His bench (*Rom. 8.18-ff* – God *subjected* creation). The new heavens and new earth is God’s eternal kingdom. The *newness* of it is the fact that Man has now truly come into the very presence of God – into His Kingdom. Adam and Eve dwelled with God on *earth* in a shadowy type (the Garden) that reflected the invisible Kingdom of God. Adam and Eve *did not* dwell with God as we do in Christ. God’s people today, because of the cross and resurrection of Christ (and the accomplished *parousia*) covenantally dwell with God without any enmity – apart from shadows and types – but in *reality* – spiritual reality. In Martin and Vaughn, the physical earth is not much of a topic in the Bible since it has been excluded from the opening pages of the Bible – dismissed as symbolic – but never addressing at all the

purpose of God creating it. In my view, this earth has a purpose for being created: to set the Stage upon which God would ultimately bring his created Man into full and complete unity through His Eternal Son – by bringing the true Heavenly, Spiritual, Invisible Tabernacle to the earth and by this bringing Man into what the Garden, the Arc, the Tabernacle, the Temple ultimately symbolized – Dwelling in the Presence of God in uninterrupted righteousness forever. Before, heaven was *typified* as on earth; now, *heaven is on the earth in Christ*.

## Conclusion

I did not deem it as necessary to explore the issues of science and epistemology. I follow the philosophy called Presuppositionalism (Byl, Cheung, Clark, Reymond, Crampton – to name a few). It exposes the errors of Inductivism and Empiricism – and many honest theistic scientists are very aware of this and freely admit to it. The goal of science is not to discover “absolute truth” since inductive reasoning can never do this, logically speaking. One would have to reinvent Logic – presumably starting with Aristotle.

What this means is that science is a useful tool for dominion. It is a God given tool in that Man’s imagination can be used to form and manipulate creation through combinations of elements – combinations that, much by accident, lead to hitherto fortunate results. However, as in the Fall, Eve’s being drawing away by her sensations, and then twisting her rationale to “fit the data” is precisely the meaning of Man’s problem. His sensations would now become used to facilitate the vain reasoning of his mind – now he could justify himself and create a worldview entirely apart from God’s word. The power of this ability has wreaked havoc on the world and only through the revelation of God’s word can it be forcefully checked.

Science displays the highest sense of Man’s reasoning powers. Man now claims to know the vastness of the universe, its origins, its age, its rotations – all apart from God’s word. I believe that the opening chapters of *Genesis* are historical. There is not a shred of scientific “proof” that can deny this. However, the Creation Scientists commit the same error as do the scientists: using empirical methods to “prove” the age of the earth. It simply cannot be done on both sides of the issue. “To be sure, they are problems that arise only when one persists in putting to the Bible scientific questions, while failing to see the questions it asks us to confront”(Bright, John, *The Authority of the Old Testament*, Twin Brooks Series, Baker Books, 1975, 155). The question these chapters ask me to confront is, is the worldview contained therein look anything like the worldview that dominates the scientific scene today? Why not?

In Presuppositionalism, there is no clash between “science and religion” precisely because science is limited in what it can discover. Martin and Vaughn, in all appearances, state that they are not trying to bring science into the picture, but one cannot fail to see that “science” permeates their book. By taking *Genesis* as “covenantal” the case for scientific

*theories* that are currently in vogue can now be believed by the Christian. Evolution? No problem since Adam was not the first man (they never answer where he came from, and one adherent to BCS simply and candidly stated that he did know where man came from). It may be another way of getting there, but the bottom line is the same: Christians do not have to look like buffoons now because we have removed the “problem” of *Genesis*.

Bright is correct: *Genesis* confronts us with an opening story that is at complete odds with our senses. Science has done everything it can to show it up as mere mythology – something so stupid that only a complete moron with no “scientific” training would believe. By hammering this for centuries, many Christians have forgotten the awe: the God that creates in ways that completely escapes our imaginations. The God that speaks and in an instant: it is. This blows our minds. In fact, *it cannot be true* it must mean something else: *God really didn't do it that way, did He?* That is the question that confronts us: *it is a question of faith.*

Martin and Vaughn have made many valuable points, but in the end, I do not believe that this is the end all be all on the matter as they have presented it. There are serious flaws in their Hebrew exegesis (well, there is no real scholarly exegesis presented). There are serious flaws that Hebrew scholars would have with their presentation of the material and until their work can be seriously footnoted in regards to Hebrew syntax, their case will remain seriously open to question. Finally, I have noted a few glaring contradictions in their approach that are not remedied in the book. This leaves open room for debate. Until a credible Response can be given, the issue is open. I look forward to a Response instead of further polarizing the “sides” that have been taken on this matter. It is my hope that a greater synthesis will happen – a greater unity – or at least a charitable attitude of agreeing to disagree occurs.