Critique of Coming to Grips with Genesis (Mortenson/Ury)

Jordan P Ballard
CRITIQUE OF COMING TO GRIPS WITH GENESIS: BIBLICAL AUTHORITY AND THE AGE OF THE EARTH

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Coming to Grips with Genesis is a biblical studies book defending a young-earth interpretation of Genesis creation written at a technical level for graduate students and seminary professors.¹ The book was written as a festschrift for Dr. John Whitcomb, co-author of The Genesis Flood which launched the modern creationist movement,² and includes forwards from the late Dr. Henry Morris (published posthumously) and John MacArthur. One of the appendices of the book sketches a lengthy biography of Whitcomb and recounts how he became a Christian, how he went from an evolutionist to a creationist, and how God has blessed his teaching and evangelistic ministry over the past sixty years. In addition, each of the authors writes a brief dedication to Whitcomb at the beginning of each chapter. Many of them studied under Dr. Whitcomb at Grace Theological Seminary and were influenced by his writings. Readers familiar with John Whitcomb and the modern creationist movement will no doubt appreciate these heartfelt dedications and forwards to the book. Coming to Grips with Genesis has fourteen chapters and multiple contributors, so each chapter will be summarized and critiqued individually in this review.

Chapter one addresses the question of whether the Church fathers favor a certain view of Genesis creation.³ This chapter is important because progressive creationist Hugh Ross presses the Church fathers into service to prove that there has been a diversity of

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¹ Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury, Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008).


views regarding the length of the days in Genesis 1.\textsuperscript{4} Ross cites Irenaeus, Origen, Basil, Augustine, and Aquinas as day-age proponents.\textsuperscript{5} While it is readily acknowledged that there is often a diversity of views in the history of Christianity and that the age of the earth is not ultimately decided by an appeal to authority in church history, the question of whether progressive creationism has historical roots is important. It is also important to know whether the early Christians interpreted Genesis 1 literally or whether this is a modern approach created to defend the Bible against evolution. James Mook demonstrates convincingly that progressive creationists have been selective in their use of the Church fathers and have misunderstood them altogether. He cites the Church fathers at length to show that they largely held to a literal view of the six days of creation. Origen and Augustine are really the only two in question, but neither of these two believed in an old universe.\textsuperscript{6} Some Church fathers believed that the six days of creation were typological of the six thousand years of history, with the seventh “age” being the millennium to come, but this does not affect their view that creation happened in six literal days less than six thousand years ago. In summary, the Church fathers did not believe in an old universe or in long ages of history.


\textsuperscript{5} Hugh Ross, \textit{The Fingerprint of God}, 2nd ed. (Orange, CA: Promise Publishers, 1991), 141.

\textsuperscript{6} Origen did not believe that Genesis 1 should be taken literally, but this does not mean that he believed in long ages or in an old universe. He states that “the world is not yet ten thousand years old, but very much under that” (Mook, “The Church Fathers on Genesis, the Flood, and the Age of the Earth,” 34). Origen’s non-literal view of Genesis 1 is a result of his Neoplatonic allegorism. Augustine believed that creation happened in an instant, but this is also contrary to the day-age view. Although Augustine did not believe in creation over six literal days, he believed that the earth was not even six thousand years old (ibid., 37). See also Jonathan Sarfati, \textit{Refuting Compromise: A Biblical and Scientific Refutation of “Progressive Creationism” (Billions of Years) As Popularized by Astronomer Hugh Ross} (Green Forest, AR: 2004), 107-22.
Chapter two builds upon chapter one by showing that key Christian leaders including Luther, Calvin, Wesley, and the Westminster divines read Genesis 1-11 in a literal, straightforward manner. Calvin rejected Augustine’s instantaneous creation and stated that creation took place “in the space of six days.” This phrase was also used in the Westminster Confession to denote a literal view of creation. Hall summarizes, “No reputable Reformed theologian from Calvin through 50 years after Westminster provides any theological latitude for what are now known as the gap theory, the day-age theory, the analogical days theory, or the framework hypothesis.” Again, this does not prove young-earth creationism, but it does bolster the argument that modern views of Genesis creation, being without historical precedent, have arisen because of evolutionary science, not because of careful exegesis. Before modern science, exegetes believed from the Scriptures that the creation is young and that Genesis 1 is an accurate, historical record.

In chapter three, Terry Mortenson traces the history of the idea of “deep time”, or long ages, back to the geologists of the eighteenth and nineteenth century. Scientists such as Hutton and Lyell suggested that the rock layers were laid down over long ages due to uniformitarian processes. Others, like Cuvier and Buckland, believed that the rock layers were the result of numerous catastrophes over earth’s history. A third group of

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9 Terry Mortenson, “‘Deep Time’ and the Church’s Compromise: Historical Background,” in Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 79-104.
scientists, known as the “scriptural geologists,” believed that the rock layers were laid down during the global Flood and read Genesis 1-11 in a straightforward, literal manner. Despite the efforts of the scriptural geologists, liberal theology dominated much of Christian thinking in the nineteenth century. Many Christians, including men like Spurgeon, Hodge, Warfield, and Scofield, preferred alternative interpretations of Genesis creation to accommodate the deep time “discovered” by scientists at the time. Mortenson states that the scientists’ conclusions, both then and now, are driven by naturalistic, uniformitarian assumptions, not by the scientific evidence alone, which must be interpreted. He concludes by stating that compromise views are unnecessary. There are many PhD scientists working in the field of geology who contest the interpretations of evolutionary scientists, and Christians need not reinterpret Genesis to fit the interpretations of secular, naturalistic scientists.

In chapter four, Richard Mayhue of the Master’s Seminary answers the question, “Is nature the 67th book of the Bible?” Progressive creationist Hugh Ross has written that the “book of nature” (modern science) is in fact the 67th book of the God’s revelation:

So, God’s revelation is not limited exclusively to the Bible’s words. The facts of nature may be likened to a sixty-seventh book of the Bible. Just as we rightfully expect interpretations of Isaiah to be consistent with those of Mark, so too we can expect interpretations of the facts of nature to be consistent with the message of Genesis and the rest of the canon.

10 The scriptural geologists were the subjects of Mortenson’s PhD dissertation. See Terry Mortenson, The Great Turning Point: The Church’s Catastrophic Mistake on Geology – Before Darwin (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2004).


12 Ross, Creation and Time, 56-57.
Mayhue dismantles this idea by arguing that Ross’ twenty-three prooftexts\textsuperscript{13} used to authenticate this claim do not teach that general revelation is on par with Scripture. Special revelation is superior to general revelation because it is only by special revelation that a person is saved. Ross’ position leaves the canon of Scripture open since scientists are constantly changing, correcting, or revising their views about the natural world.

Another point that Ross overlooks is the fact that since man is fallible, his interpretations of nature are fallible. The Bible, on the other hand, is the infallible Word of God. True, the Bible must be interpreted just as the facts of nature must be interpreted. But the major difference is that the Bible is written revelation which is much easier to interpret than the silent facts of creation. The International Council on Biblical Inerrancy also stated that God’s special revelation takes priority over God’s general revelation and that special revelation should be used to interpret general revelation. In Mayhue’s estimation, Ross needs to “rethink and abandon his answer to the question of nature being the 67th book of the Bible and bring his response into conformity with Scripture.”\textsuperscript{14}

In chapter five, Todd Beall writes a helpful overview and critique of the ways in which scholars interpret Genesis 1-11.\textsuperscript{15} Many liberal scholars regard Genesis 1-11 as mythical. This view is consistent in the way in which it treats Genesis 1-11 as a straightforward, historical account, but it is deficient in that it denies the inspiration of Scripture by labeling these chapters as mythical. Beall also critiques evangelical scholars who believe that Genesis 1-11 is an adaptation of Babylonian, Canaanite, and/or Egyptian

\textsuperscript{13} Ibid., 57.

\textsuperscript{14} Mayhue, “Is Nature the 67th Book of the Bible?” 129; cf. Sarfati, Refuting Evolution, 41-47.

\textsuperscript{15} Todd S. Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1-11,” in Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 131-62.
myths. This is one of the most helpful sections of the book, in the opinion of this writer, because of the popularity of these views among evangelicals today. Beall shows that the differences between Genesis 1-11 and these ancient Near Eastern myths are far greater than any superficial similarities that may exist. In fact, if Genesis 1-11 is historically accurate, then all of the nations descended from Adam and later from Noah, so it is no surprise that Israel’s neighbors had creation and flood legends with similarities to the true account from Genesis. Instead of Israel borrowing from her neighbors, it is likely that the neighbors retained some of the truths from Noah’s Flood and then corrupted them over time with pagan beliefs. Although many evangelicals believe that Genesis 1 is a polemic against the ancient Near Eastern gods, Beall rightly points out that there is nothing in Genesis 1 to suggest this (cf. Exod 12:12; Num 33:4).

The second approach that scholars take is to view Genesis 1-11 as largely figurative. Beall has in view here scholars like Enns, Walton, and Van Till. On the one hand, these scholars makes much of the similarities between Genesis and the ancient Near Easter myths to show that Genesis 1-11 is largely figurative, but then they also argue that Genesis 1-11 is much different than the pagan myths to show the uniqueness of Genesis as God’s Word. This seems inconsistent. Beall shows that there is no reason why scholars should interpreted Genesis 1-11 differently than Genesis 12-50. The same grammatical structures (waw consecutives) and toledoths appear in both halves of the book, and there are too many people and places in Genesis 1-11 to simply write off as

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16 Since Coming to Grips with Genesis was published in 2008, Beall did not have the chance to interact with Walton’s most recent writings (John H. Walton, The Lost World of Genesis One: Ancient Cosmology and the Origins Debate [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2009]; idem., Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology [Winona Lake, IN: Eisenbrauns, 2011]).
The figurative interpretations do not match up with the New Testament references to Genesis 1-11 which appear to take Genesis 1-11 as historical. The third approach taken by scholars is to read Genesis 1-11 as partly figurative. These scholars, such as Collins, Waltke, and Kline, believe that Genesis 1:1-2:3 is exalted prose narrative which should be read in a figurative manner, though the rest of Genesis 2-11 is historical. Although these scholars offer reasons why this section of Genesis cannot be read in a literal way which Beall addresses at length, the main reason they give is that modern science has shown that the earth was created billions of years ago. This shows that evolutionary science is really the driving force behind the interpretations, not exegesis.

The fourth approach to Genesis 1-11 is to read it in a literal, historical manner. Beall does not develop this final approach in the chapter, but the other chapters in the book support this approach.

The sixth chapter of *Coming to Grips with Genesis* concludes that Genesis 1:1-2:3 must be read as an historical narrative, not as exalted prose or poetry. Steven Boyd uses a statistical analysis of *waw* consecutives throughout the Old Testament to prove that the presence of many *waw* consecutives is characteristic of prose narrative, not poetry. He also discusses ten proofs which indicate that the authors of biblical narratives considered

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17 Walter Kaiser states, “Genesis 1-11, according to my own rough count, contains sixty-four geographical names, eighty-eight personal names, forty-eight generic names and twenty-one identifiable cultural items such as gold, bdellium, onyx, brass, iron, gopher wood, bitumen or tar, bricks, stone, harp, pipe, cities, and towers” (Walter C. Kaiser, Jr., *The Old Testament Documents: Are They Reliable & Relevant* [Downers Grove, IL: IVP Academic, 2001], 82).

18 See Beall, “Contemporary Hermeneutical Approaches to Genesis 1-11,” 146-49 for examples.

19 Ibid., 152-160.

their narrative to refer to historical events. The ones that apply to Genesis 1-11 include
the tracing back of ancient names to their origins (Gen 4:17), the use of precise
chronological reference points (Gen 7:6, 11; 8:4-5, 13-14), and the presence of
genealogies (Gen 5:1-32; 11:10-32). In chapter seven, Trevor Craigen denies the claim
that deep time can be embedded in Genesis.21 He discusses the differences between the
evolutionary order of events and the biblical order of creation. He briefly discusses the
meaning of yom in Scripture22 and states that even many scholars who are not young-
earth creationists recognize that Genesis 1 has literal days in view.23 In short, there is no
exegetical way to read deep time into the days of Genesis 1 since the days are numbered
and since they include the qualifier “evening and morning.”

In chapter eight, Robert McCabe writes a lengthy critique of the framework
hypothesis popularized by Henri Blocher and Meredith Kline.24 According to McCabe,
framework proponents draw upon similarities between creation days 1 and 4, 2 and 5, and
3 and 6 to show that a literary framework is in place instead of a straightforward account.
Upon closer examination, though, there are many differences between these creation days
which weaken the framework concept. Framework proponents also believe that the non-


chronological *waw* consecutives in Genesis 1:1-2:3 preclude a chronological reading of the creation week. The creation week must be topical, not chronological. McCabe argues convincingly, though, that the presence of seven or eight non-chronological *waw* consecutives does not have any affect upon the fifty-five *waw* consecutives which carry Genesis 1:1-2:3 along as an historical, chronological account. McCabe also counters the argument that Genesis 2:5 is proof that general providence was at work during the creation week instead of supernatural creation and that the absence of “evening and morning” on the seventh day proves that the seventh day (and thus, the other days) is unending or metaphorical. McCabe’s chapter is long and technical, but it is well argued.

Chapter nine is also a long, technical chapter in which William Barrick argues for a global flood, for the unity of the Flood account, and for a full 150 days of flood waters upon the earth (not just forty days and forty nights of rain). He argues that some of the literary features of the text, such as the presence of chiasms, point toward a global flood. Barrick also takes on a few creationist arguments from the text which he believes are misguided. This shows that creationist teachings do indeed undergo peer review. One other important point that Barrick makes is that the Hebrew of Genesis 8:3 indicates that the waters surged back and forth as the water was receding. This may have implications for creationist interpretations of the geological record.

Travis Freeman argues in chapter ten that there are no gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11. He discusses and critiques the five main arguments given for gaps in

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the genealogies. First, some scholars assert that the similarities in the genealogies of Genesis 4 and 5 point to a common source. Since they differ, though, then there must have been fluidity (changes, additions, etc.), which means that there are gaps. Freeman counters this by showing that the similarities in the genealogies are only apparent. Genesis 4 is a narrative, not a genealogy. Enoch and Lamech in Genesis 4 are clearly different than Enoch and Lamech in Genesis 5. Finally, Genesis 5 leads up to the Flood, but the genealogy in Genesis 4 does not mention the Flood. Second, some scholars argue that the structure of ten generations listed in both Genesis 5 and in Genesis 11 is evidence of a literary device and thus fluidity (like Matthew’s groups of fourteen in his genealogy of Jesus). Upon closer examination, though, Freeman notes that the genealogy in Genesis 5 has ten names, but the genealogy in Genesis 11 has only nine names. Thus, the ten-and-ten literary device is absent. Some scholars compare Genesis 5 and 11 to the Sumerian King List (SKL), which has inflated numbers and gaps, but Freeman lists ten major differences between SKL and Genesis 5 and 11. The third argument for gaps in the genealogies is that without gaps, Adam and Methuselah would have lived together for a brief time, and Shem would have nearly outlived Abraham, which seems absurd. However, there is really no reason from the text to reject such a reading. The fourth argument is that since Hebrew had no term for grandfather or grandson, then the phrase “When X had lived Y years and became the father of Z” occurs, it could be speaking of any descendent, not just the immediate descendent. While this is possible, there are several arguments against this view, including the argument that Enoch was the seventh


27 Freeman, “Do the Genesis 5 and 11 Genealogies Contain Gaps?” 297.
from Adam according to Jude 14, which does not seem to allow for gaps. The fifth argument for gaps in the genealogies is that modern science has dated human civilizations back tens of thousands of years, so there must be gaps in the genealogies of Genesis. These dates are based on the flawed assumptions of radiometric dating, though, as many creationist books demonstrate. As an addendum, Freeman provides several reasons why the extra Cainan in Luke 3:36 is likely inauthentic and thus does not support the idea that there are gaps in the genealogies of Genesis 5 and 11.

Chapter eleven is one of the most important sections of the book. Here, Terry Mortenson discusses Jesus’ view of the age of the earth. The reason why this chapter is important is that Christians should affirm anything which Jesus affirms, yet the vast majority of Genesis commentaries and systematic theologies neglect the teaching of Jesus on the age of the earth. Mortenson addresses three verses in particular. 1) In Mark 10:6, Jesus states, “But from the beginning of creation, God made them male and female.” The context is Jesus’ teaching on divorce and marriage, and Jesus seems to state that the creation of Adam and Eve happened at the beginning of creation. Old-earthers counter by stating that Jesus is referring to the beginning of marriage or the beginning of the creation of humans, not to the absolute beginning of creation, but Mortenson shows that these

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explanations do not satisfy the exegesis of the passage. 2) In Mark 13:19-20, Jesus states that near the time of His return, there will “be a time of tribulation such as has not occurred since the beginning of creation which God created…..” This verse places the beginning of human suffering (tribulation) at the time when God created. It makes little sense to read into this animal suffering, as old-earther might be tempted to do, and Jesus could have easily said “since Adam” or “since the creation of man until now” if He had so desired. 3) In Luke 11:50-51, Jesus states, “…so that the blood of all the prophets, shed since the foundation of the world, may be charged against this generation, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah….” Here, the blood of Abel is placed at or near the “foundation of the world,” supporting the young-earth view of history. If the universe is billions of years old, then it makes little sense for Jesus to put Abel’s death at the foundation of the world; it would have occurred billions of years after the foundation of the world. Mortenson makes a good case that Jesus was a young-earth creationist from these verses.

In chapter twelve, Ron Minton surveys the epistles of the New Testament and comes to the same conclusion as Mortenson – namely, that the apostles believed in a recent creation.32 He supports this conclusion by examining a handful of passages (Acts 3:21; 14:15-17; 17:24-31; Rom 1:18-25; 5:12-14, 19; 8:19-23; Col 1:15-20; Heb 9:25-26; Rev 21:1-5; 22:1-3). He also looks at Hebrews 4:1-10 and 2 Peter 3:3-8 since these are often used by scholars to promote an old-earth interpretation of Genesis. In summary,
there is nothing in Acts or in the epistles to support an old earth interpretation. If anything, these verses support a recent creation.

Another important chapter in *Coming to Grips with Genesis* addresses the question of theodicy and the age of the earth. James Stambaugh argues that if there was animal death, disease, and natural disasters before the fall of Adam and Eve, then God is responsible for creating a world with natural evil in place. Stambaugh makes several interesting points. First, death in the Bible only applies to humans and animals but not to plant life. There are three descriptions for living things: they must be conscious (*nephesh*), they must exhibit respiration, and they must have blood (Lev 17:11). While plants are said to be *living* in a modern, biological sense, they are not alive in the biblical sense of *living*. Thus, there is no death in a biblical sense if Adam and Eve (and the animals) ate plants before the Fall. The second point is that Genesis 1:29-30 teaches that humans and animals were originally herbivores. Third, Paul states that the entire creation was subjected to frustration and bondage to decay (Rom 8:19-21). Since God’s original creation being “very good” (Gen 1:31), and since the renewed creation will have no more curse, death, sickness, or suffering (Rev 21-22), one can only conclude that the original creation was free of these maladies too. The bottom line is that death before the Fall

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34 Some theologians believe that God did this for the purpose of soul-making, but this hardly solves the problem of billions of years of what seems to be pointless suffering and death in the natural world. Stambaugh also critiques William Dembski’s rather novel idea that God may have applied the effects of the curse to creation retroactively before the Fall (see William A. Dembski, *The End of Christianity: Finding a Good God in an Evil World* [Nashville: B&H Academic, 2009]).

35 See Stambaugh, “Whence Cometh Death?” 376-80 for a discussion of a few verses which may appear to teach plant death but which do not upon close examination.
continues to be a problem for theodicy if the universe is billions of years old, but the most natural reading of the abovementioned Scriptures indicates that death, disease, suffering, and thorns came as a result of the Fall. The final chapter in the volume is written by Thane Ury and explores the writings of Luther, Calvin, and Wesley on the origins of natural evil.\(^{36}\) Not surprisingly, these men also believed that death came into the world with the Fall.

In conclusion, *Coming to Grips with Genesis* is an excellent treatment and defense of the young-earth interpretation of Genesis 1-11. This has been the predominant view in church history from the Church fathers through the eighteenth century. Of course, critics might respond that Christians living before the nineteenth century were not aware of Darwinian evolution. Had they been, then they would have believed in an old universe. But this behind this type of response is one of the main points of the book: non-literal interpretations of Genesis 1-11 are driven by the interpretations of evolutionary science, not by anything in the biblical text. The authors demonstrate through careful exegesis that Genesis 1-11 was intended to be read in a literal, straightforward manner. What is more, Jesus and the apostles at least implicitly, if not explicitly, believed in a young earth and in the historicity of Genesis 1-11. The authors of *Coming to Grips with Genesis* hope that this volume will persuade the old-earth colleagues to return to a literal interpretation of Genesis 1-11 for both biblical and scientific reasons.

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\(^{36}\) Thane H. Ury, “Luther, Calvin, and Wesley on the Genesis of Natural Evil: Recovering Lost Rubrics for Defending a Very Good Creation,” in *Coming to Grips with Genesis: Biblical Authority and the Age of the Earth*, eds. Terry Mortenson and Thane H. Ury (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2008), 399-423.
Annotated Bibliography


*The End of Christianity* is Dembski’s attempt at a theodicy for Christian readers. He makes no assumptions about the age of the earth or about evolution, but his theodicy seems to accept an old universe and death before the Fall. He links all evil to the Fall of Adam and Eve, but he explains the presence of death, disease, and suffering before the Fall as God’s working the effects of the Fall into the creation retroactively. Just as God applies the work of Christ retroactively to Old Testament believers, perhaps God applies the effects of the Fall to the whole of creation from the beginning. This is the thesis of Dembski’s book.


*Thousands, not Billions* is a book about the age of the earth written by a young-earth scientist and member of the Institute of Creation Research’s RATE (Radioisotopes and the Age of the Earth) team. DeYoung provides a brief history of radiation studies, an overview of how radioisotope dating works, and an analysis of carbon-14 dating. He also discusses some of the young-earth evidence discovered by the RATE team in recent years, including the presence of helium in zircon crystals and radiohalos in granite. The book is written at a lay level and is helpful for those interested in the young-earth perspective on the age of the earth.


Hall discusses the background to the formation and signing of the Westminster Confession of Faith and shows in detail how each of the voting and non-voting members understood Genesis creation. His conclusion is that the Westminster divines believed that the days of Genesis 1 were literal, twenty-four hour days, and that the universe is young. None of the divines believed in long geologic ages.


In this article, Hasel discusses the meaning of *yom* in Genesis 1 as it relates to the creation-evolution conflict. He discusses the history of interpretation, the figurative interpretations given, and the literary genre of Genesis 1. He concludes with ten statements about why *yom* in Genesis 1 refers to literal days. Among those reasons, he explains that many commentaries and most lexicons and dictionaries read Genesis 1 as literal days. He also examines the specific uses of
Yom in the Old Testament with the article, with a number, and with the qualifier of “evening and morning,” and he concludes that yom must be read in a literal manner.


*The Young Earth* is a book about the age of the earth written by young-earth geologist and president of the Institute for Creation Research, Dr. John Morris. Morris contrasts the secular and biblical views of origins and makes that point that presuppositions determine how one interprets the geological data. He has an important chapter on radioisotope dating which explains the process, the assumptions, and the limits of this scientific tool. He also discusses human history, evidence for a global flood, and evidence for a young earth from creationist scientists. The book has many helpful charts, illustrations, and pictures.


*The Great Turning Point* is a condensed version of Mortenson’s PhD dissertation written for a general audience. He discusses the history of geology in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, focusing on seven of the “scriptural geologists” who believed in a young earth and in a global flood. This book is an interesting read for anyone who wants to learn more about the history of thought behind geology and the age of the earth.


*A Matter of Days* is written as a response to many of the charges leveled against Hugh Ross and Reasons to Believe by young-earth creationists. This book is mostly an update of Ross’ earlier book, *Creation and Time,* which discusses many of the same issues. Ross includes his personal testimony to assure readers that he is a believer, he discusses the history of the interpretation of Genesis 1 to try to root
his day-age view in the Church fathers, he argues that death before the Fall is not a problem because Romans 5 only refers to human death, and he accuses young-earth creationists of being hyper-Darwinists because of their belief in rapid speciation after the Flood. Ross also includes many of his familiar arguments which support his concordist view of Scripture, such as the claim that the Bible teaches the Big Bang Theory, and he critiques some of the creationist evidence for a young earth.

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*The Fingerprint of God* is one of Hugh Ross’ earlier books in which he discusses the roots of cosmology, the scientific evidence for cosmology (Big Bang cosmology), and the biblical teaching on cosmology. Ross critiques some of the models proposed by secularists such as the steady state model and the oscillating universe model. Ross also believes that the Bible teaches the Big Bang in verses which speak of “stretching out the heavens” and that Jesus is able to pass through extra dimensions of space-time.


*Refuting Compromise* is a comprehensive review and critique of the writings and teachings of progressive creationist Dr. Hugh Ross and his staff at Reasons to Believe. Sarfati covers a range of subjects from the authority of Scripture to biblical exegesis to scientific issues relating to fossils, the age of the earth, and cosmology. As a scientist, Sarfati shows competence in biblical Hebrew and biblical Greek in some of his biblical arguments, and his understanding of scientific issues is also apparent. For anyone familiar with Ross’ books and lectures who wants to hear the creationist response to Ross’ arguments and claims, this book is highly recommended.


John Walton, professor of Old Testament at Wheaton College, dedicates much of this book to setting Genesis 1 in its ancient Near Eastern context. He compares Genesis 1 to the cosmogonies of Israel’s neighbors by examining Egyptian, Sumerian, Akkadian, Ugaritic, and Hittite text. Walton concludes that Genesis 1 is not a straightforward account about material creation. Rather, Genesis 1 was written as a functional ontology with the underlying idea that the cosmos is the temple of Yahweh.

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The Lost World of Genesis One has the same ideas as Genesis 1 as Ancient Cosmology (above), but Walton expounds more on the functional meaning of each creation day in Genesis 1 and on the idea that the cosmos was view in ancient Israel as the temple of Yahweh. Walton draws some conclusions for the current debate about science and the Bible in light of his thesis that Genesis 1 is a functional account of creation, not a material account of creation. Also, Walton affirms the historicity of Adam and Eve, even though he does not believe that Genesis 1 is a literal account about the creation of the material world.


The Genesis Flood is widely recognized as the book which launched the modern creationist movement. The book is co-written by an Old Testament scholar (Whitcomb) and a PhD scientist (Morris). The authors spend nearly 500 pages addressing the biblical arguments for a young earth, a literal reading of Genesis 1-11, and a global flood. They also address common objections to these views and address the findings of modern geology as related to the question of the age of the earth. Although the scientific arguments and evidence have been updated by creation scientists who followed in the footsteps of Whitcomb and Morris, many of the biblical arguments and methodological arguments are still used by creationists today.