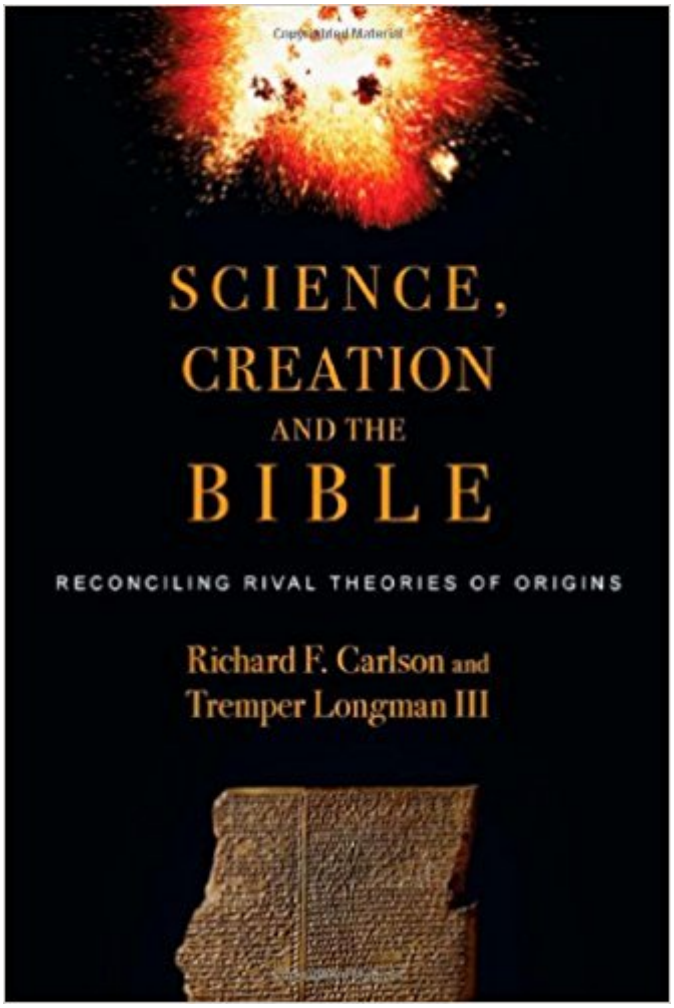
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Science, Creation And The Bible: Reconciling Rival Theories Of Origins



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Synopsis

Many Christians are torn between their belief in the Bible and the conclusions of science. This is especially the case concerning the creation narratives of Scripture and the rather different stories that science tells. Physicist Richard Carlson and biblical scholar Tremper Longman address the longstanding problem of how to relate scientific description of the beginnings of the universe with the biblical creation passages found in Genesis chapters 1 and 2. Experts in their respective fields, these two authors provide a way to resolve the seeming conflicting descriptions by showing the meaning of the biblical texts as well as the meaning of scientific description. In the process they will uncover how theology and science differ, and what they both contributewhat the key biblical passages actually sayhow the ancient Hebrews themselves understood the meaning of Genesis 1--2how the rest of Scripture helps us understand these passageswhat we can gain from science and what its limits are Properly interpreting the biblical texts and clearly identifying the nature of scientific claims are key. With those in hand we can see how Christian revelation and scientific findings about the origin of the universe are not in opposition but rather work in partnership with each other.

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Customer Reviews

"This book is recommended for conservative Evangelicals who have no academic background in science and religion or for high school students and young college students from a similar Evangelical background. . . . the coupling of a high view of the Bible and a high respect for science

and its results makes the book in itself a worthy contribution to the discussion of science and faith." (Justin D. Topp, Reports of the National Center for Science Education, November-December 2013)"I highly recommend this book, especially as an introduction to assist evangelicals in coming to terms with evolution and moving beyond concordist interpretations of the opening chapters of Scripture." (Denis O. Lamoureux, Perspectives on Science & Christian Faith, September 2011)"Science, Creation and the Bible is accessible to the lay reader, and short enough that even those unwilling to wade through long arguments on this topic can find the book helpful. Carlson and Longman develop the case for their conclusions clearly, allowing the reader to see each step of their thinking. They go back to the basics in both science and theology, identify the assumptions they are making, and due to their shared scholarship can speak authoritatively about both science and biblical interpretation." (Dennis Haack, Critique, Issue 1 2011)"Overcoming the fortress mentality, with all of its fear and animus, Science, Creation and the Bible calmly, clearly, and convincingly shows that the Author of Scripture and Nature is not speaking out of both sides of his mouth." (Christopher Benson, Books & Culture, December 2010)"Readers struggling with evolution will find this discussion by Carlson and Longman most helpful. The authors combine a robust respect for science in all its manifestations with a high view of Scripture. The result is a solid argument that there need be no conflict between the biblical and scientific accounts of our origins." (Karl Giberson, author of Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution and senior fellow, The BioLogos Foundation)"Carlson and Longman argue clearly and patiently for a truce in the war between science and Christianity. When taken together, they give a more complete picture of the human drama, and they can be brought together if we learn to respect the unique perspectives they each bring to the conversation. The authors guide readers in just such a quest by outlining some important principles of biblical interpretation, the nature of scientific and theological knowledge, and most importantly a faithful and contextual reading of the all-important creation stories of Genesis. This book is an excellent and irenic introduction to a timely topic where cool heads and broad learning are greatly needed." (Peter Enns, Senior Fellow, biblical studies, The BioLogos Foundation)"There are a number of good books available on reconciling science and Christian theology, particularly creation and evolution. The value of such books to various audiences depends, of course, on some shared assumptions. Carlson and Longman’s book is especially important for anyone who perceives conflict between evolutionary theory and Scripture. While sharing a commitment to scriptural infallibility and a generally literalist reading, they nonetheless show that none of the multiple creation stories in the Old Testament precludes the acceptance of contemporary science. I recommend it highly." (Nancey Murphy, professor of Christian philosophy,

Fuller Theological Seminary)

Richard F. Carlson is research professor of physics at the University of Redlands in Redlands, California and formerly a visiting scientist in the department of radiation sciences at Uppsala University, Sweden. He received a B.S. (University of Redlands), M.S. and Ph.D. (University of Minnesota) in physics, and an M. A. (Fuller Theological Seminary) in biblical studies and theology. His physics research interests are in experimental nuclear physics, and he has done postdoctoral research at UCLA. While teaching at the University of Redlands he has continued his nuclear research at UCLA, the University of Manitoba, University of California Davis, and currently at Uppsala University. Carlson has published more than fifty articles in physics research journals. Recently his interests have shifted to the area of science and Christian faith, and between 1995 and 2005 he taught a number of science and theology courses at the University of Redlands and Fuller Theological Seminary. His courses at Redlands and Fuller have resulted in two Templeton Foundation prizes. He is the general editor of Science & Christianity: Four Views (InterVarsity Press, 2000), as well as the author of a number of articles appearing in nuclear physics research journals and theological journals.Tremper Longman III (PhD, Yale University) is Robert H. Gundry Professor of Biblical Studies at Westmont College in Santa Barbara, California. He is also visiting professor of Old Testament at Seattle School of Theology and Psychology and adjunct of Old Testament at Fuller Theological Seminary. He lectures regularly at Regent College in Vancouver and the Canadian Theological Seminary in Calgary. Longman is the author or coauthor of over twenty books, including How to Read Genesis, How to Read the Psalms, How to Read Proverbs, Literary Approaches to Biblical Interpretation, Old Testament Essentials and coeditor of A Complete Literary Guide to the Bible. He and Dan Allender have coauthored Bold Love, Cry of the Soul, Intimate Allies, The Intimate Mystery and the Intimate Marriage Bible studies.

The focus of this book is on how to interpret the creation narratives in Genesis 1 and Genesis 2, leading to the goal of "resolving the creation-evolution conflict" (p. 72). Chapters 1 & 2 are good brief introductions to the problems of reconciling the Bible and science. Chapter 3 on biblical interpretation presents a good introduction to hermeneutics and myth and ends with quotations from and a discussion of Peter Enns' book "Inspiration and Incarnation: Evangelicals and the Problem of the Old Testament." Chapters 4 & 5 present and discuss creation narratives other than Genesis 1 & 2 in the Old and New Testaments, although it is not clear how these add much to the stated purpose of the book. On the other hand, Chapter 6 contains one of the best discussions of the similarities

and differences of the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 creations accounts that I have read.Chapter 7 contains an excellent discussion of the benefits of accepting that Genesis 1 & 2 should not be read literally because there are simply too many differences between them. Once we get beyond reading Genesis 1 & 2 literally, we can then consider the worldview questions and answers that Genesis 1 & 2 do give us: (1) How is it that things exist? (2) Who are we? (3) What does God think of us and the rest of that which exists?, and (4) What are we to do? This then provides rapprochement between science and Christian faith, opens doors for presenting the gospel message to our educated friends, and allows us to celebrate scientific progress in biology, geology and cosmology as encouraging signs of God's wisdom, power, care and faithfulness in his creation.Although the authors have done an excellent job of discussing how to interpret and understand the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 creation narratives, which is the necessary first step, it is not at all clear how they have resolved the creation-evolution conflict, since that involves so much more than the age of the universe and the earth. This book does not deal with the theological implications of biological evolution. As the title indicates, it deals only with science, creation and the Bible. I recommend this book for anyone looking for a good, short and well-written introduction to how to read the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 creation narratives.

When I first heard of "Science, Creation and the Bible," I was really excited. Creation theology really interests me, especially in light of the modern views on evolution and the Big Bang.When I first read through the book, its logic and theology amazed me. It sounded well thought out and decently objective, a couple prerequisites I had.However, after taking a more careful look at some of its arguments (especially the argument referring to "the day" in Genesis 2:4, which after a closer look, actually means "when"), and discussing with a local pastor, I can't recommend the theology of this book. I think it's a must-read, as it gets you to think, but I think its conclusions aren't true (I especially think it accepts evolution and the Big Bang too easily, without giving it more thought and consideration).For a more details look at my review of this book, please refer to my blog post on Literal Reading of Creation Account in Genesis at pursuingbiblicaldoctrine.com.

I didn't like the book at all. It told me very little that I already know and did not agree with

Trempur Longman III and Richard Carlson make a valiant attempt to reconcile rival theories of origins found in the current science versus faith debate. I waited expectantly and patiently for this work to finally appear. I ended up buying the book at November's ETS meeting and devoured the

work once returning home. Unfortunately, I was disappointed. The work does not leave the reader with any sound reconciliation between the two positions. The authors conclude in more or less words that Genesis is old world cosmology that is meaningful yet shouldn't inform the reader of any scientific ontology. Figurative interpretations, because of multiple accounts of creation, is the viable option for interpreting the creation event. After explaining the role of science and theology, the authors seek to define and parameters of each discipline in hopes that readers will seek various "truth" that are presented in each field. Go to science to answer the "how" questions. Go to Scripture for the "why" questions. I appreciate the irenic discussion on the topic. However, the book does not discuss the ramifications of biological evolution and how it affects other doctrines of Scripture. It also fails to adequately assess and discredit the Intelligent Design movement which is very convincing to many evangelicals. The books succumbs to the same fate as Karl Giberson's book Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution. It does not offer a reconciliation or a sustainable foundation for a belief in the science of evolution with a firm belief in the inerrancy of Scripture. Anyone who is moderately knowable about the material presented in the controversy will find this book lacking. However, it is commendable as a introductory piece of literature to inform the readers of the basics of the war between the two fields of study.

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