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THE LOGIC OF BIBLICAL CREATIONISM AND THE FUTURE

Tom's Perspectives

by Thomas Ice

With the recent death of Henry Morris, many have justly written tributes to him, who, along with John Whitcomb, gave birth to the now vibrant “young earth creation (YEC)” movement when they published their watershed book *The Genesis Flood*.¹ One of the interesting things about the YEC movement is that many, probably a majority of the creation scientists are also dispensational premillennialists when it comes to their view of Bible prophecy.

INTERPRETATIVE CONSISTENCY

Morris and Whitcomb have always been outspoken dispensationalists and both link their literal views of Genesis with a literal view of Revelation and believe that consistency in interpretation demands a link between a literal Genesis and Revelation. “Where the Bible speaks plainly however, we do well to take it plainly,” notes Morris. “It surely does speak clearly concerning the reality of primeval special creation and the urgent importance of the creation message in the last days.”² “If you take Genesis literally,” reasoned Morris, “you’re more inclined to take Revelation literally.”³ Many have noted the consistent correlation between belief in a literal six-day creation as taught in Genesis and a literal view of the Book of Revelation. Historian Mark Noll says, “Creationism could, in fact, be called scientific dispensationalism, for creation scientists carry the same attitude toward catastrophe and the sharp break between eras into their science that dispensationalists see in the Scriptures.”⁴ “In the opinion of the British creationist E. H. Andrews, logical consistency demanded that anyone looking ‘forward to a miraculous end to this present age’ not ‘rigorously exclude miracle from the process of creation.’”⁵

However, a small voice of dissent has been raised concerning this matter of interpretative consistency from reconstructionist preterist Gary DeMar’s publication *Biblical Worldview*. In an article honoring Henry Morris as the founder of the modern Creationist movement, Brandon Vallorani and Eric Rauch attempt to swim up stream on this matter when they claim that a literal Genesis does not fit logically with a literal Book of Revelation. Speaking of Whitcomb and Morris, they said, “Unfortunately, however, their Dispensationalism was becoming inextricably linked with the emerging ‘young-earth creation’ movement.”⁶ If this was a surprise, then it was surprising to only a few. Numbers notes, “Except for the relatively small band of postmillennial Reconstructionists, most flood geologists (in America at least) came from churches awaiting Christ’s soon return to earth. And for Christians expecting the imminent end of the present age . . . Whitcomb and Morris offered a compelling view of earth history framed by symmetrical catastrophic events and connected by a common hermeneutics.”⁷

Vallorani and Rauch go even further in their strange interpretation of creationist history by blaming the linkage of dispensationalism to advocates of the creationist movement for rejecting a biblical view of Genesis. “We believe that it was this strange and inconsistent association that led most non-dispensationalist and/or Reformed Protestants to question (or ignore) the tenets of six-day creation. Apparently, they viewed these tenets as a dispensational distinctive.”⁸ Talk about a lame excuse and perpetuating irresponsible victims! Vallorani and Rauch are indicting their Reformed

brethren for being too weak exegetically and theologically to see the truth because it is associated too closely with the evil dispensationalists.

THE REAL HEROES

When one reads Vallorani and Rauch's "tribute" to Henry Morris one wonders who are the real heroes of the modern creationist movement. Was it the ones who developed the biblical and scientific positions and wrote the book that launched the current movement, or, was it reconstructionist R. J. Rushdoony and the publisher Charles Craig? Vallorani and Rauch are continuing the line begun 20 years ago by Gary North. However, the truth of the matter is that most creation scientists, at least in the United States, are also dispensationalists. These are the guys who actually do the work of scientific creationism. Apparently they have not seen the light of preterism yet that Vallorani and Rauch think they should.

INTERPRETATIVE INCONSISTENCY

In 1988 Wayne House and I released a book about dominion theology that included interaction with the eschatology of Gary DeMar, Gary North and others who are postmillennial preterists. I made the following statement about the inconsistency between their views of creation and prophecy:

Given this kind of thinking, it is strange that Reconstructionists declare days and years in Genesis to be literal and then say that days and years in Revelation are figurative. Creation accounts are taken literally, while eschatology is symbolic. . . .

The literal hermeneutic is consistent with the usage and patterns set up in Genesis, while at the same time setting up a certain symmetry of fulfillment, which displays God's satisfactory completion of history in spite of the challenge of evil. It also takes into account God's rich variety in literary style, while not changing hermeneutics according to subject matter. The preterist approach is designed to make their theology work, when a proper interpretation would otherwise demonstrate it to be invalid.⁹

Today, some preterists¹⁰ are telling preterists like DeMar, Vallorani and Rauch that they are inconsistent for holding to a creation science understanding of Genesis and a global flood, while at the same time saying that most Bible prophecy was fulfilled through the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. Timothy Martin argues the following:

I hope to convince those who have already abandoned dispensational futurist eschatology in favor of preterism (regardless of any particular brand) of the need to completely re-examine the Creation Science paradigm. As preterism grows to eclipse dispensational futurism in American Christianity, I believe this re-examination will lead naturally to the wholesale abandonment of Creation Science ideas. . . .

This critique of the Creation Science movement is a call to consistency. My argument is simple. It is time for those committed to a general preterist understanding of Matthew 24, 2 Peter 3, and Revelation to think through the logical implications of their beliefs as they relate to the rest of the Bible.¹¹

It is no secret that every leading writer for the Creation Science movement supports some version of eschatological futurism. Thoughtful preterists

should ask why this connection to futurism, mainly of the dispensational variety, is uniform across the ranks of leading Creation Scientists. In fact, given the fundamental difference between preterism and dispensational futurism, it is odd preterists support the Creation Science movement. Is the error of Creation Science isolated to a single branch of theology named eschatology? How can they be correct in Genesis, yet so wrong when it comes to Matthew 24 and the entire book of Revelation?¹²

It seems that pretty much everyone recognizes that the consistency on this issue lies with the creationist/dispensationalists and on the other side with the preterist/old earth and local flood viewpoint. There is no biblical consistency with the creationists/preterist paradigm.

THE REAL TRUTH OF THE MATTER

Dispensationalist Charles Clough notes that the presuppositional differences between the covenant theology of those like DeMar and the dispensationalism of Whitcomb and Morris is the real issue. "Covenant theology's presupposition of theological order requires a certain kind of hermeneutic (due to its reductionism) and isolates theological order from historical development (due to its rationalistic tendencies. Dispensationalism, differs fundamentally on both issues,"¹³ contends Clough. Clough further points out:

Marsden's study proved that dispensationalism was a major presupposition or paradigmatic shift because it provided "a new historical scheme," "anti-humanist and anti-developmental," that was "a negative parallel to secular concepts of progress" and "opposed the liberal trends at almost every point." It reversed liberal attempts to explain biblical faith in terms of historical development by explaining historical development in terms of biblical faith.¹⁴

Dispensationalism approaches the Bible as real history, thus its ability to deal with science and history in the modern world. On the other hand, covenant theology views things through a preconceived framework of otherworldly and abstract covenants, thus, not able to deal with the real world of science and history. "Covenant theology is a modern survival of Reformation style thinking about heavenly matters (soteriology) which kept theological order separate from historical details," notes Clough. "In its classical form, it fundamentally ignores the post-Reformation crisis over reconciling general and special revelation."¹⁵

Dispensationalism does not have this kind of compartmentalization. Clough concludes, "Dispensationalism is the completed theological portion of a universal history still being written that ties together theological and historical order in response to post-Reformation problems. Its hermeneutic searches for historical order to validate the faithfulness of God as well as to feed on the more heavenly traditional doctrines. It establishes the Church in relation to the rest of creation and therefore involves ecclesiology and eschatology. It awaits completion of the non theological portion of its universal history by godly work in the arts and sciences."¹⁶ This is why the literal interpretative approach of dispensationalism treats creation and the future as real historical events in history that are going somewhere in God's plan—from a Garden to a city, with a tree (cross) in the middle. Maranatha!

ENDNOTES

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- ¹ John C. Whitcomb, Jr. and Henry M. Morris, *The Genesis Flood: The Biblical Record and Its Scientific Implications* (Philadelphia: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Co, 1961).
- ² Henry M. Morris, *Creation and the Second Coming* (El Cajon, CA: Master Books, 1991), p. xii.
- ³ Henry M. Morris, "Interview with Henry M. Morris," October 26, 1980 (take Genesis literally), cited by Ronald L. Numbers, *The Creationists: The Evolution of Scientific Creationism* (Berkeley, CA: University of California Press, 1992), p. 339.
- ⁴ Mark A. Noll, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1994), p. 195.
- ⁵ Numbers, *The Creationists*, p. 339.
- ⁶ Brandon Vallorani and Eric Rauch, "The Recovery of Biblical Creationism" in *Biblical Worldview* (Vol. 22, Num. 4; April 2006), p. 12.
- ⁷ Numbers, *The Creationists*, pp. 338–39.
- ⁸ Vallorani and Rauch, "The Recovery," p. 12.
- ⁹ H. Wayne House and Thomas Ice, *Dominion Theology: Blessing or Curse?* (Portland: Multnomah, 1988), pp. 329–30.
- ¹⁰ In this case they are full preterists.
- ¹¹ Timothy P. Martin, *Beyond Creation Science: How Preterism Refutes a Global Flood and Impacts the Genesis Debate—Part 1*, (Dec. 29, 2005; <http://planetpreterist.com/news-2734.html>).
- ¹² Martin, *Beyond Creation Science—Part 2*, (Jan. 6, 2006; <http://planetpreterist.com/news-2743.html>).
- ¹³ Charles A. Clough, "A Dispensational View of Theological Order: Why It Offends Covenant Theologians," *Biblical Perspectives* (Vol. V, Num. 5; Sept—Oct. 1992), p. 3.
- ¹⁴ Clough, "Theological Order," p. 3.
- ¹⁵ Clough, "Theological Order," p. 6.
- ¹⁶ Clough, "Theological Order," p. 6.