

Grace to You :: esp *Unleashing God's Truth, One Verse at a Time*

The Face of the Battle

Scripture: Genesis 1:1; Romans 1:22

Code: B100401

Here at the beginning of our series on origins, I want to take a moment to show you what we're dealing with as we argue for a literal, historical interpretation of Genesis 1-3. These three reputable scholars—Bruce Waltke, Tremper Longman III, and N.T. Wright—are teaching and training the current and next generation of pastors, Bible teachers, and theologians. They write prolifically, lecture routinely, and speak openly as respected and trustworthy evangelical sources. Here they are, in their own words, explaining why you should not take the first chapters of Genesis in a literal, historic sense.

Bruce Waltke (Professor of Old Testament, Reformed Theological Seminary) believes we will forfeit our witness (read, "academic respectability") if we don't compromise with whatever the evolutionists feed us.

[Video no longer available.]

"Our spiritual death"? Really? Spiritual vitality belongs to those Christians who are willing to be marginalized as a small sect who takes God at His word.

(*Update* Bruce Waltke has asked The BioLogos Foundation to remove his video from their website and YouTube channel. Waltke told BioLogos he still agrees with the content of the video (you can read the paper he presented at their *Theology of Celebration* conference [here](#)); but he is concerned that the video's brevity will lead to a misunderstanding of his views. You can read more about his concerns and the agenda of BioLogos [here](#). Waltke says "I believe that creation by the process of evolution is a tenable Biblical position, and, as represented by BioLogos, the best Christian apologetic to defend Genesis 1-3 against its critics."

In the same update, the BioLogos Foundation writes, "[Dr. Waltke's decision] is an extremely important statement about the culture of fear within evangelicalism in today's world. Leading evangelicals who support evolution are rightly fearful of personal attacks on the integrity of their faith and character." One commenter lamented, "It is surely a sad day for evangelicals everywhere when attempts to integrate science and faith lead to such hostile reactions from people such as John MacArthur and Douglas Wilson."

Since [Waltke's own data](#) suggest the evangelical trend toward Old Earth Creationism and Evolutionary Creationism, away from Young Earth Creationism (YEC), why would leading evangelicals be fearful? YEC holds very little sway these days, especially in academic circles, so it's hard not to see their concern as nothing more than a tacit accusation of fear-mongering by those who hold to Young Earth Creationism. That said, as long as Genesis is ignored, interpreted superficially, or distorted to support the evolutionary model of origins, they should continue to expect a negative reaction from those who treasure the Bible as the inerrant Word of God.)

In this first clip, Tremper Longman III (Professor of Biblical Studies, Westmont College) explains how literalists have been quite naive about the creation account. In the second clip, Longman wonders whether we have grounds to affirm a historical Adam, especially since we can't take the Genesis narrative literally. (After all, God doesn't have hands or breath, so how could He scoop dust together and breathe life into Adam's nostrils?)

According to Romans 5, Paul seems to think a historical Adam has major redemptive implications. But, maybe we're getting Paul all wrong too...

. . . which brings us to N.T. Wright (Bishop of Durham, Church of England). In his typical style—like a bemused parent scolding an immature teenager—Wright chastises biblical literalists for flattening out the text, forcing it to conform to their own interests. He considers literalists to be "unfaithful to the text itself" since they pervert its true meaning to win petty cultural arguments. Somehow, Wright has been able to transcend all that, restoring to us the real meaning of Genesis 1-3: this world was made to be God's abode.

That's it? *This world was made to be God's abode* is all we're to understand from Genesis 1-3? Seriously, Bishop Wright. Who is guilty of flattening out the text?

Though they come to us with impressive scholarly credentials, we're not going to make Waltke's truce with evolution; we refuse to question the historic reality of Adam along with Longman; nor will we accept Wright's authoritative, unsubstantiated pronouncements about the true interpretation of Genesis 1-3. Instead, we see Genesis 1-3 as setting the foundation for *everything*. Here's how John MacArthur put it: "The starting point for Christianity is not Matthew 1:1, but Genesis 1:1" ([*The Battle for the Beginning*](#), 44).

Well, that's the face of the battle—evangelical voices, trusted by many, have surrendered crucial ground. In fact, they've ceased to speak with an evangelical voice on this issue; they've unwitting become the heralds of a naturalistic, rationalistic, and anti-Christian worldview.

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