

IF WE READ GENESIS as
history, it is

his history.



JUSTIN MARTYR 103-C.165
Genesis is both historical and highly symbolic. Whatever we read must lead us to Christ. The message of Scripture is not always found in its 'common sense' meaning. Readings that are too literal can obscure the prefigurings of Christ.



MELITO OF SARDIS ?-C.180
OT stories and figures are types that are fulfilled in Christ. Genesis 1 and Genesis 2-3 read as one narrative. Genesis events are recorded not for their own sake, but point forward to Christ. Questions of historicity are not explicitly addressed.



THEOPHILUS OF ANTIOCH ?-C.183
Historicity is paramount; it sets Scripture apart from pagan myths. We can accept a literal reading of Genesis (chronology, genealogies). Allegorical reading enriches the text but does not negate the literal reading. Creation *ex nihilo* is central and opposed to Greek ideas of an eternal world.



IRENAEUS C.140-C.202
All Scripture was composed in light of Christ and should be read looking to him. Adam and Eve point to Christ; historicity is of second importance. Adam and Eve were created good but not complete; Christ displays full human personhood. The full meaning of Genesis is brought to light by the cross of Christ.



TERTULLIAN C.160-C.220
Creation *ex nihilo* is essential to counter ideas that matter is eternal or evil. The literal meaning of Scripture is preferred over the allegorical. The 'historical veracity' of Scripture stands even behind allegorical readings. We should read Genesis 1-3 literally/historically with some room for allegory/typology.



ORIGEN C.185-C.254
The literal meaning of Scripture should be preserved when possible. Attention to the literal/historical can reveal obstacles that point to higher meaning. Creation accounts are to be read, first and foremost, for moral instruction. Genesis should be read non-literally; the creation account is not philosophically (scientifically) sophisticated.



JOHN CHRYSOSTOM C.347-407
The heart of biblical interpretation is the journey toward holiness. We should reject Platonic thought that denies Creation *ex nihilo*. God condescends to speak to us as we can understand. The Genesis account is not exhaustive but adapted to the understanding of the original audience. The proper end for studying creation is worship.



AUGUSTINE OF HIPPO 354-430
Scripture can be read literally, analogically, allegorically, or aetiologically. We should condemn literal-minded readings that make no room for the findings of philosophy (science). Scripture is primarily written to promote love of God and neighbor. The authors of Scripture condescend to speak in the language of common people. The world was created in one instant, with all the potentials of growth seeded within it.



THOMAS AQUINAS 1225-1274
Some doctrines are primary (*that* God created) and some are secondary (*how* God created). There are multiple valid interpretations of Genesis on secondary doctrines. Scripture is adapted to the audience, not written to teach science but to lead people to God. The truths of science cannot contradict the truths of faith.



IF WE READ IT as
parable, it is

his parable.

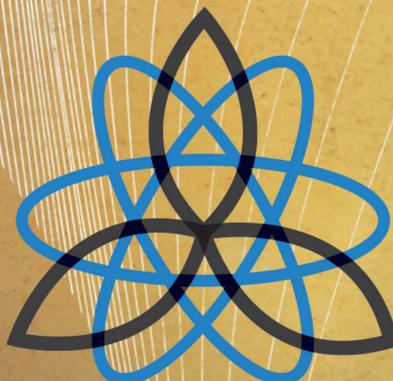


GENESIS IS the first chapter
in the book of

CHRIST,

inviting us to love as he loved.

Will we?



MARTIN LUTHER 1483-1546
Historicity is important; allegory and non-literal interpretations are not preferred. Suspension of judgment or less literal reading is required when difficulties arise. We should read Genesis 1-3 (chronology and genealogies) literally/historically. Scripture is sometimes accommodated to the knowledge of the original audience. Science and Biblical interpretation use different languages and should not interfere with each other's work.



JOHN CALVIN 1504-1564
Scripture is given, first and foremost, to reveal the glory of God. The salvation message of Scripture is written to be understood by all people (perspicuity of Scripture). Physical descriptions of creation are accommodated for unlearned readers. Science helps us interpret the creation, but the message of faith requires revelation.



MATTHEW HENRY 1662-1714
The Bible is divine revelation given for the purpose of knowing, loving, and fearing God. Genesis 1 points to a good creation and Creator vs. an uncaring, eternal world. Genesis 1-3 points to creation's purpose: to participate in and proclaim God's goodness. Scripture is written not to make us into astronomers but into saints. We can accept the standard date of 4004 B.C. as creation's beginning.



J. EDWARDS 1703-1758
God continually recreates the universe every moment (continual creation); nothing is self-sustaining. God creates not out of necessity but from the overflowing love of the Trinity. We should reject a strictly mechanical view of the world in which God could not intervene.



JOHN WESLEY 1703-1791
Scripture is written not to gratify our curiosity, but to lead us to God. Genesis should be read literally/historically; still, the creation account is not scientific. We should pursue scientific inquiry; it is made possible by God. Humility is required both in science and Biblical interpretation.



B.B. WARFIELD 1851-1921
God created the world while allowing providentially-guided natural processes (*concursus*). 'Evolution'—describing development within an already present creation—is compatible with Scripture. 'Evolution' as a theory that explains everything and opposes creation *ex nihilo* should be rejected.



DIETRICH BONHOEFFER 1906-1945
The Bible is a book of and for the Church; it is pastoral and practical. The Bible should not be read to gain scientific knowledge but to reveal people to the living God and themselves. Genesis uses narrative pictures understandable to ancient people. Christ is the heart of Scripture and all pictures used.



H. RIMMER 1890-1952
Genesis is a scientific record of absolute facts; science validates Scripture. Reason can prove creation and help lead people to Christ. An "old earth" is evident in Genesis 1:1 and a "recreation" in Genesis 1:2. Authorial intent is not normative for Moses wrote beyond what he understood.



C. S. LEWIS 1898-1963
The doctrine coming from the text is more important than its literal truth. Christian orthodoxy can be harmonized with modern evolutionary theory. New, creatively constructed stories can usefully convey Christian truth. Although often claiming such, science alone cannot produce an all-encompassing theory of the world and ethics.



POPE BENEDICT XVI 1927-PRESENT
Attention to differences in the creation narratives can point to a higher theological message. The universe is not a product of darkness, unreason, or chance but comes from intelligence, freedom, and beauty that is identical with love. Evolution and Scripture describe complimentary realities; no fatal conflict exists between Genesis 2 and the account of human evolution. Evolution implies philosophical questions that are beyond the internal scope of the natural sciences.

