

Response to Sam Frost's Critique of Beyond Creation Science

by Tim Martin and Jeff Vaughn

We would like to thank Sam Frost for his recent critique of *Beyond Creation Science*. Frost's article, "A Brief Analysis of *Beyond Creation Science*: Some Preliminary Concerns,"¹ covers a lot of ground. We thank Frost for his generous spirit in (1) acknowledging that we have been true to Milton Terry's approach, (2) agreeing that Genesis 2:4b-ff is covenantal, not global, (3) offering a new argument for a local flood that matches this covenant context in Genesis 2:4b-ff, and (4) illuminating key differences between the Genesis 1 and Genesis 2 creation accounts.

The Synthesis

It appears that Frost has met us half-way with his "synthesis" on the creation account in Genesis. We may need further clarification on the finer details of Sam's alternative to Covenant Creation as presented in BCS, but we will interact with it to the best of our ability.

We understand Frost's creation model as a "partial Covenant Creation" view of Genesis creation. He argues that "*There are two heavens and earths in the Genesis account*" (p. 17). Genesis 1:1-2:4a is a literal record of the creation of the physical universe and Genesis 2:4b-ff is a covenant creation of a local Garden that does not deal with all animals, trees and plants on planet Earth. Frost suggests that Genesis 2:4 is a "transition text" that switches subjects from the beginning of the *physical universe* (Gen.1-2:4a) to the beginning of a heavens and earth connected to man's relationship to God (Gen. 2:4b-ff). Thus Frost offers a "both-and" approach to creation that ostensibly preserves the belief that the Bible describes the beginning of the physical universe in precise, literal detail and provides a plain narrative of the origination of God's covenant relationship with man. According to Frost, these are two separate creation accounts that cover completely separate topics. He ends his presentation by stating that the "full Covenant Creation" view presented in BCS is covenantalism "*applied too much*" or "taken to an extreme" and makes "Genesis 1-11 as some sort of covenantal code book" (p. 19).

Frost's methodology might seem vaguely familiar to many of our readers. Partial preterists argue that biblical prophecy is divided between *both* the end of a covenant world *and* the end of the physical universe as we know it. These partial preterists often complain that full preterism is covenantalism "applied too much" or "taken to an extreme" and makes Revelation "some sort of covenantal code book." We will examine Frost's partial covenant creation model in detail later in our response. Following the order of his article, we will first deal with the issue of Milton Terry and the question of hermeneutical principles used to interpret Genesis creation.

Milton Terry and Hermeneutics

¹ <http://planetpreterist.com/news-5545.html>

Frost is correct that we are indebted to Milton Terry for the Covenant Creation model. He goes on to suggest that Terry was “virtually alone” in his opinion that Genesis 1-11 is “largely to be classified as ‘apocalyptic’” (p. 2).

This may or may not be true, but there were many Hebrew scholars in Terry’s day and many since then who have argued that Genesis creation is poetic, not intended to be taken as a plain-literal, scientific record of the creation of the physical universe. A. Berkeley Mickelsen, a 20th century Hebrew scholar and noted authority on biblical hermeneutics, taught a similar hermeneutic approach to creation in his landmark book on hermeneutics titled *Interpreting the Bible* (Eerdmans, 1963). Mickelsen devoted a whole chapter, “Descriptive Language of Creation and Climax,” to his conviction that there is an intimate connection between the figurative language of creation and prophecy. It is not hard to see Milton Terry’s work in the background.²

Debates over Genesis creation are as fluid on the contemporary scene as debates over prophecy. Current approaches resemble the Covenant Creation view in some ways. The ANE (which stands for Ancient & Near East Cosmology) view of creation (John H. Walton) understands Genesis as a polemic against the creation myths and temple dedications of Moses’ day. This view suggests a covenant purpose and context for Genesis creation. The Literary Framework view (Henri Blocher and Meredith Kline) sees a theological focus in the creation account that does not translate into a literal, sequential account of God’s creation of the universe. Minor views like the Analogical Days interpretation (William G.T. Shedd, Herman Bavinck, and C. John Collins) and the Days of Revelation interpretation (P.J. Wiseman and Donald J. Wiseman) rely on the connection between the language of creation and prophecy. The Covenant Creation view shares many key elements with a wide stream of scholarly interpretations of Genesis.

Frost dismisses any and all competing interpretations of creation as merely the effect of compromise with modern science. Note how Frost argued that Terry applied “apocalyptic” to Genesis creation for one reason and one reason only:

The *reason* Terry applied apocalyptic to Genesis is *not* on the basis of Preterism and not on the basis of pure exegesis. He stated his reason quite plainly:

... the discoveries of science have effectually exploded the old notion of the creation of the earth and the heavens in six ordinary days (*Biblical Apocalypics*, p. 40) (pp. 2-3)

From this snippet of Terry, Frost makes this sweeping assertion.

Therefore, *the overwhelming evidence of science became the basis for his rejection of Genesis 1:11 as an account of detailed history.* (p. 3)

² see “The Hermeneutic of Covenant Creation as Taught by A. Berkeley Mickelsen” available online at: <http://planetpreterist.com/news-5541.html>

Is that true? Frost quoted only a small portion of Terry’s statement and offered absolutely no context. Here is the full paragraph:

It has from ancient times been felt by the most devout and thoughtful interpreters that much in the earlier chapters of Genesis must be understood in some other than literal sense. St. Augustine spoke of the “ineffable days” of creation, and all the common readers since his time have wondered that light should have been separately created three days before the sun. But the discoveries of science have effectually exploded the old notion of the creation of the earth and the heavens in six ordinary days, and for more than a hundred years expositors have been striving to adjust the statements of the first chapter of Genesis to the well-ascertained facts of geology and astronomy.

Does Terry’s statement not appear quite different from what Frost presented? Note that Terry never offered science as the “one and only” reason for his approach (as Frost charged). Frost also failed to mention that Terry viewed his own hermeneutic as building on the ancient symbolic approach to creation common in the early church. Frost’s statements above are deceptive. Terry says his symbolic approach is in line with ancient church teaching (particularly Augustine). Terry spent much of his book arguing against *any* method of interpreting Genesis creation in terms of modern science. In the following chapters, Terry argued *against* those very same expositors who strove “to adjust the statements of the first chapter of Genesis to the well-ascertained facts of geology and astronomy”! Frost has not dealt honestly with Terry on this point.

Next Frost conscripts his abbreviated quotation from Terry as “proof” that the modern YEC (young earth creationism) view does not spring from Ellen G. White and the Adventists:

Terry, writing in 1889 [sic – 1898], spoke of the “old notion” of the Young Earth Creationist view (YEC), yet one of the premises of Martin and Vaughn is that YEC did not exist prior to Ellen G. White.

Our chapter which documents the role of White and the Adventists in developing the modern YEC movement is available online.³ Frost is simply mistaken. We did not argue no belief in a young earth existed before White. We did show how the modern *system* popularly known as YEC comes directly from the visions of White and writings of George McCready Price. It is this form of YEC, held by millions of conservatives today that we target in BCS. Ironically, a few years ago Frost acknowledged the “unprecedented” role Adventists played in modern views of Genesis:

My step-father, rest in peace, was a Seventh Day Adventist. Say what you will about them (my dad was a godly man), their work on Genesis is unprecedented.⁴

³ http://beyondcreationsscience.com/index.php?pr=Read_Chapter_6

⁴ <http://groups.yahoo.com/group/PretCosmos/message/6303>

Our historical investigation merely confirms Frost's comment. The "old notion" of creation in six ordinary days in Terry's statement is likely an allusion to the shift that took place at the Reformation. Luther broke tradition with the church fathers before him by insisting that the days of Genesis 1 were intended to be interpreted literally as 24-hour days. In Luther's own words:

We must understand that these days were actual days (*vero dies*), contrary to the opinion of the holy fathers. (*What Martin Luther Says: A Practical In-Home Anthology for the Active*, Concordia, 1986, p. 1523; see BCS pp. 246-248)

Luther's Reformation brought widespread popularity to the plain-literal, 24-hour day view of Genesis 1. Luther wrote more than 300 years before Terry, plenty of time for his literal days approach to be considered an "old notion" by Terry. The 24-hour day view is old, from Terry's perspective, but Terry's symbolic approach is ancient.

Frost's confusion is compounded in that he does not seem to realize that, historically, *literal days alone cannot be automatically equated with YEC views*. Many conservatives held the Gap Theory in the 19th and early 20th centuries. They accepted 24-hour days as part of their old-earth beliefs. This approach continues today with the work of John Sailhamer who holds an old earth view while advocating a 24-hour day interpretation.⁵ It was the widespread acceptance of Adventist teaching on Genesis that made 24-hour day interpretation synonymous with YEC on the contemporary scene. Bernard Ramm was quite clear on this matter. In 1954, the conservative church held a variety of views, but young-earth creationism was unknown outside the Adventist Church.⁶

Frost next makes a curious statement:

It may not be the case that Martin and Vaughn start with Science, but argue, rather, that they start with the Bible (in fact, they deny that they start with the word of God – instead they start with "the Trinitarian nature of God himself" – this rather problematic epistemic must be countered separately – p. 383)... Either Terry is inconsistent, or Martin and Vaughn are – or perhaps, both parties are. (p. 3)

Frost references chapter 19 of BCS titled "The Test of Truth." The subject of that chapter is not our views of creation, interpretation of Genesis, or prophecy, but "The Test of Truth." How Frost rips that statement out of the context of that chapter (at the back of the book under a heading titled "The Ultimate Source of the Test of Truth" no less!) and applies it to our entire approach to Genesis baffles us. Readers may agree or disagree with our presentation in chapter 19, but we made a biblical case for our conclusions regarding Genesis creation, as did Terry before us. Frost brings in matters of philosophy

⁵ John Sailhamer, *Genesis Unbound: A Provocative New Look at the Creation Account* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1996)

⁶ http://beyondcreationsscience.com/index.php?pr=Read_Chapter_6

and modern science when he should focus on the *biblical* case we presented all through the book.

Classifying “Genre”

The next section is the most technical part of Frost’s article. Frost explains the difference between biblical genres including prose (“just the facts, ma’am” - p. 3), poetic (which use Hebrew parallelism – p. 4), and formal apocalyptic (involving seven marked features – pp. 4-5). Frost’s criticism of BCS is that Genesis creation can only be considered plain historical narrative because the grammar (*waw* consecutive) of the Hebrew is “straight monologue” (p. 5). Frost then summarizes his argument:

An honest reader of the opening narrative of Genesis will find none of these elements that are so consistently found in apocalyptic literature.... There is, however, every element of “straight monologue.” In other words, historical narrative. To ignore the overwhelming definition and classifying elements that make an apocalypse what it is, and to continue to insist that Genesis is apocalyptic, is mistaken. (p. 5).

The problem is that Frost is working from a formal and narrow definition of apocalyptic. Terry acknowledged that his wider definition was not the standard in his day, but that it was useful for the internal study of Scripture. In his own words:

Apocalypse is to be understood especially of a heavenly disclosure, in the reception of which the man is comparatively passive... He who receives an apocalypse sees, hears, feels, realizes in some way that the “hand of God” is upon him, making known within his soul what was not thus known before. (BA, p. 12)

The ideal *character* of Gen i, 1-ii, 3, may be quite naturally inferred as much from its *artificial symmetry of structure* as from the peculiar style of its *contents*. The six days are set over against one another in two sets of triads, the first day corresponding noticeably with the fourth, the second with the fifth, and the third with the sixth.... [T]he narrative may be of the most simple prosaic style, and yet present an ideal picture [emphasis ours]. (BA, pp. 43-44)

It is as truly a sevenfold revelation of a beginning as the Apocalypse of John is a mystic revelation of an end. (BA p. 44)

Terry did not argue his approach from the grammar (see BA p. 44). He made his case from the *character* of the text and *contents* found within the text. We explained our similar approach in BCS:

We use the term “apocalyptic” in this book in a wider, more general sense than the technical definition applied by modern scholars to Jewish writings of the intertestament period. (BCS p. 271)

That Frost does not agree with our definition of apocalyptic is irrelevant to our case that symbolic images and details are prevalent in early Genesis. Note that Frost said nothing about the parallel structure ordering the days of Genesis 1 in a double pattern. Days 1-3 clearly relate to Days 4-6 (see BCS p. 283). This is a poetic, chiasmic *structure* with conceptual parallelism. Frost agreed with Hebrew authorities that: “The dominant structure in Hebrew poetry is parallelism” (p. 4). Hence, on Frost’s own terms, the claim that Genesis 1 is poetic is legitimate. The literary structure of Genesis 1 indicates something very different than “just the facts, ma’am” kind of writing.

In fact, Frost never dealt with *any* of the details we examined that indicate the text communicates through symbolism. Frost did not mention, for example, the creation source for biblical prophecy, the connection between the seven days of Genesis creation and the matching de-creation week in Revelation. Nor did he struggle with the fact that cherubim mentioned in Genesis 3 are found *only* in prophetic texts or symbolic/typological texts elsewhere in Scripture. Another detail we presented is the long life-spans in the early chapters of Genesis which follow a numerological pattern and match long life-spans in prophecy.⁷

Frost would dismiss this investigation of the *contents* of early Genesis and their relation to the rest of Scripture because the *grammar* does not match his formal definition of apocalyptic. This is a bad argument for a couple of reasons. Firstly, Genesis *pre-dates* the formal apocalyptic writings by many hundreds of years (see BCS, pp. 237-239). It is an anachronism to force that narrow definition back on Genesis which, in our view, introduces all the symbolic elements of biblical prophecy. Secondly, Frost agrees that the early chapters of Genesis contain apocalyptic! He agrees with us that Genesis 2:23b is poetic/apocalyptic (p. 6). He also agrees that Genesis 3:15 is poetic/apocalyptic (p. 7). Yet, *neither of these texts fit the seven-fold criteria standard for formal apocalyptic!* Frost believes this is acceptable because of a recognizable change in Hebrew syntax. But what about the recognizable *elements* in Genesis that connect to prophetic portions of Scripture? It seems that Frost has completely ignored our case.

Let us consider the text from his perspective for a moment. Can Frost’s approach work? The very fact that Frost agrees with us (as well as David Chilton and Milton Terry) that Genesis 3:15 is apocalyptic creates a major problem:

For example, citing *Genesis* 3.15, we find *waw*-consecutives throughout 3.1-14 – straight forward historical narrative, then, as we should expect, if 3.15 is “prophetic”, it will be marked *within* the framework as being such. And it is. 3.15 begins with a conjunction (*waw*) and a noun followed by a verb (“And enmity I will put between you and between the

⁷ A detailed examination of these details, along with many others, can be found in BCS pp. 281-359.

woman and between your seed and between her seed. He shall bruise (imperfect, no conjunction) you. Head! And you (conjunction with noun) shall bruise him (imperfect, no conjunction). Heel!” (my translation). This proves my point above about the nature of Biblical Hebrew. It marks out poetry, prophecy *within* a historical narrative so that we understand *this is not necessarily literal, but could be metaphorical at this spot*. The syntax here is notably broken from the flow of the *waw* consecutive narrative. (p. 7)

We suspect that Frost knows he must grant some symbolism in Genesis 3 to defend his preterism. Taking the curse “literally” (like he insists we should take the rest of the account) would mean that *physical* thorns and thistles began at the fall (3:18), as well as *human* sweat (3:19) and *biological* death (3:19). Taking Genesis *that* literally would imply that God’s redemption has not yet been completed in Christ because biological death, physical sweat, thorns and thistles are all still very much with us!

Frost is also aware that Daniel prophesied a resurrection of “those who sleep in the dust of the earth” (Dan. 12:2). Frost agrees that Daniel 12 does not refer to “casket” resurrection, a biological resurrection of physical corpses. Yet Daniel draws from the language of Genesis 3:19: “For dust you are, And to dust you shall return.” *A literal reading of Genesis 3:15-18 would refute preterism.*

Readers should understand that Frost’s YEC preterism requires a severe interpretive tension. Frost needs to take the text “literally” in order to defend his YEC beliefs, but immediately demands a covenant/spiritual symbolic interpretation at points where raw literalism would contradict preterism. Thus Frost presents a *partial-apocalyptic* interpretation to force his YEC and preterist beliefs to co-exist. How will this ever be convincing to millions of YEC futurists who are futurists precisely because of their *consistent* literalism in Genesis 3?

Now consider the problems Frost’s method creates. Eve’s temptation by the serpent and the sin contain the *waw*-consecutives, but the punishment does not. According to Frost we have literal details recorded in a plain historical and physical account followed by an apocalyptic curse; a literal man and woman receive an apocalyptic punishment in Gen. 3:16-19; a literal serpent is replaced with an apocalyptic serpent in Gen. 3:15. Can the text really be divided like this?

Frost has a physical serpent at the start of the narrative, yet turns God’s judgment of the serpent into a judgment of something else in v. 15 This partial-apocalyptic approach disjoints the story and leads to confusion in determining who or what is being judged (something other than what Gen. 3:1-14 account is about?!). Though we do not doubt the irregularity of the Hebrew, Frost’s method is impossible because *this serpent* introduced in Genesis is the subject of prophecy in Revelation. John reaches all the way back into Genesis when he says:

So the great dragon was cast out, *that serpent of old*, called the Devil and Satan... (Rev. 12:9 NKJ)

The problem with defining everything in Genesis by grammar, as Frost insists, is that grammar does not take into consideration wider connections in Scripture. Frost is so focused on the grammar trees that he appears to miss the symbol forest in Genesis. An inspection of the grammar alone is far too narrow to determine the nature of creation texts. Consider this “grammar-only” approach to interpreting Genesis offered by *Answers in Genesis*, a leading YEC organization:

It is true that Adam and Eve didn’t die the exact day they ate the fruit (Genesis 5:4–5) as some seem to think Genesis 2:17 implies. So, the options are either God was in error or man’s interpretation is in error. But God cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18), so then fallible humans must be making the mistake. Let’s take a look at where the confusion begins to arise. The Hebrew phrase in English is more literally:

“Tree knowledge good evil eat day eat die (dying) die”

The Hebrew is “die die” (*muwth—muwth*) with two different verb tenses (dying and die), which can be translated as “surely die” or literally as “dying you shall die,” indicating the beginning of dying—an ingressive sense—and finally culminating with death. At the point when they ate, Adam and Eve began to die and would return to dust (Genesis 3:19). If they were meant to die right then, God would have used *muwth* only once, as is used in the Hebrew to mean dead, died, or die, not beginning to die or surely die as die-die is used in Hebrew. Old Testament authors understood this and used the terms appropriately, but sometimes we lose a little during translation.⁸

Phew!! Perhaps we should all end this conversation because the *grammar* in Genesis refutes full preterism! But the article quoted above offers no consideration for the covenant context of the death introduced in Genesis. Nor is there any investigation of how *the rest of Scripture* (including the New Testament) references this death. The grammar alone settles the question for these young-earth creationists. Too bad for us full preterists!

The thematic, motif, and symbolic connections between Genesis and prophecy call for consistent interpretation. These connections between Genesis and prophecy are well-known. Here is another example Frost ignored. We spoke about “light without the sun” as a connection between Genesis and Revelation in BCS pp. 291-294. Consider how YEC advocates are consistent:

The traditional understanding is that on the fourth day the sun, moon, and stars simply replaced the primordial light of day 1, which was light of the Spirit and glory of God. Eventually, the sun, moon, and stars will be gone, because the firmament-boundary between heaven and earth will be gone

⁸ <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2008/10/20/contradictions-time-of-death>

and the light of the Spirit of Christ will return as the light of the cosmos (Rev. 21:23). In the meantime, the firmament stands between us and God while we live out the course of history by faith and not by sight, “under the sun,” as the book of Ecclesiastes tells us. (Jordan, *Creation in Six Days*, pp. 165-166)

Thus, William reasons, the luminaries in the firmament are only temporary. They were not there in the beginning, and they will not be there at the end. He remembers that this is just what Revelation 21:23 and 22:5 say. (Jordan, *Creation in Six Days*, p. 16)

Covenant Creation is rooted in the belief that the “traditional” YEC-futurist view has the framework exactly right. We work *within the framework* of well-tested, widely accepted theology. We are convinced that Christian theology has rightly understood an inescapable connection between the beginning and the end. We say “stick with the framework.” The real error is the physical-universe definition of both creation and new creation held by majority views of creation and prophecy.

In order to maintain his YEC view of Genesis with his full preterist view of Revelation, Frost must argue that there is no real connection between the details of Genesis 1 and what we find in Revelation 21-22.⁹ Frost says Genesis 1 is dealing with the physical universe. Revelation is talking about “new heaven and new earth” which is *not* a new physical universe. Frost provides a “partial Covenant Creation” model and then declares any attempt to *integrate* Genesis 1 with the consummation at the end of Revelation “off limits” by definition.

Frost divides Genesis 1 from Revelation, yet John is clearly writing with Genesis creation in mind. Are we to believe the resemblance (light without sun and moon) between the “beginning” and the “end” is pure coincidence? No. John drew his imagery directly from Genesis 1. If Frost’s YEC views are right, then John utilizes thematic elements of Genesis creation in a way that the original plain-meaning of Genesis 1 *never intended*. Wouldn’t it be much better to say that John worked with a symbolic or covenantal-spiritual understanding of Genesis creation because that is precisely the nature and focus of original creation? Terry taught that the Bible is a self-interpreting book. That means we must pay close attention to how the biblical writers use the creation accounts in their writings.

A narrow, grammar-only critique of our symbolic-apocalyptic interpretation, though it might fit the academic work of the liberal German scholar Hermann Gunkel, completely misses how the details in Genesis creation are used throughout the rest of Scripture. The reason Terry came to the conclusions he did was because he was dead serious about

⁹ As we will see below, Frost’s model goes counter to the entire *framework* of historic Christian theology. Frost’s view of the relationship between the beginning and the end overturns the entire table. His approach dumps the puzzle pieces on the floor and constructs a novel *framework* which relies on an *untested* approach to Genesis creation (see also BCS pp. 351-354).

letting Scripture interpret Scripture, a lesson most modern scholars have yet to seriously put into practice. Yet Frost wants to define textual issues according to their terms!

This section of Frost's article continues with more confusion. Speaking on our discussion of evening and morning in Genesis 1 Frost states:

If "day" is symbolic of "unspecified time," then Martin and Vaughn have fallen into the same trap as the "day-age" theorists, who *do* believe that Genesis is speaking in terms of a scientific cosmogony (that is, they try to fuse Genesis 1 with science)! (p. 8)

We are baffled. Our whole point of presenting Covenant Creation in BCS is that the creation text is not speaking literally about the creation of the physical universe. Frost's point above applies only if we claim Genesis speaks about the physical universe, the very point we deny in BCS. How we get lumped in with Day-Age methods because of our non-literal view of the creation days is beyond us.

The final criticism of this section is related to Daniel 8:26. We argued that the Hebrew in Daniel 8:26, "evening and morning," is identical to the phrase used in Genesis 1. This not only connects the language of Genesis 1 to another text that is widely accepted as apocalyptic, it also draws a link between original creation and the subject of the prophecy in Daniel 8 – the new creation. Frost complains:

However, as one that is familiar with Hebrew, their conclusion here violates a well known rule... This is an adjectival use of a number. The plurality of the number transfers to the singularity of the noun, therefore, the translations, "evenings and mornings" (plural) are grammatically correct.

We do not know Hebrew, but what we find interesting is that, apparently, some renowned Hebrew scholars know nothing of this "well known rule." We quoted the KJV which translated "evening and morning" as singular, just like Genesis 1. Note how James Jordan translates the passage in question:

And he said unto me, "Until evening and morning two thousand and three hundred; and a sanctuary will be vindicated." (Dan. 8:14 – Jordan, *Handwriting on the Wall*, p. 411)

And the vision of the evening and morning that has been told: it is true. And as for you, seal up the vision, because it belongs to many days. (Dan. 8:26 – Jordan, *Handwriting on the Wall*, p. 413)

Jordan's translation highlights our point. Is Jordan not familiar with Hebrew? It seems odd that Jordan would miss such an elementary detail if Frost's claim is the whole story on Hebrew grammar. Another Hebrew scholar who "missed it" according to Frost is Eugene Peterson:

The other answered, “Over the course of 2,300 sacrifices, evening and morning. Then the Sanctuary will be set right again.” (Dan. 8:14 – *The Message*)

This vision of the 2,300 sacrifices, evening and morning, is accurate but confidential. (Dan 8:26 – *The Message*)

Consider how translations as diverse as the old King James and the new *Message* as well as scholarly work on Daniel all confirm our case in BCS pp. 284-285.

Regardless of the translation point in question we see a recurrence of the same problem in Frost’s criticism. Frost’s narrow focus on Hebrew grammar, again, distracts him from a much bigger issue we raised in the book (BCS p. 284). *From where* did Daniel’s language of “evening and morning” originate? That Hebrew phrase, “evening and morning” comes directly out of Genesis 1! Preterists understand that Daniel refers to the time that God would create “new heavens and a new earth” (Is. 65:17). Why would Daniel’s prophecy allude back to creation? We suggest it is because the subject of the prophecy is the *time* of the new covenant, a new creation. “Evening and morning,” a rare phrase in Hebrew, would bring the reader’s mind back to original creation. Frost needs deal with the wider connection between Genesis creation and eschatology we find sprinkled throughout Scripture.

Alleged Contradictions: Genesis 1 and 2

Next Frost argues against a section on p. 254 in BCS titled “Genesis 1 vs. Genesis 2, Literally.” From this section, *barely over one page in length*, Frost writes:

Another major point in the work of Martin and Vaughn is that there is a contradiction between the sequence of creation events in Genesis 1 and chapter 2. (p. 10)

We sense a bit of exaggeration here. We made a “major point” in our book in barely 1 page of text? This minor section in the introductory chapter on Creation titled “The Great Creation Debate” was not presenting *our* views of the relationship between Genesis 1 and 2. It was intended to challenge our audience on an issue rarely discussed in YEC material.

Modern YEC advocates usually understand the scope and detail of *both accounts* as global. They sometimes say that Genesis 2 deals with the specific location of Adam and Eve on planet Earth, but they teach that Adam named *all the animals God created in Genesis 1*, not a few domesticated animals that God might bring inside the Garden! And certainly not merely *sacrificial* animals used in the Tabernacle/Temple (as Frost suggests

later in his article). According to the modern YEC view, Adam names representative kinds of all the animals that he had been given dominion over in Genesis 1:28.¹⁰

These same YEC advocates also insist, following Adventist doctrine, that *the entire world was a garden before the fall*. They teach that biological death did not exist before the fall anywhere, not just in the Garden, but across planet Earth. (This is why they insist that the fossil record must have been created during the flood, since no *biological* death could exist on planet Earth before Adam and Eve sinned). They teach that the account of the fall, which took place in the Garden, resulted in changes all across the world. These are the common conceptions of Genesis 1 and 2 which we were challenging in that section (BCS p. 254). And our points apply in this dual global context *given modern YEC assumptions about Genesis creation*.

Frost uses this section in BCS to launch into his charge that our view introduces a contradiction in Scripture. However, he did not read our material very carefully. We agree with his point that Genesis 1 and 2 are distinct, non-contradictory accounts. We explained this in later sections that presented our view of creation:

Recapitulation takes a theme or subject already introduced and expands on the important or leading feature. Recapitulation zooms in for a closer look.... The double pattern is manifested in the two accounts of creation, Genesis 1:1-2:4 and Genesis 2:5-25. (BCS p. 282)

You would never know this by reading his article, but our material on creation presented a general view of two distinct but related accounts of creation. Consider the similarity of our quote from BCS above to what Frost wrote:

Genesis 2 is an expansion of 1. This *is* typical in biblical literature. (p. 12)

Yes, it is typical in *apocalyptic* portions of Scripture. Take Daniel for example. The sequence of four kingdoms is introduced in Daniel 2 and the rest of the book is given over to prophecies expanding on the details of this sequence from various points of view. At one point in Daniel Greece is a leopard (Dan. 7:6). In the next chapter Greece is a goat (Dan. 8:5-12, 21). Same Greece. To the logician's mind this would be a contradiction. Is Greece a leopard or is Greece a goat? What about the law of non-contradiction? Frost's stated concern about "contradiction" in apocalyptic results from a failure to appreciate the artistic and poetic flexibility demonstrated by the biblical writers. The same type of introduction – expansion is common in the book of Revelation as well. The wider implications of these kinds of structural details in Genesis are not evaluated in Frost's critique of BCS.

Frost missed our point in this one-page section (BCS p. 254) under the heading "Genesis 1 vs. Genesis 2, Literally." It appears he is not aware of the assumed global context of our

¹⁰ see <http://www.answersingenesis.org/docs2002/1112animals.asp> and <http://www.answersingenesis.org/e-mail/archive/AnswersWeekly/2007/0127.asp> and <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/am/v3/n4/bara-what>

intended audience's views, which we were challenging. If he had read carefully a little further he would have seen how our approach recognizes that there are two distinct accounts in creation and there is no contradiction between them. As it is, Frost mounts his war horse to attack the well-documented views of his modern YEC allies.

Exegetical Considerations between Gen. 1 and 2

This section in Frost's article is given over to his explanation of the two accounts of creation and introduces his view that *these two accounts are separate and reference two different heavens and earths*.

2:4b starts another narrative, a narrative *not about* The Heavens and The Earth, but *earth* and *heavens*. It is an account of *when* God made *an* earth and *a* heavens distinct from The Earth and The Heavens. (p. 13)

Frost's model has Genesis 1:1-2:4a as a literal record of God's *creation* of the physical universe and Genesis 2:4b-ff as a literal record of as the *formation* of a covenant world manifested in the local Garden scene. According to Frost, Genesis creation is *partially* about the creation of the physical universe and *partially* about the formation of a covenant world in relationship to God. Genesis 2:4 is a "transition text" between these two separate subjects.

There are many details in this section with which we agree. Frost shows that there is Tabernacle/Temple background involved in Genesis 2 (p. 14). The genius of this insight is that it places the context where "the death" originates inside the inner courts of God's Tabernacle/Temple dwelling place. That is, *spiritual* life and *spiritual* death is in view in Genesis 2. Frost also makes a remarkable observation about the creation week in terms of redemptive history. Speaking of the man's creation he writes:

It is God's *capstone* achievement at the *end* or *last day* of creating – heaven coming to earth/God dwelling with Man – the *Glory* of the Lord *coming down* on the *last day* to raise man *from the dust* and place him in His Temple/City/Paradise followed by a *rest from works*. (p. 15)

This example from Frost would fit perfectly in our chapter titled "The Prophetic Creation." It is a great insight into Genesis 1. In fact, this is a profound application of a point we made that "There is a sense in which all covenant history is prophetically bound up in the creation week" (BCS p. 283). Frost's example, however, points to a *covenant purpose and focus* for the creation week that is quite different than his supposed plain-literal explanation of the origination of the physical universe. *Frost's insight demonstrates how the creation week is focused on covenant history*.

Frost also noted that paradise has no reference to sea creatures:

(note the fish are not mentioned – the Levitical sacrifices did not have fish offerings, but they did have "birds" and various "animals"). (p. 15)

We agree with his insight regarding the Temple/Tabernacle context of Genesis 2. We are also in general agreement with Frost that a contrast exists between the two accounts of Genesis creation. To his distinctions we would add that the land “rose up” in Genesis 1:9-10, whereas the water “rose up” in Genesis 2:6. Another contrast is the name of God is different in the two accounts. Elohim, the name of God used by Gentiles in the OT, is present in Genesis 1 and Yahweh, the covenant-name of God revealed to Israel, is present in Genesis 2.

The emphasis *is* different in the two accounts; that much is clear. But does this imply, as Frost insists, that there are two separate “heavens and earths” involved? Is Genesis 2:4 a “transition text” that takes us from the subject of the physical universe to a separate, covenantal heavens and earth?

Frost makes his initial argument based on, again, the grammar of Genesis 2:4 which he translates as:

These are the origins of The Heavens and The Earth in their being created,
When the LORD God made an earth and a heavens: (p. 13)

Frost notes the inversion of the order (heavens and earth, earth and heavens) as well as the presence of the article “the” before the two nouns “heavens” and “earth.” Frost capitalized the first set along with the articles but did not capitalize the second set to highlight his distinction. Of course, the capitalization is not in the Hebrew text but supplied by Frost.

The first problem is that the Septuagint (LXX) explicitly contradicts Frost’s model:

This is the book of the origin of *heaven* and *earth*, when it originated on the day that God made *the heaven* and *the earth*. (Gen 2:4 LXX NETS¹¹; emphasis ours)

Notice the various “heaven and earth” phrases. Concerning the article “the,” the LXX has the phrases *exactly reversed* from Frost’s translation above. The LXX also duplicated the order, “heaven” and then “earth” in both parts of 2:4. These are major problems for Frost. He even cited Genesis 2:4 (LXX) when he made an argument against a point in BCS and claimed “the Hebrew translators of the LXX knew better” (p. 13). Well, the Hebrew translators knew nothing of Frost’s distinction of two heavens and earths differentiated by the article and arrangement! We find it difficult to believe Frost did not notice these problems when he consulted the LXX on Genesis 2:4. Why didn’t Frost tell his audience that the LXX explicitly contradicts his model?

Frost’s entire review starts from the presupposition that Genesis creation can only be plain historical narrative. We believe that this presupposition causes him to miss something very important in the Hebrew. Consider another way to look at Genesis 2:4:

¹¹ <http://ccat.sas.upenn.edu/nets/edition/01-gen-nets.pdf>

Genesis 2:4 has an interesting literary structure in Hebrew, a structure that we find very often in the Bible. The structure is called a chiasm or palistrophe, and is characterized by parallelism arranged in a sandwich pattern, like ABCBA, or ABBA, or ABCDEFFEDCBA, etc. Here is Genesis 2:4 as we find it in Hebrew:

- A. These are the generations of the *heavens*
- B. And the *earth*
- C. In their *creation*
- D. In the *day*
- C'. The Lord God *made*
- B'. Earth
- A'. And heavens.

(James Jordan, *Trees and Thorns: Studies in Genesis 2-4*, 2005, p.5)

Chiastic structure is a well known feature of apocalyptic, and this structure points to more parallelism in the creation account. But if the structure of 2:4 is poetic, then the two references to “heavens” and “earth” in this arrangement *preclude* the possibility that two entirely different subjects are in view. Chiasm works by “rhyming” unified subjects. The poetic structure is not compatible with the notion that the account switches subjects from one “heavens and earth” to an entirely separate “heavens and earth.”

Frost’s next line of argumentation for his “two heavens and earths” view is based on contrasting the Hebrew verb *bara* against *asah*. Frost seems to understand *bara* as a reference to “creating” and *asah* as a reference to “making” or “forming” out of what already pre-existed:

2.5-ff relates to “making” (*ash*) of an earth and a heavens, not the “creating” (*bra*) of The Heavens and The Earth. (p. 14)

Genesis 2, therefore, is.... *the specific formation (not creation) of the Paradise of God on The Earth on the sixth day.* (p. 15)

Once again, Frost has overlooked major textual problems. *Bara* is used in Genesis 1 in reference only to the “heavens and earth” (1:1), the creatures of the sea (1:21), and man (3 times in 1:27). Following the logic of Frost’s argument here, *nothing else in Genesis 1 was “created”!* For example, the luminaries were not “created” (*bara*) but were “formed” (*asah*) on the fourth day in Genesis 1:16.

The predominant Hebrew word used for God’s creation in Genesis 1 is not *bara*, but *asah* (1:7, 11, 12, 16, 25, 26, 31). This raises an obvious question. Why would Frost insist that these examples must be understood as “creation,” but the *same word* in Genesis 2 should

not be understood as “creation”? The grammar does not bear this out. Frost’s partial Covenant Creation view employs an arbitrary and inconsistent method. He requires *asah* to reference “forming” or “making” in terms of covenant purposes of something already “created” in Genesis 2, and yet demands that the details in Genesis 1, which also use *asah*, speak of original creation! The use of *bara* and *asah* in Genesis 1-2 does not even *remotely* fit Frost’s model.

The next problem for Frost is how biblical prophecy speaks about “new heavens and new earth”:

For behold, I create [*bara*] new heavens and a new earth; And the former shall not be remembered or come to mind. (Is. 65:17 NKJ)

Can it be any more obvious that Isaiah draws from Genesis 1:1? The order, “heavens” and “earth,” is identical to 1:1. Even more remarkable is the fact that Isaiah used the same Hebrew verb for “create” (though future tense) as we found in Genesis 1:1: *bara*. If Frost were to consistently apply his method, then he would conclude that a physical fulfillment of Isaiah 65 remains in our future.¹²

Of course, Isaiah 65 is not talking about a new *physical* creation in any sense. Isaiah speaks of a new *covenant* creation. The parallel between Genesis 1:1 and Isaiah 65:17 shows the end result of Frost’s YEC commitment. Frost is, again, forced to resort to a partial Covenant Creation method to argue that Genesis 1:1 refers to the origin of the *physical* universe, but Isaiah 65:17 refers to a new covenantal heavens and earth *even though the language is identical*.

In the wider picture, Frost’s model is impossible for another reason. Genesis 1 is as integral to biblical prophecy as is Genesis 2. The sea (which Frost agrees is nowhere in view in Genesis 2 – p. 15) *is a prominent theme in Revelation*.

Now I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first earth had passed away. Also there was no sea. (Rev. 21:1 NKJV)

Note how the elements listed draw from Genesis 1 viewed through Isaiah 65. (Isaiah 65 implies no sea would exist in the new heaven and new earth; the sea is absent.) Genesis 1 is where God created the “heavens and the earth” (Gen. 1:1) and “the sea” (Gen. 1:9-10, 20). The immediate context before this passage in Revelation describes the Great White Throne judgment of “earth and heaven” (20:11) and “sea” (20:13). John works directly from the *full context* of creation as he goes on to write about the holy city in Edenic imagery drawn from creation.

¹² Frost proposed something like this in a recent article available online at: <http://preterism.ning.com/profiles/blogs/a-proposal-an-end-to-history>. In Frost’s words, “This, of course, could take millions of years.... Isaiah 65.17-ff literally fulfilled as it is already spiritually fulfilled.” The irony here is that Frost denies a million years passed during God’s original creation of the physical universe. Yet he suggests that the new creation (in a physical sense) *will be completed over a million years!* (see BCS pp. 287) What is the root problem? Frost’s insistence of a physical-universe creation as the topic of Genesis is spilling over and forcing a supposed “literal” fulfillment of Isaiah 65.

Frost claims that the background for Genesis 2 is the Tabernacle/Temple. He noted that there are no fish involved in this covenant context:

(note the fish are not mentioned – the Levitical sacrifices did not have fish offerings, but they did have “birds” and various “animals”). (p. 15)

If the Tabernacle/Temple is the background, then Frost has a major problem. *The architecture of the Tabernacle/Temple included the sea!* Yet there is no sea in Genesis 2. Where is the background of the sea in Genesis creation? That background is found only in Genesis 1 which tells us about God’s creation of the sea and creatures of the sea.

What Frost has missed with his model is that the contrast between Genesis 1 and 2 is not between two separate heavens and earths, the physical universe and the covenantal heavens and earth in some sort of partial Covenant Creation scheme. Both creation texts relate to the one “heavens and earth” of God’s creation from two perspectives. Genesis 1 corresponds to the outer courts of the Tabernacle/Temple, including symbolism related to the Gentiles (hence the use of Elohim), whereas Genesis 2 is focused on the inner court and holy of holies, correlating to the Garden (hence the use of Yahweh). *The Tabernacle/Temple motif lies not merely behind Genesis 2; it also lies behind Genesis 1.*

The text tells us this in Frost’s own terms. We mentioned above that the luminaries were “formed” [*asah* not *bara*] on Day 4 (Gen. 1:16). The text explicitly gives a *worship background* as introduction to the “forming” of the sun, moon, and stars: “let them be for signs and seasons, and for days and years” (Gen. 1:14). This relates to old covenant worship in the old creation:

The sun and moon were to function for man for *seasons*. By an analysis of the usage of the word *seasons* Maunder indicates that it means religious seasons, not the four seasons of the year. The position of the sun indicated the various times for daily sacrifices, and the position of the moon for monthly sacrifices. Seven was very important in the whole Jewish economy and it figured in their astronomy and religious seasons. (Ramm, *The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, p. 97; see also BCS p. 293-294)

Stars are for signs primarily. Festival times in the Old Creation were governed by the moon (first month, fourteenth day, etc.). The sun determines days and years. (Jordan, *Creation in Six Days*, p. 212)

By suggesting that the Tabernacle/Temple is the background of creation in Genesis 2, Frost has unwittingly affirmed the full Covenant Creation view. His partial Covenant Creation view (applied only to Gen. 2:4b-ff) is impossible because it presents *only one segment* of the Tabernacle/Temple scene, the inner courts and holy of holies. Genesis 1 completes the full picture. Here we find the sea (corresponding to the outer courts of the

Gentiles); this is the “big picture” of the worship system (involving animal sacrifices, etc.) that God ordained for the entire old covenant age, the old covenant creation.

The subject of Genesis 1 is as clearly God’s covenant people formed in worship as is the subject of Genesis 2:

Thus the heavens and the earth, and all the host of them, were finished
(Gen. 2:1 NKJV)

Note how the “host” is associated with the “the heavens and the earth.” English translations interpret “host” in a variety of ways, but the underlying Hebrew word for “host” is a common Hebrew word which is used often in reference to all of God’s people. Israel came up out of Egypt *a mixed multitude*, as a “host” (Ex. 12:51)—the same Hebrew word found in Genesis 2:1. Another four examples can be found in Daniel’s prophecy regarding the persecution of *all* God’s people in the last days (Dan. 8:10-13, 19). The subject of the creation account is the “host”—God’s army—which is a holy people. The universal picture (covenantally speaking) of Genesis 1 anticipates, as did the Tabernacle and Temple architecture, united Jew and Gentile worship around the One true God.

All of creation is covenantal. The prophets and apostles made no distinction between two supposed “heavens and earths” in Genesis. The details of Genesis 1 and 2 are both referenced as covenant context in such passages as Deuteronomy. 32:1, 10-11, Isaiah 51:13-16, and Jeremiah 4:23ff (see BCS pp. 328-330). Only the full Covenant Creation view can explain the sea-context so prominent at key points like Revelation 20:13 and 21:1. What Genesis 1-3 does, Revelation 20-22 undoes, because God created “a new heaven and new earth for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away. Also there was no more sea” (Rev. 21:1 NJK). The entire old creation was dissolved at the consummation, the full manifestation of the new creation. Covenant Eschatology demands Covenant Creation.

2 Peter 3 Considered

This final section in Frost’s review is very difficult to follow from a casual reading. We need the reader to grasp clearly what Frost has concluded in order for us to effectively interact with his criticism of BCS.

Frost’s view of 2 Peter 3 is absolutely central to his entire model. Along with a few other preterist critics of BCS, Frost believes that 2 Peter 3 says “a” heavens and earth was destroyed by the flood. Frost goes on to suggest that *another* completely separate heavens and earth was awaiting destruction by fire in Peter’s day. *That is, covenant history is broken up into a series of heavens and earths.* The last of these heavens and earths in the old covenant age was, in Peter’s day, slated for destruction by fire. This concept of a *series* of heavens and earths forms the wider context for Frost’s conclusions.

Frost's fundamental belief, to be defended at all costs, is Genesis 1 is a literal account of the creation of the physical universe. Frost's unique YEC view rests entirely on that foundation. However, Frost's series of heavens and earths means there *must also be "a" heavens and earth to be destroyed by the flood*. Since the physical universe (as everyone, including the futurist, agrees) was not destroyed by the flood, Frost needs to demonstrate the existence of *another* heavens and earth between Genesis 1 and the flood recorded in Genesis 6-9. As we have seen, Frost finds this second, distinct "heavens and earth" in Genesis 2 with the description of the Garden; Genesis 2:4, the supposed "transition text," takes us from "the" heavens and earth (physical universe) to "a" heavens and earth (local-covenantal). Frost's YEC beliefs, combined with his series of heavens and earths drawn from his reading of 2 Peter 3, force him to claim "*There are two heavens and earths in the Genesis account, just as there must be two heavens and earths in Peter's account.*" (p. 17).

Frost's model provides "a" heavens and earth that, physically speaking, could be destroyed in the flood. That is, "a" heavens and earth that is completely separate from "the" heavens and earth of Genesis 1. What was destroyed by the flood according to Frost? He has only two choices available by the time of the flood: the physical universe (Genesis 1) or the Garden (Genesis 2). Frost picks the local option from his own model:

We can, therefore, by all means conclude that *this* heaven and earth was *certainly* destroyed and perished. But, as we have seen above, *this* earth and heavens is *not* the same as The Earth and The Heavens of *Genesis 1*. (p. 17)

It is Frost's "two heavens and earths" model that leads him to his "Garden View" of the flood.

We are not to suppose, then, that every single genus of the first animals and fish entered into this Garden – and neither are we to suppose that this was the case with Noah's arc. (p. 15)

The Paradise of God is what "perished" in the flood: the Garden, the Tree of Life, the gold, the East Gate all "perished" and was "destroyed." (p. 17)

Frost views the flood destruction in the same context as the Tabernacle/Temple scene of Genesis 2, which Frost earlier stated is *not* global. (Frost argued for a local context of Genesis 2 to avoid any conflict with his supposed physical-universe context of Genesis 1-see Frost, pp. 12-15). The above comments surprise us because Frost has defended a global flood for years. Yet, with no fanfare he now appears to accept a local flood judgment related to a *covenant* context, roughly paralleling the views expressed in BCS pp. 111-187. (Frost's review has no critical comments of the portion of BCS that develops the case for a local/covenantal Genesis flood.) If the animals that entered the ark were not the same as *all* the animals of God's original creation in Genesis 1, then the

flood was limited to a *covenant* context. This should be a newflash. *Frost has affirmed a local flood in Genesis!*¹³

We want to take a moment to thank Frost for this concession. Genesis teaches a local flood. We hope our readers, as well as advocates in the modern YEC movement, will notice something very significant here. Full Preterists, both YEC and OEC, now teach publicly that the Genesis flood was not a global judgment, but a covenant judgment related to a covenant context. *Frost has vindicated a local flood view similar to what was presented in BCS.* Frost's model would lead preterists who embrace his views to abandon (and argue against) the global flood view at the heart of the modern YEC movement. Preterism refutes a global flood according to Sam Frost.

We expect many readers will find Frost's presentation odd as they think through the implications. The Tree of Life destroyed in the flood? Yes. Frost maintains a "literal" view of Genesis 2, so that *physical* garden scene must be removed to make room for a "spiritual" garden to come later. (Yet Frost believes "spiritual death" is the nature of punishment for Adam's sin in the Garden.) The East Gate destroyed in the flood? That implies the cherubim guarding the way were also destroyed by the flood. Would Frost affirm that the flood destroyed the literal snake in the Garden? (Remember Rev. 12:9 references the same serpent "of old" in prophecy.) Frost's Garden view of the flood leads to even stranger conclusions. Frost claims that the *physical* Garden scene was the heavens and earth destroyed by the flood, but *no one lived in the Garden* during Noah's day! This last point alone should alert the reader that something is terribly wrong with Frost's model and presentation.

Another serious problem arises for those who think carefully about Frost's model. Frost's series of heavens and earths creates a covenantal "gap" between Noah and Moses:

Moses' Tabernacle/Temple is the *first covenantal Temple/Tabernacle/Paradise on earth.* It is the *first* attempt of God to *restore* the relationship God naturally had with Adam in the original Paradise through blood. It is the *first* attempt to *rebuild* what had been "destroyed" through the waters of Noah's day. (p. 17)

Frost's view requires a huge gap in covenant history, the entire period from Noah to Moses. The same problem is repeated in his concluding summary listing:

2. Genesis 2.4b – The formation of Paradise on The Earth where God dwells with Man and Man with God. [Which was destroyed in the flood]

¹³ We could state ~~this~~ the matter a different way. If Frost were to place the flood into the "universal" context of Genesis 1, then his partition between two heavens and earths as two separate subjects, Genesis 1 and 2, utterly fails, for then we would have "universal" destruction. Frost's model does not allow Genesis 1 to be in view *anywhere* in the flood account; Genesis 1 must speak about a *different* heaven and earth, and Frost maintains that Peter says "a" heaven and earth was destroyed! Furthermore, Frost's model *requires* him to *oppose a global flood, for a global flood would bring a universal context to the garden scene in Genesis 2!* Frost has sacrificed the global flood doctrine in order to defend a YEC-preterist synthesis.

3. The Law – The First Tabernacle/First Heavens and Earth through which God reestablished “heavens on the land” through a covenant by which Man can dwell with God. (p. 18)

There is a problem here. Was there no covenantal heaven and earth between Noah and Moses? What about covenant history during this “gap”? Noah inherited a (covenant) world by faith. He dwelled with God by faith through his pleasing sacrifice made *after* the flood. Abraham received a covenant of circumcision and promises which were passed down to the patriarchs, Joseph, and the children of Israel in Egyptian bondage. Are we to conclude that Abraham and the patriarchs did not dwell with God? Frost’s gap stretches from the flood, past all these people and events, to Sinai. How can it be possible that the “heavens and earth” were destroyed at the flood, but the “The Law” is where God “reestablished ‘heavens on the land’” (p. 18)? That would leave Noah, Shem, Terah, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and Joseph (among many others) without any covenant standing. Frost needs to offer more explanation about this inadvertent “gap” between his supposed destruction of the “heavens and earth” during the flood and the “reestablished ‘heavens on the land’” of the “first tabernacle” which he associates with the Sinai covenant (p. 17-18). It seems Frost has left father Abraham completely out of the scene of covenant history.

We believe that Frost has made a fundamental oversight regarding what 2 Peter 3 actually says. This oversight affects his entire presentation and criticism of BCS. As already noted, Frost assumes that Peter said “a” heaven and earth was destroyed by the flood:

Peter counters this by bringing up a destruction of a heavens and an earth – the Paradise of God, which by all means was totally eradicated. (p. 18)

Frost’s entire model is built on his notion of a series of heavens and earths. The problem for Frost is that Peter does not say that the flood destroyed “a heavens and an earth”? Let us examine the passage closely:

But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the *heavens* existed *and* the *earth* [*ge*] was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the *world* [*kosmos*] of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present *heavens and earth* are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men. (2 Peter 3:5-7 NIV)

Note how verse 5 speaks of the *existence* of the heavens and the *forming* of the earth [*ge*] out of water which alludes to Gen. 1:9-10. Peter references the first heavens and the first earth of Scripture. Consider what Peter says next. By these waters the *kosmos*, the “governing order” or “arrangement,” was destroyed. Nothing is said about the heavens being destroyed. The Greek words for earth [*ge*] and world [*kosmos*] are different words entirely! Peter refers back to the corrupt “ancient world” he mentioned back in 2 Peter

2:5 "... bringing in the flood on the world [*kosmos*] of the ungodly."¹⁴ Nowhere does Peter say that the flood destroyed "a" heaven and earth as Frost and some other preterist critics claim, but rather the waters destroyed the "world" or governing order of that time. The flood destroyed *a wicked system of men who apostatized from the covenant faith*, not a physical garden where no one lived. We presented this context of the flood in BCS as the line of Seth (Gen. 5) who "began to call on the name of the LORD" (Gen. 4:25). The covenant people had become corrupt (like the Jews in the first century) with the exception of righteous Noah. The wicked, not the old heavens and old earth, were destroyed by the flood.

The heavens and earth of 2 Peter 3:5 (reaching back into Genesis 1) is a reference to the entire old covenant creation. The old heavens and earth existed *before* the flood as well as *after* the flood. Animal sacrifices were accepted as the ordained way to worship God back in Genesis 4. Abel offered sacrifices from "the firstborn of his flock" (Gen. 4:4) just as Israel was required by the Law (Deut. 12:6). Clean and unclean distinctions were made *before* the flood (Gen. 7:2) as well as after. The seventh-day Sabbath is rooted in Genesis creation (Ex. 20:11). Yet *all of this* was reserved for destruction by fire at the end of the old covenant age, the termination of old creation. We sometimes forget that Peter lived in the same old covenant creation as Abel. The New Testament demonstrates over and over how Jesus and the apostles viewed the coming end as the terminus of what began in the earliest chapters of Genesis (e.g., Matt. 23:35; Heb. 12:24). Peter says the world [*kosmos*] of the ungodly was destroyed by water in Noah's day, but the heavens and earth [*ge*] were, at that time, reserved for fire.

Consider another passage that cannot be reconciled with the flawed concept of a series of heavens and earths. (Frost makes no mention of this text in his entire review even though the passage is pivotal for Covenant Creation; see BCS pp. 350-351 and 353-355):

You, LORD, *in the beginning* laid the foundation of the earth, and the heavens are the work of your hands. They *will perish*, but You remain...
(Heb. 1:10-11a NKJ)

Where does the Bible talk about what God made "in the beginning"? The language is explicitly drawn from Genesis 1. Yet the writer says *that* heavens and earth "will perish" – in the future tense. As preterists we know this took place in AD 70, but notice that *the author of Hebrews is teaching the same thing as what Peter taught in 2 Peter 3*. The heavens and earth, that which was made "in the beginning," was about to perish. Like Peter, the author of Hebrews makes an explicit link back to Genesis 1. Hebrews 1:10-11 allows no series of heavens and earths in old covenant history. Frost cannot make sense of the passage within his own model! If he were to apply Hebrews 1:10-11 to his supposed "heavens and earth" of Genesis 2, then Hebrews could not refer to its destruction in the *future*. Frost says *that* heavens and earth was destroyed in the flood, which would be the *distant past* from the perspective of Hebrews.

¹⁴ It is interesting to note Peter lists both the flood and the fiery judgment of Sodom *together* as an example of the day of judgment coming upon the unrighteous in Peter's day. See BCS pp. 465-468.

We believe, based upon 2 Peter 3:5-7, Hebrews 1:10-11, and Revelation 21:1 (which all parallel each other), that the old heavens and earth, the original creation, what God made “in the beginning,” *entirely* passed away at AD 70. Furthermore, the *timing* of the passing away of the old heavens and earth tells us the *nature* of the Genesis 1 creation; if the physical universe did not pass away in AD 70, then Genesis 1 speaks about Covenant Creation. The old covenant creation does not merely go back to Sinai. It goes all the way back to the Genesis 1 creation.

Once the reader grasps the fundamental error at the heart of Frost’s critique, we can untangle his main criticism. *Frost uses his own flawed view of a series of heavens and earths as an argument against BCS:*

Martin and Vaughn move right into the text of *II Pe* 3.5-7 and note, “Notice how Peter references the original creation when he says the heavens existed and the earth, *ge*, was formed...” Further, [the Flood] destroyed this covenant world (346 – ital. theirs). But this is precisely what causes the problem. If the first heavens and earth is *Genesis* 1:1, then what “heavens and earth” was destroyed in Noah’s day? Would that not logically demand that Noah’s destruction was the first destruction? This is an inescapable conclusion. *Rev* 21:1 cannot, then be a reference to *Genesis* 1:1, because, according to Martin and Vaughn, the 1:1 heavens and earth was “destroyed” according to their own exegesis! (p. 16)

We see once again how Frost’s case is based on his own view of a series of heavens and earths. Note how Frost thinks we argue from 2 Peter 3:5-7 that the flood destroyed the entire heavens and earth of *Genesis* 1:1! *We never argued that in BCS*. Frost cut off our explanation in his fragmented quotation above and misrepresents us. Here is what we actually said:

Notice how Peter references the *original creation* when he says the heavens existed and the earth, *ge*, was formed out of water by water. *That is a reference to the creation week of Genesis 1, particularly Day 3 (Gen. 1:9-10)*. Peter then included the flood in his comparison; a flood which destroyed this covenant world with the exception of righteous Noah and his family (who became the new covenant “world” at that time by receiving a “new” covenant). (BCS p. 346)

We stated explicitly that Peter references Day 3 (*Gen.* 1:9-10). Nowhere did we argue that *Genesis* 1:1 is in view in Peter’s text. The *world of the ungodly* was destroyed by the flood, leaving Noah and his family as the remnant who entered a new order (see BCS p. 169). If Peter meant to say that the “heavens and earth” was destroyed, we suggest that he would have said that the “heavens and the earth” was destroyed by the flood. Peter said no such thing. The *kosmos* was destroyed, not the heavens and the earth. The heavens and earth was reserved for fire at the end of the old creation when God would create a new heaven and new earth, the new covenant.

Frost's entire model is predicated on a simple, most basic oversight regarding 2 Peter 3. This error leads to some key mistakes in his personal translation of 2 Peter 3:5-7:

For this is concealed from them willingly: that a heavens were of old and an earth by water and through water, having been held together by the word of God, through which things the then world being inundated by water perished, but the Now Heavens and The Earth by the same word are kept in store reserved for fire... (p. 16)

Frost's translation looked odd to us when we first saw it. What is being "held together"? The heavens? The earth? Both? Frost implies that Peter says *both* "heavens" and "earth" are "held together by the word of God." But the Greek text does not say that at all. The word for "having been held together" is a feminine participle that modifies "earth" [*ge*], a feminine noun. Frost's translation *disconnects* the participle from the noun so that both "heavens" and "earth" are viewed together, but that is not the case in Greek. It is the earth [*ge*] that was "held together." Peter is talking specifically about the "land" being "held together" or "standing out of water." Frost's faulty translation is driven by his preconceived "two heavens and earths" model. Note the difference between Frost's translation above and these accurate translations:

For this they willfully forget: that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and *the earth standing out of water and in the water*, by which the world that then existed perished, being flooded by water... (2 Peter 3:5-6 NKJ)

[F]or this is unobserved by them willingly, that the heavens were of old, and *the earth out of water and through water standing together by the word of God*, through which the then world, by water having been deluged, was destroyed. (2 Peter 3:5-6 Young's Literal)

A related issue is that Frost did not use "standing" in his translation. Instead he used the less common "held together." Peter referred to the earth [*ge*] "standing" out of the water by God's word. In other words, Peter wrote that God's word *spoke* the land into existence out of the water. Technically, "held together" works as well because God's word brought the dry land "together" in Genesis 1. As commentaries unequivocally point out, *Peter makes an explicit reference to Day 3 of the creation account* (Gen 1:9-10). The land that rose up out of the water (or "gathered together" out of the water) was flooded by water. This is a *specific portion* of God's covenant creation that matches the inner courts of the Tabernacle/Temple architecture. The land [*ge*] is *symbolic* of the covenant people of God (see also Heb. 6:7-8). There is nothing in 2 Peter 3:5-7 about the destruction of the heavens or the destruction of the sea and sea creatures at the time of the flood (or at Sinai). The comprehensive renovation of *all* creation was reserved for the time of the end:

“At that time his voice shook the earth, but now he has promised, ‘Once more I will shake not only the earth but also the heavens’” (Heb. 12:26 NIV).¹⁵

Accurate translations of 2 Peter 3:5-6 reveal why Frost needed his own translation of 2 Peter 3. Peter is drawing from Genesis 1! This violates Frost’s YEC model which requires Genesis 1 to speak of the physical universe. Frost argues that neither the universe nor planet Earth were “destroyed” by the flood. “... [C]learly, it did not ‘perish’ if the meaning is the Universe (p. 16).” Therefore, Frost’s literalism requires him to redirect Peter’s statement toward details in Genesis 2 rather than Genesis 1 to avoid the problem:

The Garden of Eden was formed “out of” water. The LXX reads, “and there arose a *fountain out of the earth* (*ek tes ges*) and watered the face of *the earth*” (Gen. 2.6) (p. 17)

Note the sleight of hand in the above statement. Frost says the Garden of Eden was formed “*out of water*,” and then proceeds to quote Gen. 2:6 which says that a fountain came “*out of the earth*”! But Day 3, and only Day 3, matches the detail in Peter’s text. Like we mentioned in BCS, Peter references the rising of the *land out of the water* on Day 3 as described in Genesis 1:9-10. Contrary to Frost’s model, Peter refers to Genesis 1:9-10 not 2:6.¹⁶

Why is Frost forced into such shoddy handling of the text? The problem is not essentially different than futurist exegesis. Frost makes his model drive his interpretation rather than allowing sound interpretation to drive the model. Frost simply *must* have 2 Peter 3 reference Genesis 2 rather than Genesis 1. If Peter points to Day 3 in Genesis 1, then Frost’s model is completely invalidated. As it is, Peter’s link matches Covenant Creation perfectly, a specific part of the Genesis 1 creation, the corrupted land, was destroyed in the flood.

The problem for Frost goes deeper, however. If Peter points to Day 3 in Genesis 1 as what was “destroyed” by water, then *the flood-destruction of the land [ge] tells us something about the nature of the “land” created on Day 3 in Genesis 1!* The destruction of the “land” is the destruction of ungodly people; Peter is informing us that the “land” in Genesis 1:9-10 is not planet Earth, but a reference to God’s people who once lived in covenant relationship with God. That perspective matches Paul’s concept of “the creation” as *God’s people* in Romans 8:19-23.

Conclusion

Frost’s final pages need brief comment. Frost makes an emotional appeal against Covenant Creation by saying:

¹⁵ Notice that the author of Hebrews goes on to speak of “the removing of what can be shaken – that is created things – so that what cannot be shaken may remain” (Heb. 12:27 NIV). What is being finally removed at AD 70? “created things”!

¹⁶ Every commentary we have seen acknowledges the explicit link to Genesis 1:9-10.

In Martin and Vaughn, the physical earth is not much of a topic in the Bible since it has been excluded from the opening pages of the Bible – dismissed as symbolic – but never addressing at all the purpose of God creating it. (pp. 19-20)

We never addressed the “purpose of God creating” the physical earth? Frost has confounded a *description* of the creation of the physical universe with God’s *purpose* for the physical universe. Frost’s claim is that if the Bible does not have a *physical description* of creation, then the physical universe has no *Divine purpose*. This is a fallacious argument. We already dealt with this sort of confusion in BCS (one example is pp. 217-236). We believe that all of Scripture models a Divine purpose for the physical universe, irrespective of whether or not Genesis describes *how* God made the physical world in the first place. In Chilton’s words:

*[A]ll creation is primarily symbolic. All creatures reflect the glory of God, and are images of some aspect or other of his nature. God’s personality is imprinted on everything He has made.*¹⁷

Why do we have to take Genesis 1 “literally” in order to believe that? Scripture teaches that perspective consistently (e.g., the metaphorical Psalms, the parables of Jesus, creational imagery in Revelation, etc.). Furthermore, the physical world is a lot more than a “... the Stage upon which God would ultimately bring his created Man into full and complete unity through His Eternal Son...” (p. 20). The entire Bible, including Jesus’ own teaching, shows how the physical world teaches us about God and his kingdom; it was made to “reflect his covenant relationship with his people” (BCS p. 358). We believe there is a *profound purpose* for the physical universe, and we said so in our book.

Ponder how futurists make a similar argument against preterism as Frost made above. After all, preterists believe that the physical earth is not much of a topic in biblical prophecy, having been excluded from the closing pages of the Bible! Or consider the issue of heaven. Do preterists believe that the Bible teaches the *reality* of heaven for God’s children after they die? Yes, we do. But do Preterists believe that the Bible gives a “*literal*” *description* of what heaven will be like including auto-luminescent cities, streets of gold, and many mansions? No, we believe the Bible was not given for that purpose.

Why doesn’t the same principle apply to the physical origin of the universe? Do those who hold Covenant Creation believe in the *reality* that God created the physical world? Yes, we do. Do advocates of Covenant Creation believe that the Bible gives a “*literal*” *description* of *how* God created the physical world? No, we believe the Bible was not given for that purpose (BCS pp 358-359).

The reader should understand that Frost intends to make his own particular *literal interpretation* of Genesis 1 a matter of faith (see BCS p242-245):

¹⁷ David Chilton, *Days of Vengeance*, p. 11.

The God that speaks and in an instant: it is. This blows our minds. In fact, *it cannot be true* it must mean something else: *God didn't really didn't do it that way, did he?* That is the question that confronts us: *it is a question of faith.* (p. 21)

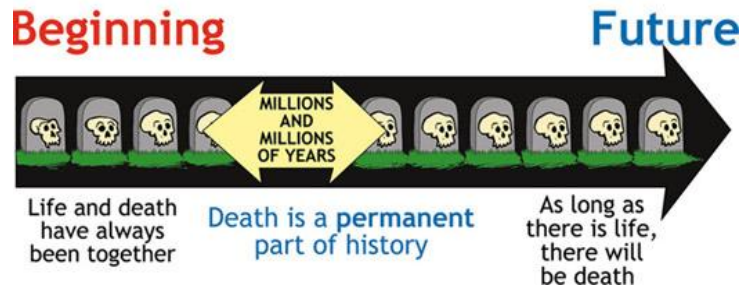
This kind of innuendo regarding BCS never ceases to amaze us. However, this approach is commonly encouraged by the modern YEC movement. Some of us now believe that Covenant Eschatology has profound implications for Genesis. From the very first edition of BCS released in 2001 by Tim Martin, the goal has *always* been to reach a better understanding of what the Bible teaches about the creation and the flood. We can deal with Frost's criticism by asking a simple question of our own: *How much faith does it take to believe that God created the physical universe even if God never tells us how?* It seems that if Frost is not told all about God's original creation in precise order and literal detail, then he finds it hard to believe!

The irony is that, sooner or later, YEC advocates will inevitably ask Frost the same questions. It is only a matter of time before someone dedicated to an even more "literal" reading of the earliest chapters of Genesis confronts Frost on the same point. The questions will sound like these:

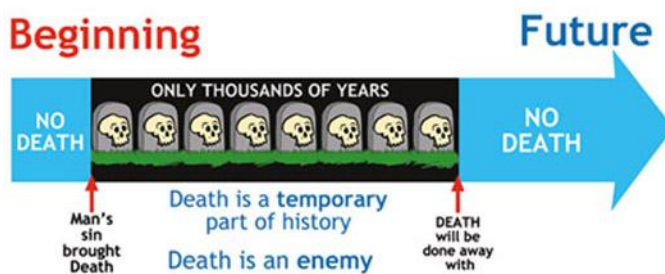
- Didn't God say that death entered the world by sin?
- Didn't God curse the earth with thorns and thistles, and increase physical pain in childbirth.
- Don't we sweat today because of Adam's sin?
- Isn't all human pain a result of God's curse for sin?
- Why doesn't Frost believe in a "mind-blowing" global flood?
- Why does Frost believe that "God didn't really do it that way"?
- Why doesn't Frost have *faith in God's Word*?

The simple fact of the matter is that tens of millions of YEC supporters don't see much difference at all between the views of Martin, Vaughn, and Frost when it comes to Genesis. If Frost (top of p. 21) wants grab the Evolution club to use on us (even though we made our views on Evolution clear in BCS, pp. 83-92), then perhaps he should consider that millions in the modern YEC movement will be happy to do the same to him. Consider the diagrams below and ask yourself what they say about Frost's view of Genesis... and Revelation:

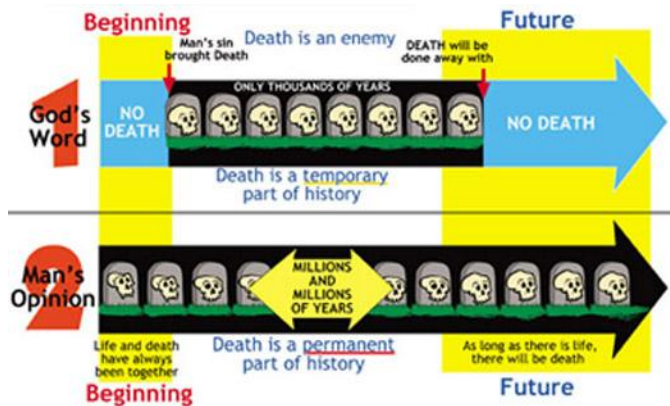
Belief in evolution and/or millions of years necessitates that death has been a part of history since life first appeared on this planet... In this system of belief death, suffering and disease will continue on into the unknown future. Death is a permanent part of history.



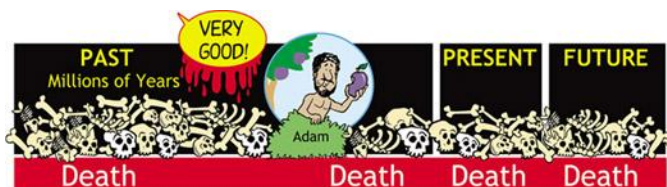
From a perspective of the literal history of the book of Genesis, there was a perfect world to start with—described by God as ‘very good’ (Genesis 1:31)...The death of man and the animals was not part of the original creation.



In reality, the battle between Creation and evolution, between young Earth and old-Earth views, is in fact a battle between two totally different histories of death.



For the Christian, which history of death you accept has major theological implications.



However, if a Christian accepts the history of death as given by a literal reading of the Genesis account, then this history can be represented by the following diagram:¹⁸



Where does Frost’s view of the past and future fit in those diagrams? Will the tens of millions of YEC Christians who define their worldview by those beliefs consider Frost as a young-earth creationist or an evolutionist? How will Frost convince them that preterism and YEC beliefs do not conflict? How will Frost convince them of a local flood that matches his partial Covenant Creation model?

Frost’s attempt at a “synthesis” on this issue has been a very fruitful exercise from our perspective. We explained clearly what we intended with *Beyond Creation Science*:

We will argue against the three pillars of modern young-earth creationism from the perspective of a preterist view of New Testament prophecy. We believe that preterism offers a refutation of: (1) the belief that the Genesis flood was global; (2) the belief that no biological death existed before the fall; and (3) the belief that Genesis 1 is a literal record of God’s creation of the physical universe over six 24-hour days. (BCS p. 109)

Frost now agrees that pillars (1) and (2) have been refuted. His “synthesis” is a last-ditch effort to preserve pillar (3) together with preterism. Frost’s partial Covenant Creation model was designed to preserve pillar (3) at any cost. However, synthetic approaches (like partial preterism for example¹⁹) tend to be inherently unstable. The details outlined above demonstrate why Frost’s “synthesis” will not survive careful examination.

Again we would like to thank Frost for his generous review, his acknowledgement that we have accurately developed Milton Terry’s view, his adoption of a local flood, and his development of the partial Covenant Creation approach. For many of us in Covenant

¹⁸ “Two Histories of Death” by Ken Ham. Full article available online at:

<http://creationontheweb.com/content/view/450/> or

<http://www.answersingenesis.org/creation/v24/i1/history.asp>

¹⁹ We expect that the future growth of old earth creationism will play a major role in the demise of partial preterism. The big hang-up for most partial preterists is a biological resurrection which is inescapably tied to a biological view of the fall, a central pillar of modern YEC doctrine. Old earth creationism demonstrates powerfully that *the fall had nothing to do with biology*, and if the fall is not biological, then neither is the resurrection. Old earth creationism is preterism applied to the curse and preterism is old earth creationism applied to biblical eschatology.

Eschatology today, partial preterism was a way station, a rest area or bridge from futurism to a consistent, fulfilled eschatology.

Sam Frost has now provided that service for the creation account.

(Editor's Note: Tim and Jeff can be reached through their website, www.beyondcreationsscience.com)