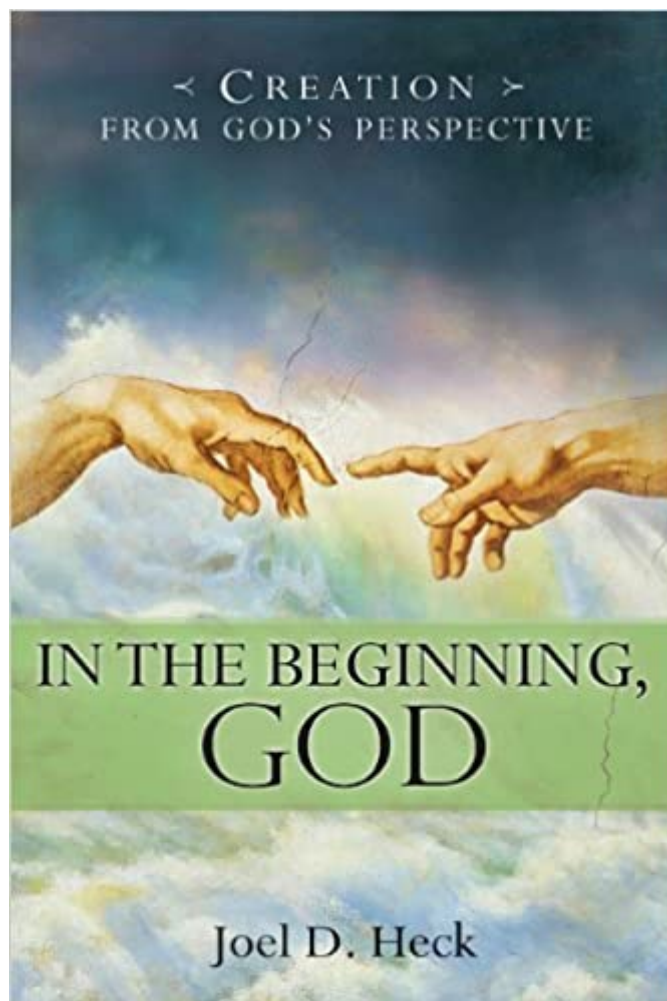


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In The Beginning, God: Creation From God's Perspective



Synopsis

Dr. Heck presents a theological defense of young earth creationism through a straightforward reading of the first chapter of Genesis as narrative history. This book works well for topic study on creation and for Old Testament studies on the text of Genesis. Much has been written on the creation from the scientific view, but little has attempted to explain the text of Genesis 1. A failure to read Genesis 1 as narrative history almost always comes as a result of the reader bringing presuppositions on the assured results of science. The first chapter of Genesis must be taken as historical fact! This booklet sets forth the position of the Bible on the message of Genesis 1, particularly as it has to do with the creation/evolution debate. Someone once described himself as having been liberated from literalism. Presumably, he was referring negatively to the position that takes Genesis 1 literally, that is, as a statement of historical narrative. As a result of being liberated from literalism, he was enslaved to a falsehood. The issue for a proper understanding of Genesis 1 is not a literal versus a figurative interpretation; it is a question of the intended message of the text. There is nothing wrong with taking literally a passage that is intended to be taken literally, that is, according to the letters. Most of the time, to take a passage literally is to take it seriously. -From the Introduction-Dr. Joel D. Heck is Professor of Theology at Concordia University Texas. He holds a ThM in Old Testament from Trinity Evangelical Divinity and a ThD in Exegetical Theology from Concordia Seminary, St. Louis.

Book Information

Paperback: 80 pages

Publisher: Concordia Publishing (April 1, 2011)

Language: English

ISBN-10: 9780758627384

ISBN-13: 978-0758627384

ASIN: 0758627386

Product Dimensions: 5 x 0.3 x 7.3 inches

Shipping Weight: 3.2 ounces (View shipping rates and policies)

Average Customer Review: 4.6 out of 5 stars 3 customer reviews

Best Sellers Rank: #295,412 in Books (See Top 100 in Books) #80 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Theology > Creationism](#) #957 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Bible Study > Old Testament](#) #1390 in [Books > Christian Books & Bibles > Bible Study & Reference > Old Testament](#)

Customer Reviews

One hundred and fifty years after Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*, the origins debate continues to flare in homes, schools, and churches. For those committed to a biblical understanding of reality, responding to claims made in the name of science is thus an ongoing challenge one for which Joel Heck provides timely, useful resources. This book is an excellent short introduction to the meaning and significance of Genesis 1, and will help anyone looking for knowledge and guidance. Dr. Paul A. Nelson, Fellow, Discovery Institute Adjunct Professor, Biola University --cph.org

Dr. Heck addresses the creation-evolution debate by starting in the right place: the reliable Word of God. Using scholarly analysis and research, Joel Heck allows the text to declare the wondrous creation account. If you want to tackle the big questions about creation in a faithful and intelligent way, this book is the place to start. Rev. Michael W. Newman, author of *Struggle Well and Revelation: What the Last Book of the Bible Really Means* Mission and Ministry Facilitator, Texas District LCMS --cph.org

I am encouraged to read Dr. Heck's strong and uncompromising Biblical stand concerning Creation. It is assuring to one's faith to know that Scripture means what Scripture records from the very beginning of time itself. Joel offers a perfect balance of clear biblical word study and relevant scientific application that can be understood by clergy and laity alike. This is a gift to the church. Rev. Steven J. Misch, author of the Bible study *Out of Nothing: The Word, Creation and Faith* --cph.org

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A controversy I regularly encounter amongst Christians is over a literal six day creation as recorded in the Old Testament book of Genesis. In Genesis chapter one verses one through thirty-one we read the creation account which spans six periods of time described in the text as "there was evening and there was morning" followed by "the first day," "the second day," and so on and so forth

until "the sixth day." Are these "days" literal twenty four hour periods? Did God literally work one of the grandest miracles of all in creating the entire universe in one hundred and forty-four hours? Not all Christians take the Genesis account of creation literally. Indeed, some insist, such as the "Day Age" proponents, that the six days of creation are not literal twenty-four hour cycles. Instead a "day" is a descriptor of what can be a very large period of time, or age. Who is correct? Are the "Day Age" proponents correct, or are those who take the natural reading of the Genesis account for a one hundred and forty-four hour creation correct? The answer to those questions are provided in a great little book of only eighty pages in length titled, *In the Beginning, GOD* written by Dr. Joel D. Heck. In his book Dr. Heck presents an excellent defense of a literal six day creation, arguing from the Hebrew language and from grammar. With a small amount of effort he masterfully exegetes New Testament passages and presents evidence from the Church Fathers in support of cogent arguments demonstrating why the "Day Age" proponents are wrong in their approach to the Scriptures and why we ought to take the Genesis account of creation literally. One argument from the "Day Age" proponents that I had found difficult to overcome at one time is taken from Genesis 1:3 where we are told that God created light, but it isn't reported until verse sixteen that God created the Sun. So how is it possible that there is light without the Sun? Here is how Dr. Heck approaches the problem in his book: "One common objection to a traditional reading of Genesis 1 is the creation of light before the creation of the light-bearers. That can't happen, some say--which is true, if your presupposition for a chapter filled with miracles are entirely naturalistic. This, however, was not a problem for some of the Church Fathers, such as Theophilus of Antioch and Basil the Great. In fact, why can't light exist before the creation of the sun? God is light (1 John 1:5), the ultimate light source, not only figuratively but also literally, so why not? The first three days of Genesis may not have been solar days, because the sun was not yet created, but those days are still circumscribed by one evening and one morning. This is the second miracle of Genesis. (Ibid. p. 20)" Did you catch the implication raised by Dr. Heck with the point of miracles? In other words, why should a Christian be surprised that light exists prior to the Sun when it is God who is Lord over even light and is in fact light? God is most certainly able to call into existence light, gravity, space-time, etc. without the Sun. How it happened we can't say other than to point out that it is a miracle. If we hold a presupposition against miracles based on our own reason, then it makes "good sense" that physical light doesn't exist without a physical light source and therefore we can't take Genesis one literally. However, pointing out the miraculous nature of the events recorded in Genesis one pushes the "Day Age" proponent into either rejecting their rationalistic endeavor of trying to harmonize the Scriptures with our own understanding of physical evidence (empiricism), or in rejecting miracles all together. If it is

the case that miracles are rejected all together, then events such as the resurrection of Jesus must also be rejected and at that point the "Day Age" proponent must understand he is not really Christian at all (1 Corinthians 15:14-17). In the Beginning, GOD has many excellent points and arguments crammed into eighty pages. As I was reading this book I wished that Dr. Heck had expanded upon all his points and given me more. It was one of those books where I felt I was eating an amouse-bouche that should have been a full course. But that is my only gripe with an otherwise worthwhile read. If you haven't read In the Beginning, GOD by Dr. Joel D. Heck, then you should pick up this little gem. It will be the best dollars you spent in a long-time, literally.

As a non-biologist, I found this a fascinating and convincing exposition of what the the book of Genesis says about creation. Though it seemed a bit sketchy in places, I especially appreciated the challenge in last two chapters to supposed certainties with regard to evolution. I bought a second copy of the book for a friend of mine who has a strong background in science.

Easy read for anyone needing to gain a good understanding of what the church teaches us about creation. It remains true to God's Word and provides the reader with a complete understanding of the creation narrative. It also provides the reader with a few new tools for helping them defend their faith. Excellent read!

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