

Klingbeil, Gerald A. ed. *The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament*. Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 2015. 408 pp. Softcover, US\$24.99.

The Genesis Creation Account and Its Reverberations in the Old Testament, edited by Dr. Gerald A. Klingbeil, research professor of Old Testament and Ancient Near Eastern Studies at the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary in Berrien Springs, MI, is the first volume in a two-volume set dealing with creation. The book looks at the creation theme throughout the Old Testament and shows that the biblical writers understood Gen 1 and 2 as historical fact, with a prominent place in their theology. The second volume will deal with the Genesis account in the New Testament and will be edited by Thomas Shepherd.

The contributors of this volume are from the Seventh-day Adventist Theological Seminary, Southern Adventist University, and the Biblical Research Institute, notably Richard Davidson, Jacques Doukhan, Randall Younker, Michael Hasel, Ángel Rodríguez, et al. The authors all have PhDs in different fields of Old Testament studies.

The book is divided into three sections: first, *Biblical Cosmology* (with two chapters), second, *Creation Accounts and Creation Theology* (with six chapters), and third, *Creation, Evolution, and Death* (with two chapters). Each chapter deals with a different aspect of these themes. *Creation Accounts and Creation Theology* is the largest section covering the Pentateuch, Psalms, with an extensive discussion of Psalm 104, and the Wisdom and Prophetic literature. The *Biblical Cosmology* section deals with the term *rāqīa* (often translated as *firmament* or *expanse* in reference to the sky) and what the ancients believed about the universe. The *Creation, Evolution, and Death* section discusses the possibility of death before the fall and ancient evolutionary ideas.

The book takes the position that the Old Testament supports a literal interpretation of Gen 1 and 2 and that creation happened over a literal week of seven days in the last six to ten thousand years.

The book is a solid, well-documented work. There are ample footnotes and the subject matter of each chapter covers a broad range of topics within the creation controversy. The book does not go into great detail on each topic, but it gives a good overview of some of the major issues involved in the creation debate, such as the *rāqīa* or solid-dome debate, possible evolutionary ideas from antiquity, and whether or not there was death before the fall of Adam and Eve.

My interests lie where the scientific and theological realms meet. Because of this, I found the *Biblical Cosmology* and the *Creation, Evolution, and Death* sections the most intriguing. The discussion of the history of the three-tiered universe model was quite enlightening. Most people think the ancients believed in a solid, metal-like dome, a flat earth, and an underworld; but, as Drs. Gerhard and Michael Hasel relate, this concept was of pagan origin. It was only recently, through the influence of Voltaire and a few others, that the idea was transferred to the biblical story.

The discussion of the term *rāqīa* by Drs. Randall Younker and Richard Davidson was well written and very helpful. This term, describing the

firmament or sky, has not been clearly understood by many. However, Younker and Davidson suggest that the term simply means expanse or sky, similar to how we understand what the sky is today.

As mentioned, the book covered many topics relating to the creation debate, but, for me, it could have included a few more topics. One topic to add would be a study of creation in the book of Job. Many scholars (see, e.g., Ronald Osborn's *Death Before the Fall*) think that Job has much to say about creation. A chapter on this would have been helpful.

This book is a great resource for anyone who wants to know more about what the Bible says in regard to creation. The chapters are well written and easy to follow and understand. The writers present a solid case for a literal interpretation of Gen 1 and 2 in Old Testament theology. They support their positions well. Many people resort to attacking those with whom they do not agree, but the authors of this volume eschew such tactics, and I greatly appreciate this. Background knowledge of the various topics is helpful, but not absolutely necessary, making *The Genesis Creation Account* accessible to the well-informed lay reader. This is a book that should be in one's library. For a detailed discussion of these topics, another book would be a better choice, but for an overview of how Genesis fits into Old Testament theology, *The Genesis Creation Account* is a must read.

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LaCocque, André. *Jesus the Central Jew: His Times and His People*. ECL 15. Atlanta, GA: SBL Press, 2015, 350 pp. Hardcover, US\$57.95; Softcover, US\$42.95.

My friend André LaCocque has surprised us with a new book, which will inform, enrich, deepen, sometimes shock, and paradoxically draw us closer to our Master and Lord Jesus. Indeed, LaCocque portrays a "human" Jesus who may betray anxiety and uncertainty (195), a Jesus we can relate with, and who is not a far and crushing superhuman Being (277). LaCocque's ambition in this book is to demythologize the Jesus of Christian tradition in order to reveal the Jesus who was "central" to his people and not "marginal," a hint in passing to John Meier's massive trilogy. LaCocque warns, however, that his study is not intended to be a polemic regarding Meier's work (2), which he often refers to and gratefully uses. Although LaCocque does not dismiss the sharp scalpel of the critical methods, he respectfully remains "conservative in dealing with the Gospel text" (5).

LaCocque chose to focus on the Synoptic Gospels, rather than on other New Testament books which, according to LaCocque, introduce "vertical" speculations promoting a super Jesus Christ that is beyond the historical domain (13). Cogently, he digs into the immense funds of Jewish tradition, referring either to rabbinic sources to shed light on the event in view, or even to later literary inspirations ("at the risk of being anachronistic") to trace the hidden and living genius of the testimony. The result is a "historical Jesus"