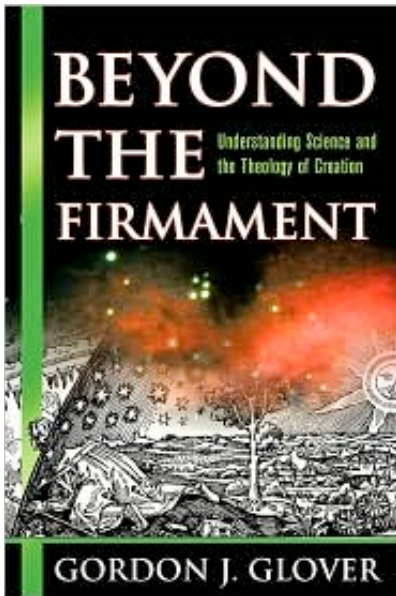


BEYOND THE FIRMAMENT

UNDERSTANDING SCIENCE AND THE THEOLOGY OF CREATION



As debates within the Church rage between creation and evolution, the 'experts' seem to grow more entrenched while the rest of us only become more confused.

Beyond the Firmament: Understanding Science and the Theology of Creation challenges all creationist camps—whether Young-Earth, Old-Earth, or Theistic Evolutionist—to step outside of traditional paradigms and recognize how our modern, Western, post-Enlightenment scientific worldview actually blinds us from seeing the simple truth of Creation as it was originally intended; and how our failure to grasp the theological significance of the biblical creation model puts science and faith on a collision course.

Beyond the Firmament is divided into four main parts:

Part I - *What Do We Know and How Do We Know It?*

This is the starting point for any discussion on science and faith. God reveals Himself to us through both His creation (natural revelation) and His transcendent Word (special revelation). The purpose and limits of these two ways of knowing are explored, and a very practical Christian epistemology is set forth.

Part II - *What Can the Bible Tell Us About Nature?*

What kind of information about the natural history of the cosmos can we reasonably expect the Bible to provide? Rather than force the book of Genesis to answer the kinds of questions that modern, post-Enlightenment, Western Christians tend to ask, this section tries to understand the questions that would have been relevant to a disorganized gaggle of Hebrew slaves that had just been delivered out of the hands of their Egyptian oppressors.

Part III - *What Can Nature Tell Us About Itself?*

Here the methods scientists use to estimate the age of the earth and cosmos are examined and the reader learns how the data is evaluated to piece this information together.

Part IV - *What About Evolution?*

The materialistic philosophies attached to evolutionary thinking obviously have no place in the Christian worldview, and this leaves many believers with no choice but to categorically reject the science of evolution strictly on religious grounds—apart from any meaningful scientific analysis of the subject. But to really grasp the theological consequences of evolution, Christians must first understand the material case for common descent in light of what science *is* and *isn't* able to tell us about the past.

**Beyond the Firmament:
Understanding Science and the Theology of Creation**

By Gordon J. Glover Published by Watertree Press

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PRAISE FOR *BEYOND THE FIRMAMENT*

Dr. Stephen F. Matheson, Associate Professor of Biology, Calvin College:

“I’m frequently asked, ‘Can you recommend a good book on evolution that would cover all that stuff you were talking about?’...Well, now I have a great answer: ‘Get a hold of *Beyond the Firmament* by Gordon Glover.’ **I’m going to buy a few copies and hand them out. That’s how good it is.**”

Dr. Christopher M. Sharp, Research Astrophysicist and Educator: “Many times I have heard conservative Christians complain that the Big Bang removes God from the picture, so it must be an *atheistic* theory... But science can only examine the physical universe in terms of material cause and effect, and is not equipped to address transcendent meaning or purpose, and as described in this book, the interpretation of the physical aspects of nature cannot be held hostage to particular philosophies of either Christians or atheists. **I would strongly recommend this book as a valuable addition to a church library and bookstore, and it should pique some Christians, agnostics, and atheists into thinking about what they believe, or what they do not believe.**”

Brian McLaren, Author/Activist: “Gordon J. Glover’s new book will be important for several groups of people: thoughtful Christians troubled by culture wars and seeking a way beyond them, people engaged in the science-religion debate that seems to have heated up (on both sides) in recent years, and those interested in how world-views (ancient, medieval, modern, or whatever) resource and limit the ways we read sacred texts – and apply them today. **I found it energetic, well-researched, and constructive.**”

David W. Opperbeck, Associate Professor of Law, Institute of Law, Science and Technology, Seton Hall University School of Law: “In clear, everyday language, Gordon Glover shows that thoughtful Christians need not choose **between God’s world and God’s word.** Glover’s approach will be appreciated by anyone who wishes to better understand, and more fully rejoice in, the fact that the maker of heaven and earth graciously allows us to understand something of Himself as we study both his Creation and the Bible. Glover shows how science and scripture are complementary – not competing, nor co-extensive – means of approaching truth, and instills a new appreciation for the ways in which God accommodates his revelation to our limited, broken, and frail human circumstances.”

P. Andrew Sandlin, President of the Center for Cultural Leadership: ““Gordon J. Glover takes seriously the claims not only of Biblical revelation but also of natural revelation (creation), and he deftly navigates the frontier between the scientific investigation of the universe’s origins and the theological investigation of Holy Scripture. As an advocate of Biblical infallibility, he asks us to stay tune to ancient Near Eastern world-views and to exercise hermeneutical sensitivity in inquiring what the book of Genesis is actually attempting to say. While not endorsing all of Glover’s conclusions, **I commend this work as a thoughtful treatment of the issues surrounding origins as seen from an intentionally and distinctly Christian perspective.**”

Rev. Jack Carter, Senior Pastor, Church of the King, Corpus Christi, TX: “I have carefully read *Beyond the Firmament* and I am once again rethinking my previously held positions. I have been a card-carrying ‘young earth’ adherent for most of my 73 years. Can old dogs learn new tricks? I certainly hope so. **Gordon, in his book, has clearly and with great good will, challenged all in my camp to rethink our handling of Scripture, our hermeneutics, and perhaps even a strong bias against modern science.** I am in the process of doing just that and I sincerely thank Gordon for his book. Thank you Gordon, for calling us all to greater humility and faith.”

ABOUT GORDON J. GLOVER



A native of Texas, Gordon J. Glover currently lives and works in the Baltimore-Washington area with his wife Kathryn, and their three children: Dabney, Truitt and Bryn. Gordon has always had an insatiable interest in the natural sciences; specifically how they relate to Christian theology and the Bible.

He studied Mechanical Engineering at the University of Texas and Ocean Engineering at Texas A&M University. He then served ten years in the U.S. Navy as a Deep Sea Diver and Ocean Engineer before settling down in the suburbs of southern Maryland. In his ongoing quest to integrate science with Christian orthodoxy, Gordon has probably held just about every conceivable position on Creation. He now spends most of his free time studying, discussing, speaking and writing about the challenging philosophical issues that arise from the scientific investigation of natural history - and doing backyard astronomy with his kids.

A Personal Journey

Gordon J. Glover's first book on creation was given to him as a young teenager. In those pages, Gordon was faced with two opposing ideas: either the entire universe was created by God in a span of six days less than 10,000 years ago, or it had arisen by itself over billions of years through blind, purposeless and meaningless forces. Given a choice between those two alternatives, the issue was easily settled. What place could a godless idea like *evolution* have in a Biblical worldview?

Over time, Gordon became increasingly uncomfortable with the Creationist claim that any attack on the scientific integrity of Genesis is also an attack on the Gospel of Jesus Christ. As Gordon explains in the preface to *Beyond The Firmament*, "Except for a few obnoxious scientists who seem more interested in forcing their own atheist beliefs down the public's throat than in actually pursuing scientific truth, the majority of those in the scientific community came across as entirely oblivious to the spiritual implications of their work. So whenever I would read statements like that by fellow Christians, I sensed that somewhere along the way a line had been crossed. While these kinds of bold proclamations are intended to be a motivational charge to the *faithful*, they often become an irresistible challenge to the *faithless*, unintentionally poking the secular hornets' nest and inviting the world to pick apart the Christian faith."

Over the years, these thoughts and emotions led Gordon to further study and ultimately a new perspective on the theology of creation. *Beyond The Firmament* is Gordon's attempt to consolidate what he's learned thus far in hopes of assisting fellow Christians who have been unsatisfied with how both sides have framed this debate.

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SUGGESTED DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. Who is *Beyond the Firmament* written for?
2. There are many new books on science and faith; what does *Beyond the Firmament* add to the discussion?
3. I noticed that you are neither a trained scientist nor theologian, so what make you qualified to write a book on science and theology?
4. What would you say to Christians who have no interest in the natural sciences? Why should they read *Beyond the Firmament*?
5. In your book, you seem to spend a lot of time talking about historic controversies between science and faith. What do these have to do with the current creation/evolution controversy?
6. You seem to uphold the idea that Scripture is God-breathed and given to us without error, but you also seem to reject the idea that the Bible can provide us with accurate scientific information. How do you explain this apparent contradiction?
7. Is it possible to reconcile the Biblical creation narrative with the Big Bang or the theory of evolution?
8. Are you saying then that the Bible has nothing to do with scientific truth?
9. Where does the intelligent design movement fit into your understanding of the creation/evolution controversy?
10. As a Christian parent of young children, how do you approach these issues with your kids?

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ABOUT WATERTREE PRESS



Watertree Press is a new Christian publishing house dedicated to quality non-fiction works that fulfill our motto: **Read. Think. Grow.** Our first release entitled *Beyond the Firmament: Understanding Science and the Theology of Creation* by Gordon J. Glover highlights our purpose — well-researched and thought-provoking content from an impressive first-time author.

Watertree Press is a Christian publisher in the fullest sense of the term. Let us offer two quotes which help explain this concept. First, as Abraham Kuyper famously declared, "There is not a square inch in the whole domain of human existence over which Christ, who is sovereign over all, does not cry: Mine!" Second, G.K. Chesterton said, "If Christianity should happen to be true -- that is to say, if its God is the real God of the universe -- then defending it may mean talking about anything and everything. Things can be irrelevant to the proposition that Christianity is false, but nothing can be irrelevant to the proposition that Christianity is true. [All] things not only may have something to do with the Christian God, but must have something to do with Him if He lives and reigns."

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