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*

It is a rare pleasure to find a theologian courageous enough to take the first chapter of Genesis at face value, disregarding those of his peers who feel they must kowtow to the latest fad in “science.” Dr. Heck explains the passage clearly, showing it is historical narrative supported by true scientific research—not myth, poetry, or vague allegory.

**D. Russell Humphreys, PhD**
*Physicist, author of Starlight and Time*

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*
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

Dr. Heck dispels modern “scientific” myths about the origins of life and the world. He affirms that God alone is the Creator of the universe. His booklet is packed with scientific facts and persuasive arguments that support the plain sense of Scripture. You can confidently profess that “God the Father Almighty” is “maker of heaven and earth” (Apostles’ Creed), which is essential for the truth that Jesus Christ alone is your Savior.

Dr. Christopher Mitchell
Editor, Concordia Commentary Series

This little book is perfect for any pastor or layman who wishes to defend God’s great work of creating the world in six 24-hour days. The evidence is all laid out with great references to the technical literature. The book is a primer to the pastor who needs to be ready to answer the questions of his catechumens and parishioners. This is the evidence you need to set forth your case.

Rev. Dr. Scott R. Murray
Senior Pastor, Memorial Lutheran Church
Fifth Vice-President, LCMS,
author of A Year With the Church Fathers (CPH, 2011)
CREATION FROM GOD’S PERSPECTIVE

IN THE BEGINNING, GOD

Joel D. Heck
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Introduction

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.

Ninety-nine percent of our conversations, newspaper stories, e-mails, text messages, magazine articles, news broadcasts, advertising, and much of the rest of our communication is understood in its plain sense. The literal sense is the plain sense, the normal meaning, or the straightforward meaning of a written text. This is the default, so we must depart from the normal meaning of a passage only when there are reasons from the context that demand it.
All of the evidence that has been presented as scientific proof for evolutionary theory and the great age of the earth is subject to alternative explanations. And, in fact, evolution is more often asserted than demonstrated. For example, the similarity of the chromosomes of a human being and a chimpanzee has been asserted as evidence of evolution, but there is no necessary connection between the two.¹ A common Creator is an even more convincing explanation than a common ancestor. Furthermore, some have offered evidence to show that chimpanzees and humans cannot have arisen from a common ancestor.²

This booklet challenges not only Darwinian evolution but also theistic evolution, the framework theory, the day-age theory, and old earth creationism. Each imposes a meaning on the text that is not present in Scripture, largely because the battle lines are drawn before one reads the text of Scripture.

The issue is the meaning of Genesis 1. What is God saying in this chapter, based on the actual message of the text, rather than how some scientists interpret scientific data as a result of their committed positions? So much of the creation/evolution debate takes place on scientific soil, almost as though the biblical record were

irrelevant. The debate is often portrayed as though the two competing positions were one interpretation, held by a minority of fundamentalist and weak-minded Christians, versus the nearly unanimous results of objective scientific discovery. This booklet considers the actual words of the Bible. What does God have to say on this issue, and are we willing to allow His voice to speak?

The debate is a matter of competing worldviews and competing religions (with atheistic materialism, or naturalism, as the religion behind the evolutionary worldview, which suppresses dissent even when there is strong evidence against this worldview). This debate actually is a matter of what God says versus one interpretation of scientific data. Fossils and geologic strata do not come with labels, giving the date and occasion they were laid down. Unfortunately, many Christians have placed the conclusions of some scientists above the Word of God. The conservative Old Testament scholar Gleason Archer, for example, admitted that a creation in six twenty-four-hour days “seems to run counter to modern scientific research.”

J. Barton Payne stated, “Confessedly, it would not have been as readily deduced from the Genesis text had it not been for the evidences advanced by secular science.” As Paul Nelson has written, “Do the considered

opinions of scientists now have the last say in important religious matters that touch on history?” And again, did God communicate so badly that “every reader thought it said something quite the opposite from what God meant”? This opinion is common, but its frequency is a testimony to an inadequate understanding of the primacy of the Word of God, normal rules of interpretation, and God Himself.

As we look at what God says in the first chapter of the Bible, we will discover that it is impossible to prove evolution, or even demonstrate evolution, using Scripture only. There is not a hint of an evolutionary process on the pages of Scripture. There is a theology of creation in Scripture, but there is no theology of evolution.