

Beyond Creative Speculation: A Review of Hyperpreterist Creationism

By Roderick Edwards March 2006 -- Revised Oct 2008

In March 2006 while still a hyperpreterist, I wrote a review of a new theory that was up & coming within the ranks of the hyperpreterist movement. In summary, this new theory attempted to apply the hyperpreterist interpretative model not only to eschatological passages, but also now to the Creation account & the Flood account.

The theory was eventually published in book form & called "*Beyond Creation Science*" (henceforth BCS)

The third edition of the book, released in 2007 was co-authored by Tim Martin & Jeff Vaughn (both long time hyperpreterists). The first two editions were authored exclusively by Martin. The review I wrote was of the second edition, but Martin says the new edition has not dramatically changed from the previous editions.

Interestingly enough, Martin & Vaughn had fellow hyperpreterist Mike Beidler edit their book. Beidler is an admitted Evolutionist (see:

<http://www.thecreationofanevolutionist.blogspot.com/>)

The reason it is important to re-assert my review, now under a NON-hyperpreterism sheen is that the "*Covenantal Creationism*" view (the name ascribed to the theory by Martin & Vaughn) is gaining prominence among the hyperpreterist movement.

Ironically enough, though my review was at the time the most complete, chapter-by-chapter review of BCS, Martin has NEVER interacted with it.

BCS contains the same arrogant propositions as does all hyperpreterist materials, as the introduction of the new edition contains this sentence:

We wrote this book because we are convinced that the majority of conservative Christians in America have got it wrong about both Genesis and Revelation.

(Martin & Vaughn expressing hyperpreterist arrogance)

This is the same mindset that allows hyperpreterists in general to justify how 2000 years of Christian interpretation has not concluded what hyperpreterists conclude.

During the preface to his second edition, Mr. Martin expressed surprise that there wasn't more opposition to his proposal. He had anticipated a "*stiff headwind of opposition*", but the reason that opposition has probably not materialized is because Mr. Martin's original audience was comprised of an element of Christianity that is comfortable with doubting everything & deconstructing everything. His main audience has been a "*post-modern*", "*emergent church*" type that is not prone to "*proving all things*".

What follows is a revised version of my original review of the second edition of BCS. I have DE-hyperpreterized it & added some new material. Notice that Martin uses the term "preterists" when addressing his audience. This is misleading because his audience is really HYPERpreterists. True, historic preterists are what are presently often

misnamed, “partial-preterists”. No true preterist would subscribe to Martin’s theories since his theories are so dependant on his hyperpreterist approach. So, everywhere you see Martin using the word preterist, understand he really means his fellow hyperpreterists. You will also notice a hint of the internal battle going on between hyperpreterists over this theory – not all hyperpreterists accept Martin’s theory. Martin, Vaughn & their “Covenantal Creationism” supporters have been advocating that this theory is the future of their movement & that those hyperpreterists that do not accept it will eventually be relegated to a fringe group. For instance, an avid “Covenantal Creationism” supporter named Norm recently said this about a group of non-Covenantal Creationism hyperpreterists & their leader, Sam Frost:

Covenant Creation is spreading through the rank and files of the Preterist community. You are not necessarily privy to other forums where this is being discussed and understood. In a few years you and your site will become embraced only by the Ed Stevens and Kurt Simmons follower types of Preterism and maybe some reformed folks. The Covenant Creation understanding will move on into the mainstream leaving you guys in the dustbin of history as just another remnant of curiosity in about 5 or 10 years. Fifty years from now the questions being asked is “what happened to that Sam Frost guy who started out so good?” Will history simply say that he got “left behind”?

INTRODUCTION

During his introduction, Mr. Martin rightfully assesses about the Genesis account:

“Mistakes made here will inevitably ripple across the rest of the Bible.”

This is certainly true & is the reason that it is very important what is made of the creation account.

Next, we see an appeal by Martin to hyperpreterists:

“My argument is simple. It is time for those committed to a general preterist understanding of Matthew 24, 2 Peter 3, and Revelation to think through the logical implications of their beliefs as they relate to the rest of the Bible.”

The connection we are supposed to make is that the references of “world” & “all” as seen by hyperpreterist methodology when viewing the Eschaton (the end times), should & must also be applied to the creation, otherwise we’re being inconsistent, according to Martin.

I wonder if that is a valid dichotomy since as we see all through the Bible, God’s pattern of progressive typology. We see this in how God showed Himself as the Messiah, one that would rule the whole world. The Jews understood it on a global scale. But when Jesus revealed He was the Messiah within & among men, Jesus narrowed the focus on a smaller or more personal scale. Then Jesus

expanded His kingship to a global proportion – it would indeed affect the kingdoms of the world for all time. It is extremely important to remember this pattern as we approach any biblical account.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 1

In chapter 1, we see another unfortunate example of over simplification via false dichotomy. Martin tries to paint a hermeneutical contrast that is not quite accurate:

“...a covenantal approach relies on what is known as the grammatico-historical method. Dispensationalism, on the other hand, operates by the method known as literalism. Covenant thinking rests on the belief that it is essential to interpret Scripture in light of other Scripture, always allowing the New Testament to interpret the Old Testament. Dispensationalism stresses the Bible must be read literally at all points possible.”

Here we see Martin’s use of the term “*covenantal*” without having yet defined what he means by that phrase. Although I certainly understand the differences in interpretive approaches, it doesn’t seem fair to paint dispensationalists as not interpreting Scripture in light of other Scripture. Nor do dispensationalists always interpret the Bible literally, otherwise they would see Jesus coming back with a literal flaming sword sticking out of His mouth – a casual poll of dispensationalists would show they don’t take that literal.

What then is the real distinguishing factor in interpretive approaches? We will leave the word “*covenantal*” alone until Martin defines what he means by it, but instead we submit the main differences between the dispensationalists & the Reformed interpretive approaches is that as the label “*dispensational*” notes, dispensationalists tend to divide the plan of God into smaller segments instead of one continuous plan. It is almost as if God had to keep coming up with alternative plans when previous plans failed. We see this in the Fall of Adam & Eve, in the Flood account, in the Abrahamic account, in the giving of the 10 commandments & the Jews’ inability to keep the Law. Dispensationalism compartmentalizes the plan of God. So, the problem is not that dispensationalists take literal approaches to the Bible, since all Bible students should apply literalism when warranted (that is the real question, when is it warranted?). Nor is it accurate to say dispensationalists do not compare Scripture with Scripture because they most certainly do but under the frame of their disjointed dispensationalism.

In an attempt to persuade hyperpreterists that dispensationalists might be wrong on creationism Martin asks about dispensationalists:

“How can they be correct in Genesis, yet so wrong when it comes to Matthew 24 and the entire book of Revelation?”

Again, the implication is that since dispensationalists would look at the language of the Eschaton (in the Olivet Discourse & in the book of Revelation) & see a global perspective where Martin supposes hyperpreterists see only a regional or local perspective, then hyperpreterists should by comparison also see a regional or local perspective in the Creation & Flood accounts. This does not necessarily follow & it can still be consistent, especially in light of how we have seen God working from a progressive typology.

We see Martin ignoring the progressive typological schema when he attempts to exegete the Hebrew word: *erets*.

He wants the reader to conclude that since *erets* often simply means “land”, it should also mean “land” in the Flood account, that only the “land” was flooded, but not the whole planet. It could be a valid argument, but let’s unpack it more.

In Genesis 1:1 we read:

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. – NKJV

Before we continue, let us again quote something Mr. Martin said earlier on.

“Mistakes made here [in Genesis] will inevitably ripple across the rest of the Bible.”

So, then keeping that in mind we must ask how Mr. Martin can conclude God created the planet earth at all – that is, in Genesis 1:1 the word for earth is that very Hebrew word (*erets*) that Mr. Martin wants us to believe always denotes merely “land”. So, not only does Mr. Martin appear to be advocating a regional flood by his exegesis of *erets*, but by using Martin’s hermeneutic we could conclude God didn’t even create the planet earth, but merely just a portion of land. (source for *erets* use in Gen 1:1 --

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Gen&c=11&v=1&t=KJV#conc/1>)

Indeed, mistakes made in verse 1 of chapter 1 of page 1 of book 1 of the Bible will inevitably not only ripple across the rest of the Bible, but also will skew it beyond any ability to comprehend.

I find it telling that when Mr. Martin starts his “exegesis” of the Hebrew word *erets*, he doesn’t start “in the beginning” but he skips ahead to chapter 12 of Genesis.

Quoting Martin from chapter 1 of his book:

The Hebrew word translated as "earth" in this passage is "erets." Many overlook the fact this word carries no inherent global, spherical connotation from the Hebrew. "Erets" is translated as "land" in the Old Testament over a thousand times. It is also repeatedly translated as "country" and "ground."

One example of how the word "erets" often works in the Old Testament occurs only a couple of chapters after the account of the flood.

Genesis 12:1 reads, "The Lord said to Abram, 'Leave your country, your people, and your father's household and go to the land I will show you.'"

This already seems like a flawed start to this study, since a person would wonder why Martin doesn't start with the very first use of the word erets, especially because it is upon that word which he starts to build his case.

Martin spends half of chapter 1 showing where erets has been used simply as land or region, examples with which almost no one would disagree. He then quickly (too quickly) jumps to the N.T. showing correlation between how the O.T. sometimes used erets to mean land & region & how the N.T. often purposely over exaggerates its phraseology to appear global – such as Caesar Augustus taxing all the world, which is known not to include every parsec of land on the face of the planet.

Just because erets is sometimes, even most of the time used to denote land or region doesn't mean it always denotes that. Again, Martin's conclusions leave us with a planet that was not expressly created by God. According to Martin's position, the planet could have simply already been here & God just "seeded" it with life.

Martin then moves to the next challenge, the phrase, "*all the high mountains under the entire heavens were covered*" as used in some Bible translations like the NIV, NASB, & the ESV.

An interesting thing to note here is that the NIV is considered as a translation using "dynamic equivalence", so that it is not a literal word for word translation but a translation that is supposed to convey original intent. Whereas the NASB is supposed to be a "formal equivalence", yet both translations use the word "mountains". More popular translations like the KJV use the word "hills". (KJV supposedly uses formal equivalence)

Anyhow, this seems an odd flip-flop since Martin's case would imply that during the flood; the water only covered the "high hills". If the original intent of the text was supposed to convey only hills, we'd expect the dynamic equivalent translations to use the word hills instead of mountains. This doesn't prove anything; it's just a curiosity that stands out.

The Hebrew word used in Gen 7:19 as "hills" or "mountains" is har which in the KJV is translated 261 times as mountain, 224 times as mount, & only 59 times as

hill, & 1 time as hill country & 1 time as promotion. (source: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H2022&t=KJV>)

The rest of chapter 1 of BCS simply continues to rehash the same theme, that sometimes the Hebrew & Greek words used to convey a global extent are also used more local or regional. Martin wants the reader to conclude that the creation & the flood accounts are thus also regional.

Again, just because these terms could be & are sometimes used as localized does not follow that everywhere the words are used it is to be taken as local. Let us continue to examine Martin's proposition.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 2

In chapter 2 of BCS Martin continues to force that if the Genesis account is taken as global then his fellow hyperpreterists must also take the Olivet Discourse/Eschaton account as global. Martin makes this comparison because most of his hyperpreterist fellows see the Olivet Discourse/Eschaton being exclusively relating to events surrounding the destruction of Jerusalem in AD70 – a localized event.

“Preterists committed to Creation Science may object, but Olivet Discourse must be taken globally once a commitment to plain literalism is made in Genesis.”

Martin continues to ignore the progressive typology schema when he says:

“If the flood of Genesis 7 is global by virtue of the language in the account, then consistency demands the Great Tribulation must be global as well! The language and physical phenomena is every bit as global in Matthew 24 as it is in Genesis 6-9.”

These false dichotomies become annoying & frustrating to deal with, because if taken to their ultimate conclusions, the God of the Bible is no better than a tribal, regional god of some obscure Semitic people group, which is exactly how many biblical critics view the God of the Bible.

I mean, using Martin's logic, the “global” extent of salvation could just as well have been for a specific region & people group, “the elect of Israel” & some Gentiles who would be grafted in. But now that regional tribal God is done dealing with his regional people, humanity is left to fend for itself. Or, as happens with many hyperpreterists, the entire salvation event was a one time situation which culminated in the first-century & leads to a type of preterist universalism – another up & coming faction within hyperpreterism.

Another quote from Martin comes off as strong-arming:

“Shouldn't Jesus' use of global language in reference to a regional destruction in A.D. 70 aid our understanding of the language of Genesis 7? Shouldn't the Old Testament be interpreted in light of clear statements in the New? To what hermeneutic are we committed? These are questions preterists who cling to the theory of a global flood must deal with openly and honestly.”

Again, no – just because Jesus uses global, hyperbolic language in His reference to the regional destruction in A.D. 70, does not mean we have to go back & apply this to every global reference in the Bible. The hermeneutic to which we should be committed is a progressive hermeneutic where God uses “first the natural, then the spiritual” to relate reality. (1 Cor 15:46) A literal, physical man & woman, husband & wife help us understand the spiritual reality of Christ as the Bridegroom & the Church as His Bride.

We would not go back & say that there were no literal physical marriages in the Bible because we understand the spiritual reality of Christ's marriage. Nor does it follow that we go back and blindly apply regional specifics to global generalities.

Martin ratchets up his strong-arming:

“Does continued support for a global flood subvert a preterist understanding of the Olivet Discourse and New Testament prophecy? How will someone taught Creation Science methods of reading the Bible ever be convinced of a 1st century, regional fulfillment of Jesus' prophecies?”

Most hyperpreterists at this present time have not used their understanding of a global or regional flood to support or doubt their hyperpreterist conclusions, however Martin's theory may actually be a “consistent” application of hyperpreterism to the Creation/Flood account. As a matter of fact, some Covenantal Creationism advocates claim this very thing, that hyperpreterists that still hold to a global flood & that Genesis speaks of a literal planetary creation are actually inconsistent.

Interestingly enough, Martin's approach is dispensationalism in reverse. Both dispensationalism & hyperpreterism often misunderstand that there is a progressive typology to the Bible. So, where a dispensationalist may literalize all eschatological events due to a literal reaching of the creation account, a hyperpreterist will spiritualize all creation events due to a spiritualized reading of the eschatological account.

Martin quotes Ken Ham, a well-known Creation Science advocate:

“Since Jesus Christ in Matthew 24:37-39 uses the event of Noah's Flood as a warning that God has judged the earth, and will judge it again, they would have

to agree that God is going to come back as Judge. The next time He will use fire as the method of judgment rather than water.”

Instead of rejecting Ham’s false dichotomy, Martin allows Ham’s logic to remain & allows Ham to dictate how Scripture should be interpreted. Martin replies:

“These examples illustrate how the Creation Science movement is based from beginning to end on the dispensational hermeneutic of futurist eschatology. They also demonstrate how a particular reading of the flood account is logically related to our eschatological paradigm. On this point the Creation Scientist writers are absolutely correct. There is a clear parallel between the flood of Noah and the parousia of Jesus.”

Martin could have concluded, the hermeneutic itself is faulty, but instead he says they are “absolutely correct”. Martin has bought into their faulty hermeneutic & applies it in reverse, coming out instead with if Y = regional then X must = regional. This hermeneutic is no better than if X = global then Y = global. Jesus & the apostles referencing what are understood as global events in the past (Noah’s Flood) in relation to the soon coming regional events of A.D. 70 does not necessarily mean the account of Noah’ Flood was also region. Sometimes, for impact & effect, a regional event will be referenced to a global event. We do the same thing even in our own modern speech. This fits perfectly with God’s methodology of “first the natural then the spiritual”.

Martin’s premise will only lead to more hyperpreterists seeing the salvific events of Jesus’ death on the Cross & His “coming in the clouds” before the Ancient of Days vindication (see Dan 7:13) as merely a first-century event – thus breeding more universalists within hyperpreterism – which is fine with me, since the more hyperpreterism is “consistently” applied to other “ologies” the more it can be seen as flawed.

Again we quote Martin from chapter 2 of BCS:

“Preterists need to recognize something obvious. The destruction of the flood by water is as surely regional as was the destruction of Jerusalem and the land of Israel by fire! Both the linguistic and theological parallelism throughout the entire New Testament demands it. The global flood idea is essentially a dispensational futurist concept born out of the method of literalism. Although it predates the system we now know as dispensationalism, the hermeneutic method used to argue for the doctrine is entirely dispensational.”

This is almost repulsive. First to make it out that a global Flood is an exclusively dispensationalist teaching is grossly inaccurate. Secondly it is the epitome of

theological thuggery to say if a person doesn't accept a regional creation & flood that a person would by de facto be considered a dispensationalist. As Martin hints, the concept of a global creation & flood predates dispensationalism. The hermeneutic method used to argue for a global flood is NOT entirely dispensational, as a matter of fact there is nothing intrinsically dispensational about it. Dispensationalism has to do with dividing biblical history into "dispensations". Whether the creation & flood were global or regional doesn't change that these events were at a specific period of time, unless Martin is now arguing for a completely allegorical interpretation of the events?

Even though Martin initially said BCS was written for "preterists", we see from the following quote that he has other motives for pushing the concept of a regional creation & flood.

"This book is written from the perspective of the preterist implications on the Genesis flood. However, the main points can be made in reverse. Just as a regional interpretation of New Testament prophecy implies regional events in the flood account, so accepting a regional flood implies a regional understanding of New Testament prophecy. As a regional flood view is accepted among Christians in the future for various reasons, a great opportunity for the widespread acceptance of preterism awaits."

Already it is a backward methodology that tries to superimpose the hyperpreterist methodology onto every area of the Bible – in effect "hyperpreteristizing" the Bible. And we also see Martin validating our suspicions about his reversed hermeneutics. Rather, it is more likely to devolve into a regional perspective on salvation, or worse a universalistic perspective where after the destruction of Jerusalem, God supposedly reconciled all people, no longer behaving regionally, specifically, & covenantally.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 3

Chapter 3 of BCS starts out accurate enough, contrasting the fact that the older a theory or belief is doesn't necessarily mean it is the most pure or authoritative view.

Martin spends time articulating how during the Reformation, the Reformers took a second look at many of the "traditions" that the Roman Catholic Church had placed almost as high as Scripture itself. When the Reformers found no biblical support for these traditions, the traditions were discarded no matter how old the tradition. Yet, it neglects that the Reformers did NOT actually make up a whole new theology completely disconnected from historic Christianity, as is hyperpreterism.

Martin goes on to point out the opposite truth, that a young position can still be true despite the fact of its recent proposition.

“Conversely, developments in Christian theology are not illegitimate simply because they are relatively new as systems and currently remain minority positions (e.g., preterism). Children of the Reformation should never use accepted historical views to bypass arguing the case biblically.”

Perhaps here more than any place have I altered my views with hyperpreterist hermeneutics. Notice the subtle & historically inaccurate implication that the Reformation ignored history. The Reformers rejected Papalism, they did not reject historic Christian interpretation. As a matter of fact, the Reformers appealed to Scripture AND structure – that is they appeal to the Scripture case and back it up by showing that Christians had always interpreted Scripture the way they were interpreting it. To follow that premise, the Reformers then wrote numerous documents & confessions that agree with historic Christian interpretations. Unlike hyperpreterism, the Reformers were NOT ready to reject Christian history for some distorted view of “Sola Scriptura” which actually amounted to private interpretation.

Here in chapter 3 Martin begins to make some real headway. He quotes the Jewish historian, Josephus. Josephus is often utilized by hyperpreterists to shore up a secular account of the events the Bible presents in the Olivet Discourse & the book of Revelation. It is here that Martin begins to make a strong albeit still flawed point.

“Preterists love to quote Josephus on the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70. When will they learn to quote Josephus on the flood?”

One quote by Josephus concerning the Flood account certainly seems to depict a regional or at least not an utter destruction of all human life except those inside the Ark.

“Now the sons of Noah were three – Shem, Japhet, and Ham, born one hundred years before the Deluge. These first of all descended from the mountains into the plains, and fixed their habitation there; and persuaded others who were greatly afraid of the lower grounds on account of the flood, and so were very loath to come down from the higher places, to venture to follow their examples.” -- Antiquities: Book 1, Chapter 4, Section 1.

At first, it would look like Martin has successfully shown that Josephus supports a regional flood, since it appears that some people had survived outside the Ark. But the text doesn't say that. It says, “others were afraid of the lower grounds on account of the flood”. These could very well have been descendants of Noah & his three sons who had been living with them in the mountains after the Ark settled. And now, Noah's sons begin to venture back to the low lands, but these descendants are still leery, thinking another flood may occur.

In fact, by Martin quoting this text from Josephus, Martin contradicts himself. It is clear by this quote by Josephus that the Ark came to rest in mountains, not simply “high hills” & that the sons of Noah had to go down into the plains below. But Martin earlier made an assumption from another quote by Josephus:

“This points clearly to a low elevation, accessible resting place for the ark in direct contradiction to the Creation Science system. A low elevation landing of the ark presents serious difficulties for a global flood.”

Which is it? Did the Ark come to rest in the mountains or in low elevations? This contradictory approach presents serious difficulties for Martin’s proposition for a regional flood & is typical of hyperpreterist reasoning.

Further damaging to Martin’s usage of Josephus as proof for a regional flood is that Josephus in the same book from which Martin quotes, relates the creation as a global event. This either undermines Josephus’ credibility to be consistent or it speaks to the fact that Martin may have misunderstood Josephus’ relation of the flood account. Martin could be reading his regional flood into Josephus’ words. (See Josephus’ perspective on the creation account: <http://www.ccel.org/j/josephus/works/ant-1.htm>)

Martin returns to trying to tell us the global flood position was foisted on Christianity almost exclusively by the dispensationalists & “hyper-futurists”, such as the Seventh Day Adventists. Although there is no dispute that these various groups may have had a hand in promoting the global flood in the last 100-200 years, the global flood most certainly had strong proponents long before.

Ignoring all of this, Martin instead paints a sinister picture of an almost covert nature, wherein many of the more modern Creation Science advocates lifted their work from a former radical advocate whom they were supposedly purposely down playing so their more moderate views could be accepted. Even if this is true, it has little bearing on the fact that before all of this drama, people had been advocating a global flood for hundreds, & thousands of years.

If anything, I am more concerned that we are just 3 chapters into Martin’s work & there has been numerous glaring examples of glossing over of very important facts (like how erets is used in Gen 1:1 & how Josephus relates a global creation) to a vague usage of terms such as “covenantal” without any explanation, to the strong-armed tactics of practically saying global flood advocates are no different than dispensationalists. This is not a very promising start to a book that purports to hold so much hope of transferring people to a hyperpreterist paradigm via advocating a regional flood concept.

In this chapter of BCS, Martin deals with six common objections to a regional flood. I summarize those objections as:

1. The Regional Flood theory is liberalizing the Bible
2. Noah & company could have simply sought higher ground
3. The Bible clearly says all but Noah & company died in the Flood
4. A regional flood where some others survive points to other ways to salvation
5. The Bible clearly states the Flood covered the “high mountains”
6. The promise of God to never again flood the earth/land is constantly broken

We shall interact with Martin’s response to each objection as he presents in BCS & if needed, we will put forth a few of our own objections within that interaction.

Objection #1

At the heart of Martin’s response to the first objection is this quote by Martin:

“Why must the flood be global in order to be historical?”

This is an excellent response. It is true that the flood need not to be global to be historical. It seems like an obvious answer that should put to rest the first objection. Usually behind the vague charge of “being liberal” is the unfounded notion that anything non-traditional is thus “liberal”. While this conclusion would be false there is a more accurate concern with people “liberalizing” the Bible. This concern has more to do with the motivation behind the move away from traditionalism. If that move is simply an attempt to strip all supernaturalism from the Bible, leaving in its wake a “demythetized” historical account, then indeed it may be a form of liberalism. I don’t believe that is the motivation behind Martin’s position, but more that Martin thinks he has found the magic talisman to create a revolution of hyperpreterists. However, I wonder even at that since Martin did indeed utilize an avowed evolutionist to edit his current edition of BCS.

Objection #2

Martin points out how some people assume it took Noah 120 years to build the Ark, but as is clear from the text of Gen 6:3, which Martin references, this has no correlation with how long it took Noah to build the Ark. Rather, this is a general reference on the average extent of human lifespan. This quote in Gen 6:3 actually speaks against a regional flood in a way Martin may have not considered. Is the quote in Gen 6:3 just saying 120 years was the average age of men in this region? Let us actually quote the text:

And the LORD said, “My Spirit shall not strive with man forever, for he is indeed flesh; yet his days shall be one hundred and twenty years.” – Gen 6:3 NKJV

If anything, this text seems to be saying God is establishing that mankind would no longer live to the great ages they had previously, but that God would limit mankind's lifespan to 120 years. It is a curious thing that after this decree, we see the lifespan of all people mentioned in the Bible decreasing to eventually not exceed 120 years. Even today there are few if any verifiable persons living beyond age 120.

Since Martin has quoted Josephus in the past, let us again quote Josephus on this matter.

“Now God loved this man for his righteousness: yet he not only condemned those other men for their wickedness, but determined to destroy the whole race of mankind, and to make another race that should be pure from wickedness; and cutting short their lives, and making their years not so many as they formerly lived, but one hundred and twenty only...” – Antiquities, Book 1 3.2.1

Josephus confirms our interpretation of Gen 6:3 as God cutting short the lifespan of mankind. What is interesting is that within Josephus' quote, a person could see that the “former race of mankind” was able to live beyond 120 years, but this other “race” God would make would be limited, & interestingly as worded by Josephus, “be pure from wickedness”. Again, are there any races of mankind today that live to be extreme ages? Would this mean that all of present mankind descends from the “new race” God made to live a limit of 120 years?

But let's get back to the objection that Martin is actually trying to refute, that since it took Noah a long time to build the Ark, Noah could have spent that time leaving the region avoiding the flood altogether.

Before we go further, I would again like to quote Josephus:

“But Noah was very uneasy at what they did; and being displeased at their conduct, persuaded them to change their dispositions and their acts for the better: but seeing they did not yield to him, but were slaves to their wicked pleasures, he was afraid they would kill him, together with his wife and children, and those they had married; so he departed out of that land.” – Antiquities, Book 1 3.1

According to Josephus, Noah didn't even remain in the land/region where the wickedness was occurring. So, if Noah left the region & God was going to only flood the region to kill the wicked men, why did Noah still have to build an Ark? As to the actual construction of the Ark, if the conversion of 21 inches equals 1 cubic is correct, then the Ark's specification as outlined in Gen 6:15 is 525ft long, 52.5ft high, & 87.5ft wide. This was no small undertaking for one man, even if he had the help of his three sons. Keep in mind the average modern day home is only about 50X50Ft & 20-50Ft high, yet even with power tools & prefabrication it can take a team of men several weeks to months to construct it. The point is,

Noah could have just as easily left the region in the time it was going to take him to build this Ark. And according to Josephus, he DID leave the land.

Martin's answer to this question seems a contradiction to his own premise:

“Rather than presenting a problem for the regional flood view, this question exposes how Creation Scientists’ physical-literal priority in reading the account entirely misses the emphasis the biblical writers constantly place on the story. God planned the events to picture salvation by grace through faith. There is a spiritual need for the ark, because the ark is a picture of Christ in the midst of God’s judgment. What Creation Scientists often miss in their zeal to defend a dispensational-literal reading is the story of Noah’s ark is not about the geological history of planet earth. It is about the gospel of Jesus Christ.”

This reasoning, though not completely wrong tends to support the global nature of the flood for a few reasons.

1. God has an operating pattern of “first the natural then the spiritual”
2. If men besides Noah & family survived, then it would appear to suggest salvation is possible without God’s saving grace

Martin continues to contradict the point he tries to make.

“In God’s plan it was important, as a picture of Christ, that Noah enter the ark as an “incarnation” of the gospel, resting in Jesus Christ for salvation. Noah was figuratively ‘in Christ’ while he was ‘in the ark’.”

While we would agree to the above quote, what Martin’s regional flood does to that picture is atrocious. If people survived & were alive “outside the Ark”, then it would follow by typology that people “outside of Christ” will also have “life”. This paints a picture that there are other ways to life outside of Christ – no wonder so many hyperpreterists are so quick to adopt universalism.

Objection #3

Here we are 4 chapters into BCS & Martin is still using undefined terms when answering this objection he states:

“What is odd about this argument is covenantal Christians don’t even realize they are again arguing on dispensational grounds.”

He still has not defined what he means by “covenantal”. Perhaps he assumes we all know what he means. I just find this distracting, I’m sorry. Let’s move on to the meat of the objection.

Martin spends his time on this objection, arguing that “all” doesn’t always mean every individual – I as a Calvinistic Christian have no beef with him there, but he seems to have glossed over the real issue. In light of his answer on objection #2 wherein he made the comparison to the salvific typology of being in the Ark & being in Christ, it would seem Martin’s salvific model breaks down if there are those who remain alive outside of the Ark.

Objection #4

It is interesting how the preceding objections do also relate directly to this one & how Martin completely contradicts himself. Martin says,

“Those who argue for a regional flood do not destroy the type of Christ, since all those in the immediate region of Noah, where the flood actually occurred, were destroyed.”

Really? Didn’t Martin back in chapter 3 of BCS try to convince us the flood was merely regional because as Martin quoted Josephus – some men fled to the mountains to escape the flood? Which is it Mr. Martin? Did all people who were in the flood actually die or did some survive? You can’t have it both ways & still make a credible argument. This is typical hyperpreterist contradictory-speak. This contradiction along with Martin’s complete silence up to this point on the use of the Hebrew term, “erets” in Gen 1:1 really brings into question the validity of his proposition. Although the regional flood could still be viable, Martin’s methodology not only doesn’t help the argument but has actually damaged it.

Objection #5

Martin opens his response to this objection by comparing obvious speculation (like a vapor canopy over the earth), to something that is less speculative, like the Ark coming to rest on the mountains of Ararat. Martin wants the reader to believe that both notions spring from traditional speculation.

“...belief the ark landed on top of Mt. Ararat are all wild speculation...”
“The Bible says nothing of these bizarre theories. It also says nothing about the particular mountain we know as Mt. Ararat.”

Indeed, the idea that there is a single snowcapped mountain upon which the Ark settled is unwarranted, but it is not wild speculation or bizarre theory on the level of a vapor canopy. The biblical text actually says:

“Then the ark rested in the seventh month, the seventeenth day of the month, on the mountains of Ararat.” – Gen 8:4 NKJV

Clearly it is a chain of mountains, but the Ark didn’t just come to rest on a chain of mountains but ultimately had to rest on one mountain in that chain. Martin is correct to point out that it may not be Mt. Ararat, especially since there have been several mountains with that name.

Next, Martin quickly & weakly tries to make the case that the Hebrew word “har” which is used here to denote mountain can also be translated as hill. I already addressed this in my interaction with chapter 1 of BCS but one sentence from my interaction bears repeating here.

The Hebrew word used in Gen 7:19 as “hills” or “mountains” is har which in the KJV is translated 261 times as mountain, 224 times as mount, & only 59 times as hill, & 1 time as hill country & 1 time as promotion.

Thus, when Martin says:

“What many do not realize is that the word has no inherent implication of snow-covered peaks. It is commonly translated throughout the Old Testament as “hills” in English as well.”

He is either ignorant or misleading because 59 times out of 545 times is hardly considered “common” – as a matter of fact, it is only 10.83% of the time translated as “hill”.

Objection #6

What I find interesting in Martin’s answer to this objection is that he seems to switch methodologies & begin arguing like a Creation Scientist. He says:

“It is often implied that if the flood was not a global event, then it must have been a tiny, local event essentially no different than the common floods we experience. The truth is there is solid geological evidence that a vast inundation of Mesopotamia did occur around 6000-7500 years ago.”

Creation Scientists often make such claims as well but on a larger scale. They will talk about global sediment distribution, fossil records showing a cataclysmic change, vegetation & animal evidence (such as finding remains of tropical plants or animals in ice or in mountains). Whether any of this can be confirmed is not my argument, I’m not a Creation Scientist, I’m a biblical presuppositionalist but if Martin’s scientific reference can be admitted as evidence in this debate, then why can’t we also examine the Creation Scientists’ evidence for a global flood?

This next quote by Martin is very telling.

“Even if current geological theories about the Near East’s experience of a massive flood event 6000-7500 years ago were disproved, the question at hand could still be handled well in light of the covenant context of the account. Rather than focusing on the physical extent of the flood (as if that is the point of God’s promise) we should apply that promise within the covenant context of Scripture. God’s promise in Genesis 9:11 says, “never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood.” That promise could be understood well in the context of Israel’s history.”

First, if Martin's reasoning was applied even to Creation Science's claims we could say, "Even if current geological theories about a global flood were disproved, the question at hand could still be handled well in light of the covenant context of the account."

But what would we be saying? It looks like we would be concluding the same thing that Martin seems to be concluding – that the whole flood account could very well be allegorical. That it was just an allegory to be understood in context of Israel's covenantal history. That the promise that "never again will all life be cut off by the waters of a flood" is to be understood as an allegory that God would always retain a "covenantal" remnant.

This picture fails because according to Martin, whether the flood was regional or global, God didn't cut off all flesh, not even of those in the flood, but according to Martin some survived on mountains or "high hills". If we believe Martin, even if allegorical it would be a promise built on a false premise.

If Martin would not have contradicted himself by in one place saying everyone outside the Ark experiencing the flood did not die, & then in another place saying everyone outside the Ark experiencing the flood did die, then perhaps even his hyperpreterist fellows might take his arguments serious. But as it has been presented, Martin's arguments are doubtful & just show the typical hyperpreterist contradictory nature.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 5

In this chapter Martin's arguments take an interesting turn. Dispensationalists, fundamentalists who are typically NOT associated with being very "scientific" in their methodology & conclusions are here being accused by Martin of poisoning "*the reading of the Bible with materialism and scientific precisionism*"

These constant contradictions by Martin are alarming. Which is it? Are dispensationalists fatalists (not materialists) & simple-minded literalists or are they materialists & scientific precisionists?

Earlier on, I made reference that Martin's argument appeals to the "post-modern, emergent church" types because of its almost intellectual elitism. I think we see that coming to the fore with this comment by Martin.

"...it is not difficult to see that Creation Science ideology is actually a right-wing form of modernism."

Although Martin wrote this book in 2001, probably well before his en steeped exposure to the "emergent church hyperpreterists" which administer & frequent

the forum where Martin mainly interacts, this mentality no doubt fits perfectly with their constant abhorring of anything “modern”. They love it when someone rails against “modernism”.

How we understand creation in general does impact many other aspects of our theological understanding. If the creation account is only a story of how God created a “covenantal race” of people & that there were other people in existence either by natural evolution or created but ignored by God, this would certainly affect our theological outlook. There would be no warrant to believe the God of the Bible created the physical planet earth, it could have very well been formed exactly how geologists suppose & “God” merely seeded it with life. Having said that, it doesn’t make it right or wrong, just very impacting.

As for the physical dangers of Creation Science, I don’t think the correlation between creationism & dispensationalism is as exclusive as Martin makes it out to be. There are many people who hold to a creationist view but are not dispensationalists. I would highly agree with Martin about the political dangers of dispensationalism’s concept that the people of modern day Israel are somehow God’s “chosen people” & that time must wrap up with a huge war where two-thirds of modern Israel’s inhabitants are killed. A person need not even be a hyperpreterist to see the dangers of holding that concept.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 6

I think Martin is a little over confident about his presentation in BCS. He states:

“Now that the Creation Science paradigm is discredited by preterism there is really only one inescapable question. What do we do now? Where in the world does this leave us in the wider Bible-Science debate that rages around us?”

Presently there appears to be a slightly higher number of hyperpreterists that DON’T agree with Martin’s theories though this is quickly changing. I’m certain Martin’s proposition will affect some hyperpreterists, but others will remain global creationists & perhaps even global flood adherents & this will not affect their stance on the hyperpreterism one iota. They will still solidly be hyperpreterists & not de facto dispensationalists as Martin seem to imply.

As is typical with hyperpreterists (& if you compare my original review to this present one) hyperpreterist arrogance is astoundingly overassertive & overconfident. You can see that in this quote by Martin in what he thinks of his work’s impact:

“This paradigm shift may very well be in the early dawn moments of a new day in Christian theology. Or we may be generations away from seeing the full implications of preterism worked out in cosmogony. Either way, I leave strong

conclusions on cosmogony in the hands of others more capable than I. Hopefully they can build on any helpful ideas presented in the prior chapters.”

He is right. We are just at the beginning of how a hyperpreterist hermeneutic applied consistently to other areas affects all the other “ologies” of Christianity. Just as a consistent hyperpreterism applied to soteriology has bred many universalists among hyperpreterists, we have yet to see the affect of Martin’s Covenantal Creation theories – we know how it at least affected, Mike Beilder, the editor of BCS to make a “journey” from “young-earth creationism” to “evolutionary creationism”. Is that Martin’s intent?

Martin tries to make a strong point with his quotes from the Reformers, Martin Luther & John Calvin. Both men quoted scripture in opposition to what is now considered scientific fact (such as the planet earth orbiting around the sun instead of the sun orbiting around earth).

But what does this really change? Perhaps this is a reason that some people worry we are de-supernaturalizing the Bible to a point where eventually it will be concluded simply as humanity’s effort to position themselves within the world.

That they think of themselves as “covenantal” beings distinct not only from animals but from “non-covenantal” humans. In this they give their own lives meaning & purpose, but ultimately the whole thing could be a fabrication & self imposed delusion.

No wonder relativity runs rampant among many of the hyperpreterists, especially among those with which Martin keeps company. But again, this doesn’t say whether they are correct or not, just that what they are proposing will not be viewed as “Christian” anymore. Indeed, some among their company have tossed away that label all together.

An interesting, ironic curiosity rises in the use of terms.

Martin labels one view as “Young Earth Creationists” & the other (his view) as “Old Earth Creationists”. In light of how Martin has dealt with the Hebrew word, “erets” & how Gen 1:1 uses this word, then the label “creationist” is not very accurate. In essence, the God of Martin’s theory did not create anything beyond the “land”, the immediate region wherein Adam & Eve were to occupy. It seems inaccurate to call it creationism at all. It in effect removes any creation by God of the natural world altogether. God becomes a regional, tribal, “covenantal” god & nothing more.

But where Martin’s view really seems to play out is in soteriology. He creates a synergistic conclusion where mankind is working toward God, perhaps we could even conclude mankind working to “create” god. It is a sort of an “unfinished Christianity” or “unfinished religion”. This is most obvious from this quote by Martin:

“Radical Calvinist and radical Arminian views of salvation tend to rely on this same simplistic either/or assumption when it comes to salvation or “new creation.” On this point both extremes of Calvinism and Arminianism are in essential agreement: salvation is either by God’s choice or of man’s choice. They are two sides to the same either/or coin. The opposing sides then fight till the end of the world on top this shared assumption.”

This pretension to be the middle-knowledge, middle ground guy has always been annoying. There really **is** an either/or dichotomy in salvific models. It is called monergism versus synergism. Wrapped up in this debate is the very definition of “grace” to which Mr. Martin has constantly referenced. Grace is no longer grace if it is earned by a co-working.

My point is, Martin’s views seem to be leading him to even more dangerous conclusion than the ones he had warned us about with the Creation Scientist. Martin’s soteriology sees not a “new creation” of an individual but rather a progressive change. A person could not be rightly said to be made alive, but only continuously being made alive. This goes even further backwards than the concept of “progressive sanctification”.

I think the reason the Creation Science issue becomes a larger issue with Martin is seen from the first few sentences of this chapter:

If you are like me with a long background of time, effort, money and emotion invested in the Creation Science cause, then there are probably a few burning questions on your mind at this point. Maybe it’s disorienting to even consider the plausibility of the failure of Creation Science.

I can see how disorienting this issue can be if one has invested time, effort, money, & emotion into it. But more & more I have read Martin’s work since my initial review, I realize his real motive is that he thinks he can get a lot of people to come into the back door of hyperpreterism by almost tricking them into it with his flawed but “logical” sounding arguments. This is how hyperpreterism operates in general. It never openly announces itself, but rather tries to sneak in unawares.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 7

In chapter 7, Martin does a thorough job at presenting the various creation theories to his readers. The key word in my previous sentence is “theories” & is another reason I have no intention of getting bogged down interacting with theories.

However one of the theories is important to note. Martin calls it the “Local Creation” view but it cannot really be seen as any different than the view he espouses.

“This view never became widely popular, but it is worthy of mention here for two reasons. The first is the textual implications of preterism. Another relevant detail in the history of this view is that its chief advocate, John Pye Smith, was also the pioneer in developing many of the ideas and arguments for a regional flood in Genesis which are still in common use today.”

Ah-ha, just as we have been saying, Martin’s proposition seems to lead to a regional creation wherein the regional, covenantal, tribal god merely creates the land wherein his covenantal/tribal people would dwell.

Indeed, Martin comes right out (in almost the last chapter of his book) & admits what we suspected he was driving toward.

“Though some preterists might be horrified at the suggestion, might we understand the creation of the "heavens and earth" in Genesis 1:1 as a direct reference to the covenant creation of Israel during the time of Moses? If that were the case, the creation account would better be understood primarily within the context of Israel’s history, rather than cosmologically. It may be speaking about the creation of the Garden of Eden which is typological of the Promised Land. But the implication is that a universal, cosmological reading of Genesis 1 is not warranted.”

No, rather we should continue to understand that God uses the natural then the spiritual. That Genesis 1:1 denotes the creation of the physical world, which is merely a shadow of the “heavenly”. That God does indeed make the connection between the copy & the reality so by the time we get to the N.T., many references to “heavens & earth” are completely covenantal/spiritual in nature but harkening back to the physical for reference.

Taken to its conclusion, by wiping out all notion of actual physical representation we might assume many of the persons, places, & events in the O.T. may not be “real” at all, but merely covenantal examples. The god that is being re-imaged before our eyes is not a god who creates but a god who works with the matter already in existence. Indeed not only would it conclude that a “cosmological reading of Genesis 1” would not be warranted, but by this reasoning no reading of the Bible at all would be warranted. This deistic god is so metaphorical that mankind could never ascertain any meaning from that book.

Martin compounds his false dichotomy with this quote:

“So long as preterists are committed to a covenantal rather than cosmological reading of "heavens and earth" in biblical redemptive history the idea of a covenantal, rather than cosmological reading of the original creation of the "heavens and earth" in Genesis 1:1 is a legitimate possibility. The only way to

rule it out as impossible is to consistently read all "heavens and earth" language cosmologically which would make preterism impossible."

No one (not even me here in this review) are ruling out that there are many references to creation in spiritualized sense, both in the O.T. & certainly in the N.T. – but that doesn't mean EVERY reference to creation must be spiritualized. Again, this crowbar approach is what hyperpreterists really mean when they use the word "consistent". To a hyperpreterist, it means ignoring typology, ignoring grammatical variance & instead muscling every word & phrase into their paradigm.

This next quote shows that unwittingly even Martin doesn't think his theory makes sense:

"While the theory does have a logical consistency to it there are some real textual challenges with rendering the creation account as the creation of Israel. First of all, even preterists recognize that not every use of the phrase "heavens and earth" in Scripture must be covenantally based."

Martin goes on to quote several scriptures where he says the text is speaking of the physical, global, earth even though the texts use the exact same Greek words that Martin told us elsewhere only means a covenantal earth. (Acts 14:15, Exodus 20:4) Who gets to decide these things? I know we would say the context dictates when to interpret it in the varying ways, then why does Martin insist the context of the creation & the flood is merely regional, especially in the light of the biblical principle of "first the natural then the spiritual"?

Rather, it looks like Martin is working backwards, taking the revelation & fulfillment of the types & shadows & forcing a "covenantal" reality on the mere shadow. His concept that the creation & flood accounts are speaking about the covenantal creation of Israel, thousands of years before even the covenant with Abraham much less with Jacob/Israel is an absurd redaction of what those covenants were about. Indeed, the natural creation & flood could point to the eventual covenant but they were not the actual covenant itself.

Martin wisely but perhaps still unwittingly acknowledges this violation of the pattern.

"A Local Creation approach violates this Biblical pattern by limiting the original creation to covenantal and spiritual realities. A creational, cosmological reading of the "heavens and earth" in Genesis 1 fits with the overall pattern in Scripture of 'first the physical, then the spiritual.'"

Martin further seems to see the problem with the local/regional creation view, a problem that I keep pointing out during this review. This one paragraph should

have caused Martin to not even write his first edition of BCS let alone a second & third edition.

“A preterist Local Creation interpretation tends to break down the physical-spiritual relationship in Scripture by limiting all "heavens and earth" language to covenantal realities. Exegetically, we are left with no creational background or antecedent for the covenantal "heavens and earth" language when it is clear the Hebrews understood the universal link between physical creation and spiritual covenant in all of life. Each reflects the other.”

Martin’s pause for re-consideration of his regional creation doesn’t come from reexamining Genesis 1:1 (because he still thinks the Hebrew word “erets” could be understood covenantally), but his doubt of his own position comes with the texts of Proverbs 8:27-31. He even says:

“Proverbs 8 seems to make a local creation interpretation in Genesis 1 highly doubtful.”

Martin says the reason he thinks Proverbs 8 (especially Proverbs 8:23-29) is speaking of a physical, global earth is because he says Proverbs uses the Hebrew word “tebel” for earth instead of erets.

Well, this is NOT entirely true, Proverbs 8:23 which is the start of the creation context uses the word erets. (source:

<http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Pro&c=8&v=23&t=KJV#conc/23>)

I have been established from everlasting, from the beginning, before there was ever an earth. – Proverbs 8:23 NKJV (the word earth is the Hebrew word erets)

Mr. Martin isn’t being quite straight with his readers. On top of that, another interesting thing is seen in verse 25.

Before the mountains were settled, before the hills, I was brought forth; --
Proverbs 8:25 NKJV

You will notice that this passage uses both the words mountains & hills. Let us here examine Mr. Martin’s earlier reasoning, wherein he said Gen 7:19’s use of the word “mountain” should really be understood as “hills” because it used the Hebrew word “har”. We already pointed out that har in the KJV is translated 261 times as mountain, 224 times as mount, & only 59 times as hill, & 1 time as hill country & 1 time as promotion. But what is so poignant here is that the word translated mountains is as we expect the Hebrew word “har” & the word translated hills is the Hebrew word “gibah” which specifically means “lower than a mountain”. And no, har & gibah DON’T come from the same root words. (source: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/Bible.cfm?b=Pro&c=8&v=25&t=KJV#conc/25>)

The point is, if Genesis 7:19 was only intended to relate “hills” why didn’t the author use the word “gibah” which of the 69 times it is used in the O.T. it is always representing a hill & never a mountain. (source: <http://www.blueletterbible.org/lang/lexicon/lexicon.cfm?Strongs=H1389&t=KJV>)

In the end, the various creation theories that Martin presents in chapter 7 of BCS all have underlying faults, including the view which Martin says claims would be most compatible with preterism.

“The weakness of the Framework View is its tremendous complexity with its triads, upper and lower registers, and commitment to ordinary providence during the creation week. Many have suggested the view is contrived by exegetical gymnastics and represents, at best, theological eccentricity.”

I’m not certain I want to get attached to a view which even a proponent like Martin admits, *“Many have suggested the view is contrived by exegetical gymnastics and represents, at best, theological eccentricity.”* That is not a promising foundation upon which to build. But what do you expect, all of hyperpreterism is built on this type of reasoning.

INTERACTION WITH CHAPTER 8

We often speak of people having trouble seeing the meaning of a text of scripture because their “presuppositions” get in the way. We typically would encourage people to attempt to drop their presuppositions & let the text interpret itself as much as possible.

But what Mr. Martin has been pressing & even more so here in chapter 8 is that we should apply a hyperpreterist presupposition or premise to creation & the flood. How is this advice consistent with the advice that people don’t apply any presupposition? If we are going to apply any sort of premise, why not the premise that God is sovereign & has maintained within His Church a basic & correct understanding of His Word. Otherwise, every generation can revision Christianity as they see fit -- & indeed, many hyperpreterists are comfortable with revisionism. Martin shows that in this quote:

“If preterism represents an advance in biblical understanding of Christian eschatology, particularly the apocalyptic genre of Scripture, then that advance will have tremendous implications in our understanding of Genesis.”

Of course applying a radically altered version of interpretation will result in a radically different kind of Christianity but that doesn’t mean it is an “advance” – it certainly would have “tremendous implications”, not just on our understanding of Genesis but on the entire nature of what we have considered to be Christianity for 2000 years. And most hyperpreterists are perfectly fine with this. Amazing! This is the reason I often say that hyperpreterism is fundamentally a DIFFERENT

religion than Christianity as much as Mormonism is a different religion even though it shares with Christianity common theological terminology & appeals to a figure named “Jesus”.

Martin spends a lot of time quoting from Milton Terry (a theologian of the 19th century), from which no doubt Martin has acquired many of his views about creation & the flood. But Martin references one quote from Terry that seems to be at the heart of this flawed methodology.

“But if these opening chapters of the Bible are a revelation of God’s creative relation to the world, may they not be apocalyptic in character? Is it not fitting that the canon of Scripture should open as well as close with an apocalypse?”

No Mr. Terry (& Mr. Martin) it is not “fitting”, as Martin already agreed:

“Exegetically, we are left with no creational background or antecedent for the covenantal “heavens and earth” language when it is clear the Hebrews understood the universal link between physical creation and spiritual covenant in all of life.” – Martin from chapter 7 of BCS

If even Martin agrees that the regional creation holds no exegetical water (pun intended), because it breaks down the antecedent link, then why are we even discussing this? How have we gotten to the point of an 8-chapter book in its third edition? Because the hyperpreterist audience allows its proponents to use such flawed logic & does nothing to counter it. This is just another reason I have since rejected hyperpreterism.

To me, what it looks like is a man with an agenda used his favored hyperpreterist sounding author (Milton Terry) & latched on to some of the views he thought would help advance hyperpreterism. This isn’t the first time this has happened. For instance, the first-century Rapture theory was not originally espoused by Ed Stevens or Ian Harding but by J.S. Russell & Ernest Hampden-Cook, both favored authors among preterists.

It seems that Martin has become so “hyperpreteristic” that he is seeing apocalypses everywhere, even in the beginning...

“I believe a linguistic comparison of the Genesis creation account and the Apocalypse of Revelation will not only validate the suggestion the creation account may be a mini-apocalypse: it will be the obvious solution to those who are generally convinced of preterist hermeneutics and eschatology.”

It seems he has jumped from one presuppositional mindset (when he was a “futurist”) to another (now that he is a hyperpreterist) & it is casting a vapor canopy over his reasoning.

Earlier in BCS Martin tells us not to get bogged down with the debate over 24-hour days & such, yet here in chapter 8 he devotes a lot of time to discussing that very debate. I'll take his original advice.

In fact, the more I compare Martin's own words from chapter to chapter, I become bogged down not in debate but in his contradiction. Here he says:

"As long as the roots of plain, wooden literalism grow in the Genesis creation account, the trunk and branches of wooden literalism will continue to obfuscate the heart of all biblical prophecy."

But earlier he said:

"Exegetically, we are left with no creational background or antecedent for the covenantal "heavens and earth" language when it is clear the Hebrews understood the universal link between physical creation and spiritual covenant in all of life." – Martin from chapter 7 of BCS

Which version of Tim Martin should I listen to? The one that is appealing to being exegetical (thus holding to a physical creation), or the one that seems to be a dutiful disciple of his favored author Milton Terry in calling for the chopping down the trunk of that "wooden" antecedent? Perhaps it is here we finally see what Martin means when he keeps using the word "covenantal". He doesn't mean in contract with, but rather it appears he means metaphorical, allegorical, or metaphysical – anything but traditional, fundamental, or modernistic. This is the reason I think Martin's book is so popular with the post-modern/emergent church type hyperpreterists, whether Martin is of that group or not, his views cater to their whims.

As a matter of fact, Martin seems to be in complete accord with the post-modern/emergent church type hyperpreterists as we see from this quote by him:

"Because Christians still live in the shadow of the Fundamentalism/Modernism controversy, Christian conservatives remain very shy when it comes to accepting biblical hyperbole, symbolism and metaphor as an essential part of the story of Scripture. Conservatives have been habituated to suspect any interpretation which wanders from the plain "literal" as a concession to modernist unbelief."

The group with which Martin bonds despise anything considered "fundamental" or "modern" because they view themselves as beyond that crude simplistic way. They see themselves as enlightened & above the basics (i.e. fundamental = basic).

Martin concludes his book with relating how much impact it would have on the Christian world if people could just see the creation view as he has presented. Again, I believe he overstates the case. If anything, the pressing questions on

the minds of Christians today are, “When is Jesus coming back?” & “When will the world end?” I know Martin has said the answers to these questions are wrapped up in how we view creation, but from a practical standpoint that is not accurate. From an exegetical standpoint, Martin himself has told us that the regional view has serious problems.

At this point in my original review, as a hyperpreterist I commended Martin for at least taking on this issue. I now retract that commendation. As a hyperpreterist, I was deluded by the same false & contradictory premises that we have seen Martin employ in his book. My hope is that either hyperpreterism will remain the small isolated movement it presently is, or that guys like Martin & Vaughn will begin to be the main representatives of hyperpreterism, since with their reasoning at the helm & their “consistent” application of hyperpreterism to every facet of their theology hyperpreterism will become more distinguishable from TRUE Christianity & will be so strange that no Christian will consider it any more than they would consider Mormonism, JW's or Islam.

May God bless the reader.

Let God be true & every man a liar (in comparison) – Romans 3:4

Roderick Edwards 03/2006 (revised 10/2008)

APPENDIX

As hyperpreterism continues to fracture into yet smaller & smaller factions, a group led by Sam Frost has been resistant to the “Covenantal Creation” view of Martin, until Oct 2008, wherein Frost wrote a 21 page “response” to Martin (note how many years AFTER the fact). But Frost’s response is being received as a synthesis or a “partial Covenantal Creationism” view – It seems Frost is trying to make sure the prediction by his fellow hyperpreterist, named Norm doesn’t come true. Frost is trying to find a way to remain relevant within the larger hyperpreterist movement but he may have to throw his followers under the Covenant Creationism bus to do so.

www.thekingdomcome.com & www.preteristblog.com

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