



Church and Academy

Session 3: Thursday, June 6, 9-10:30 a.m.

“Beginning in the Present: Genesis 1-2 in the Lab, Classroom, and Sanctuary”

Location: Malamat

Garrett Best, *York University*, Moderator

- **Josh Kingcade**, *Preston Road Church of Christ*
- **Kevin Youngblood**, *Harding University*
- **John Lewis**, *Lipscomb University*
- **Janet Kellogg Ray**, *North Texas University*

This session will explore the relationship between faith and science in the classroom and in the local church. Pew Research Center found that 56% of Americans say there is generally a conflict between science and religion, and a 2022 Barna study found that 32% of pastors doubt Christian beliefs because of science. Professors and preachers must navigate these issues as they teach Genesis 1-2 to students in the classroom as well as to believers in the sanctuary. Many approach this topic with preconceived ideas about what and how the creation account(s) in Genesis are communicating. This session brings together leading scholars and experienced ministry leaders to address the challenges and opportunities that arise when teaching the creation narrative(s) of Genesis, aiming to foster dialogue between the church and academy as we seek to navigate issues related to faith and science.

Josh Kingcade, *Preston Road Church of Christ*, “Rebuilding the Foundations: Reteaching Sunday School and Treading Lightly”

Some Christians’ greatest struggle to understand Genesis 1-2 comes from what they were taught as children. This presentation will examine how we might gently rebuild those foundations without toppling people’s faith.

Kevin Youngblood, *Harding University*, “Creation in Stereo: The Significance of Genesis’ Two Distinct Creation Accounts”

Contrary to popular opinion, Genesis presents two distinct creation accounts that differ with respect to the duration, starting point, sequence, and method of creation. In fact, it was not unusual for ancient Near Eastern cultures to hold multiple creation accounts in tension. They appeared to grasp, perhaps better than we do, that the cosmos and its origins are profound mysteries that cannot be reduced to a single narrative. While Genesis certainly does challenge many aspects and claims of neighboring creation myths, it at least concurs with their notion that the profundity and significance of creation cannot be limited to a singular account. By placing these two differing accounts side-by-side, Genesis is signaling to readers that the two accounts are not intended to be read as literal reportage of the precise historical steps God took in forming the cosmos, but rather symbolic theological statements regarding the nature of Creator, creation, and their relationship to each other. As such, Genesis 1-2 need not be read as excluding what the natural sciences have discovered in God’s “Book of Nature” as the apparent mechanisms and means of cosmic, animal, and human development.

John Lewis, Lipscomb University, "Genesis 1 and 2 in Light of Human Anthropology"

With fossil remains from over 6,000 individuals, the evidence from paleoanthropology for human evolution is nearly impossible to ignore. Likewise, the evidence from genetic analysis converges on the same conclusion—human evolution has proceeded like most other species. The question then, is what does that mean for Christians that want to take both Scripture and science seriously? After providing a summary of the paleoanthropological and genetic evidence, several models for reconciling hominin evolution with the Biblical account of our origins will be considered.

Janet Kellogg Ray, North Texas University, "Monkey Science: Evangelicals and Science Denial"

At the beginning of the pandemic, many hoped for a more positive relationship between science and faith, perhaps a joint effort to fight a common enemy. Unfortunately, it drove us further apart. Why are evolution, COVID, and climate change at the top of the evangelical hit list? How did we get here?