

Book Review

Navigating Genesis: A Scientist's Journey through Genesis 1–11

Ross, Hugh. *Navigating Genesis: A Scientist's Journey through Genesis 1–11*. California: RTB Press, 2014, 283 pp.

Reviewed by Dr. Marco Kletting

Modern Physics, Cosmology and Design

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1. Author Information

Hugh Ross, the author of *Navigating Genesis* is the founder and president of the Christian apologetics ministry Reasons to Believe (RTB). RTB focuses on making a positive case for Christianity based on the latest scientific discoveries. Ross completed his BSc in physics at the University of British Columbia and MS and PhD in astronomy at the University of Toronto. For postdoctoral studies he went to the California Institute of Technology, where he researched galaxies and quasars. In 2012, Ross received together with Dr. Gerald Schroeder the Ide P. Trotter Prize presented by Texas A&M University in recognition of his work in demonstrating connections between science and religion. He is the author of many other books and articles relating to the intersection of science and faith. Ross spoke on hundreds of university campuses as well as conference and churches all over the world. In addition to his activities at RTB he is also on the pastoral team at Christ Church Sierra Madre.¹ His scientific background enables him to write on topics pertaining the intersection between science and faith - especially in the area of astronomy and cosmology.

2. Summary

Navigating Genesis: A Scientist's Journey through Genesis 1-11 is as the title suggests about the first 11 chapters of the first book of the Bible. Its aim is not only to show that both scripture and science do not contradict each other but also making the positive case that Genesis 1-11 is confirmed by scientific discoveries. Ross argues that the Bible is unique in that respect and that this uniqueness of the biblical record and the accuracy, which can be confirmed by science, points to a supernatural source. The book consists of 23 chapters and three appendices, which will be summarized in the following by highlighting the most important points for each chapter.

Chapter 1 - *Personal Journey*² - describes Hugh Ross's personal journey regarding the content of Genesis 1-11. Ross emphasizes that the two books of revelation – that is, the book of nature and the Bible – will always match up “when we come to understand them more fully and interpret them responsibly.”³ Chapter 2 – *Reasons for Resistance*⁴ - describes various models how Science and Scripture can relate:⁵ According to the Separatist Model, science and scripture are completely independent, according to the Conflict Model science and scripture are in direct conflict, according to the Complementarian Model science and scripture complement each other and according to the Constructive Integration Model, which is Ross's preferred model, science and scripture can be

¹ <https://reasons.org/team/hugh-ross>

² Hugh Ross, *Navigating Genesis: A Scientist Journey through Genesis 1-11*. (California: RTB Press, 2014), 9-13.

³ Ibid., 11.

⁴ Ibid., 15.-24.

⁵ Ibid., 16.-20.

constructively integrated. Since Ross's overall model is a concordist model, this chapter also addresses some concerns and about and reasons against this kind of approach.⁶

Chapters 3 to 9 deal with the creation account in Genesis 1. Ross takes a "day age approach" regarding the 6 days of Genesis, where each day encompasses a long period of time. Chapter 3 – *Creation of the Cosmos*⁷ - is about Genesis 1:1-2. The chapter starts discussing verse 1 which describes the creation of the cosmos out of nothing. Ross argues that Genesis 1:1 is a completed event, and the universe and Earth already are in place before the events of the six creation days."⁸ This verse also has scientific support by the Big Bang model, which also implies that our universe had a beginning a finite time in the past. In this chapter Ross also notices that there is a turning point between 1 and 2: the frame of reference shifts from the entire universe to the surface of the earth.⁹ Another important aspect of this chapter is the discussion on the duration of the creation days.¹⁰ Ross writes that *yôm*, which is the Hebrew noun for day, has four literal definitions and one meaning is a long but finite period of time. Moreover, Ross emphasizes that this was the only word in ancient Hebrew to communicate a long period of time. Ross contends that the actual meaning of *yôm* depends on context, grammar, and sentence structure. Furthermore, Ross notices that the initial conditions of the Earth as described in Genesis 1:2 fit to what is now known from science.¹¹ Chapter 4 – *Creation Days One and Two*¹²- focuses on the first and second day of creation. Regarding day 1 Ross describes how "Let there be light" makes sense in light (pun not intended) of what we know from science: While the sun was already present, the surface of the Earth, which is now the reference frame of the narration, was still dark because the sun light could not penetrate the atmosphere. However, at some point on the early Earth the atmosphere became translucent and therefore able to permit light's passage. But since the atmosphere was not transparent yet¹³ the sun, moon and stars were still not visible as discrete objects in the sky. This light now also enabled photosynthesis to work. Ross contends that this whole process required design. Moreover, this chapter also shows that the creation of the moon amounts to a miracle.¹⁴ Regarding day 2 this chapter highlights the importance of a stable and abundant (but not too abundant water cycle).¹⁵ Chapter 5 – *Creation Days Three and Four*¹⁶ - focuses on the third and fourth day of creation. Regarding day three Ross argues that the text agrees with our current scientific understanding of the emergence of landmasses on Earth. He also addresses the problem of chronology regarding the emergence of plant life. For example, the Hebrew word used for plants would also "apply generically to any photosynthetic land life."¹⁷ Regarding day four Ross maintains that the atmosphere became transparent to make the sun, moon and stars visible

⁶ Ibid., 21-24.

⁷ Ibid., 25-36.

⁸ Ibid., 29-30.

⁹ Ibid., 28-31.

¹⁰ Ibid., 35.

¹¹ Ibid., 31-32.

¹² Ibid., 37-46.

¹³ Ibid., 38-39.

¹⁴ Ibid., 39-41.

¹⁵ Ibid., 41-42.

¹⁶ Ibid., 47-56.

¹⁷ Ibid., 50.

as discrete objects in the sky. Again, Ross argues that the process to accomplish this needed design.¹⁸ Moreover, this happened not before the sun and moon were required for life to serve as signs, which was the case for animals created on day 5 and 6 on.¹⁹ Chapter 6 - *Creation Days Five and Six*²⁰ - starts with the creation of sea animals on day 5. Ross argues that the fact that whole phyla are not mentioned can be explained by considering, that Genesis 1 focuses “on the most important preparations for the introduction of humankind.”²¹ He argues that “step by step over the millennia, God filled Earth with appropriate life-forms in preparation for His ultimate creation—the human race.”²² Ross also mentions the Cambrian explosion which remains a major challenge for the evolutionary paradigm.²³ Next, the chapter covers “soulish” animals. Then, the problem of the timing of sea mammals is addressed, which can be resolved by a closer reading of the original Hebrew.²⁴ This chapter also covers alleged transitional forms²⁵ and the question of dinosaurs and the Bible. The Chapter is concluded with the creation of specialized land mammals on day 6. Again, Ross argues that the mammals mentioned on day 6 refer to animals which are important to humanity.²⁶ Chapter 7 – *The Final Act (For Now)*²⁷ – is about the creation of the first humans. It starts with a discussion on the Image of God. Next, it takes up the tracing of human history. In this chapter Ross also discusses the possible “DNA dates” for Adam and Eve. The genetic material in the Y-chromosome, which can be only transmitted via the male ancestral line, can be traced back to a single man – the Y-chromosomal Adam - living in the distant past (in the ballpark 100000 years ago). The mitochondrial DNA, which is only passed on through the maternal line, can be traced back to a single woman - the mitochondrial Eve – living also in distant past (ca. 50000-60000 years ago).²⁸ Ross argues “Even now, as crude as the date estimates may be—based on the scientific and biblical information currently available—these estimates appear to converge.”²⁹ Ross identifies homo sapiens with humanity of the Bible. Therefore, he also proposes a purpose for God to create the other hominids (like homo erectus or the Neanderthals). The chapter also includes a treatment on the assignment God has given humanity and what it does involve. The chapter is concluded with a discussion of why God created some creatures and later replaced them with other creatures. Chapter 8 – *Source Controversy*³⁰ - covers the topic of source criticism related to Genesis. Ross contrasts Genesis 1 with other creation stories and contends: “Genesis 1 correctly identifies four initial conditions of the planet in the era before life appeared. It accurately describes ten major transitional events (creation events) and places all ten in the correct chronological order. None of the nonbiblical creation accounts comes close to this level of accuracy. The Enuma Elish comes closest, and for reasons we can

¹⁸ Ibid., 54-55.

¹⁹ Ibid., 53

²⁰ Ibid., 57-67.

²¹ Ibid., 57.

²² Ibid., 64.

²³ Ibid., 58-60.

²⁴ Ibid., 61.

²⁵ Ibid., 62-65.

²⁶ Ibid., 66-67.

²⁷ Ibid., 69-80.

²⁸ Ibid., 74-75.

²⁹ Ibid., 74.

³⁰ Ibid., 81-84.

understand, but it strays far into the fictional realm.”³¹ Chapter 9 focuses on the *Message of Day Seven*³² (Genesis 2:2-3). Ross argues that the pattern established by God of 6 days of work and one day of rest has been shown to be optimal for humans (independent of the fact that God’s workdays and rest day could be arbitrarily long, and that God does not get tired).³³ Ross also argues that the God’s cessation creating new lifeforms after creating humanity is in accordance with science.³⁴ Chapter 9 also includes a discussion on the duration of day 7.³⁵ Ross maintains that it continues until today, which yields support for long periods of time for *yôm* in Genesis 1. The chapter also contains a sidebar covering the questions if the days in Genesis are unequal in duration or if the days are overlapping. Regarding the duration Ross argues that they must not be of equal length, and that the scientific record of Earth’s history indicates that “the creation days grew progressively shorter from one to six.”³⁶ Moreover, Ross contends that based on the structure and purpose of the passage that the days are non-overlapping. Moreover, Ross argues that “on each creation day God initiates a specific transformative event. On that basis, Genesis 1 indicates no sea mammals or birds were created until day five. However, God’s initial creation of bird and sea mammal species on day five would not mean He created no more of these creatures on day six.”³⁷ The Chapter concludes with a discussion of the expression “it was good” and “it was very good”.³⁸ Here, Ross explains that death before the fall is not in conflict with these expressions if understood correctly.

In Chapter 10 – *Spiritual Perspective on Creation: Genesis 2*³⁹ - Ross argues that Genesis 2 focuses on humans, on how they are in relation to God and on the responsibilities, God has given to humans. Ross also outlines a proposal for the location of Eden. In a subsection on Adam’s creation Ross argues that Genesis 1 “introduces three “layers” of God’s creative work, each distinguished by the use of the verb *bārā’*: first, the physical creation; second, the soulish creation; and third, the spiritual creation. In Genesis 2 we see that God introduced Adam to his creation in exactly this order.”⁴⁰ Ross also argues for a vegetarian diet for humans as God’s original intend. Ross also addresses the apparent chronological problem of the creation of animals being mentioned after Adam. According to Ross the naming of animals and Adam’s statement “now at last “when Eve appeared shows that “day 6” must also be longer than 24 hours. Ross further emphasis that Eve was created as an ally and not as a subordinate helper. In a sidebar Ross addresses the question what a *kind* means in the Bible in relation to today’s science.

³¹ Ibid. 80.

³² Ibid., 85-93.

³³ Ibid., 85.

³⁴ Ibid., 86-88

³⁵ Ibid., 88-90

³⁶ Ibid., 92

³⁷ Ibid., 92.

³⁸ Ibid., 91-93

³⁹ Ibid., 95-108.

⁴⁰ Ibid., 100.

Chapter 11 – *How Far the Fall? Genesis 3*⁴¹ - describes the consequences of the disobedience of Adam and Eve. Ross argues that while due to the fall Adam and Eve were no longer morally and spiritually fit to live in the presence of God, the fall did not change the laws of nature. The 2nd law of thermodynamics implies decay but is also required for life to exist in the current creation. The very good creation will later be replaced by the ultimate creation. Ross also contends that animal death and predation existed before the fall. However, the fall changed not only humanity's relationship to God and among themselves, but also changed humanity's relationship to nature. Chapter 12 - *Cain's Story: Genesis 4*⁴² - addresses the story of Cain and Abel and the consequences of Cain murdering Abel. Ross also addresses the issue where Cain got his wife from. Ross speculates that due to rampant increase of sin probably most people living at that time died at the hands of other humans.⁴³ Chapter 13 addresses the possibility of long-life spans in Genesis 5-6⁴⁴. Ross argues that several factors and conditions which were different at that time might (for example exposure to much less radioisotope decay) have enabled for humans to live much longer. On the other hand, the eruption of a supernova increased the cosmic radiation which might have been an important factor in reducing the maximum possible life span. Ross also points out that the maximum life span decreased gradually.

In Chapters 14 to 18 Ross turns his attention to the flood account (Genesis 6-9). Chapter 14 is about the enigmatic sons of God and the Nephilim of Genesis 6⁴⁵. Ross argues "Given human physiological limits, the description of the Nephilim—if mere men—must be exaggerated."⁴⁶ Regarding the Sons of God Ross compares two possible interpretations: 1) the sons of God were fallen angels 2) the sons of God were the offspring of Seth. He outlines the pros and cons for each approach. Then he also proposes a hybrid approach according to which "the sons of God in Genesis 6 were humans invaded and possessed by fallen angels in such a way as to alter the genes transmitted via intercourse. In this way they produced offspring with the physiological characteristics associated with Nephilim."⁴⁷ In Chapter 15 – *Boundaries of God's Wrath: Genesis 6*⁴⁸ - Ross argues that the limits of defilement define the limits of God's judgement.⁴⁹ Applied to the flood this would mean that it reached all areas where humans lived at that time. In Chapter 16 – *Global or Worldwide Flood? Biblical Evidence*⁵⁰ - Ross argues that while all humanity was affected by the flood, the flood was not global in scope, because humanity was not spread over the whole Earth yet. Ross gives several biblical arguments for his view. In Chapter 17 – *Global or Worldwide Flood? Scientific Evidence*⁵¹ – he shows that a global flood cannot be supported by science and faces numerous obstacles. In Chapter 18 – *The Ark's*

⁴¹ Ibid., 109-115.

⁴² Ibid., 117.

⁴³ Ibid., 119, 121

⁴⁴ Ibid., 123-30.

⁴⁵ Ibid., 131 ff

⁴⁶ Ibid., 134

⁴⁷ Ibid., 138

⁴⁸ Ibid., 139-144.

⁴⁹ Ibid., 142.

⁵⁰ Ibid., 145-154.

⁵¹ Ibid., 155-172.

*Passengers: Genesis 6-9*⁵² - addresses questions why God chose an ark to save Noah and his family, where Noah got his technology and resources to build an Ark, how the ark could be seaworthy and how Noah could take care of all the animals. Ross also argues for a different location of the Ark's landing place than traditionally maintained.

Chapter 19 is about Genesis 9-11⁵³ and the origin of Nations and Races. God commanded Adam to spread and fill the Earth. Adam failed, and his descendants after the flood account also did not follow the command. God confused the languages of the people when they attempted to build a tower to heaven. Ross contends that the main reason why God wanted humanity to spread over the whole Earth was the danger of the kind of unity which would have resulted if they wouldn't – due to their sinfulness. Ross shows that the geography of the world changes appropriately to allow for human migration. Moreover, Ross maintains that the different languages and races could not have been achieved by purely natural means.

After covering Genesis 1-11 and demonstrating the same and the Bible can be shown to be compatible, Ross turns in Chapter 20 to the so-called higher criticism⁵⁴ in biblical scholarship, which emerged in the 18th century and continues until today. Proponents of higher criticism contend that Genesis 1 and 2 are at odds since they represent different chronologies and the Bible therefore cannot be inspired. According to Ross this kind of scholarship is mostly responsible why there is an apparent conflict between science and faith. Chapter 21 – “*Creation Science*”⁵⁵ – addresses the history of creation science movement, which consists of young Earth creationist scientists. A major element of this movement is Flood Geology. Chapter 22 – *New Criticism*⁵⁶ - briefly discusses and critiques alternative approaches for the interpretation of Genesis 1: the Framework Interpretation, the view that Genesis 1 is mainly a polemic, the functional interpretation by John Walton, and the view that there were two or more Adams. Chapter 23 – *More Than Myth*⁵⁷ - starts with a brief discussion on the topic of myth and creation /origin stories. Ross has shown throughout the book that Genesis 1-11 is more than a myth. According to Ross “Biblical faith must be informed faith, belief rooted in testable facts and logic.” This does not amount to absolute proof, since absolute proof cannot be obtained. What is required for a view to be justified is adequate evidence for it. Ross contends that the right approach for the relationship of science is the view that “the Bible reveals truth, and nature reveals truth, and wherever the two meet they agree.”⁵⁸ And if there is an apparent disagreement it is either due to a problem with the interpretation of the scientific data or due to a problem with the interpretation of the text. The book concludes with the following three appendices:

⁵² Ibid., 173-182.

⁵³ Ibid., 183-195.

⁵⁴ Ibid., 197-201.

⁵⁵ Ibid., 203-208.

⁵⁶ Ibid., 209-218.

⁵⁷ Ibid., 219-222.

⁵⁸ Ibid., 221-222.

- Appendix A - *Biblical Origin of the Scientific Method*⁵⁹
- Appendix B – *Word Studies in Genesis 1*⁶⁰
- Appendix C – *Sons of God and Sons of Men*⁶¹

3. Evaluation

3.1. Strengths

Navigating Genesis is a great book solely because it addresses many of the most important questions about Genesis 1-11 in one volume. Ross's general goal was to demonstrate the uniqueness of the biblical record and to show, that the accuracy, which can be confirmed by science, points to a supernatural source. The book contains numerous footnotes to references to the relevant scientific literature which back up scientific claims made by Ross. Ross's general case regarding the correspondence of Genesis 1-11 with what we know from science is argued very well. While there are still some open questions, the remaining issues are not unsurmountable.

In his approach Ross does not only look at Genesis but also brings in other places of the Bible which have something to say about the period of Genesis 1-11. While one might disagree with some of his interpretations (see the following section for an example) to also allow other texts of the Bible to speak to the events Genesis 1-11 talks about is completely legitimate. Ross mostly ("mostly" since there are some exceptions I will cover in the next section) avoids the pitfall many critics accuse concordist: allowing science to interpret scripture. Or as another reviewer states: "He is careful to not allow science to interpret scripture, but rather the observations of nature (science is an interpretation of these observations) that God has provided (God's creation will never contradict His spoken Word)."⁶²

Another important point is the argument that the life forms appearing in the creation account are the ones most crucial to humanity's needs and therefore the creation account is not exhaustive. This resolves some conflicts. For example, on day five sea animals are introduced before land animals but this is not a conflict with science because according to the original Hebrew "The fifth creation day narrative refers to sea mammals generically, while the sixth day account narrows in on three specialized kinds of land mammals, the kinds most crucial to humanity's needs. When other land mammals arrive on the scene the text does not say. Scientific research will need to fill in that information." ⁶³

⁵⁹ Ibid., 223-224.

⁶⁰ Ibid., 225-231.

⁶¹ Ibid., 233-234.

⁶² <https://apologetics315.com/2014/07/book-review-navigating-genesis-a-scientists-journey-through-genesis-1-11-by-hugh-ross/>

⁶³ Ibid., 56.

Ross argument that Genesis 1:1 really predates the 6 creation days is very strong. This fact can be solely based on the text without any scientific input and should be taken seriously even by die hard YEC proponents!

Ross's insight regarding the shift of the reference frame in Genesis 1:2 perspective makes it possible to fit the biblical text of the appearance of light on day one and the appearance of the sun, moon and stars in the sky on day 4 with what we know from science.

I also appreciate Ross's stance that while each book of the Bible has its original audience the Bible is written for all generations and that "we should anticipate that the Bible's creation texts, Genesis and others, will include content that becomes progressively clearer to successive generations as knowledge of the book of nature increases."⁶⁴ Thus, while there can be some insights from non-concordist interpretations of the creation account - for example that Genesis 1 is a polemic against other creation accounts - a (soft) concordist approach is better in my view. Thus, while Genesis 1 is also a polemic, it is also more than that.

His argument that the flood did not have to be global in scope to impact all of humanity is also a very good solution of the problems pertaining a global flood. While one could always that God could do a series of miracles to make a global flood work, the sheer amount of miracle required sounds ad hoc, therefore I would side with Ross in this case (but might go even further – see next section).

3.2. Weaknesses/Critique

As mentioned above Ross's view has 6 consecutive periods of time with unspecified length of possible unequal duration and he argues against overlapping days.⁶⁵ However, there is a different kind of overlapping view one can consider. The view argued for in *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* has six 24-hour days which initiate 6 different creation periods, where there is a time gap between each of the days. Furthermore, the creation periods overlap and continue until today.⁶⁶ This view seems to allow additional flexibility, for example to allow fruit trees appear at a much later point in natural history than initial vegetation before without further arguments.

In Chapter 22 Ross critiques several other non-concordist interpretations of Genesis 1. However, there are also other views which deserve to be mentioned. For example, the Prophetic Day view (PDV) is also intriguing. According to Benjamin Smith the PDV can be summarized the following way: "The PDV essentially argues that at the time Genesis 1:2 describes the Spirit of God brooding over the dark waters of an already existent "desolate and lifeless" Earth, God completed a one week work of prophesying (proclaiming) in a topical order what He was going to do to change the Earth's condition.

⁶⁴ Hugh Ross, *Navigating Genesis*, 212.

⁶⁵ Ibid., 92.

⁶⁶ Robert C. Newman, Perry G. Phillips, and Herman J. Eckelmann Jr., *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth*. 2nd Ed (Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 2007), 104 and 122.

The actions that the text says God did to fulfill the proclamations He did afterward over an unspecified period of time leading up to the creation of Adam and Eve in the Garden. The fulfillments of the proclamations were not fulfilled on the 6 Days He spoke. Like other prophecies God gave us, the fulfillment was some time after the prophecy (fiat) was given. According to the PDV, Genesis 1 is primarily a record of what God said on the 6 Days and His actions and fulfillments were carried out over an unspecified period of time, in an unspecified order, following the historical week in which He said the proclamations.”⁶⁷

Hugh Ross argues convincing for a flood account which was not global in extent. Other scholars have taken this even further and argue the text is also compatible with the view where the people already have spread out to farer regions of the globe than Mesopotamia, but the flood was only a judgment to *all* those people living in Mesopotamia.⁶⁸ In that case in America, Australia, Eastern Asia, Europe etc. people would still have been alive after the flood. For example, Old Testament (OT) scholar Michael Heiser argues in his book *Unseen Realm* that “Many biblical scholars, scientists, and other researchers have marshalled the evidence in favor of this reading. For our purposes, this option would allow human survival somewhere in the regions known to the biblical authors (Gen 10), specifically the ancient Near East, the Mediterranean Sea, and the Aegean Sea.”⁶⁹ On his website he furthermore gives a detailed argument on “How to argue from the biblical text of a local-regional flood instead of a global flood.”⁷⁰ I would have appreciated if Ross might have mentioned this view as well.

Hugh Ross dates the tower of Babel event at ca. 40000 years⁷¹ ago. At that time there was not a place called Babel. The Bible might use an intentional anachronism (like in the case of Ramses in Exodus) to make it clear where this event took place regarding to a location which was known at the time of the writing of Genesis. However, this problem should have been addressed by Ross. Moreover, the technology required to build the tower is not known from current archeological findings for the period Ross suggests for the tower of Babel event. A similar problem are the capabilities of Tubal Kain who according to Genesis 4:22 forged all kinds of tools out of bronze and iron. Ross argues elsewhere that Tubal Kain might have lived well before the general bronze age (due to gaps in the genealogies) and that technology can be lost and regained at a later point.⁷² However, a discussion on this should also have found a way into the book since it is an obvious and important problem. If one considers the events of the flood and the tower of Babel as regional events e.g., in the regions of Mesopotamia a lot of these problems disappear (but of course one has to address other issues instead).

⁶⁷ Smith, Benjamin. *Genesis, Science, and the Beginning: Evaluating Interpretations of Genesis One on the Age of the Earth*. Kindle-Version. (Theolosaurus Rex Publications, 2015), 27-28.

⁶⁸ <https://109.cb3.myftpupload.com/argue-biblical-text-local-regional-flood-instead-global-flood/>

⁶⁹ M.S. Heiser. *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 189-190.

⁷⁰ <https://109.cb3.myftpupload.com/argue-biblical-text-local-regional-flood-instead-global-flood/>

⁷¹ M.S. Heiser. *The Unseen Realm*, 195.

⁷² <https://reasons.org/explore/publications/articles/q-a-does-tubal-cain-predate-the-bronze-and-iron-ages>

According to OT scholar Michael Heiser the sons of Gods in Genesis 6 are clearly supernatural beings⁷³, which were member of God's divine council.⁷⁴ This is also now the major view in modern scholarship. Ross third option where these fallen beings are possessing humans however is also a viable option as Heiser also argues:

“There are two possible approaches to the origin of the Nephilim in Genesis 6:1–4 that are consistent with the supernatural understanding of the sons of God in the Israelite worldview. The first and most transparent is that divine beings came to Earth, assumed human flesh, cohabited with human women, and spawned unusual offspring known as Nephilim.⁷⁵... There is a second supernaturalist approach to Genesis 6:1–4 that takes the sexual language as euphemistic, not literal. In this perspective, the language of cohabitation is used to convey the idea that divine beings who are rivals to Yahweh are responsible for producing the Nephilim, and therefore are responsible for the later giant clans.⁷⁶ Moreover, Ross writes regarding the Hebrew term *mal'āk* for angel: “Outside of Genesis 6, Moses refers to angels fifteen times in the Torah. He identifies them in these other instances using the Hebrew word *mal'āk*, translated ‘angels.’ In none of these other passages does he use the phrase translated ‘sons of God.’ This raises the question: If these verses in Genesis 6 do refer to angelic beings, why would he not use *mal'āk*?”⁷⁷ However, according to Heiser the term *mal'āk* is just a job description – a spirit being from God's heavenly host sent by God to deliver or receive a message⁷⁸ - it is not a term about ontology.

Sometimes Ross is overstating his case when looking at the Bible for events known from science. For example, regarding Psalm 104 he writes: “Step by step over the millennia, God filled Earth with appropriate life-forms in preparation for His ultimate creation—the human race. Psalm 104 seems to support this history of ongoing extinction and speciation. In verses 27–28 the psalmist declares that all of Earth's creatures depend on God for their needs. Verse 29 refers to those instances when Earth's creatures die off. But then, according to verse 30, God recreates and renews the face of the Earth.”⁷⁹ However, this is too much reading into the text. The text only supports the view that God provides food to all creatures and that he is the author and sustainer of life.

Since according to Ross all humanity has been wiped out at the flood except Noah and his family, the Y chromosomal Adam is actually the Y chromosomal Noah. Thus, depending on the time between Adam's creation and the flood the difference between the Y chromosomal dating and mitochondrial DNA dating could differ. If there is only a difference off several thousand years this difference would not be discernible due to the large error bars. However, according to Ross “Noah and his immediate

73 M.S. Heiser. *The Unseen Realm: Recovering the Supernatural Worldview of the Bible*. (Bellingham, WA: Lexham Press, 2015), 104.

74 Ibid., 23 ff, 104.

75 Ibid., 185.

76 76 Ibid., 187.

77 Hugh Ross, *Navigating Genesis*, 135.

78 Heiser, Michael S. *Angels: What the Bible Really Says About God's Heavenly Host*. Kindle-Version. (Lexham Press, 2018), Pos. 558.

79 Hugh Ross, *Navigating Genesis*, 64.

descendants likely lived 30,000–50,000 years ago.”⁸⁰ Thus, there was a significant large gap between Adam and Noah, and this should lead to discernable different “DNA dates” for Noah and Eve, where Eve the date for Noah should be more recent.

3.3. Additional Suggestions for what to include in a 2nd Edition

While interbreeding between homo sapiens with Neanderthals and also with Denisovans was still debated at the time when *Navigating Genesis* appeared, shortly after that it became evident that it really occurred. This has been also admitted by RTB, for example in an update of their book *Who was Adam*.⁸¹ This fact should be addressed in a future update of the book.

In the recent years more and more evidence came to surface that other member of the genus homo – like the Neanderthals – might have similar intellectual capabilities like homo sapiens. Therefore, in my view the scenario that humanity arose at an earlier time for example with homo heidelbergensis – or even homo erectus - should be addressed. The whole discussion about human origin is closely related with our understanding what it means to be created in the Image of God. Are these just some set of attributes (consciousness, intelligence, symbolic thinking)? Or the task/status given us by God to rule the Earth as his vice-regents (a more functional view)?⁸² Or the relationship to God? Or is at combination? To fulfil the task, we need to have some attributes. But even babies in womb already have the image of, without being fully conscious, therefore it is also the status given us by God. So, one could well imagine that *homo heidelbergensis* might already have been intelligent similar to modern humans but was not given the status by God as his image bearer.

4. Theological Implications

As stated above, the main goal of *Navigating Genesis* is to show that Genesis 1-11 is confirmed by scientific discoveries. However, at the point of writing Genesis no science did exist for which the text could have been made to fit. Therefore, if Ross argument succeeds – and I think he made a good case in general - this clearly points to a supernatural source. Or as another reviewer states “The interpretation of the whole of scripture and the scientific observations shown to be fully compatible presented in this book allows the apologist to defend a more robust and consistent Christian worldview. Genesis does not need to be a scientific or historical stumbling block for skeptics, and Dr.

⁸⁰ Ibid., 195.

⁸¹ Fazale Rana and Hugh Ross, *Who Was Adam?* (California: RTB Press, 2015), 301-312.

⁸² <https://drmsb.com/image-god-imaging-god/>

Ross demonstrates how this is true.⁸³ While other interpretations are also possible, Ross's approach is in my view also great to especially scientifically people to Christ. Moreover, while other interpretations of the creation account are also possible, they merely show that the Bible does not contradict science since it does not address any science in the creation accounts at all in that case. But if the Bible also describes events -in simple language, not like a scientific textbook - which can be scientifically confirmed the apologetic impact and its use for evangelism is much greater. For me personally the approach by Ross (and RTB in general) regarding the creation account has helped me immensely after I came to Christ, because I saw no way how a young universe and young Earth could be argued for scientifically. While after the years since I have become a Christian, I see also other interpretation as viable - e.g., the PDV mentioned above - I still think that OEC interpretations like the one of Ross or the one by Newman⁸⁴ in *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth* (which also has been mentioned above), make the most sense to me - both biblically and scientifically.

Regarding the flood story, Ross's approach also resolves the thorny question why God would destroy all life on Earth when just humanity had sinned, which is for me personally a difficult theological question to answer otherwise.

Let us for the moment consider that the (soft) concordist approach would not work. What would be the implications? Well, it definitely would not lead to atheism since there are numerous arguments for the existence of God.⁸⁵ Would this prove Christianity to be wrong? Also here, it is not clear that it would. But it would mean that we would need to be open to a different interpretation or a different genre for the early chapters of Genesis – for only the creation story or even Genesis 1-11- in order to maintain a robust sense of inerrancy. Revelation – the last book of the Bible - is apocalyptic literature, which is very symbolic. Why could not also be the first book of the Bible start off with a less “literal” (whatever this means) genre. For example, according to Hummel Genesis is a blend of prose and poetry, which is sometimes called a hymn.⁸⁶ He contends that “the literary genre is a semi poetic narrative cast in a historic-artistic framework consisting of two parallel triads.”⁸⁷ Or the whole Genesis 1-11 could also be “mytho history” - as William Lane Craig argues in his new book on the historical Adam.⁸⁸ Even more, the above-mentioned PDV also would be an option. Having, Genesis in genre which differs from the view of most OEC and all YEC proponents does not mean that this is a slippery slope where we would end up with a situation where every book of the Bible is only understood metaphorically. For example, if one want to classify the gospels according to any contemporary genre

⁸³ <https://apologetics315.com/2014/07/book-review-navigating-genesis-a-scientists-journey-through-genesis-1-11-by-hugh-ross/>

⁸⁴ Robert C. Newman, Perry G. Phillips, and Herman J. Eckelmann Jr., *Genesis One and the Origin of the Earth*. 2nd Ed (Interdisciplinary Biblical Research Institute, 2007), 104 and 122.122.

⁸⁵ See e.g., Craig, William Lane, *Reasonable Faith* (3rd edition): Christian Truth and Apologetics. Wheaton: Good News Publishers/Crossway Books, 2009; Meyer, Stephen C. *Return of the God Hypothesis*. Kindle-Version. HarperOne, 2021.

⁸⁶ Charles Hummel, *The Galileo Connection: GENESIS ONE: ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE*, Chapter 10, 3.

⁸⁷ *Ibid.*, 11.

⁸⁸ Craig, William Lane. *In Quest of the Historical Adam: A Biblical and Scientific Exploration*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Kindle-Version. 2021, 65-353.

of their time, the genre which would fit best are ancient Greco-Roman biographies.⁸⁹ Moreover, if one considers the historical evidence around Jesus' life, death and resurrection and the claims he made and the often-neglected evidence from miracles in Christian context throughout church history and even today⁹⁰, Christianity (still) comes out (all facts considered) as the most plausible worldview – even with a “non-literal” understanding of Genesis 1-11.

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⁸⁹ See e.g., Keener, Craig S. *Christobiography*. Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co. Kindle-Version. 2019.

⁹⁰ See e.g., Craig S. Keener. *Miracles: The Credibility of the New Testament*. Grand Rapids: Baker Academic, 2011.