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"A fresh and harmonious perspective on an issue of vital importance."

—PHILIP YANCEY, best-selling author

IN THE  
BEGINNING...  
WE MISUNDERSTOOD

*Interpreting Genesis 1  
in Its Original Context*



JOHNNY V. MILLER | JOHN M. SODEN

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**Johnny Miller - DTS**  
**ThM - 1970**  
**ThD - 1980**  
**former president of**  
**Columbia Intnt'l U.**

**John Soden - DTS**  
**ThM - 1983**  
**PHD - 1989**

# **MILLER Background**

- **Raised in fundamentalist, Bible teaching church**
- **Inspiration & inerrancy**
- **H Morris -> young earth**
- **had doubts about age of earth**
- **~1997 changed thinking -> science**
- **Goal - authorial intention**

# **SODEN Background**

- **Raised studying ICR books**
- **Under graduate - physical sciences**
- **Saw conflicts between Gen 1 & science**
- **Science does not determine text meaning**
- **Goal - what did God mean**

# CONTENT

1. **“We’ve Been Here Before”**
2. **Interpreting Scripture - author intent\*  
inspiration, inerrancy, context,  
eliminating personal assumptions,  
historical & cultural context**
3. **“Science does not have ultimate  
authority over Scripture”**
4. **Indications in text to not take literally**
5. **If Gen 1 & 2 literal contradictions**

“... leads us to conclude that it is a broadly **figurative** presentation of literal truths; it is highly **stylized** and highly selective. It **does not report history** as a journalist might do.”

p 48

# CONTENT

6. **Purpose - gives Israel's identity**  
**history meant to be read theologically**
7. **Focus on theology of creation not**  
**mechanics of it**
8. **Gen 1 compared & distinguished from**  
**Egyptian, Mesopotamian, & Canaanite**

**“... God chose not to correct all of the incorrect perceptions of the world ... we see God does correct wrong theology, but his instruction does not depend upon accurate scientific observations & descriptions of the material world”**

**p 147-148**

**“... God chose to connect with them on a level that they could understand. ... God corrected their spiritual worldview, not their physical picture of the world, by teaching them who Yahweh their God was.”**

**p 151**



# **CONTENT**

- 6. Purpose - gives Israel's identity  
history meant to be read theology**
- 7. Focus on theology of creation not  
mechanics of it**
- 8. Gen 1 compared & distinguished from  
Egyptian, Mesopotamian, & Canaanite**
- 9. Narratives not always chronological**
- 10. Days of Gen 1 not literal**
- 11. "Toward a Creation Theology"**

# **STRENGTHS**

- 1. Defense of inspiration, inerrancy, sound hermeneutics**
- 2. Repeated emphasis on author intent**
- 3. Background and cultural study of Egyptian, Babylonian, & Canaanites**
- 4. Attempt to accurately treat text**
- 5. Honest with assumptions & views**

# **WEAKNESSES**

- 1. Establishes excellent hermeneutics but then violates hermeneutics**
- 2. Warns on injecting 21<sup>st</sup> century science on text, then inject their scientific assumptions**
- 3. Do not clearly identify their view on age of universe**

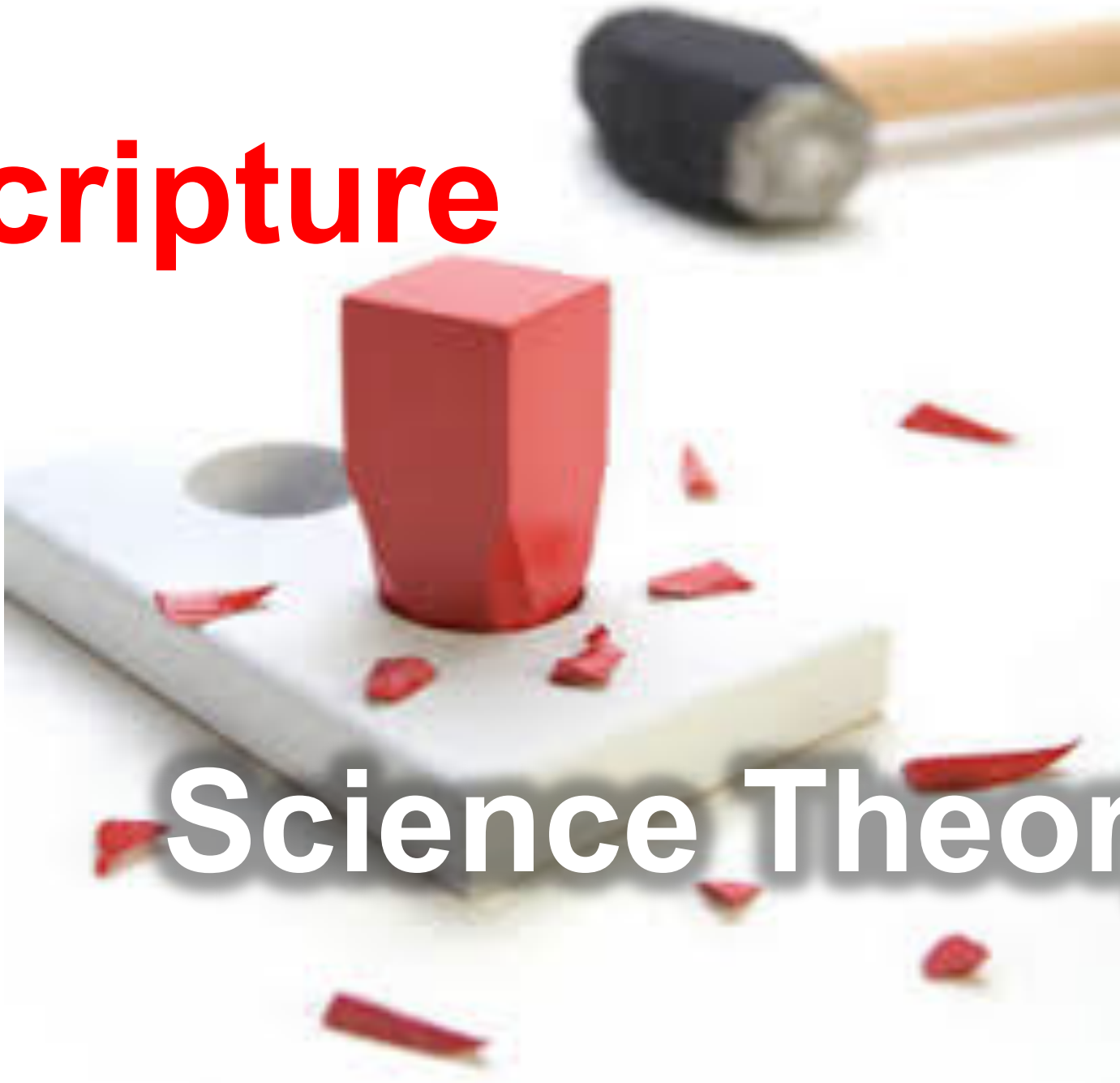
# **APPROACHES**

- 1. Accommodating text by injecting science theory on Gen 1 - Hugh Ross**

# **ACCOMMODATION**

- 1. Emphasize supporting details**
- 2. Superimpose current theories**
- 3. Reinterpret text**
- 4. Ignore non-supporting details**

**Scripture**



**Science Theory**

# APPROACHES

- 1. Accommodating text by injecting science theory on Gen 1 - Hugh Ross**  
**authority - science**
- 2. Seeking flexibility of Gen 1 to harmonize with science - Miller & Soden**  
**authority - Scripture & science**
- 3. Interpret Gen 1 using G-H-C then re-interpret science theory - authority - Scripture alone**