

A Surrejoinder to Peter Enns's Response to G. K. Beale's *JETS* Review Article of His Book, *Inspiration and Incarnation*

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I thank Peter Enns for responding to my review article¹ of his book, *Inspiration and Incarnation*.² It has been the policy of the *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society (JETS)* not to allow surrejoinders, so I was not able to write one in that journal. I am thankful to the editor of *SBJT* for accepting this surrejoinder to be published.³ *SBJT* readers ideally should consult my original review of Enns's book in *JETS* and Enns's response to me there. But, for those unable to consult *JETS*, the substance of my original review and of Enns's response will be summarized in this review.

For those readers who go back and read my review and Enns's reply to my review, I think most will see that he has not advanced the argument much beyond what I said in my review nor has he responded to some of the specific evidence that I adduced. I have in mind, for example, the evidence that he holds various significant narratives in Genesis to be "myth" according to its classic definition, and that he acknowledges that the biblical writers mistakenly thought such "myths" corresponded to real past reality.

I will respond to what I consider to be some of Enns's major critiques of my review of his book.⁴

(1) Enns contends that I misread the genre of his book and that I reviewed it as a scholarly book instead of a popular

book. He says that, as a result, though I cite his statements "at length," "citations, no matter how lengthy, will not contribute to bringing clarity to an author's intention" and might cause "obscurity" of it, if such citations are "founded on a faulty reading strategy."⁵ He says I reviewed the book as if it were "an academic treatise" or "a systematic theology" or "an introduction to Scripture," whereas "its [real] aim is to reach a lay evangelical audience for which the human element of Scripture . . . presents an obstacle to confessing that the Bible is God's word."⁶ He says that his "primary audience" is "evangelical and non-academic" and that the "book's purpose is specifically apologetic" in that it is "intended to help the faithful deal with threats to their faith."⁷ This "aim" is not only "announced explicitly, but its popular focus is implied throughout the book, as indicated by the absence of footnotes, annotated bibliographies at the end of each chapter, and a glossary of terms at the end."⁸ He continues by saying that,

the fact that my aim is evangelical, non-academic, and apologetic accounts for the rhetorical strategy I adopt throughout the book, which is to lay out a few examples of things that are universally accepted as demonstrations of the human situatedness of Scripture—the very thing that is causing readers problems—and to present these

examples unapologetically, in as stark and uncompromising a manner as that of hostile commentators, be it in a book, on cable TV, or in a classroom. As part of this apologetic, it is crucial that the non-scholarly reader understand that nothing in principle has been withheld; no data has been covered over as too damaging or problematic for consideration; no special pleading has been employed against the data themselves, because these data have positive value in helping us understand how Scripture—by God’s design—bears perfect witness to the wisdom and glory of God.

To present the matter this way is to attempt to pull the rug out from under the perceived strength of the opposing argument, that for the Bible to be God’s word it cannot possibly look the way it does.⁹

Enns asserts that not to review the book according to its popular aims is to criticize him for not writing a book that he never intended to write, an error he feels that I committed in reviewing the book: “Beale seems to read the book alternatively as a failed academic treatise, an ambiguous systematic theology, or a dangerous introduction to Scripture. None of these descriptions are valid, but they form Beale’s starting point, which leads him to draw unwarranted conclusions.”¹⁰ Yet he acknowledges that I “flag various topics for high-level discussion,” and in doing so I have “correctly discerned . . . that in addition to the primary purpose, there is a secondary purpose [of the book] as well: to foster further theological discussion among evangelical scholars regarding the implications of the human element of Scripture for how we think about our Bibles, and for how we are equipping our students to do the same.”¹¹

A number of responses to Enns’s reply need to be made here. I am going to elaborate a bit on this issue, since we are dealing with the important subject of how

Christian scholars should communicate important and very debated interpretative and theological issues to a more popular readership, especially in the church. I am also going to elaborate, since Enns is attempting to use this objection to deflect quickly my criticisms of his book. First, I clearly noted in my review article the exact dual purpose of the book that Enns has laid out, and which he acknowledges (above) that I perceived correctly: I say

Indeed, why write a lengthy review article of a book that is designed primarily to address a more popular audience and only secondarily a scholarly readership?¹² The reason is that the issues are so important for Christian faith, and popular readers may not have the requisite tools and background to evaluate the thorny issues that Enns’s book discusses. But I have also written this review for a scholarly evangelical audience, since the book appears to be secondarily intended for them,¹³ and, I suspect, there will be different evaluations of Enns’s book by such an audience.¹⁴

In point of fact, I reviewed the book with these primary and secondary audiences in mind: at the beginning of my review article, I said, “the book is designed more for the lay person than the scholar but is apparently written with the latter secondarily in mind.” And, how could citing quotations from Enns at length in order to understand what he says in context be a misreading of the popular genre, as he contends? Are popular readers to be kept from the contextual meaning of his statements? This critique by Enns would seem to be an attempt to say that no one should give serious scrutiny to the cogency and validity of his arguments. So I am mystified by his response here.

So, why does Enns think that I misjudged the popular genre of his book?

Enns thinks that his book is at such a popular level that he need not discuss alternative views of major explosive issues that he addresses in the book nor should such issues be footnoted, even in a brief representative manner. But one must ask whether or not it is appropriate to address such important interpretative and theological issues and give only one side. To give alternative viewpoints does not necessitate heavy footnoting but only a brief representation of sources supporting various sides, and these could be put in the form of end notes at the end of chapters or at the end of the book, which one typically finds in more serious *popular* kinds of books (here, for example, I think of John Piper's and J. I. Packer's books, as well as those by Don Carson). Moreover, Enns should have done this because he considers part of his popular audience to be "graduate students" and "college students" (though he states this negatively: the popular audience "is not restricted to" such students¹⁵). But, since Enns acknowledges that the book's primary readership, a popular audience, includes undergraduate and graduate students, and its formally intended secondary readership is scholars, does this not make entirely appropriate, even necessary, that the best of representative positions be presented and lightly footnoted? I have taught both on the undergraduate and graduate level, and when I order textbooks that address major interpretative and theological issues, I consider it normal for such books to have brief though representative footnoting of alternate sides of debated topics.

But, even if footnotes were judged not to be appropriate, is it not incumbent in such crucial discussions, at least, to lay out the main sides of the debate and the

primary evidence supporting each side, and then to argue for the view the author prefers? But, by his own admission, Enns has not even done this: his popular "rhetorical strategy adopted throughout the book . . . is to lay out a few examples of things that are universally accepted as demonstrations of the human situatedness of Scripture" and "present these examples unapologetically, in as stark and uncompromising a manner as that of hostile commentators."¹⁶ Any reading of Enns's book will reveal that a number of the issues that he discusses are of crucial theological significance and vigorously debated by scholars of varying theological perspectives—indeed, to say the least, these are matters about which there is no "universally accepted" position, especially if one is comparing traditional non-evangelical, neo-evangelical, and traditional evangelical positions (though, if one has in view that the only viable positions to survey are non-evangelical positions, then one might be able to say there is "universal acceptance" within this restricted community on such issues). But he has chosen to present only one side on these issues, and, strikingly, it is the side that has been traditionally held by non-evangelical scholars. Specifically, let us review what are some of these major issues. I summarized the major points of my critique in the following eight-fold manner, the first four of which elaborate on specific interpretative and theological issues of great import:¹⁷

- He affirms that some of the narratives in Genesis (e.g., of creation and the flood) are shot through with myth, much of which the biblical narrator did not know lacked correspondence to actual past reality.
- Enns appears to assume that since biblical writers, especially, for example, the Genesis narrator,

were not objective in narrating history, then their presuppositions distorted significantly the events that they reported. He appears too often to assume that the socially constructed realities of these ancient biblical writers (e.g., their mythical mindsets) prevented them from being able to describe past events in a way that had significant correspondence with how a person in the modern world would observe and report events.

- Enns never spells out in any detail the model of Jesus' incarnation with which he is drawing analogies for his view of scripture.
- Enns affirms that one cannot use modern definitions of "truth" and "error" in order to perceive whether or not scripture contains "truth" or "error." First, this is non-falsifiable, since Enns never says what would count as an "error" according to ancient standards. Second, this is reductionistic, since there were some rational and even scientific categories at the disposal of ancient peoples for evaluating the observable world that are in some important ways commensurable to our own.
- Enns does not follow at significant points his own excellent proposal of guidelines for evaluating the views of others with whom one disagrees.
- Enns's book is marked by ambiguities at important junctures of his discussion.
- Enns does not attempt to present to *and* discuss for the reader other significant alternative viewpoints other than his own, which is needed in a book dealing with such crucial issues.
- Enns appears to caricature the views of past evangelical scholarship by not distinguishing the views of so-called fundamentalists from that of good conservative scholarly work.

It is astounding to me that Enns would say that there "are universally accepted" positions on these issues. This is just as true of Enns's last chapter on the use of the Old Testament in the New, though

he does start by giving four basic viewpoints taken on the subject, but when he addresses specific passages, he treats their interpretation as if his view were the only reasonable or probable one (but I will not comment further on this, since I have done so elsewhere¹⁸). Furthermore, note that only one of my eight above points concerns Enns's complaint about "footnoting," and actually this point only demands that Enns presents the various major competing views on these debated issues, even if footnotes are excluded. Now, he does present only in passing and very briefly typically another viewpoint, but it is usually a "fundamentalist" view, which does not represent the mainline evangelical position on the matters that he addresses. I do not see how the other seven above points are inconsistent with a popular book, which includes serious laypeople, undergraduate students, and graduate students. The first four points involve substantive issues that need well-balanced discussion. Instead, Enns appears to have approached his discussion rhetorically like a preacher who wants to persuade a congregation by presenting only one side of a biblical or theological issue.

There is, however, one area in which Enns affirms that he has been as thorough as he could be within the parameters of the aims of his book. Note again that he says,

As part of this apologetic [in the book], it is crucial that the non-scholarly reader understand that nothing in principle has been withheld; no data has been covered over as too damaging or problematic for consideration; no special pleading has been employed against the data themselves, because these data have positive value in helping us understand how Scripture . . . bears perfect witness to the wisdom and

glory of God.¹⁹

Should not Enns have been just as careful in presenting the best of traditional evangelical positions on the controverted issues as he has been in laying out the non-evangelical critical viewpoint? He likely would respond by saying that the difficulties he adduces should be recognized by all evangelical scholars. And, this is the very nub of the problem: many, if not most, evangelical scholars, I dare say, do not consider the difficulties as problematic as does Enns (though he will sometimes say that not to recognize the problems the way he does is to be guilty of “special pleading” and refusing to recognize the reality of the biblical data.).

Let me repeat from my review article that the reason that alternative views should be carefully explained in such a popular book “is that the issues are so important for Christian faith, and popular readers may not have the requisite tools and background to evaluate the thorny issues that Enns’s book discusses.” As scholars, I believe that we should be as careful when writing for non-scholars as for scholars and distill difficult scholarly issues and debates in a way understandable to laypeople, which includes, of course, the level of communication not employing scholarly jargon or Greek or Hebrew or other technical language. But the concepts should be there for them, including concepts representing the best of both sides of an argument. Accordingly, the vast majority of my review article, as can be seen from my above eight-point summary critique, dealt with substantive issues that Enns was discussing and was not primarily a critique of the fact that he did not include footnotes.

Consequently, Enns and I disagree

about whether or not he should have engaged with the best of representative positions on various significant interpretative and theological matters. I believe he made an infelicitous choice in adopting the rhetorical strategy that he did, since it can and likely will mislead the typical lay reader, despite the fact that he repeatedly says that he wants to help lay readers better understand how ancient Near Eastern (ANE) parallels relate to the Bible. In particular, recall that he says that the purpose of his book “is specifically apologetic, that is, intended to help the faithful deal with threats to their faith.”²⁰ But the reality is that only a very small percentage of laypeople have the kinds of problems with the Bible that Enns sets forth. Ironically, the likelihood is that most of what Enns discusses lay readers will confront for the first time (I do find that graduate students sometimes have these problems and questions). Furthermore, most of the problems that he poses are not that hard to solve, though he gives the impression that they are difficult to square with a traditional view of inerrancy. Indeed, this is partly why I felt a burden to write the review that I did. Instead of helping people in the church gain confidence in their Bibles, Enns’s book will likely shake that confidence—I think unnecessarily so.

(2) Enns says that I call into question (by insinuation) his “basic conviction” that “the Bible is from God—that every bit of it, no matter how challenging or troublesome, is precisely what God wanted us to have and perfectly formed to do what God has designed it to do.”²¹ Enns has misread me, so I will repeat precisely what I said about Enns’s view of inspiration:

Therefore, the most probable assessment of his view so far is that *concep-*

tually, at the least, he affirms that the biblical writers imbibed myths at significant points, recorded them and, though they were not essentially historical, they naively affirmed such myths as reliable descriptions of the real world because they were part of their socially constructed reality. Furthermore, divine inspiration did not restrain such social-cultural osmosis.²²

And in the very beginning of my article, I say this about Enns's discussion of "myth" and history in scripture:

he says that the Old Testament contains what he defines as "myth" (on which see his definition later below), but, he affirms, this should not have a negative bearing on the Old Testament's divine inspiration. God accommodates himself to communicate his truth through such mythological biblical accounts. Chapter 3 discusses what Enns calls "diversity" in the Old Testament. He believes that the kinds of diversity that he attempts to analyze have posed problems in the past for the doctrine of "inerrancy." He asserts that this "diversity" must be acknowledged, even though it poses tensions with the inspiration of scripture. This diversity is part of God's inspired word.²³

And, again, I say, that,

indeed, Enns wants to "emphasize" that "such a firm grounding [of Genesis] in ancient myth does not make Genesis less inspired" (pp. 56)! Thus, uncritical and unconscious absorption of myth by a biblical author does not make his writing less inspired than other parts of scripture.²⁴

Thus, it is clear that I do not call into question Enns's own *conviction* that *all* of "the Bible is from God," but I do question the viability of his attempt to hold to plenary inspiration while at the same time affirming that biblical writers unconsciously imbibed mythical stories

and mistakenly thought that they corresponded to past historical reality. I do not think I have misunderstood him on this matter. He holds to a fully inspired scripture, though this inspired scripture contains "myths" (unbeknownst to the biblical writers themselves) at various significant points in describing redemptive-historical events. Consequently, I believe that Enns holds to a fully inspired Bible, but I do not think his view of the nature of inspiration is persuasive.

Thus, according to Enns, biblical writers were consciously intending to be understood as writing a historical genre, *but, in fact, we now know such events are myth*. Enns says that, though such accounts do not convey historical truth they still have important theological truth to tell us: that we are to worship the God of the Bible and not pagan gods. Enns even differs here from Robert Gundry, who contended that some narratives by gospel writers, which traditionally had been taken to be history, in fact are not, since they were intentionally and consciously employing a midrashic method that added significant non-historical but interpretative features. But Enns is saying much more than this: the biblical writers thought they were recording history but they were wrong, since we now know they were unaware that they were recording myth. This is a conclusion that does not appear to pay due hermeneutical respect to the conscious historical genre signals by biblical writers, however interpretative they may be.

Thus, one problem with his view of inspiration is that he ends up with a completely inspired Bible in which the biblical authors narrate what they thought was history, but now we know they were wrong. This is tantamount to saying that the biblical writers made mistakes, but

these mistakes were divinely inspired. His affirmation of inspiration, thus, dies the death of a thousand qualifications.

(3) Enns has several responses to my discussion of his section on “myth and history.” First, he affirms that a “potentially misleading impression” could result from my “claim that his concern is that ‘conservatives have not sufficiently recognized ANE parallels with the Bible,’ when in fact the entire chapter is based on the opposite assumption that these things have been duly recognized by evangelicals”;²⁵ rather, Enns says that his concern is “to bring to the forefront the implications of these parallels for how evangelicals can think of Genesis as historical, authoritative, and inspired.”²⁶

But Enns does not present the full picture of what he has said and of what I have said. Here is what I say:

In particular, he [Enns] is concerned that conservatives have not sufficiently recognized ANE parallels with the Bible, particularly the parallels with the Babylonian myth of creation and the Sumerian myth of the cataclysmic flood (pp. 26-27). Enns says that “the doctrinal implications of these discoveries have not yet been fully worked out in evangelical theology” (p. 25). For example, he says that if the Old Testament has so much in common with the ancient world and its customs and practices, “in what sense can we speak of it as revelation?” (p. 31). But, as he acknowledges, these discoveries were made in the nineteenth century, and evangelical scholars have been reflecting on their doctrinal implications ever since the early nineteenth hundreds.²⁷

It is true that Enns is most concerned with the implications of ANE parallels for the doctrine of scripture (Genesis in this case) as inspired and historical, and he does not feel that evangelicals have reflected on this sufficiently. My above

quotation focuses on this very point (this focus is observed by noting that my first sentence is contextually explained by the following two sentences). But Enns also believes specifically that evangelicals *have not sufficiently recognized the ANE parallels* because of their commitments to a traditional view of scriptural inspiration (and this is part of what I have in mind in the first sentence of my above quotation): in his book he says, “it is also ill advised to make such a sharp distinction between them [ANE and OT parallels] that the clear similarities are brushed aside [which, from the context of this chapter, he thinks conservatives have too often done].”²⁸ Again he says, “the conservative reaction . . . tends to minimize the ancient Near Eastern setting of the Old Testament, at least where that setting poses challenges to traditional belief,”²⁹ and again, “conservative Christian scholars, particularly early on, have tended to employ a strategy of selective engagement of the evidence: highlighting extrabiblical evidence that conforms to or supports traditional views of the Bible, while either ignoring, downplaying, or arguing against evidence to the contrary.”³⁰ Thus, my statement that Enns believes “that conservatives have not sufficiently recognized ANE parallels with the Bible” is part of what Enns is saying; I was not saying that Enns believes that evangelical scholars have been ignorant about the existence of these parallels but that they have not “sufficiently recognized” their bearing on scriptural inspiration. Indeed, I explicitly note at the end of my above quotation that Enns acknowledges that “these [ANE] discoveries were made in the nineteenth century, and evangelical scholars have been reflecting on their doctrinal implications ever since the early

nineteen hundreds.”

Second, he says in his book that there are biblical texts that presuppose the real existence of other gods, arguing that God led Israel slowly but surely from partial knowledge (i.e., from revealing to them that other real gods in addition to himself did actually exist) to fuller monotheistic knowledge of himself.³¹ I refer to this as a developmental view and say that “some would call it ‘evolutionary.’” Enns considers my use of “evolutionary” as a pejoratively “visceral” expression of his view, but it is unclear why he says this.³²

Third, Enns is concerned about my use of the phrase “essential historicity” in my discussion of his analysis of the “myth-history issue” in Genesis, for which he says I have “lack of appreciation” of the complexities of this topic.³³ He notes that a phrase that I use to “capture this problem is ‘essential historicity.’” Enns says that I “err in thinking that such an affirmation is crucial to addressing the very difficult but real myth-history problem in Genesis,” and that “the phrase amounts to little more than a slogan that obscures the issue when further explanation is not given to how, in what way, and to what extent Genesis is essentially historical.”³⁴

But I have chosen to use this phrase to summarize the problem because it is the phrase that Enns himself used to contrast the problem of the records of “the previous periods of Israel’s history,” from the historical record of the “monarchic period, when it began to develop a more ‘historical consciousness;’”³⁵ similarly, he says that “it is precisely the evidence *missing* from the previous periods of Israel’s history [e.g., the Pentateuch] that raises the problem of the *essential historicity* of that period” (italics mine).³⁶ Enns appears to assume a typical definition of “essential

history,” otherwise his statement about monarchic and pre-monarchic history would not make good sense; and I take the same, fairly normal definition of the phrase: that writers record events that correspond with real past events (of course, as I said in my review article, though historians certainly interpret history, such interpretations do not necessarily distort the historical actions and events being recorded, as I would hold in the case of biblical writers).

It bears repeating from my review article that Enns does not include “essential historicity” in his definition of “myth,”³⁷ which he sees present in Genesis, and that he does not see the pre-monarchic biblical accounts to contain “essential historicity.”³⁸

Enns asserts in his “Response” that he “would have liked to have been clearer” about his “affirmation of the basic historical referential nature of the opening chapters of Genesis.”³⁹ But he really says no more to clarify this very brief statement, which is also ambiguous. First, what does he mean by “the opening chapters of Genesis” (Genesis 1-3 or Genesis 1-9), and, second, his very use of “referential” is open to interpretation: e.g., the Encarta World English Dictionary gives two definitions: (1) “relating to references or in the form of reference;” (2) “used to describe a work of art that imitates other works or contains oblique references or homages to them, often at the expense of original content or style.” Does Enns affirm here that there is a correspondence between the Genesis 1 narrative, for example, and actual events that happened or is he using “referential” with the second meaning in mind, especially the comparison of Genesis 1 to ANE mythical works? Is this merely a tantalizingly coincidental

ambiguity?

One reason that one might not think it is an accidental ambiguity is that Enns has used the analogy of an artist painting a portrait or a mere painting to describe how the event of the Exodus might be understood. After acknowledging that some have compared the Exodus to a portrait, he qualifies the comparison by saying, “in Exodus the whole question is, ‘are we dealing with a life-like portrait such as that of Norman Rockwell or are we closer to the impressionism of a Monet or even the abstract art of a Picasso or Jackson Pollock?’”⁴⁰ (the reader should go on-line and look at some of the abstract art of Picasso and, especially, Pollock to visualize the kind of comparison that Enns appears implicitly to be posing as a possibility for understanding the event of the Exodus). Accordingly, Exodus appears to be a work of literary art that in significant ways indirectly imitates other ANE mythical works to depict something that is historical, but it may be difficult to discern how much of the actual historical kernel of the event is present in the narrative “painting.” According to one of Enns’s above analogies (abstract art), the event of the Exodus may be hardly discernible at all. At best, this may merely be another of the several ambiguities that I discussed in my *JETS* review article.

Though Enns contends that he is among those “evangelicals [who] would generally affirm” that “Genesis ‘appears to be a historical genre’ and therefore is ‘true history’ and records ‘real’ events of the past,”⁴¹ he immediately back-tracks and asks “what type of historical genre does Genesis appear to be, and how does the ANE evidence affect how we formulate such a definition? What constitutes ‘true’ history or ‘real’ events?”⁴² The sharp edge

of the problem for him is that “Genesis shares the cosmology of its ancient analogs, even while it contests their theology,” and this “cannot help but affect how we think about the ‘essential historical’ nature of Genesis.”⁴³ He sees the polemical contrast between the pertinent Genesis narratives and their ANE analogues to be only in the area of “theology,” i.e., the God of Genesis is the only God that deserves worship (Enns would not say at this point that the polemic is that the God of Genesis is the only real God, since, as we have seen, he affirms that God’s revelation at this point did not deny the existence of other real gods). But why does the polemic not also involve a contrast with history, in the sense that the God of the patriarchs really does work in history as opposed to the unreal ANE gods? I would say that the biblical account gives the record that corresponds with what God actually did in space-time history in contrast to the ANE accounts of false gods who really did not act in history.

Thus, though Enns claims to hold to some kind of “general affirmation” of the historicity of Genesis 1-11, the way he specifically fleshes this out is quite different than other evangelical Old Testament scholars. He gives so many qualifications that it is unclear what he really affirms. In my review article I went to great lengths to cite Enns’s very words (indeed paragraphs) to show that he “affirms that the Pentateuch positively adopts mythical notions in the essentially normal sense of the word (i.e., non-historical and fictitious narrative).”⁴⁴ Of course, Enns must see some actual history in Genesis (perhaps the core of the patriarchal narratives), though he never spells out for the reader what narratives he sees to be narratives corresponding to actual past

events and to what degree he sees them as “historical.” In fact, the problem for him is significant, since he says that all pre-monarchic historical narratives face the problem of “essential historicity” in contrast to monarchic history writing.⁴⁵ In this respect, recall that he says that “it is questionable logic to reason backward from the historical character of the monarchic account, *for which there is some evidence*, to the primeval and ancestral stories, *for which such evidence is lacking*.”⁴⁶

Enns’s fairly clear answer to his question regarding the genre of Genesis is that it is a “mythic” genre, explaining “myth” to be “an ancient, premodern, pre-scientific way of addressing questions of ultimate origins and meaning in the form of stories: Who are we? Where do we come from?”⁴⁷ Note, again, that Enns’s definition does not include a reference to recording history that corresponds to an actual past state of affairs. I labored to show in the review article that Enns’s definition of “myth” is normal in that it refers for him to “stories [that] were made up” especially about “origins.”⁴⁸ Thus, he says that “myth is the proper [genre] category for understanding Genesis.”⁴⁹

Enns says that V. P. Long’s discussion in his *Art of Biblical History* gives an excellent beginning point about genre considerations and especially to our concern about “what role ANE literature should play in ‘calibrating’ our genre discussions” about Genesis.⁵⁰ But Long is much more cautious than Enns; one of his main points is that while genre categories derived from study of ancient extra-biblical and cultural contexts can be helpful, “it is important to bear in mind that genre categories that have been developed through study of literatures outside the Bible may not be fully applicable to the biblical texts.”⁵¹ Again,

Long says, especially with respect to ANE mythological parallels, that “the temptation must be avoided either to insist that only those biblical genres are possible that find analogies outside the Bible . . . or to assume that whatever genres are attested outside the Bible may without qualification find a place in the Bible.”⁵² And once more, “the Ancient Near East, then, offers little that can compare to the larger discourse units of the Old Testament, or of the Old Testament.”⁵³ At points in the same chapter, Long says that smaller discourse units in the Bible also contain unique genres that have no parallel in the ancient literary world⁵⁴ or they contain mixed or blended genres,⁵⁵ and extrabiblical genre categories are merely “descriptive” and must never become “prescriptive” for the Bible,⁵⁶ and some “might be deemed unacceptable.”⁵⁷ In contrast, even in his response, Enns remains unnuanced in his understanding of how ANE mythic genre relates to Genesis. Part of the upshot of Long’s chapter is about how difficult it is to define genre both theoretically and specifically.

It is striking that Enns affirms that “the biblical account, along with its ancient Near Eastern counterparts, assumes the factual nature of what it reports. They did not think, ‘We know this is all “myth” but it will have to do until science is invented to give us better answers.’”⁵⁸ Thus, the biblical writers absorbed mythical world-views unconsciously, reproduced them in their writings, and believed them to be reliable descriptions of the real world and events occurring in the past real world (creation account, Flood narrative, etc.) because they were part of their socially constructed mythical reality.⁵⁹

Enns presents the problem of Genesis 1 as a classic case of the problem about

which he is concerned:

What, for example, is “essentially historical” about Genesis 1? Is it the bare affirmation that God did “something” in space/time history? Or, at the other end of the spectrum, is it the affirmation that Genesis 1 describes creation in literalistic terms (literal 24-hour days, canopy of water, etc.)? If the former, are the specific form and content of Genesis 1 just decorative flourishes (which leaves one wondering why God put them there in the first place)? If the latter, are we to say that Genesis 1 can be safely understood at arm’s length from the ancient world in which the texts were intended—by God—to speak? What precisely about Genesis 1 needs to be affirmed as “accurate, true, real” (to use Beale’s terms), and how does one even begin to make these judgments, given the antiquity and foreignness of Genesis vis-a-vis modern historical standards? These are the kind of things that can and do trouble lay readers.⁶⁰

In reply, there are several possible well-known interpretations of Genesis 1 that can be quite consistent with a notion of “essential historicity”: (1) a literal creation by God during a literal six days (composed of 24-hours for each day); (2) a literal creation of God over a long period of time (understanding the “days” to be ultimately figurative for a long period); (3) a creation that is to be seen as a literal description of a chaotic, non-functional cosmos followed by a description of God “setting up the functions that will establish an ordered, operational cosmos,”⁶¹ which is conceived of as a temple for himself and his people in which to dwell.⁶² There are, of course, sub-categories of these basic views, some of which hold to theistic evolution and some of which do not. Thus, both of the above views that Enns cites, and the third also cited above, would be within the range of correspondence to “essential historicity.” Varying interpretations of the creation

narrative (as well as the flood narrative) do not necessitate a different view of the narrative’s “essential historicity.” A view that would not be consistent with “essential historicity” is one that holds to the depiction of God’s creative activity to be merely a reflection of other ANE mythical creation narratives, and that the only point being made by the Genesis writer is that the God of Genesis is the God to be worshipped instead of the various other ANE gods who purportedly participated in the creation of the cosmos.

The following quotations (that I repeat from my review article⁶³) are virtually explicit statements by Enns that these biblical accounts are not essentially history but myth.

We might think that such a scenario [that which Enns has presented] is unsatisfying because it gives too much ground to pagan myths . . . (p. 53; my italics).

. . . God adopted Abraham as the forefather of a new people, and in doing so he also adopted the mythic categories within which Abraham—and everyone else—thought. But God did not simply leave Abraham in his mythic world. Rather; [sic] God transformed the ancient myths so that Israel’s story would come to focus on its God, the real one (pp. 53-54; my italics).

. . . The biblical account, along with its ancient Near East counterparts, assumes the factual nature of what it reports. They did not think, “We know this is all ‘myth’ but it will have to do until science is invented to give us better answers” (p. 55, my italics).

. . . The point I would like to emphasize, however, is that such a firm grounding in ancient myth does not make Genesis less inspired . . . (p. 56, my italics).

Significantly, the third above citation asserts that biblical writers “assumed the factual nature” of their “reports,” even though they were really not factual but “myth.” And, remember that Enns affirms that God’s revelation in early Israelite

history did not deny the true existence of other gods, which Israel later came to understand were mythical.

I must stop here and refer readers back to my *JETS* review article. Enns has not addressed the specific evidence that I lay out there that he, indeed, affirms that significant narratives in the Pentateuch are shot through with “myth,” which I concluded that he understands “in the essentially normal sense, that is stories without an ‘essential historical’ foundation.”⁶⁴ Since he has not distanced himself from the evidence that I laid out for his view in this respect or disagreed with my conclusions about his view, then I must assume that he holds what I concluded about the mythical nature of accounts in Genesis. And, as I pointed out in the review article, he holds the same thing about references in the New Testament to Jewish traditions that are mythical (e.g., Paul’s reference to the “rock that followed” in 1 Cor 10:4 he calls a “legend,” though, according to Enns, Paul believed the tradition corresponded with real past events in Israel’s history, when in fact they did not).⁶⁵

How is Enns’s view different from that of Gerhard Von Rad’s perspective that Old Testament writers wrote what appeared to be historical accounts, which were theologically true on a “salvation-historical” plane, but which possessed no essential connection with true, past historical reality?⁶⁶ I mentioned this in my initial review, but Enns never addresses it in his response.

Consequently, when Enns challenges me and others about our simplistic view of “essential history,” what he wants us to agree with is that Genesis is shot through with a mythic genre, though the writer, and those who passed on the early tradi-

tion which the writer received, thought they were passing on accounts that corresponded with true past historical events. For myself, I am unconvinced by Enns’s challenge.

(4) Enns is also troubled by my discussion of inerrancy as it is related to his view of “myth” and “theological diversity.” First, in responding to Enns’s dichotomy in his book between the pre-scientific world and the scientific world, I pointed out in my review that there are significant overlaps between modern mathematics and astronomy. Enns responds by saying that he fails to see how such overlaps help with understanding “the relationship between Genesis 1 and Enuma Elish, or any other ANE analog.”⁶⁷ But the very reason that I made the point is that Enns repeatedly in his book made the unqualified distinction between the purported pre-scientific and scientific ages: e.g., “ancient peoples were not concerned to describe the universe in scientific terms . . . scientific investigation was not at the disposal of ancient Near Eastern peoples;”⁶⁸ “Are the early stories in the Old Testament to be judged on the basis of standards of modern historical inquiry and scientific precision, things that ancient peoples were not at all aware of?;”⁶⁹ the historical context of Genesis “was not a modern scientific one but an ancient mythic one.”⁷⁰

My point about the existence of ancient mathematics and astronomy that overlaps with modern notions of these areas is relevant, at least, because it qualifies Enns’s sweeping generalizations and reductionisms about an absolute gap between the two worlds. Furthermore, these overlaps are specifically significant for the present discussion, since Enns himself relates “modern historical inquiry and scientific precision.”⁷¹ He immediately elaborates

on “modern historical inquiry and scientific precision” by referring to “modern standards of truth and error.” Without any further qualification, I assume that he includes scientific precision in describing the cosmos and such things as scientific precision in measurements, calculations, etc., which may sometimes form part of historical narrative reports. Indeed, that he does have in mind descriptions of the cosmos is apparent from his above reference to ancients not “describing the universe” in scientific terms and from the context, where he includes reference to ancient perceptions of how the sun and the moon travel⁷² and the ancient view of the cosmos.⁷³ Certainly, to some significant degree the overlap that I mention between astronomy is relevant here. Furthermore, what is also relevant is that ancient and modern peoples also share strikingly similar phenomenological portrayals of the cosmos (e.g., see Don Carson’s experience with his father about referring to the newspaper’s official notice about the sunrise).⁷⁴

Lastly, while it is true that there are unusual portrayals of the cosmos in the ANE and Old Testament, according to modern standards, which some might be tempted to call pre-modern, the reason is likely theological. For example, it is clear in the ANE and Old Testament that temples were designed to be symbolic representations of the cosmos. Why? There is evidence in both the ANE and in the OT that the cosmos was conceived of as a huge temple. The earthly temples were little models of God’s entire creation as a macrocosmic temple in which he was present in a much grander way than in the small architectural sanctuaries.⁷⁵ Since the temples were symbolic of God’s heavenly dwelling, it is unlikely that the Israelites

actually believed that the cosmos was literally structured like a giant temple merely on a bigger scale than Israel’s earthly temple, though there is not space to elaborate on how this so.⁷⁶ There is even a notion in Egypt and Israel that the little sanctuaries pointed symbolically to God’s creation at the end of time as a huge dwelling place of God.⁷⁷ I also do not have room within the constraints of this article to explain possible relationships between ANE and Israelite temples, but suffice it to say that it is unlikely that Israel merely unconsciously modeled their temple on the temples of the foreign false, mythical gods around them.⁷⁸ The reason for the cosmic symbolism of Israel’s temple in the divine design is that it would be a unique redemptive-historical pointer to the consummated new heavens and earth as God’s temple and eternal dwelling place. Thus, Israel’s temple was meant to be a non-repeatable pointer to a greater divine reality in the latter days. One must be cautious in setting up other symbolic cosmic perspectives purportedly shared by the ANE and Israel and calling them “pre-modern.”⁷⁹ In the case of Israel, what some may call pre-modern or pre-scientific is a specific symbolic entity pointing to some greater reality in the new age to come.

In connection again to inerrancy, Enns is uncomfortable with my effort to show that there are certain universal categories of rational thought by which truth is discerned. He is responding, for example, to my following assertion in my *JETS* review article:

These issues that Enns discusses touch on epistemology. I cannot enter into a full-orbed view of epistemology to which I ascribe and how this relates to logic and the modernist-post-modernist debates.

Suffice it say the following. The laws of contradiction (or non-contradiction) and identity would seem to be part of the faculties of all human beings, as a result of their creation by God in his image. Without these abilities humans would not be able to communicate with one another or perceive correctly (not exhaustively but definitely in part) the created world. Enns seems to have confused the use of reason, which is an aspect of general revelation, with certain kinds of purported modern history writing and precise kinds of modern scientific knowledge. But these most basic laws of logical thought are quite operable for both modern and pre-modern people. Indeed, people could not communicate without assuming the truth of these foundational notions of logic (if I say something is red, it means that it is red and not green; or if I say the Chicago White Sox won the world series last year, I mean they won it and not the New York Yankees [here I would add that when Exodus says that God defeated the Egyptians that the text means he defeated the Egyptians and not the Babylonians]). When people do not presuppose these most basic laws of thinking, then they have difficulty communicating and living in the world. The same is true with ancient communication.⁸⁰

Enns responds to this by saying that, “even though there are certainly categories of thought that are universally and timelessly part of the human condition, the Bible, precisely because it is a product of God’s self-revelation in *history*, has, by God’s design, a local, timely dimension to it.”⁸¹ But Enns never tells us what human categories of thought are universally and timelessly applicable, so that the concession is a platitude without content. Essentially, I am merely saying that ancient peoples had categories of thought “at their disposal for assessing” the observable world “that are in some regards commensurable to our own.”⁸² Furthermore, if the

categories of thought that I offer above are not applicable, then how can we make any sense of scripture? It would merely become so much gibberish.

Despite the fact that Enns says that this is an outside criterion by which I am defining the nature of scripture, it is quite evident that scripture reflects and presupposes this notion, since scripture itself often uses the word “true/truth” to affirm that ancient people could make descriptive statements that corresponded, not exhaustively but truly to actual reality; likewise scripture uses words like “know” to indicate that the ancients could know things sufficiently that corresponded to the reality around them.⁸³

In fact, to turn the tables on Enns, it appears to be Enns who is allowing extra-biblical sources to define the nature of scriptural inspiration, since he affirms that the genre of Genesis is best defined as “myth.” And why does he define the genre of Genesis in this way? Because there is such a close conceptual similarity between the opening chapters of Genesis and Mesopotamian myth.⁸⁴ So do we let the mythical genre of the ANE stories determine the genre of Genesis or do we let Genesis itself determine its own genre and then go outside to the ANE environment to see how it is related to it and vice versa.⁸⁵ In the initial part of my review article, I contended that on its own, Genesis portrays itself as a historical genre (of course with interpretation interspersed, as is true with any ancient or modern history writing). Then as one attempts to see the relationship between this genre in Genesis and other ANE writings, there are at least five ways that one can perceive of such a relationship,⁸⁶ the last of which, unconsciously imbibed myth, favored by Enns, is the least probable. Among the

most viable suggestions are that Genesis alludes to ANE religious myth in order to conduct polemic against it or it reflects, along with the ANE myths, general revelatory truth or a common ancient tradition, both of which are only rightly interpreted by the divine scripture. Any of these perspectives could be applicable to understanding the example of cosmic temple symbolism discussed above. This is not forced harmonization nor special pleading but a reasonable evaluation of the evidence.

Interestingly, Enns makes the same mistake in starting points in his chapter on the use of the Old Testament in the New, where he affirms that one first must understand second temple Jewish hermeneutics and then one can only understand New Testament hermeneutics through the lens of early Judaism. As I argue elsewhere, Enns's approach must be turned on its head or radically altered: start first with examining the interpretative approach of Jesus and the apostles, and then study Judaism to see the relationship between the two or, at least, study the various sectors of Judaism and the NT, and then compare and contrast them.⁸⁷ Enns's typical approach appears to be to interpret special revelation by general revelation (e.g., extra-biblical tradition) rather than vice-versa. In other words, with regard to OT issues, he wants to "calibrate our genre discussions" by letting the ANE literature play a more dominant role than the biblical literature.⁸⁸

Enns says that "some of our differences can be attributed to my [Enns] Reformed, specifically presuppositional, theological and epistemological starting point."⁸⁹ I doubt that this is helpful, since I cut my teeth early in my graduate studies on the presuppositional viewpoints of such

Reformed theologians as John Calvin, Abraham Kuyper, and Cornelius Van Til, and the biblical-theological approach of Geerhardus Vos, perspectives which I still hold.⁹⁰

In relation also to the issue of inerrancy, Enns says I affirm that recognition of diversity in scripture is close to denial of inerrancy.⁹¹ He says that I "seem to suggest that the choice is between 'complementary viewpoints' and 'irreconcilable perspectives,'" though he says it is "more complex" than this.⁹² Actually what I say is that "his definition of 'diversity'" in the book "is not clear: does it refer to various but complementary viewpoints or to irreconcilable perspectives on a given topic?" His answer: it is a "more complex matter than this." In reality, much of what Enns discusses is not difficult to relate or "harmonize" (if I may use such a worn word), which Don Carson has well discussed in his review of Enns.⁹³ After reading Carson and Enns again, I think readers will discern a penchant in Enns to make "diverse molehills" into "irreconcilable hermeneutical mountains." Like Carson, I just do not see the problem in a number of "diverse" examples that Enns gives. Part of Enns's concern is excellent: let us not jump immediately to trying to "harmonize" before we have *fully* explored on the exegetical level each particular text of concern, seeing its role within its own literary and historical context. He is afraid that people with "inerrancy on their brain" will too quickly start trying to "harmonize." His caution in this respect is outstanding.

On the other hand, he does not appear to see a role for rigorous analysis of how the two "diverse" texts may relate (I have the same commendation yet criticism of Enns with respect to the Old Testament

in the New, which I have commented on elsewhere⁹⁴). This is really part of the work of biblical theology, not merely a knee-jerk reaction by those preoccupied to solve scriptural problems. Enns himself says that a biblical-theological approach should be used in the face of the diversity, not so much to solve it but to recognize that such diversity (for example, in the case of the Law) “is not ultimate, but are steps along the way leading up to Christ . . . helping us to see that the Law is not meant to be an ultimate unchanging statement of God’s will but penultimate, awaiting the coming of Christ who . . . fulfills the law.”⁹⁵ This particular example with respect to the Law I find very interesting, though Enns would have to flesh it out more for it to be persuasive. Nevertheless, he has offered here an ultimate redemptive-historical rationale that actually does have great potential to resolve the problem of diversity, which Enns most of the time denies can be done. Indeed, I think it would be difficult to use this particular christocentric (or christotelic, as Enns prefers) rationale to understand other kinds of diversity that Enns sees throughout the Bible, since it is very vague how such diversity (e.g., diversity in historical parallel accounts, apparent mistakes in numbers, place names, etc.) relates to Christ’s eschatological coming, a critique also offered in Don Carson’s review.

But it is clear that Enns does see that, at least, some of what he discusses involves such radical diversity that it cannot be resolved according to “modern standards of rationality,” and we must leave such diversity to stand as it is. Now, in part, I agree that when “diversity” appears irresolvable on the literary or biblical-theological level, then we let it stand, and

we do not foist some precarious harmonization onto the text. What we philosophically label such “irresolvable diversity” will differ with the presuppositions of the individual interpreter: some will call it “error,” some “difficulty,” and some, like Enns, just “diversity,” since “error” for him is an anachronistic modern word that is inapplicable to ancient thought. My final assessment of Enns’s view of “diversity” in my review article has not changed, despite his further response:

Thus, Enns insists on the term “diversity,” since he opposes judging ancient writers by the modern standards of truth and error. Does Enns imbibe too much post-modern relativity about truth or has he been “chastened” properly, so that he has been affected by some of the strengths of post-modernism? Readers will make different judgments about this. For myself, I think he has been too influenced by some of the extremes of post-modern thought.⁹⁶

Enns does not like my application of “postmodern” to his view, since he thinks it is “a loaded, emotive” term.⁹⁷ I do not mean it in any emotive sense, only in the sense that modern standards of rational thought are inapplicable to judging ancient expressions of thinking, a typical trait of even those who would refer to themselves as evangelical postmodernists and do not see it as a negative term.⁹⁸

(5) Enns’s last major concern is with my evaluation of his incarnational analogy. In my review I questioned the validity of the way Enns uses this analogy with respect to understanding scripture as both a divine and a human word, since he was ambiguous about what parts of the analogy apply and which do not. He admits that, if he were writing the book again, he would be clearer about how the incarnational analogy applies to scripture: he

says he would elaborate on how just “as there is no sin in the God-man Jesus, so too there is no error in Scripture. The human situatedness and diverse nature of Scripture, then, are not to be understood as errors corresponding to some putative sin on Christ’s part, but rather as the condescension of God corresponding to Christ’s humanity.”⁹⁹

Enns admits that the analogy is large enough to drive a hermeneutical truck through it, since he can see how some would use it to disallow “myth” in scripture, yet he believes that he can use it to see “that such culturally laden expressions” of myth “are what one would expect.”¹⁰⁰ Enns appeals to some wonderful quotations by Bavinck, Green, Warfield, and Gaffin on the incarnational analogy with scripture (with which I agree), but the question remains how to flesh out further what they say. It is in the attempt to flesh out that the disagreements arise. He tries to give concrete filling out of the details of his view: “does Genesis 1, bearing strong similarities to ANE myth, correspond to Jesus ‘sinning’ or to the fact that he had olive skin, wore leather sandals, and spoke Aramaic?’ I am of the latter opinion.”¹⁰¹ But, this kind of alternative incarnational example does not get to the heart of the matter of Enns’s proposals. Enns wants to see that “myth” can be naturally though unconsciously woven into God’s revelation in its human situatedness. So the better incarnational question should be formulated in this manner, which I commented on in the review article:

Some evangelical theologians speculate that while the human Jesus was perfect morally, he was still imperfect in such things as mathematical computation or historical recollection (e.g., some say, could not

Jesus have made a “B” on his fifth grade math test? Or could he not have cut a board wrongly from the instructions of his human father?). On analogy with this conception of Jesus’ incarnation, scripture is God’s absolutely faithful word about morals and theology (e.g., the way to salvation) but not about minute points of history or scientific facts.¹⁰²

So, to get more at the heart of the issue for Enns’s proposals, it would seem that his above question should have been reformulated as follows: “does Genesis 1, bearing strong similarities to ANE myth, correspond to Jesus unconsciously in his human nature accommodating himself to the mythical or non-historical traditions of Jewish culture,¹⁰³ which would not be moral sin, or does the Genesis 1 - ANE relationship correspond more to the fact that Jesus had olive skin, wore leather sandals, and spoke Aramaic?”¹⁰⁴

Now, I wonder, which option Enns would choose with this new alternative. I posed the same question in my review article, but Enns has chosen not to address it, even though it is the most pertinent aspect of the incarnational paradigm that would seem to have most relevance for supporting his argument about myth. Of course, it would mean holding to a lower Christology than the church has dominantly held to throughout her existence. In my review article, I gave my critique of this kind of incarnational understanding. If Enns holds to an unconscious accommodation to myth by Old Testament writers and by Paul (e.g., recall his view of 1 Cor 10:4), then it would appear that he likely holds the same view about Jesus. This is pointed to further by recollecting that Enns explicitly affirms that Jesus’ use of the OT in the NT was a complete accommodation to Judaism’s uncontrolled and non-contextual use of the OT. Thus,

Jesus was not concerned with the original meaning of OT authors, and he read in meanings that had nothing to do with such original meaning.¹⁰⁵ Recall also that Enns later includes in “Second Temple techniques” that Jesus purportedly uses an interpretative method that involves the unconscious absorption of myth, though he discusses this aspect of Jewish exegesis only in relation to Paul (as in the case, e.g., of 1 Cor 10:4). Thus, my objection is not that the incarnational analogy cannot be validly used but that, if it is used, it must be carefully defined, which Enns still does not do in his response.

Enns concludes his response on this topic by saying that “the precise nature of this analogy . . . cannot and need not be worked out with the kind of precision he [Beale] seems to demand before the analogy can be used to benefit lay readers who confess by faith the mystery of the incarnation”¹⁰⁶ But this is an insufficient response, since the way he has defined the incarnational analogy is very general and, by his own admission, is susceptible of widely varying applications, so that, as it stands, it is not a very helpful model for trying to resolve the kinds of problems that Enns has set up throughout his book. To appeal to “the mystery of the incarnation” at this point would appear to be special pleading.

Conclusion

Enns concludes his response by reflecting upon why there is so much controversy over his “little book, written in a popular style for a popular audience.” His answer: the controversy tells as much about “the reviewers themselves” and “the current state of evangelical thinking as it does the book itself.”¹⁰⁷ While this is an obviously very generally correct statement, it

is virtually a truism. Speaking for myself, part of the fuel that fired my motivation to write the review was to give lay people and students another perspective on the issues that Enns addresses, especially since I believe there are people who will be disturbed and have their faith *unnecessarily* unsettled by a writer who comes from what has been a very traditionally orthodox theological seminary, as Westminster Theological Seminary has been. Contrary to Enns’s view, I have written partly because I do not want lay people to have the impression that Enns has laid out all the relevant evidence on both sides of the debate and then to think that Enns’s conclusions, based on such selective evidence, are viable for evangelical faith.

The last sentences of Enns’s response are a plea not to perpetuate a “climate of fear, suspicion and posturing” that produces “a climate [that] does not honor Christ” (326). I completely agree, as long as this does not mean that vigorous critique of one another’s views is disallowed.

ENDNOTES

¹G. K. Beale, “Myth, History, and Inspiration: a Review Article of *Inspiration and Incarnation* by Peter Enns” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49 (2006): 287-312.

²Peter Enns, “Response to G. K. Beale’s Review Article of *Inspiration and Incarnation*,” *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society* 49 (2006): 313-26.

³I am also grateful to the editors of the “reformation21” online magazine for accepting this surrejoinder for publication.

⁴I have also reviewed the fourth chapter of Enns’s book, which concerns the use of the OT in the NT (see G. K. Beale, “Did Jesus and the Apostles Preach the Right

Doctrine from the Wrong Texts? Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later in the Light of Peter Enns's Book, *Inspiration and Incarnation*," *Themelios* 32 (2006): 18-43; see also Enns's response to that review in the following issue of *Themelios* and my surrejoinder to that in the same following *Themelios* issue.

⁵Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 313.

⁶*Ibid.*, 313-14.

⁷*Ibid.*, 314.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹*Ibid.*

¹⁰*Ibid.*, 315.

¹¹*Ibid.*

¹²Note where Enns indicates his purpose in addressing a more popular audience in *Inspiration and Incarnation* (Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), e.g., 13, 15, 168, though these statements do not exclude a scholarly audience.

¹³E.g., the publishers distributed complimentary copies to biblical scholars at the November 2005 Institute for Biblical Research meeting.

¹⁴Beale, "Review Article," 312. In addition to the reviews noted in my review article now see D. A. Carson, "Three More Books on the Bible: A Critical Review," *Trinity Journal* 27 NS (2006): 1-62; Paul Helm, review of Peter Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, *reformation21*. Online: http://www.reformation21.org/Life/Shelf_Life/Shelf_Life/181?vobId=2938&pm=434; and Susan Wise Bauer, "Messy Revelation," *Books and Culture* (May/June 2006), 8-9 (Available Online: <http://www.christianitytoday.com/bc/2006/003/3.8.html>). The

first two reviews are negative and the latter positive, though the latter is not written by a practicing exegete or theologian.

¹⁵Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 314.

¹⁶*Ibid.*

¹⁷Beale, "Review Article," 311.

¹⁸See Beale, "Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later," 18-43.

¹⁹Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 314.

²⁰*Ibid.*

²¹*Ibid.*, 317.

²²Beale, "Review Article," 297.

²³*Ibid.*, 287.

²⁴*Ibid.*, 293.

²⁵Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 318.

²⁶*Ibid.*

²⁷Beale, "Review Article," 289.

²⁸Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 27.

²⁹*Ibid.*, 32.

³⁰*Ibid.*, 39.

³¹For my full discussion of this, see Beale, "Review Article," 293-95.

³²Enns chaffs at my labeling of his position as "evolutionary," and says I should have been "more circumspect than to use such a visceral term," since evolutionary models are naturalistic and exclude divine "direction and involvement" (Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 318). He says he is "working from a progressive-revelational model." Perhaps, he thinks the word is visceral, since it may evoke associations with the notion of, for example, biological evolution and its applications to the history of intellectual and social thought. But is it not well-known that there

are two dominant "evolutionary" models: an atheistic one and a theistic one, the latter in which God is involved and directing the evolutionary process? There are significant Christian scholars (some of whom even hold to inerrancy) who hold to the latter view. In fact, it is well-known among church historians that the great Princeton New Testament exegete, theologian, and scholar still greatly revered by both Westminster seminaries, B. B. Warfield, accommodated some qualified aspects of theistic evolution within his Calvinistic approach to scripture. For example, see B. B. Warfield's articles on "Creation, Evolution, and Mediate Creation," and "The Manner and Time of Man's Origin," in *B. B. Warfield, Evolution, Science, and Scripture: Selected Writings* (ed. M. A. Noll and D. N. Livingston; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2000), a collection of writings by Warfield that Enns even cites in his "Response" (313-314, n. 3; 318, n. 9). In this light, how in the world could Enns think that I meant the naturalistic, atheistic model of evolution, since he clearly espouses belief in God? I do not think that I needed to qualify the word, since Enns expresses such belief in God, and, thus, I do not think that reference to theistic evolution is "visceral" (especially since I do not refer to it as my own opinion but that others "would call it 'evolutionary'").

³³Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 318.

³⁴*Ibid.*, 319.

³⁵Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 44.

- ³⁶Ibid.
- ³⁷See Beale, "Review Article," 290, 296
- ³⁸Ibid., 293.
- ³⁹Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 317.
- ⁴⁰Peter Enns, "Exodus and the Problem of Historiography" (paper presented at the annual meeting of the Evangelical Theological Society, San Antonio, Texas, November 2004).
- ⁴¹Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 319.
- ⁴²Ibid.
- ⁴³Ibid.
- ⁴⁴E.g., see Beale, "Review Article," 293; for the full evidence, see 289-297 to which the reader should refer.
- ⁴⁵Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 43-44.
- ⁴⁶Ibid., 43.
- ⁴⁷Ibid., 50.
- ⁴⁸Ibid., 41.
- ⁴⁹Ibid, though the wording is part of a question in his book ("does this [Genesis's similarity to ANE myth] indicate that myth is the proper category for understanding Genesis?), in context, he answers the question positively.
- ⁵⁰Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 320.
- ⁵¹V. P. Long, *The Art of Biblical History* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1994), 40.
- ⁵²Ibid., 45-46.
- ⁵³Ibid., 48.
- ⁵⁴Ibid., 44-45.
- ⁵⁵Ibid., 57.
- ⁵⁶Ibid., 43.
- ⁵⁷Ibid., 46.
- ⁵⁸Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 55.
- ⁵⁹See Walton, "Ancient Near Eastern Background Studies," in *Dictionary for Theological Interpretation of the Bible* (ed. Kevin J. Vanhoozer; Grand Rapids: Baker, 2005), 43, who repudiates such unconscious absorption and use of myth in the Old Testament, while still affirming that "God's communication used the established literary genres of the ancient world and often conformed to the rules that existed within those genres" (41).
- ⁶⁰Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 319-320.
- ⁶¹J. H. Walton, *Genesis* (NIV Application Commentary; Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2001), 84, though see the entire section of pp. 65-159.
- ⁶²Ibid., 147-152; though, while this is a literal depiction, the time scope may be difficult to pin down. Also, the cosmos is defined as the literal macrocosmic temple, of which small ANE and Israel's architectural temples were microcosmic models.
- ⁶³Beale, "Review Article," 296.
- ⁶⁴See *ibid.*, 297.
- ⁶⁵For elaboration of this, see my "Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later" and my "Surrejoinder to Peter Enns" in a subsequent issue of *Themelios*.
- ⁶⁶For a convenient summary of this aspect and problem of Von Rad's theology, see W. Eichrodt, *Theology of the Old Testament 1* (Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1961), 512-20.
- ⁶⁷Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 320.
- ⁶⁸Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 40.
- ⁶⁹Ibid., 41.
- ⁷⁰Ibid., 55.
- ⁷¹Note his above quotation from *ibid.*, 41.
- ⁷²Ibid., 40.
- ⁷³Ibid., 54.
- ⁷⁴D. A. Carson, "A Critical Review," 34-35.
- ⁷⁵On which see G. K. Beale, *The Temple and the Church's Mission* (Leicester: IVP, 2004), 29-80.
- ⁷⁶On which see *ibid.* 29-80.
- ⁷⁷On which see *ibid.*, 81-167.
- ⁷⁸For my explanation of the relationship, see *ibid.*, 29-167.
- ⁷⁹As, e.g., that depicted in A. P. Dickin's chart in Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 54.
- ⁸⁰Beale, "Review Article," 301.
- ⁸¹Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 321.
- ⁸²Quoting in part J. D. Woodbridge, *Biblical Authority: A Critique of the Rogers/McKim Proposal* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1982), 163.
- ⁸³See D. A. Carson, *Becoming Conversant with the Emerging Church* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2005), 188-200; see also A. C. Thiselton, *The Two Horizons: New Testament Hermeneutics and Philosophical Description* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans, 1980), 411: "In Greek literature and in the Old and New Testaments there are abundant examples of uses of the word 'truth' in which the point at issue is correspondence with the facts of the matter."
- ⁸⁴Enns, *Inspiration and Incarnation*, 55; so also p. 41: "the biblical stories are similar enough to invite comparison" with the category of ANE myth.
- ⁸⁵Interestingly, in contrast to Enns's approach, C. Van Til's presuppositionalist perspective, the most well-

known apologist of the Westminster Seminary tradition, of which Enns identifies himself, starts first with Scripture and judges all things by Scripture.

⁸⁶On which see Beale, "Review Article," 289-90.

⁸⁷For my fuller argument in this respect, see my "Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later;" and my "Surrejoinder to Peter Enns" in a forthcoming issue of *Themelios*.

⁸⁸Note Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 320, n. 14, where he uses this language to pose the question of how to determine genre, a question that he answers in his book and in his "Response" that I lay out above.

⁸⁹*Ibid.*, 315, n. 6.

⁹⁰It may be true that our differences are due to presuppositional perspectives, but, if so, it may be because Enns and I interpret the presuppositional approaches of old Princeton and old Westminster differently. I am sure, however, that we could not get to the bottom of this particular disagreement without some in-depth face-to-face discussion and debate.

⁹¹Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 323.

⁹²*Ibid.*, 322.

⁹³Carson, "A Critical Review," 37-40.

⁹⁴See my above cited *Themelios* article, "Revisiting the Debate Seventeen Years Later," and, in a forthcoming issue of the same journal, Enns's response, and my surrejoinder.

⁹⁵Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 322.

⁹⁶Beale, "Review Article," 303.

⁹⁷Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's

Review," 317.

⁹⁸Enns says that I employ "at times heavy rhetoric" (*ibid.*, 317), but I would like to see more examples of what he considers such "heavy rhetoric."

⁹⁹*Ibid.*, 323.

¹⁰⁰*Ibid.*

¹⁰¹*Ibid.*

¹⁰²Beale, "Review Article," 299.

¹⁰³Which some moderate evangelicals would say, e.g., was that Adam was a real figure in history or that there really was a flood in Noah's day or that the prophet Isaiah wrote the entire book of Isaiah or that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch, etc.

¹⁰⁴Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 324.

¹⁰⁵Enns, *Inspiraton and Incarnation*, 114-115, 132.

¹⁰⁶Enns, "Response to G. K. Beale's Review," 324.

¹⁰⁷*Ibid.*, 326.