



Volume 61 | Issue 2

Article 23

12-1-2018

Grabbe's "Faith and fossils: The bible, creation, and evolution" (book review)

D. Jason Gardner
Dallas Theological Seminary

The Christian Librarian is the official publication of the Association of Christian Librarians (ACL). To learn more about ACL and its products and services please visit [//www.acl.org/](http://www.acl.org/)

Follow this and additional works at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl>

 Part of the [Biblical Studies Commons](#), [Christianity Commons](#), [History of Religion Commons](#), and the [Religious Thought, Theology and Philosophy of Religion Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Gardner, D. Jason (2018) "Grabbe's "Faith and fossils: The bible, creation, and evolution" (book review)," *The Christian Librarian*: Vol. 61 : Iss. 2 , Article 23.

Available at: <https://digitalcommons.georgefox.edu/tcl/vol61/iss2/23>

This Book Review is brought to you for free and open access by Digital Commons @ George Fox University. It has been accepted for inclusion in The Christian Librarian by an authorized editor of Digital Commons @ George Fox University. For more information, please contact arolf@georgefox.edu.

Book Reviews



(2018). *Faith and fossils: The bible, creation, and evolution*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans. 182 pp. \$24.00. ISBN 9780802869104

Much has been written in recent years about the relationship between various matters of faith/theology/bible and the many disciplines of science. Noted biblical scholar Lester Grabbe enters the fray with his recent work. Grabbe's intended aim is to "discuss the question of creation and evolution from a biblical point of view" (p. ix) and works through the questions primarily via biblical texts (as well as other relevant ancient texts). Grabbe discusses the titular matters of evolution and creation through the lens of the ancient understanding of the physical world, inasmuch as constructing their views is possible.

Part one addresses matters stemming from the biblical texts – creation, flood, and reproduction – and examines them in the light of other ancient Near Eastern texts and beliefs. The emphasis in part two shifts to cultural analysis, essentially examining the relationship between science and religion before transitioning back to discussion of the biblical text. Part three trains attention on evolution and humanity and how this impacts one's understanding of origins, especially in light of texts such as Genesis (though other biblical texts are discussed).

Grabbe draws from a deep well of biblical expertise in his analysis of the biblical text and their relationship to the topics of creation and evolution. He writes at a level that is accessible to non-experts in the fields of biblical studies/theology and science, but offers plenty fodder for these two (primary) camps to engage in meaningful conversation (though there is occasional use of technical vocabulary that may limit some readers' ability to understand some technical points). There are no polemics, grandstanding, or other unseemly tactics here – only a desire to enable readers to approach Genesis and other biblical texts in a contextually-aware manner when seeking to know what they say about origins. It should be noted that while Grabbe does not fully engage those who might stand opposed to his ideas, it is not really the purpose of the book. Rather, Grabbe lays out his understanding of the biblical texts and helps the reader gain a better understanding of the world in which Genesis (and other relevant texts) was written, which helps moderns situate particular ideas in their ancient context.

As noted, Grabbe's expertise is in the world of the ancient Near East and his knowledge is evident; however, one should not dismiss him as unqualified to write on matters of science. Before becoming a biblical scholar, Grabbe trained to be a scientist, which gives him the unique ability to analyze both sides of these issues. Grabbe also writes sympathetically, having once argued for the incompatibility of the bible's teachings on creation and origins and those of the scientific community.

In the modern evangelical world, opinions are changing about the bible and the question of origins. Some evangelicals' acceptance of evolution has provoked a vocal response from many on the other side of the issue, hence the necessity of books such as this, which are a welcome and needed contribution.

Reviewer

D. Jason Gardner, Dallas Theological Seminary