

He also makes some useful observations about how we perceive these ideas in the text and how we apply them in our situation. So though this book may be a splendid example of theorising about hermeneutics, it is a disappointing example of hermeneutical practice.

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The Biblical Flood: A Case Study of the Church's Response to Extrabiblical Evidence

Davis A. Young

Grand Rapids: Eerdmans; Carlisle: Paternoster Press, 1995, xiii + 327 pp., £14.99, pb., ISBN 0-8028-0719-4 (Eerdmans); 0-85364-678-3 (Paternoster)

ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Das Buch bringt einen hervorragenden Überblick über die Beziehungen zwischen biblischer Exegese und naturwissenschaftlichen Entdeckungen von neutestamentlicher Zeit bis heute. Relativ viel Platz wird der Darstellung und Widerlegung exzentrischer konservativer Erklärungen der Flut gewidmet. Young selbst sieht eine lokale mesopotamische Flut (als berechtigtes Paradigma universalen Gerichts) im Hintergrund des biblischen Berichtes.

RÉSUMÉ

Le livre donne un excellent aperçu de la relation entre l'exégèse biblique et les découvertes scientifiques depuis le temps du Nouveau Testament jusqu'à nos jours. L'auteur consacre une large place à l'exposé et à la critique des explications conservatrices plutôt excentriques du déluge. Il considère pour sa part que le récit biblique du déluge a pour arrière-plan un événement local, qui s'est produit en Mésopotamie, et qui fonctionne comme un paradigme du jugement universel.

Belief in a universal flood was part of standard Christian belief until the nineteenth century. Indeed, in the early days of geology fossils and sedimentary layers were often ascribed to Noah's flood. But as geological knowledge grew, traditional views of the flood became less and less credible.

Young in this book gives a magnificent survey of the interaction of biblical exegesis and scientific discovery from New Testament times to the present. It is salutary to realise how many older interpretations have rested on ephemeral scientific theory and how more recent evangelical studies have often ignored well established geological facts.

European readers may be surprised at the amount of space devoted to eccentric American conservative Christian explanations of the flood and geological discovery, but clearly these ideas have much more currency on the other side of the Atlantic. Young is concerned to confute such views. Those who have never taken them seriously may be tempted to ignore this book, but Young's concern to integrate geological discovery with the testimony of Scripture is an important one for Christian apologetics. He believes that a Mesopotamian local flood lies behind the biblical story, but that the Bible is right to affirm this as a paradigm of universal judgement. He is also right to hint that Christians should stop being defensive about the relations between science and faith. The age, size and complexity of the universe witness to a Creator of unimaginable wisdom and power.

I should also have liked him to have gone further and discussed the *Tendenz* of Genesis in its use of Mesopotamian tradition. Its monotheistic theology, the place it assigns mankind in the divine purpose, and its scepticism about human progress give the theology of Genesis a strikingly original thrust that still resonates today.

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The Jesus Debate: Modern Historians Investigate the Life of Christ

Mark Allan Powell

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ZUSAMMENFASSUNG

Powells Buch besteht aus einer Darstellung und Wertung von sechs wichtigen Beiträgen zur wissenschaftlichen Suche nach dem historischen Jesus. Besprochen werden die Arbeiten des Jesus Seminars, J.D. Crossans,