

Genesis, Creation, and Early Man

Paperback – September 2, 2011

by Fr. Seraphim Rose (Author), Hieromonk Damascene (Editor)

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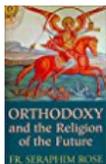
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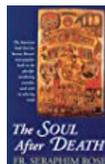
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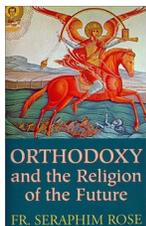
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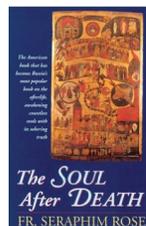
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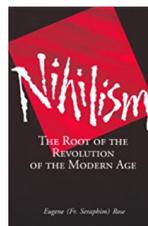
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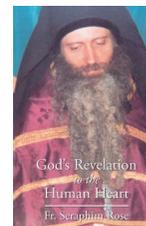
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Editorial Reviews

Review

A presentation of the traditional, Patristic understanding of Genesis, which at the same time bravely exposes the lie of the modern philosophy of evolution. This is a vital, pathfinding work, which can serve as a true foundation for all sides in future discussions. ----His Eminence Metropolitan Joseph, Bulgarian Eastern Orthodox Diocese of the USA, Canada, and Australia

It is with great joy and tremendous interest that we greet the publication of the second edition containing much additional theological and scientific material of great value of this remarkable work by Hieromonk Seraphim of blessed memory. Having myself employed the first edition of this work as a sourcebook in our courses on Apologetics and Comparative Theology, I can testify to the clarity and meticulousness of Fr. Seraphim's presentation of the traditional Orthodox doctrine of creation. I can moreover witness to the satisfaction with which students, previously instructed in evolutionist theories, encounter the truth about our God-breathed origins in the pages of this book. As an antidote against the fashionable but spiritually and intellectually corrosive 'dogma' of evolution, this work is unsurpassed. As such, it belongs everywhere parishes, monasteries, seminaries, and homes where Orthodoxy is taught and studied. ----Archimandrite Luke, Rector, Holy Trinity Orthodox Seminary, Jordanville, New York

This book is a treasure. It not only provides a careful survey of Patristic teaching on creation, it also makes plain the continuing relevance of this teaching by directly challenging the theory of evolution in both its secular and theistic forms. Anyone with a serious interest in Patristic theology or the creation/evolution controversy will find it of great value. ---David Bradshaw, Professor of Philosophy, University of Kentucky, author of Aristotle East and West

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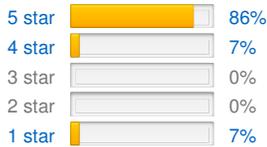
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4.5 out of 5 stars **Glory to God for this book**

By [J. I. Crabtree](#) on June 26, 2013

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In Orthodoxy we have a division of thought on the topics of creation and evolution. There are those who believe that the divinely inspired writings of Genesis are compatible with all the present day conclusions of the scientific establishment concerning the origins of the universe, the world, and man. Among them are many good, well-meaning, and pious people, who for one reason or another believe that rejection of the scientific consensus should not be a requirement for those uniting themselves to Christ.

On the other hand, you have others who have weighed Darwinism and the materialistic accounts of the origins of the universe and found them wanting. They have engaged with the ideas, they have honestly looked and examined the teachings of the holy fathers, and realized that there are some irreconcilable differences between the two accounts. Fr. Seraphim is firmly in this camp. While he does explain that the "science" of the fathers is not necessarily correct, since they were in this respect subject to the conceptions of their day, their interpretations of the Scriptures are nevertheless true. It is in these scriptural interpretations where the fathers are clear that they reject the ideas most fundamental to evolution: random mutation, the origin of death and conflict in the natural world, the age of the universe and world-- ideas not really all that new, since most of them were contained in Epicureanism and other pagan philosophy with which the fathers contended.

Fr. Seraphim is not really a "voice crying in the wilderness," although he may seem like that to Americans in the proverbial backwaters of Orthodoxy. All the fathers since Darwin, who have seriously engaged with his ideas, have rejected them: The Optina Elders, St. Theophan the Recluse, St. Nektarios of Aegina (who wrote a whole book dedicated to the refutation of evolution), Elder Paisios the Athonite, Elder Joseph of Vatopedi (who saw in a vision the creation of the world in Six Days), St. John of Shanghai and San Francisco, and so on, down to the last man. The burden is on the compatibilists, overwhelmingly, to show that their ideas don't conflict with the Tradition, since any holy father who had the opportunity condemned and rejected evolution and its philosophical underpinnings.

Fr. Seraphim, just as he did in [The Soul After Death](#), simply lets the fathers, both ancient and modern, speak for themselves. In [The Soul After Death](#), they spoke on that topic. In this amazing work, they speak on their understandings of the account of the Creation delivered to the Holy Prophet and God-seer, Moses. Buy this book-- you will be surprised with the theological truths given in Genesis. The fathers reveal very, very deep meanings from the divine writings, and all of them treat it as a literal, albeit miraculous, history, even if they also see it allegorically and typologically. As with so many things, this is a real "buzz kill" to those who would try to distort Orthodoxy into their own form of Eastern Rite moralistic therapeutic deism, or their own form of Eastern Rite Anglicanism, or whatever. "Mystery" does not mean "ambiguity."

We have a genuinely "ecumenical" opportunity here to join with other Christians, both Catholic and Protestant, who also reject compatibilism and who seek to infiltrate the atheistic scientific establishment with a voice of reasoned, and reasonable, dissent. Perhaps such an opportunity is like Fr. Seraphim's own concept of the "ecumenism of the anti-ecumenical" (avoid caricatures of this great and holy man and read him for yourself to see why BOTH the liberal modernists AND the super-correct schismatics so intensely hate him). Genesis, Creation and Early Man is an invitation to suffer outside the gates of intellectual respectability-- but not alone. In fact, this book demonstrates that we

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A hefty volume by Blessed Seraphim Rose. I am still not through this book as it takes considerable time to read all of the footnotes and absorb all commentary.

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will be in good company.

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||||| **Understand Man's Creation to Understand Man**

By [Milan Iliev](#) on October 5, 2011

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This is an account of the Creation of the World, and of the Creation of man, through the Holy Fathers of the Orthodox Christian Church's interpretation of Genesis. Fr. Seraphim Rose combines the writings of the Holy Fathers on Genesis, and through them explains the correct Orthodox understanding of the creation of the world, the creation of man, and the fall of man. In doing so, he helps us understand God's love toward man, and His mercy, before, after and even during the fall. If you have ever wondered why world was corrupted, or why there is evil in it, or why there is suffering in the world, the Holy Fathers are shown in this book clearly explaining the origin and purpose of these things, and more. I recommend this as highly as any book of Christian writing I've read.

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||||| **A remarkable work of profound exegesis**

By [David Gould](#) on February 4, 2012

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The late Fr. Seraphim (Rose) has explained the significance of the relationship between God and man before the Fall, as well as the profound relationship between Genesis and Our Lord Jesus Christ. This is a must-read book. The updated 2011 edition features discussion in the light of contemporary views of evolution and creationism.

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||||| **Fr. Seraphim Rose Upholds the Truth of Genesis!**

By [Carolyn](#) on August 7, 2015

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"Genesis, Creation, and Early Man: the Orthodox Christian Vision" is a very well researched book with expansive footnotes, bibliography and index. Father Seraphim Rose quotes the early and modern Church fathers proving that they all believed that the book of Genesis is factual. Father Seraphim, unlike many Orthodox, Catholic, and Protestant Christians, was not afraid to stand up for the truth of the Bible that the Church has always taught. This book is 1,143 pages long and exhaustively proves his case. Father Seraphim Rose had the courage of his convictions just like St. John Chrysostom. All Eastern Orthodox Christians should read this book. It is well worth the time.

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||||| **Pretty good read**

By [David](#) on August 31, 2012

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I think that Fr. Seraphim Rose did a very good job of exposing the dogma of Evolution as being more of a worldview and avoidance strategy, than it is of any verifiable science. He does provide several chapters dealing with the mechanics of the theory and features commentary by several Creation Scientists.

Evolution is foundational to the Noble Secular State and hence is required dogma to man's faith in progress and the notion that things are getting better, including human nature.

As for the ideas represented about male and female and the fall, they seem to be hostile to the very fact of sexual reproduction, and the quotes from Ancient Church Fathers betray a sort of anti sexual bias, which would esteem the Celibate Monastic life above Marriage. Though it would seem that they believed this to be so, It seems hard to suggest that God created Male and Female reluctantly, due to an anticipation of the Fall.

Yet Fr. Rose makes such a claim and it would seem that we are male and female as a plan B, to compensate for the fact that Man and Woman did not remain celibate. It would seem that sexuality is frowned upon and that the Fathers of the Church suggest that some other 'more proper' means of reproduction would have taken place, had Adam and Eve not fallen from Grace.

Having said that, I do think the book is very well documented and if nothing else, demonstrates that the theory of Evolution is being rejected, not only by Christians, but also by many in the Scientific

Published on November 5, 2014 by Loren Capsopoulos

||||| **Another Great Book by Father Seraphim...**

I highly recommend this book by Father Seraphim to any Orthodox Christian who is interested in the subject - but beware that amazon often ships damaged products - better off... [Read more](#)

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||| The Definitive Orthodox Teaching on Creation

By [E. Nikitopoulos](#) on June 18, 2016

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If you are a Christian wishing to understand the way in which the One Church has always interpreted Genesis, then this is the book for you. Drawing on the Hexaemera of St. Basil and St. Ambrose, and on the Commentaries of St. Ephraim the Syrian and St. John Chrysostom (as well as on many other minor writings), Fr. Seraphim has stitched together a magnificent presentation of the Orthodox view of Creation. No other book like this exists in the English language.

This is more than a mere historical study. Here, Fr. Seraphim shows us how the Book of Genesis has an enduring meaning for all men. It shows us where we came from and the state we are trying to get back to. In the words of St. John Chrysostom, it is "a prophecy of the past". As such, we must humble ourselves before its mysteries and seek to understand only what it will tell us. This is what the Holy Fathers did, guided by the Holy Spirit. In an age of opinions and conflicting interpretations, the Fathers provide a solid foundation from which to understand the whole Christian faith.

There are many different interpretations of the Bible. As an Orthodox Christian growing up I always struggled to reconcile the account of the world found in the Book of Genesis and the one presented to us by the secular scientific establishment. While I could never accept the idea that man evolved from apes, I bought into all the rest, i.e., that the earth is billions of years old and that all creatures have evolved over time. I was never quite satisfied with this compromise, though, and, like many of my fellow Christians, I did not research what the opinion of the Holy Fathers was on this subject. If I had, their clarity and divine insight would have answered my questions long ago.

A few years ago I finally began researching the scientific evidence for evolution and doubts began to grow in my heart. A new shock to my conscience came a few months later while doing research for a history paper on Byzantium: while I was reading the Chronographia of St. Theophanes the Confessor, the great 9th century chronicler, I noticed that he would refer to dates using the abbreviation A.M., short for "Year of the World" in Latin (Anno Mundi). Thus, you read that Emperor Heraclius restored the Holy Cross in A.M. 6139 (AD 630) and that the Seventh Ecumenical Council took place in A.M. 6296 (AD 787). I was stunned. Surely, only illiterate Western medievals or American fundamentalists think that the world is a few thousand years old, right?

Well, I was wrong.

The truth is, the Orthodox Church has never had a problem accepting a "literal" interpretation of Genesis, although this literalness is quite different from what you find in Protestant circles. Indeed, as Fr. Seraphim Rose brilliantly demonstrates in this book, interpreting Genesis literally is in fact necessary for the whole Orthodox worldview. This does not mean that many elements in the Creation account cannot ALSO be interpreted symbolically, but denying the literalness of things like the "days" of the creation week obliterates any symbolic interpretation you may make of these. And that is an error which many "accommodationist" or "Old-Earth" Christians fall into. As Fr. Seraphim writes, "we are not free to rearrange the Days of Genesis to fit our theories; we must rather humble our understanding so as to comprehend what the sacred text actually says" (p. 169).

This book is filled with so many insights and interesting points that it's impossible to mention all of them here. But I can't continue without listing a few. Among the many questions tackled in the book are the following: Why did God need to speak to create the world on Day 1? What was the darkness over the waters of the deep? Why did God create light and plants before he made the sun? What is the firmament? What is the image of God? What is the nature of Paradise, and where is it? What was the original condition of man? Why did God punish the serpent? Who were the "sons of God" and the "daughters of men"? What is the curse of Ham?

The book is structured in the following manner:

1. A preface that explains the context of Fr. Seraphim's writing and an overview of some of the themes discussed later on. A bit lengthy, but interesting nonetheless.
2. An introduction by Philip E. Johnson, author of Darwin on Trial and founder of the Intelligent Design

movement. Very clear presentation of the scientific problems with evolution.

3. Verse by verse commentary from the Creation Week to Babel. This is the crown jewel of the book (approximately 230 pages).

4. A copy of a letter written by Fr. Seraphim on the topic of evolution, showing that evolution is essentially a philosophy and that it is irreconcilable with Orthodox Christianity.

5. An analysis of the history of scientific thought in the West since the Enlightenment. Provides the historical and philosophical background needed to understand why the theory of evolution developed.

6. A lengthy section refuting "Christian Evolutionism" and demonstrating that any attempt to reconcile evolution and Christianity produces a satanic, un-Christian and chiliastic philosophy (e.g. in the style of Teilhard de Chardin).

7. Selection of letters written by Fr. Seraphim to various friends and clerics during the 1970s and 80s. Not my favourite part, but provides interesting context on the writing of the book.

8. Four lengthy Appendices. The first discusses man's original state of incorruption in more detail, expanding on notions treated elsewhere in the book. The second appendix looks at how some modern Orthodox saints like St. Nektarios of Aegina and St. John of Kronstadt viewed evolution. The third looks at biological arguments against evolution while the fourth looks at problems with the current techniques of dating the Earth. The last two are very up-to-date and come especially in handy when trying to refute evolutionists.

9. A lengthy list of resources for further reading. Includes some interesting notes, for example, on the question of dragons and dinosaurs.

10. A list of biographies of different saints referred to throughout the book, in alphabetical order.

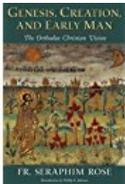
A few notes on the form of the book: The cover image is simply stunning, and the book makes for a handsome piece on the bookshelf. There are about 100 illustrations on the inside, many of which are pictures of rare icons depicting events from Genesis. The font is clear yet elegant. Footnotes are pretty long and are clear most of the time, although endnotes can also be found at the very end of the book. The sources cited are extensive and everything is presented in the most scholarly manner. No typos. My one critique of the book is the binding (regular perfect glue binding) which, considering the thickness of the book, tends to leave lines on the spine. It's not a very big problem, though. Delivery was done on time and the product was wrapped in plastic. Again, this book is HIGHLY RECOMMENDED.

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