



# Beginnings: Ancient Christian Readings of the Biblical Creation Narratives

*Peter C. Bouteneff*

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"This wonderfully researched and elegantly written book provides the reader with a compelling and trustworthy portrait of how the fathers of the church read the story of Adam and Eve. As Bouteneff tells that story we see that the tale of the fall is always contextualized within a narrative that celebrates the restoration and redemption of the human race."--**Gary Anderson**, professor of Old Testament, University of Notre Dame

"*Beginnings* takes us back to the beginning of the scriptural creation narrative and to the beginning of the Christian appropriation of this narrative. The reader is initiated into precursors of the Christian tradition (especially the Septuagint and Philo) and then guided through the early Christian thinkers (especially Origen) whose writings underpin current theological reflection on Genesis 1-3. *Beginnings* allows twenty-first-century readers to wrestle with issues ranging from creation and the image of God to anthropology and gender--all in the context of the community of faith that found its beginning, middle, and end in Jesus Christ. Peter Bouteneff has done the church a valuable service in this focused study."--**Joel C. Elowsky**, managing editor, Ancient Christian Commentary on Scripture, Drew University

"The question of the origin of humankind and the cosmos has perhaps never been so hotly debated as nowadays, with 'evolution' and 'creationism' presenting themselves as polar opposites. In this fine book, Peter Bouteneff presents a carefully researched and scholarly reading of early Christian readings of the creation account in Genesis. What emerges is a range of interlocking insights into God's creative purpose and the human place in the cosmos. Genesis 1-3 is seen as neither a myth nor an outdated scientific account, but a poem of creation, yielding deeper meanings upon closer ponderings. Bouteneff unveils the often surprising riches of our patristic inheritance with a rare intelligence and passion."--**Andrew Louth**, professor of patristic and Byzantine studies, University of Durham

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