

CSA News

The Creation Science Association for Mid-America

"It is better to trust in the Lord than to put confidence in man" Psalm 118:8

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The Bible: Literal, Symbolic or Pro Choice? Part II

by Tom Willis

In Part I we learned that the sane meaning of metaphors in serious text is normally the same as metaphors in serious speech: to add color or emphasis to the description of a person, place, event, etc. Of course, there are some serious, comedy and other writings (and speech) that are heavy in their application of metaphor, or other figures of speech. We noted that, the Bible has passages that seem to be entirely, or largely, figurative, e.g., the parables of Jesus, and most apocalyptic prophecy. We **know** this is true because the authors are meticulous to warn us of it. "The ten horns are ten kings" (Dan 7:24, Rev 17:12), and "He spake a parable" (13 times in various forms in Matt, Mark, Luke and John) are examples, "Warning, figures of speech ahead."

One does not need a seminary degree to discern that the Holy Spirit seems to have known that some braying donkeys in the not-too-distant future would demand literal interpretation of these obvious metaphors. In fact, sometimes one wonders if a seminary degree does not hinder sane Biblical exegesis.

As we illustrated last time, there are also folks who, based on the "evidence" of one figure of speech, within 500 pages of perfectly straightforward, historical and/or doctrinal passages, declare that none can legitimately be interpreted literally. Not only are such self-annointed experts legion, they inevitably and effectively declare that they are thus authorized to categorize any portion or all of the Bible as figurative, conveniently allowing them to build any history or doctrine that suits them. This is not Biblical scholarship. It is, at best, sophistry.

Genesis and the Gospel

Another strategy used to avoid "inconvenient" Bible passages is to declare them irrelevant to the Gospel. This is often joined with the "figurative" declaration to render the origins narrative off-limits to *informed* Christians. More than a few even declare that teaching or writing about origins in any way other than in obedience to popular science is unchristian, or antichristian.

In this article, we will reflect on the "irrelevant" and "figurative" positions. Let's begin with a brief, computer assisted, factual overview of Genesis and the Gospel.

Thoughts by Jesus on the Word of God

There are key passages that guide Bible interpretation, "I have finished the work... I have manifested thy name... I have given unto them the words which thou gavest me; and they have received them... I pray for them...keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me, that they may be one, as we are [one]... Sanctify them through thy truth: thy word is truth... And for their sakes I sanctify myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth." John 17:1-19

Notice, this is the great **unity** prayer by Jesus. He earnestly desires of the Father that His followers be "*sanctified* [set apart] *by thy truth, thy word is truth.*" In this context, it is clear that God's truth is both the sanctifying and the unifying agent of the Church. Yet, how often do you hear that ignoring, de-emphasizing,



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symbolizing or mythologizing inconvenient passages will "help bring about unity." It may, but around what? These tactics may be wise in some men's eyes, but, Jesus didn't use them, nor did any New Testament author.

Thoughts by Jesus on Moses

Lazarus was a servant of a rich man. Both died, the rich man went to a place of torment, but Lazarus went to the bosom of Abraham. The rich man was thirsty, "*Send Lazarus to fetch me water.*" "*Not possible,*" he was told. Then the rich man seemed to grasp the reality of the situation. So he said: "*Send Lazarus to warn my brothers*"

Jesus is telling the story, understood by most to be a parable, but that is not critical to its meaning. Jesus has the figure of Abraham say to the rich man, "*They have Moses and the Prophets, let them hear them.*" "*Oh no Father Abraham, they will not believe Moses, but, if one rose from the dead, they would believe.*" Abraham (Jesus) replies: "***If they hear not Moses and the prophets, neither will they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.***" Luke 16:19-31 You, dear reader, need to consider, for your own welfare, what Jesus meant when he said that anyone not believing Moses would not believe Jesus either. There are countless "christians" and "christian leaders" today who do not believe Moses. Are you sure they believe Jesus. If you believe these "leaders," you might want to ask yourself what you believe about Jesus,

because Jesus said they are not believers. Rather than Christian leaders, the Bible teaches they are a mission field... or worse.

Moses In the Gospel

Moses is named, by name, in the New Testament:

- 30 times in the Gospels
- 19 Times by Jesus
- 39 Times in the Acts, Epistles and Revelation
- No other Old Testament author or prophet comes close!

Genesis in the New Testament

The New Testament quotes, alludes to, or refers to Genesis:

- Over 200 Times
- Over 100 references to Genesis 1-11
- Every N.T. author refers to Genesis 1-11 at least once!
- **Genesis is always treated as fact! There is Never a hint** that Genesis is considered allegory, poetry or "symbolic," much less myth, or trivialized for simple-minded primitive people on the way up from apes!

Thoughts by Jesus on Moses and Genesis

"For laying aside the commandment of God, ye hold the tradition of men... Full well ye reject the commandment of God, that ye may keep your own tradition. For Moses said... But ye say..." [The key is not the details, but in replacing God's Word with man's opinion.] (Mark 7:8-11). Some may say, "He was referring only to Law." True, but irrelevant. Jesus was (again) castigating men for inventing Scripture. Jesus often referred to the history recorded by Moses, and always treated it as fact. He referred to the Flood, comparing it directly to the final destruction. He referred to Man being made "In the beginning," not 18 billion years after the beginning. He used the facts of history by Moses to establish the doctrine of marriage. He even used the tense of a single OT verb (Exo 3:6)(Matt 22:32) to prove the resurrection. And the whole Gospel is built around the ownership and rules of God juxtaposed with the disobedience of man in the (mythical?) Garden of Eden. When He chastised them for unbelief, Jesus occasionally mentioned the Law, but often just mentioned Moses. If the history of Moses is symbolic fairy tale, so are the doctrines of the New Testament.

"What If God...?" - The Oldest Form of Unbelief

Recently I was reminded of another form of pseudochristian thought. The leader of a rapidly-growing church in the region dropped into our monthly meeting. I recognized him as a visitor and greeted him. He was not hostile, but distant. He included a discussion of his visit to CSA in his next letter to his flock. Here are key parts:

Sally [name changed], my fifteen year old, was with me. Afterwards she asked, "Couldn't his arguments, used against the logic of the scientists, be used against his own position as well?" I thought her comment perceptive – it was exactly what I was thinking... [Correct answer: "Well, possibly Sal, but to make your claim you need to show us how the same logic or fallacies apply to the speaker, not just claim it."]

I talked to Sal about the speaker's presupposition that the Biblical creation stories are God's attempt to tell us exactly what happened at creation and how God created. Given his presuppositions, he must then build a case for how what can be observed in the natural world fits the "historical" and "scientific" record as described by God in the Bible. [Note the speaker has problem presuppositions, not the daddy.]

"**What if,**" I asked Sally, "Moses, or those who came before him, wrote the epic stories of creation, using the language and concepts of their day..." "**What if** God whispered in their hearts... inspiring these theological truths..." **What if,**" I continued, "God intentionally did not reveal the specifics..."

Of course there is more, request a copy of his epistle. But the heart of his position is obvious in what I have quoted. God told him plainly what he did, and how long it took. His presuppositions do not agree with God's Word, so he pretends that any "**What if**" is superior to Scripture, and sufficient in his eyes to refute or rewrite any Scripture he chooses to disbelieve. Daddy revealed his presuppositions, and "defended" them by accusing the speaker of guilt (without evidence), and inventing *scripture* out of hot air. Another fellow did this, "Yea, hath God said" then followed it with, "Ye shall not surely die." He rejected the obvious meaning of God's Word and invented his own *truth*. Isaac Newton suggested, that many Protestants would be part of the Great Harlot. Perhaps a "Saint Newton Seminary" would be a step forward.

He also reported to his flock that only one item of evidence for a young earth was included in the CSA talk. As the speaker announced at the start, he had decided not to focus on the scientific evidence for a young earth, which had been covered in four meetings this year. His focus was the application of Magic in the *proofs* of old-ages and evolution. A claim that the speaker's logic could be turned back on him, must show us how, rather than inventing Scripture or science to fit whatever the claimant believes.

As Solomon said, there is nothing new in the motives for "scholarship" like this. They include: propping up various manifestly false doctrines and attempting to reduce the Bible to meaningless gibberish; but mostly building an "interpretation" edifice that enables the "scholar" to please himself or men, rather than the only living God. Jesus said of this tactic. "*How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that comes from God only?*" (John 5:44) Paul added "*For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine [teaching]; but after their own lusts shall they heap to themselves teachers, having itching ears; And they shall turn away their ears from the truth, and shall be turned unto fables [myths].*" (2Tim 4:3,4)

At CSA, we seek to understand what Scripture really says. Our evidence-based "presupposition" is that Scripture was written by a competent author who stated emphatically that, while not telling everything, He was telling **TRUTH**, not symbolic fairy tales! We expect, and find that, scientific evidence always supports it. We don't invent Scripture (or science) to support our beliefs. We maintain that both Scripture and science teach a young earth, without "macro evolution." We do not pretend our understanding of Scripture or science is perfect, or above criticism. But our critics mostly offer distortion and transparent unbelief. If a few "*What ifs*" convert the "six-days" of Genesis 1, Exodus 20:9-11 and 31:15-17 to 600 million years, then why not "What if eternal life means 6-days?" If Scripture can be declared irrelevant or rewritten by every opinionated human, merely by pronouncement or "*What ifs,*" why waste human resources pretending to believe it?

Related articles can be found at www.csama.org, under "Newsletters," in Jan-Feb and Nov-Dec, 2005, and the Nov, 1999 issue, "I'm a Christian Too *Proof* of Evolution." The theme of these articles is a little different, but the content quite relevant to this topic. For even more, see the FAQ page on the website.

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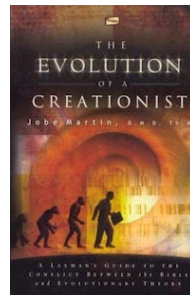
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**The Creation Science Association
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CSA Meeting - Tuesday, Jan 3, 2006

The Relevance of Creation

By: Tom Willis

It behooves us to occasionally review why we are in this ministry. There are some who feel that our view of Biblical history is wrong, and some who feel it is irrelevant. This talk focuses on the overwhelming evidence that origins are foundational to all Christian doctrines. We typically discuss Biblical history in "History of the World" talks, so that is not the thrust of this talk. Tom recently completed converting, rewriting and updating his various "relevance" talks to Powerpoint, and has given a few of the new talks. Now he will share a fresh look at an important issue with a CSA audience for your consideration.

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CSA Meeting - Tuesday, Feb 7, 2006

**Mathematics in Nature
and the Nature of Mathematics**

By: Bob Farwell

It is often claimed that mathematics is the one subject which cannot be taught from a distinctly Biblical perspective. Bob does not agree and has been violating that claim for quite a few years. Like other aspects of science, in Math, we typically find that God was using higher mathematical principles before man was even on the scene to pretend that he had invented mathematics.

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