

## Genesis: The Beginning of Time...or God's People?

by Ward Fenley

For a moment, let's pretend Genesis was never in the Bible. Instead, let's assume that the Bible consists of 65 books and that those books contain the books Exodus through Revelation. In other words, the book of Exodus marks the beginning of the history of God's people and all the books from Exodus to Revelation simply tell the story of God's interaction with those people. As we begin our study in Exodus we quickly realize that God's people are a physical nation of people called Israelites. Exodus through Deuteronomy tells the story of how they were held captive by the Egyptians, rescued by Moses, given laws from God while wandering for 40 years in the wilderness; and then finally end up in the promised land in the book of Joshua. Then, beginning in Joshua, their history continues and shows how they eventually have boundaries established for their land by overtaking other nations. From Joshua to Malachi we follow the Israelites' history as they experience life under kings, have victories and losses against other nations, obey and disobey God, and receive prophecies from such great prophets as Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Daniel about a time when they would be under the holy leadership of God in an everlasting kingdom. Finally, their history reaches a marvelous climax with the fulfillment of this kingdom and Jesus Christ as God and Governor over this people forever. The story of Christ begins with His birth, his life among this people, His death by this people, and His eventual resurrection and eternal presence with this people. This people never loses the title of Israel, or people of God. The only thing which changes is their nature. That is, once Jesus would come on the scene, they would no longer be Israel after the flesh, but instead they would be Israel after the Spirit. They would now have a spiritual King, a spiritual kingdom, and eternal and spiritual life. That is the history of Israel . That is what Exodus through Revelation is all about.

Now, let's throw Genesis into the picture. Suddenly, according to the presupposition of some, we have a book which chronicles the creation of the sun, the moon, the stars, plants and animals, geology, topography, oceans, rivers, the first humans, and of course conspicuously silent of dinosaurs, cavemen, and the age of the universe. Then suddenly, in chapter eleven, we have the birth of Abram, who would later be the Father of the Israelites.

In other words, one thousand one hundred and seventy-nine chapters of the Bible deal with the history of the Israelites and only the first ten deal with the physical creation of the universe. That is, the first ten chapters of the Bible speak about the creation of the physical universe, the next one thousand one hundred and seventy-seven chapters deal specifically with the history of Israel. Then, according to a futuristic perspective, the very last two chapters in Revelation deal with the destruction of the physical universe and the creation of a new physical universe. The "first heavens and earth " which Revelation says must "pass away" is of course referring to the same heavens and earth which God created "in the beginning."

So, a total of 12 chapters of the Bible are devoted to the creation and destruction of the physical universe and a total of 1177 deal with the history of the Israelites. For some reason, that just doesn't seem balanced. On one hand you have the

monumentally significant creation of the universe with only ten chapters devoted to its creation and two chapters devoted to its destruction; and in between, 1177 chapters devoted to the history of a seemingly insignificant people called Israelites. One would think that if the beginning ten chapters the Bible were about the physical creation of the universe and planet earth and the last two chapters of the Bible were about the destruction of the universe and planet earth, perhaps the rest of the Bible might be about the history of all the inhabitants of planet earth and all the history of the physical universe, humans, aliens, super novae and scientific and technological development. In which case, the Bible would be this enormous book which is being continually written and updated by ever-existing prophets until the climax and destruction of everything. But virtually all evangelicals believe that the Bible is not being continually updated and in fact ceased being updated after the book of Revelation, which was written in the first century.

I suppose I should have identified my intended audience already. I am writing this to preterists who still believe that the above scenario is true. Don't get me wrong. I used to believe it too. But in fact, preterists who actually affirm the above is true are more inconsistent than futurists who affirm the above is true. Why? Most preterists believe that only ten chapters of the Bible speak of the physical universe. They believe the first ten in Genesis refer to its creation, but rather than the last two in Revelation referring to its destruction, they actually believe that the last two chapters in the Bible are still referring to the history of the Israelites, and do not refer at all to cosmological history. In other words, they believe (as I used to believe) that Genesis 11 through Revelation 22 documents the history of the Israelites, but that God abruptly and grotesquely predicates the history and redemption of his people with this awkward, bizarre, unreasonable, and totally out of place beginning of the physical universe, never again to enter the pages of holy writ. Call me liberal, in denial, or whatever other ad hominem name you would like, but what I have just described not only seems illogical; it is *literarily* absurd.

So then, having moved on to a consistent view of Scripture from Genesis to Revelation, let's safely assume that Genesis is not a literally historical, chronological account of the beginning of the physical creation and its inhabitants. For, if that were the case, then the rest of the Bible would be about the history of the physical creation and its inhabitants. After all, it is called *Genesis*! The Beginning. If it is called the Beginning, then wouldn't it make sense that the rest of the Bible would be the outworking of what was begun? But as the literalists would have it, the Bible has a beginning and an end but no middle! That is, the futurists have Genesis 1-11 as describing the beginning of the physical creation and Revelation 21-22 as describing the end of the physical creation, while maintaining the rest of the Bible is about some obscure Middle-Eastern people. Preterists holding to a literal, global view of Genesis are just as unsound, and perhaps more so, due to their afore-mentioned inconsistency.

So, again, let's rightly assume that Genesis is primarily about the *beginning* of the Israelites. That is, Genesis is the beginning of the story of how God entered into covenant with His people. But in order to approach this correctly, we must not *literarily* isolate Genesis 1-10 from the rest of Scripture. That is, we must use the analogy of Scripture as a theological framework for interpreting Genesis. The Westminster Confession of Faith describes this analogy of scripture as follows: "The

infallible rule of interpretation of Scripture is the Scripture itself; and therefore, when there is a question about the true and full sense of any scripture (which is not manifold, but one), it must be searched and known by other places that speak more clearly." (WCF I.xi)

This will be a brief examination of several words and phrases in Genesis which are used to communicate something far more meaningful than the physical creation of the universe, as far as God and His people are concerned. But before we get started, it is imperative that we understand that God is indeed the Creator of everything, not just His covenants or His people. Many complain, "But if Genesis 1 isn't directly referring to the creation of the physical universe, where in the Bible does it speak of God creating everything?" What if the Bible didn't say anything about it? Would that destroy our faith? Would that leave us no defense for our position that God created everything? Would it simply make us have a bad day? There are lots of things we experience on a daily basis which are not addressed in Scripture. There is no mention of computers, TVs, blow-dryers, automobiles, or even helicopters (though some dispensational theologians might disagree!). We continue in our faith, just as firmly grounded, even though Scripture never mentions them. And we know that ultimately, even all those things came from God. But Scripture does in fact speak repeatedly about the creation of all things. God created all people and objects, visible and invisible. Colossians 1 is just one of many passages which makes this clear:

Colossians 1:16-17 For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him: (17) And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.

We do indeed believe the Bible affirms perpetually and consistently that God is the Creator of the physical universe. Even Genesis alludes to the fact that God is the Creator of everything; it is a given. But we must be clear that *Genesis* is *not* providing us with a chronological account of the cosmological creation. Genesis is the story of the origin of God's covenants with man. Now, as any good story contains elements close to our experience in order to make the story come alive, Genesis has these elements as well. And these are elements which God has created! It was simply accepted by the ancient Hebrews, whose Scriptures contain Genesis, that God created all things. Therefore God, through Moses, uses these created things to illustrate the creation of His covenant relationship with His people (as He does repeatedly through many other prophets throughout the Old Testament). Most people agree Moses wrote the Pentateuch (Genesis through Deuteronomy). Therefore, wouldn't it make sense that the author of all five of these books is referring to things dealing with the beginnings of God's covenant people in the first book of the five, called the "Beginning", since the history of God's covenant people is all the other four books in the same volume are about?

Moses is writing about the history of God's people, not the universe. Moses is quoted or paraphrased throughout the Bible, whether by use of exact whole passages, phrases, or even mere words he used in the history of the Israelites. So let's start with words he uses which we find elsewhere to give us insight into the beautiful story of God's people. We will not go over every relationship of every word which connects Genesis with the rest of Scripture. However, we will pick a few very choice words

clearly indicating that Genesis is a book about the beginning of God's covenant people, thus setting the stage for the content of the entire Bible. "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." Compare this with the introduction to the Gospel of John:

John 1:1-5 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. (2) The same was in the beginning with God. (3) All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made. (4) In him was life; and the life was the light of men. (5) And the light shineth in darkness; and the darkness comprehended it not.

### **Light and Glory**

We begin to understand that there is some element of metaphor when John uses the word "light" to describe Jesus. We also see this with John's use of "darkness". It speaks of a contrast God wants us to understand—an eternal contrast designed to uphold God's glory in the minds of His people. Also, since Jesus is almighty God, it makes no sense for John to be referring to the creation of the physical universe or even the beginning of Jesus. Jesus had no beginning, unless, of course, we are referring to His actual manifestation in the flesh. Is it possible that John is speaking about the beginning of the New Covenant just as Moses was speaking about the beginning of the Old Covenant? John refers to aspects of both covenants in his story of the beginning of the New Covenant just as Moses refers to aspects of both covenants in his story of the beginning of the Old Covenant. John even says, "The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ." (John 1:17) Both Moses and John contrast light and darkness throughout their introductions. So we see that the beginnings of both books speak of light and darkness to establish the contrast between the two covenants. Even Paul writes more specifically on this topic:

2 Corinthians 3:6-14 Who also hath made us able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life. (7) But if the ministration of death, written *and* engraven in stones, was glorious, so that the children of Israel could not stedfastly behold the face of Moses for the glory of his countenance; which glory was to be done away: (8) How shall not the ministration of the spirit be rather glorious? (9) For if the ministration of condemnation be glory, much more doth the ministration of righteousness exceed in glory. (10) For even that which was made glorious had no glory in this respect, by reason of the glory that excelleth. (11) For if that which is done away *was* glorious, much more that which remaineth is glorious. (12) Seeing then that we have such hope, we use great plainness of speech: (13) And not as Moses, which put a vail over his face, that the children of Israel could not stedfastly look to the end of that which is abolished: (14) But their minds were blinded: for until this day remaineth the same vail untaken away in the reading of the old testament; which vail is done away in Christ.

Glory is a term which can be used interchangeably with light. John does this in his own genesis of the New Covenant:

John 1:14 And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth.

In looking at Jesus Christ, they were not beholding physical light but rather the glory of God. It is obvious that the New Covenant "glory that excels" is far greater than the "glory which [was] passing away." Under the Old Covenant glory the darkness of man was shown. But in 2 Corinthians Paul calls the Old Covenant glory a glory which was fading and even a ministration of death. That is, this lesser light of the Old Covenant ruled over the darkness (or night) of God's people and showed them separated from God. Yet the greater light of the New Covenant was rising (excelling) to rule over the brightness (or day) of God's people dwelling in His presence.

Specifically, Moses writes of the comparison between the two covenants, again, in terms of lights:

Genesis 1:16-18 And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night: he made the stars also. (17) And God set them in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth, (18) And to rule over the day and over the night, and to divide the light from the darkness: and God saw that it was good.

In the kingdom, God's people shine as brightness:

Daniel 12:3 And they that be wise shall shine as the brightness of the firmament; and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.

Matthew uses similar language:

Matthew 13:43 Then shall the righteous shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father. Who hath ears to hear, let him hear.

## **Heaven and Earth**

So then, we turn again to the language of Genesis. "God created the heaven and the earth." At first it may seem like this is a literal statement of cosmological fact. But let's see how Moses uses the phrase "heaven and earth" in the rest of his writings:

Leviticus 26:18-19 And if ye will not yet for all this hearken unto me, then I will punish you seven times more for your sins. (19) And I will break the pride of your power; and I will make your heaven as iron, and your earth as brass:

This heaven does not seem to be referring to the vast space containing the stars, clouds, and all other luminaries, nor does this earth seem to be the terrain upon which God's people walked. Moses clears up the meaning:

Deuteronomy 4:26 I call heaven and earth to witness against you this day, that ye shall soon utterly perish from off the land whereunto ye go over Jordan to possess it; ye shall not prolong *your* days upon it, but shall utterly be destroyed.

Heaven and earth here refer to something which makes an accusation against the people of God. So we must ask: how is it that the physical cosmos can accuse God's

people? This question is answered by Moses' further use of the phrase "heaven and earth" which clarifies a distinct relationship to the law and even the song of Moses:

Deuteronomy 31:19-26 Now therefore write ye this song for you, and teach it the children of Israel: put it in their mouths, that this song may be a witness for me against the children of Israel. (20) For when I shall have brought them into the land which I swore unto their fathers, that floweth with milk and honey; and they shall have eaten and filled themselves, and waxen fat; then will they turn unto other gods, and serve them, and provoke me, and break my covenant. (21) And it shall come to pass, when many evils and troubles are befallen them, that this song shall testify against them as a witness; for it shall not be forgotten out of the mouths of their seed: for I know their imagination which they go about, even now, before I have brought them into the land which I swear. (22) Moses therefore wrote this song the same day, and taught it the children of Israel. (23) And he gave Joshua the son of Nun a charge, and said, Be strong and of a good courage: for thou shalt bring the children of Israel into the land which I swear unto them: and I will be with thee. (24) And it came to pass, when Moses had made an end of writing the words of this law in a book, until they were finished, (25) That Moses commanded the Levites, which bare the ark of the covenant of the LORD, saying, (26) Take this book of the law, and put it in the side of the ark of the covenant of the LORD your God, that it may be there for a witness against thee.

Thus, we have Moses speaking of the law, heaven and earth, and the song of Moses as a witness against the people of God. They all represent the Old Covenant. That is, heaven is very likely referring to the conscience and earth is referring to the law. They represent that which experiences the guilt and that which brings the guilt, so that both are as iron and brass (bondage) against the people of God. This is why Paul says the law was the taskmaster (slave driver) to lead the people of God to Christ.

## **Earth and Sea**

In Genesis, God refers to the dry land as "earth" and the waters as "seas":

Genesis 1: 10 And God called the dry land Earth; and the gathering together of the waters called he Seas:

Revelation says that there is no more sea in the New Heavens and the New Earth, after the first heaven and the first earth have passed away. The Gentiles are called the "seas" in Isaiah 60 and Israel is often referred to as the earth (for example, "all the tribes of the earth shall mourn, even they who pierced Him"). Ephesians tells us that in Christ, God broke down the middle wall of partition between Jew and Gentile. There is no more division. There is no more land vs. sea. For, they are all one in Christ Jesus. The law given by Moses was the bringing about of a division of humanity. The law separated a people of God from the heathen, or the Gentiles. It showed for the first time God choosing to make a covenant with a people by revelation. He revealed the law from heaven, that is from the holiness of God. It was an act of goodness on the part of God to show the people their transgression and their need for a Savior. This was not so with the Gentiles. They were "without God

and having no hope.” (Ephesians 2:12) Under the Old Covenant, Jew and Gentile were divided from each other as the earth is divided from the sea. But in the New Covenant, those “who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ.” (Ephesians 2:13) That is why in John’s vision of the New Heaven and New Earth, there is no more sea.

## **Men and Beasts**

Even in the account of the creation of man we see covenantal traces:

Genesis 1:26-28 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. (27) So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (28) And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

This could be looking forward to the blessing given to Abraham, that his seed would be multiplied and the people of God would eventually have dominion over the Gentiles. We see this fulfilled both physically and spiritually: with Joshua gaining victory with the physical sword and with Paul gaining victory with the spiritual sword. Even Peter was told to “rise, kill and eat”:

Acts 10:10-15 And he became very hungry, and would have eaten: but while they made ready, he fell into a trance, (11) And saw heaven opened, and a certain vessel descending unto him, as it had been a great sheet knit at the four corners, and let down to the earth: (12) Wherein were all manner of fourfooted beasts of the earth, and wild beasts, and creeping things, and fowls of the air. (13) And there came a voice to him, Rise, Peter; kill, and eat. (14) But Peter said, Not so, Lord; for I have never eaten any thing that is common or unclean. (15) And the voice spake unto him again the second time, What God hath cleansed, that call not thou common.

God describes many beasts in Genesis. Here in Acts the beasts are obviously referring to the Gentiles, which Peter previously believed were unclean, but now through the Gospel were made clean. And the Gospel, through Paul and Barnabas, would spread and multiply the people of God taken from every tribe, kindred, tongue, and nation. So then, Genesis is again telling a story to represent both Old and New Testament realities. This isn’t to say there are not real characters addressed, but it’s not likely that it is chronicling a literal chain of massive cosmological events. Instead, setting the stage for what follows, Genesis is referring to a chain of massive covenantal events.

## **Snakes and their Offspring**

What about the talking serpent? With God all things are possible, and it is certainly within God’s power to cause a snake to talk. But when we consider all of the various

elements of this story and their spiritual significance, it is much more reasonable to conclude that the serpent in Genesis is referring to something other than a literal snake:

Genesis 3:1-6 Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? (2) And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: (3) But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. (4) And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die: (5) For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. (6) And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat.

Was the serpent a real snake? Probably not anymore than the Pharisees were real snakes:

Matthew 3:7 But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees come to his baptism, he said unto them, O generation of vipers, who hath warned you to flee from the wrath to come?

Matthew 12:33-34 Either make the tree good, and his fruit good; or else make the tree corrupt, and his fruit corrupt: for the tree is known by his fruit. (34) O generation of vipers, how can ye, being evil, speak good things? for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh.

We must not overlook this subtle reference to the snake/fruit motif of the Genesis account. Again, Jesus addresses these snakes:

Matthew 23:31-33 Wherefore ye be witnesses unto yourselves, that ye are the children of them which killed the prophets. (32) Fill ye up then the measure of your fathers. (33) Ye serpents, ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of hell?

Who was their serpent ancestor? It wasn't a literal snake. Isn't Adam the one who sinned from the beginning? Therefore, we must conclude that the serpent in Genesis wasn't a literal snake but was the one who brought sin into the covenantal world. The Pharisees were offspring of the first snake. Sin continues to this day as a result of Adam's snake-like behavior.

### **Trees and Fruit**

And did they eat of a literal tree with literal fruit producing the knowledge of good and evil? Again, probably not. There is no such object. However, by the law is the knowledge of good and evil:

Romans 3:20 Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified in his



sight: for by the law is the knowledge of sin.

Romans 7:7-11 What shall we say then? Is the law sin? God forbid. Nay, I had not known sin, but by the law: for I had not known lust, except the law had said, Thou shalt not covet. (8) But sin, taking occasion by the commandment, wrought in me all manner of concupiscence. For without the law sin was dead. (9) For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died. (10) And the commandment, which was ordained to life, I found to be unto death. (11) For sin, taking occasion by the commandment, deceived me, and by it slew me.

Sin was already in the world, but sin was not imputed. God gave commandment to Adam, and sin, taking occasion by the commandment, slew him. Genesis later tells the story of the law given by Moses to the people. The law was given and sin (already in the world) took occasion by the commandment, deceived them and slew them. It's all in man's response to law. He tries to take law and justify himself, but that law only brings guilt to the conscience. (This is the real definition of being slain. This is why Jesus tells the Jews that their father was a murderer from the beginning. They followed suit. Their own sinful consciences slew them taking occasion by the law.)

So the tree of the knowledge of good and evil represents the law of Moses, or any law man would set up between himself and God as a way of achieving righteousness by his own effort. But there is yet another tree: the Tree of Life. God, however, keeps Adam and Eve from eating of that tree lest they have eternal life. (Genesis 3:22) But Christ says *He* is the life. Is it possible that the Tree of Life represents Christ? So why would God keep them from Christ? Because Christ had not yet fulfilled what was necessary to forgive sin.

Remembering that God does not look upon the outward but rather looks upon the heart, we should understand Adam and Eve's nakedness as not a literal, physical nakedness but rather a status before God. Nakedness has never been viewed as a good thing in Scripture. In 2 Corinthians 5 God's people were longing to be further clothed as a body of believers previously under the veil of Moses, which was passing away during the first century. But as one turned to the Lord the veil was gradually being taken away from the entire body (2 Corinthians 3). Nakedness in a post-Adam era meant an awareness of guilt. That is, all are naked (without Christ) upon conception. However, when law comes, one is made aware of his or her nakedness. Adam's nakedness simply meant that he was without Christ, i.e., without the Tree of Life. But, since he the first man (i.e. the first man with whom God made a covenant), death (separation from God) had not come upon him. More specifically, he had not known good or evil. But he was not dead (separated from God), as is evident by the fact that God said, "in the day you eat you shall surely die." In the day Adam ate he died, that is, he was made aware of his nakedness, which is being aware of guilt before God. And it was that guilt which separated him from God's presence. In other words, prior to his awareness of guilt, he was the only man who was naked and yet existing in life with God. But when he sinned, he was made aware of that nakedness. And thus death passed upon him and all men who would fall under his umbrella. It was the curse which Adam's sin brought.

At this point we should note that the most significant problem of God's people

throughout the whole Bible is that they tried to use the law God had given to bring themselves into right standing with God. But just as God's purpose in giving the law through Moses was to show Israel's desperate need of salvation by God and not by law, so also that was the purpose of giving law to Adam. And just as Israel used the law unrighteously, so Adam used the law unrighteously. For the serpent (Adam's mind) told him that he would not surely die but instead be like God. In other words, he used the law, and not faith, to try to bring himself into right standing with God. He sought his own righteousness, boastfully pursuing God-likeness in defiance of what God had said.

### **The Tree of Life is Christ**

In the garden there was a Tree of Life. Not a literal tree, of course, but that which represented Christ. God's plan was to bring law to Adam (that is, bring law to His covenant people) to show his need for that Tree of Life. However, God's plan was also to bring about the death of that Tree of Life to restore man to Himself. The Tree of Life is Christ. Therefore God kept them from partaking of it:

Genesis 3:22-24 And the LORD God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: (23) Therefore the LORD God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. (24) So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

The metaphor of the Tree of Life is used elsewhere:

Proverbs 3:13-18 Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. (14) For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. (15) She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. (16) Length of days is in her right hand; and in her left hand riches and honour. (17) Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace. (18) She is a tree of life to them that lay hold upon her: and happy is every one that retaineth her.

Wisdom, in Proverbs 3 and 8, as well as 1 Corinthians 1 refers to Christ:

1 Corinthians 1:23-24 But we preach Christ crucified, unto the Jews a stumblingblock, and unto the Greeks foolishness; (24) But unto them which are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ the power of God, and the wisdom of God.

Wisdom=the Tree of Life. Wisdom=Christ. Therefore, the Tree of Life=Christ.

The tree of life is, without a doubt, used as a metaphor for Christ and His salvation in Proverbs. In fact, everywhere else in Scripture it is also used the same way:

Proverbs 11:30 The fruit of the righteous is a tree of life; and he that winneth souls is wise.

Proverbs 13:12 Hope deferred maketh the heart sick: but when the desire cometh, it is a tree of life.

Proverbs 15:4 A wholesome tongue is a tree of life: but perverseness therein is a breach in the spirit.

Revelation 2:7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches; To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

Revelation 22:2 In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of the river, was there the tree of life, which bare twelve manner of fruits, and yielded her fruit every month: and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

Revelation 22:14 Blessed are they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

This last passage speaks of "having right" to the Tree of Life. Jesus said that we must eat His flesh and drink His blood in order to have life. God said in Genesis that if Adam ate of the Tree of Life he would live forever. Again, Jesus said whoever ate His flesh and drank His blood would live forever:

John 6:50-58 This is the bread which cometh down from heaven, that a man may eat thereof, and not die. (51) I am the living bread which came down from heaven: if any man eat of this bread, he shall live forever: and the bread that I will give is my flesh, which I will give for the life of the world. (52) The Jews therefore strove among themselves, saying, How can this man give us his flesh to eat? (53) Then Jesus said unto them, Verily, verily, I say unto you, Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you. (54) Whoso eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, hath eternal life; and I will raise him up at the last day. (55) For my flesh is meat indeed, and my blood is drink indeed. (56) He that eateth my flesh, and drinketh my blood, dwelleth in me, and I in him. (57) As the living Father hath sent me, and I live by the Father: so he that eateth me, even he shall live by me. (58) This is that bread which came down from heaven: not as your fathers did eat manna, and are dead: he that eateth of this bread shall live forever.

From Genesis to Revelation, it is clear that Christ is the Tree of Life. It would be negligent, therefore, to isolate one passage and assume that its meaning is vastly different and even glaringly literal while all the rest of the passages are clearly metaphorically referring to Christ.

### **It's All the Same Story**

Throughout the Bible the goal is to bring a covenant people back into fellowship with the God who created them. This is the story of the Bible and the story of redemption. Making Genesis refer to an unrelated scientific account of creation is not only illogical, irrational, and scientific nonsense; it also is a grave mishandling of Scripture, considering the weight of evidence pointing to its proper place and significance in the context of the whole story. Again, the argument is not that there

were no people called Adam and Eve or that any other characters in the first 11 chapters are merely mythical. However, the hyperbole and metaphors used to communicate the story of the covenant people of Israel should not be missed. It is what the Bible is about and brings cohesion to the books of Genesis and Revelation and all the books in between; instead of making Exodus through Jude unite but leaving Genesis and Revelation hanging out as totally unrelated accounts of the beginning and ending of the universe.