

Scripture Truth



Inside:

Is the Bible True?
New! Hebrews 7-10
Can the Christian sin?
Wonderful words of life

One hundred verses of real grace
"And the Scripture cannot be broken"
What does the Bible teach about Creation?

January – March 2010

SCRIPTURE TRUTH

Editor: Theo Balderston

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Contents

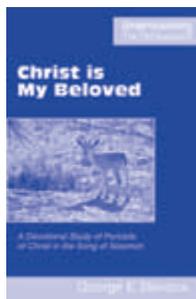
“And the Scripture cannot be broken”	1	New! Hebrews 7–10	14
Wonderful words of life.....	2	One hundred verses of <i>real grace</i>	18
Is the Bible True?	6	What does the Bible teach about Creation? 23	
Can the Christian sin?	12	The Great teacher	Back Cover

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by George E Stevens

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Front cover photograph of Lizard Point, Cornwall

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All correspondence should be addressed to:

SCRIPTURE TRUTH Publications

31-33 Glover Street, CREWE, Cheshire CW1 3LD

Tel: 01270 252274

Fax: 01477 587454

“And the Scripture cannot be broken”

It was winter. As Jesus walked in Solomon’s porch, the Jews [asked Him concerning His Messiahship, and His answer concluded with the words], “I and the Father are one.” The Jews took up stones to stone Him, telling Him they did so, “because Thou, being a man, makest Thyself God” (John 10:22-31, KJV).

Now then, let the reader carefully mark answer made by Jesus Christ. He appeals to certain words in the 82nd Psalm, “Is it not written in your law, I have said, Ye are gods?” (v.34). He then interrupts Himself. He pauses in a solemn parenthesis, and exclaims, “*And the Scripture cannot be broken*” (v.35).

Has sufficient attention been paid to this? Was there no rationalist scribe from the universities of Israel to be found there, to say to Him, “You cannot, Lord, claim the authority of that expression. Although inspired as respects the thoughts suggested by his piety, [the psalmist] no doubt did not maturely weigh every little word with a very scrupulous regard to the use that

might possibly be made of it a thousand years after his own day.”

Not only is our Lord’s argument¹ here founded entirely on the use made by the psalmist of the single word, “gods” (Psalm 82:6), but, farther, Jesus calls it by the name of LAW. He does this in order to make us understand that in His eyes the whole book was dictated by the Holy Ghost, and carried the authority of the Law. It is as if He had said, “Beware! There is not in the sacred books a single word to be found fault with, nor a single word that one can neglect. This which I cite in the 82nd Psalm, has been traced by the hand that made the heavens.”

Here, then, we ask of every serious reader, “Is it possible to admit that the Being who makes such a use of the Scriptures *does not believe in the plenary, verbal inspiration?*”

Abridged and edited from L. Gaussen, “*Theopneustia:*” *The Plenary Inspiration of the Holy Scriptures*. Translated by David Scott and others (London, 4th edition, 1912), pp.84-6.

¹ Concerning this argument, see further note 1 on p.7 below.

Wonderful words of life

Selected by John Weston

“A man that is called Jesus... said unto me...” (John 9:11).

This selection gives the gospel in the Lord's own words (cp. Hebrews 2:3).

“Never man spake like this man” (John 7:46).

His concern for mankind

The mission stated

I am come a light into the world, that whosoever believeth on me should not abide in darkness..... I came not to judge the world, but to save the world. *John 12:46-47 (KJV)*

For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost. *Luke 19:10*

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. *John 3:16*

I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me. *John 14:6*

Mistakes corrected

They that are whole need not a physician; but they that are sick.

I came not to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance. *Luke 5:31-32*

The means revealed

The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many. *Matthew 20:28*

And as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of man be lifted up: that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life. *John 3:14-15*

His counsel to mankind

Decisions to make

Ye must be born again. *John 3:7*

Except ye be converted, and become as little children, ye shall not enter the kingdom of heaven. *Matthew 18:3*

For what is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?

Matthew 16:26

But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you. *Matthew 6:33*

Dangers to avoid

And while [the foolish virgins] went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage: and the door was shut. *Matthew 25:10*

No man can serve two masters: for either he will hate the one, and love the other; or else he will hold to the one, and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and mammon. *Matthew 6:24*

And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand. And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it. *Matthew 7:26-27*

Directions to follow

My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me. *John 10:27*



Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal. But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also. *Matthew 6:19-21*

And he took bread, and gave thanks, and brake it, and gave unto them, saying, This is my body which is given for you: this do in remembrance of me.

Likewise also the cup after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you. *Luke 22:19-20*

Watch therefore, for ye know neither the day nor the hour wherein the Son of man cometh. *Matthew 25:13*

The Lord's comfort for mankind

In stress

Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest.

Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. *Matthew 11:28-30*

Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing? and one of them shall not fall on the ground without your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered.

Fear ye not therefore, ye are of more value than many sparrows. *Matthew 10:29-31*

And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them, and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. *John 10:4*

These things I have spoken unto you, that in me ye might have peace. In the world ye shall have tribulation: but be of good cheer; I have overcome the world. *John 16:33*

In sadness

Let not your heart be troubled: ye believe in God, believe also in me. *John 14:1*

These things have I spoken unto you, that my joy might remain in you, and that your joy might be full. *John 15:11*

Peace I leave with you, my peace I give unto you: not as the world giveth, give I unto you. Let not your heart be troubled, neither let it be afraid. *John 14:27*

Blessed are they that mourn: for they shall be comforted. *Matthew 5:4*

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him and will sup with him, and he with me. *Revelation 3:20*

In certainty

Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life. *John 5:24*

And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again, and receive you unto myself; that where I am, there ye may be also. *John 14:3*

For the Son of man shall come in the glory of his Father with his angels. *Matthew 16:27*

...And then shall they see the Son of man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. *Luke 21:27*

And finally

Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man, which built his house upon a rock: and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell not: for it was founded upon a rock. *Matthew 7:24-25*

Is the Bible True?

Theo Balderston

“Not in the sense you probably understand ‘true,’” is the unsettling answer of some Christians, even some who profess to believe in the “God-breathedness” of Scripture. Are they right? Indeed, does the Bible mean “true” in a different way from us moderns? Focusing on the Lord’s words, “Your word is truth,” this article seeks to answer such claims.

Introduction

Today even quite a few Christians will deny that the Bible is, in any simple factual sense, “true.” But “if the foundations are destroyed, what can the righteous do?” (Ps.11:3) Happily, the Lord Jesus gave a clear, simple answer to this question in His own teaching and usage of Scripture. In His great prayer to His Father of John 17 He said, “Your word is truth” (v.17). And His own words showed that He considered “Moses and the prophets” to be the word of God; and that He regarded Noah, Abraham, Lot, Moses, and Daniel as historical persons (Matthew 24:15, 37; Luke 17:32; John 8:58). Such texts *implicitly* bear the same testimony concerning the truthfulness of the OT as is *explicit* in the statement, “Your word is truth.”

Professing Christians have to claim to honour the Lord’s words. So those who desire to evade the testimony of John 17:17 can only do it by:

- (a) denying that our Lord actually said it, and hence that it is authoritative.
- (b) limiting its meaning.
- (c) arguing that in becoming Man the Lord voluntarily restricted His own knowledge to that of the times in which He lived.

Did the Lord say it?

Denying that John 17:17 was spoken by the Lord is not sufficient for denying that He taught the truthfulness of the Old Testament. We then also have to deny the authenticity of statements such as “As the days of Noah were...,” “...spoken of by Daniel the prophet...” etc. If we deny these as well, we cannot trust the historical reliability of *any* the Lords’ words in any of the Gospels, for there is nothing to suggest that this set of verses is specially dubious. And then, “what can the righteous do?” Note, too, that it is not possible just to sacrifice “factual” bits of the Bible that strike us as inconvenient or embarrassing, whilst conserving the “spiritual

truths” it enshrines. The Bible cannot be neatly segmented in this way.

What did the Lord mean by “Your word”?

But if we accept that the Lord did say the words of John 17:17, we can only reconcile them with the claim that not all of Scripture is factually accurate by somehow limiting their meaning.

We could, for example, try to limit “Your word” to the words which the Father had specially given Him to give the disciples (John 17:8, 14). But seeing that in this Gospel the Lord also said, “The Scripture cannot be broken” concerning Psalm 82:6 (see John 10:35¹), He clearly treated the OT as “Your word.” So this will not do. And it will not dispose of His acceptance of the historicity of Noah, etc.

“Truth”: faithfulness, not fact?

Secondly, we could limit the meaning of the word “truth” in “Your word is truth.” In modern English, “truth” means “factual accuracy”, primarily. We have in mind a state-

ment which can then be compared with something observable in “the real world”, and if the two correspond, we say that the statement is “true.” But some allege that in Bible languages “truth” did not mean “factual accuracy,” which is a modern concept. Rather it meant “faithfulness”, “reliability”, “trustworthiness” By this claim some Christians try to reconcile their scepticism about the factual accuracy of the Bible with professed allegiance to the “God-breathedness” of all Scripture (cp. 2 Timothy 3:16, ESV).

Indeed: “truth” *did* mean “faithfulness”, etc. in Hebrew – as a concordance will soon show. But it *also* meant factual accuracy, as Deuteronomy 17:4 clearly demonstrates. This text prescribes how to deal with an allegation that an Israelite had turned to idolatry (v.2-3). The allegation had to be carefully investigated. “True” in v.4 includes the meanings “reliable, faithful, trustworthy.” But the allegation’s reliability, faithfulness and

¹ On this, see the article at the start of the magazine. Our Lord’s argument was that these OT judges were “gods” in the sense that “the word of God came” to them. That is, when they in dependence on God gave sentence, their sentences were “the word of God,” so that even they were, to this extent, embodiments of God. If even *they* could be so described, how much more is the One “whom the Father sanctified and sent into the world” truly God – God the Son. The argument was designed to show Jews, whose basic tenet is the Oneness of God (Deuteronomy 4:35; 6:4), that even their Scriptures gave a hint of what was to come in Christ.

trustworthiness consisted in its *correspondence with the facts*. Thus the meaning of “true / truth” in Hebrew included the meaning of factual accuracy. Truthfulness of witnesses was a central matter in the Old Testament (see e.g. Deuteronomy 17:6; 19:15-20). Factual accuracy is not just a modern concept.

And can God’s words be true by a lesser standard than demanded of those human witnesses in Deuteronomy 17? So when David said, “O Lord GOD, you are God and your words are true” (2 Samuel 7:28), “true” meant that the observable outturn of events would correspond to God’s promise. Can we say that God’s word would have been “faithful, reliable, trustworthy” if David’s “house” were *not* established for ever? And if it is wrong to require a verifiably, factually, “accurate” fulfilment of *this* promise, Christ Himself was not a verifiable fulfilment of it. Certainly the Gospel-writers expected such a fulfilment, as we can see by their frequent statements, “That it might be fulfilled which was spoken by...”

This reduction of “truth” to inner moral qualities marginalises the factual heart of the gospel. Instead of the heart of the gospel being that “Christ died for our sins, according to the Scriptures, and that he was buried, and that he rose again the

third day, according to the Scriptures” (1 Corinthians 15: 3-4), it will be reduced to the mere *verbal* assertion that God is love. This is an empty assertion if its factual corollary, namely, that “God *so* loved the world *that he gave...*,” is eliminated from “the truth,” and consigned to the category of mere, possibly fictitious, human assertion.

“True”: only the main gist of the text?

Again, the above redefinition of truth will not dispose of our Lord’s acceptance of the historicity of Noah, etc. So another redefinition of “truth” runs like this. Every Scripture truly conveys God’s primary purpose in giving it. But if we seek to extract information from it that is aside of God’s purpose in giving it, we put it to profane use. How dare we (so the re-definers of “truth” say) abuse Scripture to establish matters God never intended to teach! Thus, for example: “Your word is truth” teaches the truthfulness of God’s word in respect of the primary teaching – teaching about God Himself and about salvation. It is putting John 17:17 to a profane purpose to make it teach anything about the accuracy of God’s word in relation to other matters. Likewise, the purpose of Genesis 1 is to teach God’s sovereignty over the process

of creation, His beneficence, etc., but certainly nothing so mundane as the time-frame of creation, or the origin of species. If we ask of the chapter whether “days” literally mean “days”, or “after its kind” means “after its kind,” we are making it answer our questions, rather than letting it teach God’s mind.

Sounds plausible? But it imputes a lower standard of truthfulness to the words of God than we do to the words of man. Very often, after a friend has spoken for a while, we will comment, “I notice that in passing you said such and such...” We expect even the “such and such” to be true, although it was an “aside,” and not the primary thrust of what the friend intended to convey.² Do God’s words conform to a *lower* standard?

But we have a conclusive answer in the Lord’s own use of Scripture. In proving the truth of resurrection to the Sadducees, the Lord drew something out of Exodus 3:6 which, without His words, we would never have considered to be its “primary” meaning. We would only have seen in this verse an affirmation that God was still the same God as the God of the patriarchs. We would never have deduced what the Lord inferred

from it, namely, that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must be going to rise, seeing that “God is not the God of the dead but of the living” (Matthew 22:32). Of course, in the case of the many Scriptural texts where we lack the benefit of the Lord’s own interpretation, we do have to decide (prayerfully, relying on the Holy Spirit) what is primary, if we are to interpret them at all. But that does not give us license to discard as valueless everything in the text that is not central to our interpretation.

Obviously I am in no way condoning profane, unspiritual, frivolous uses of Scripture. But the Lord’s usage of Exodus 3:6 teaches us not to limit how God may use His holy Word to what we deem to be its primary purpose!

Was our Lord’s knowledge limited?

Other professing Christians, though probably fewer than a century ago, will use point (c) of my introduction to reconcile our Lord’s treatment of all Scripture as factually authoritative with their doubts about its accuracy. This so-called “kenosis” theory tries to make Philippians 2:7 (lit. “[he] emptied himself”) mean that in becoming

² Historical research relies heavily on such “asides” in the documents for its reconstruction of the “truth” about the past. It generally assumes they are reliable.

Man the Lord divested Himself of all knowledge that was not shared by first-century people – e.g. in relation to illness, or OT history.

But our Lord did have more-than-natural knowledge! Consider John 1:47-8; Mark 2:8; Matthew 17:27. Where does Scripture limit this supernatural knowledge to the whereabouts and thoughts of His contemporaries, and the habits of fish? In fact, Scripture contains not a hint of this theory. And even if its supporters answer that this is not surprising, since the NT writers were imprisoned in the same first-century world-view, this is no answer for those who believe the Scriptures to be “God-breathed.” Moreover, the boundaries of this alleged “self-limitation” are arbitrary. Did our Lord (on this theory) also limit Himself to the *cultural* assumptions of the society of His time? The “kenosis” theory would certainly apply this limitation to His acceptance of the existence of demons. But, if so, what about the assumption that a right blood sacrifice can atone for sin? (Mark 10:45) That is *very* cultural – widely accepted then, alien to modern western thought! (*They* were right, not us!)

Therefore the main point of relevance to this article is that such a theory would in no way clarify the

meaning of “truth” in John 17:17. It would instead throw it into utter indeterminacy. We could *never* tell how far such and such an utterance of the Lord – whether “spiritual” or “factual” – was cloaked in concessions to the faulty conceptions of the age.

This article has sought to show that a simple, unqualified ‘Yes’, is the only right answer for the Christian to give to the title-question of this article. This answer has been based on our Lord’s own words and usage of Scripture.

Some side issues

A few points of explanation perhaps need to be added, however. Firstly, this doesn’t mean that all Scripture has to be interpreted with wooden literality. It has much poetry, many figures of speech. When Isaiah (10:15) called Assyria an “axe”, this was plainly a vivid figure of speech. The passage itself usually makes quite clear what is literal and what figurative; though in some cases the comparison of Scripture with Scripture might be needed to clarify the matter.

Secondly, something must be said about what appear to be the self-contradictions of the Bible. Here, everyday experiences help. Recently I told our neighbour that we were “going to stay at our daughter’s over Easter,” so that he would know our

house would be empty. What I omitted to say was that our daughter and her family would not actually be *there* at Easter, because they would be at a Christian house-party. However we would see them for the Tuesday after Easter, once they had returned late on Monday evening. I didn't think he would want to know this detail. But if someone else had asked whether we were going to see the family over Easter I could easily have replied, "No, but we will see them after Easter." If our neighbour had overheard the second answer, he might think I had contradicted myself. If future historians discovered these two statements, and only these, they could well conclude that at least one of them was wrong. Instead, both are true, though each incomplete. When we trust the speaker, we often assume this, and don't inquire further. Likewise if we find two Bible statements apparently at odds with each other, we trust the Author. Sometimes He will reveal their reconciliation immediately, sometimes after many years. Christians have experienced these things. For some, we may have to wait for the glory. *But all God's words are true.*

Thirdly, the Bible uses language accommodated to our perceptions. When Joshua 10:13 says that "the sun stood still in the midst of

heaven," that's exactly what it did from the standpoint of the people watching.

All reality is *exceedingly* complex. And yet people *can* tell the truth! How much more God! His Word is entirely truthful, even though, because adapted to our finite capacities, it cannot be complete in the sense just outlined.

Conclusion

This article has sought to show that the Lord's own words shut us up to an unqualified affirmation of the inerrancy of Scripture. Of course external evidences have strikingly confirmed the accuracy of many Bible passages. But here the simple ground of the Lord's words is rested on. The inerrancy of the Bible is a matter of *faith* – faith in Him. This is a challenging conclusion. It challenges us regarding our thoughts of Christ more generally. If His word as to the truth of the Scripture seems troublingly inadequate as an answer to the ferocious attacks on the inerrancy of Scripture, you need to examine your *whole* faith in Him. For the believer, His word should settle the matter. And to those for whom it does, it gives a completely satisfying answer to the title-question of this article. *The Bible is true.*

Rest on it, my soul!

Can the Christian sin?

George F. Trench

Sadly he can, but he has the power not to. With striking clarity this short excerpt sets out the core of “the Scriptural doctrine of practical holiness,” and reconciles the apparently contradictory statements of 1 John 2:1 and 3:9.

Animating, prompting the moral part of a Christian are two natures, one good, one evil. The evil is the natural, the good the supernatural. “For these are contrary the one to the other” (Galatians 5:17, RV, 1881). The Christian is liable to influences arising from each. If the old evil nature prevail, he is described as walking “after the flesh” (Romans 8:4,13). If the new, the holy and Divine, prevail, he walks after the truth. But the seventh of Romans shows a sad state. It is that of one whose desires are prompted by the new nature, but whose will is ever conquered by the old, who has learned his natural state of bondage, but has yet to learn the way of liberty.

This truth of the two natures is doubtless denied by some; but it lies at the root of true sanctification. To learn it is to “learn Christ.” “If so be that ye heard Him, and were taught in Him, even as truth is in Jesus” (see Ephesians 4:20-21). The “man in Christ” is commanded to “put off the old man,” and “put on the new.” He is not told to reform, or cleanse, or wash “the old man,” but to put it off, to deny it, mortify it, cross it, and disown it altogether (Ephesians 4:22; Matthew 16:24; Colossians 3:5; Galatians 5:24). And as for the new, it is incorruptible, it needs no cleansing, being “created in righteousness” (Ephesians 4:24); and he is to put it on, to yield to its promptings and suggestions, to adopt it as his habit, to be conformed to its character. No more can the old man be improved by its proximity to the new, than the new can be corrupted by the old. But I, the person thus drawn in contrary directions, will be moulded, fashioned, in character and conduct, according to the power to which I yield.

Thus Ephesians 4:25ff proceeds to exhort, not the old man in me, but *me*, the person in question, against thieving, lying, anger, corrupt speech, bitterness, and malice, to which the old man prompts me. And it exhorts, not the new man in me, but *me*, in favour of industry, beneficence, truthfulness, patience, kindness, forgiveness, and edifying speech, to which the new man inclines me. In the measure in which each of us obeys the exhortations, in that degree shall we be changed into the *image of Christ from glory to glory* (2 Corinthians 3:18). This is the conflict of Galatians 5:16ff: “Walk by the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. For the flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh; for these are contrary the one to the other, so that ye may not

do the things that ye would.” That is, the Spirit “lusteth” in order that ye may not do the bad or sinful things that ye would. And, the flesh “lusteth” that ye may not do the holy things that ye would. It is war to the knife, there is no possible compromise. Moreover, it is constant. For this is (in Galatians 5) no description (as was the case in Romans 7) of a past or transitional condition. It is in the present tense (“lusteth”), and describes a permanent, continuing, unceasing warfare.

To hold that sin is eradicated is to deny the truth, and to become sin’s slave at last. To admit that sin survives, active, alluring, ensnaring to the last, but conquerable in daily walk by the Spirit – this is the way of victory.

But how then, my reader will ask, about the text, “He cannot sin, because he is born of God” (1 John 3:9)? This is true in two senses.

First the seed is sinless, for as Peter declares, ye have been “begotten again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, through the word of God which liveth and abideth” (1 Peter 1:23). The origin of the new life is incorruptible. “A good tree *cannot* bring forth evil fruit” (Matthew 7:18). There is an absolute incompatibility between sinful living and the incorruptible seed. The apostle John, in his bold and striking style, is propounding this grand truth in its utmost simplicity. It is true that the abiding in Him insisted upon in 2:28 is necessary for full realization of this in practice. But the seed is incorruptible absolutely, and the man who walks under its influence will be kept from sin while he does so.

Secondly, “He cannot sin” in another sense, of which I take the case of Joseph for illustration. Sorely and frequently tempted by one whom his situation as a subordinate would naturally incline him to obey, Joseph steadfastly refuses the temptress. And how does he explain his contumacy? “Behold my master... hath put all that he hath into my hand... neither hath he kept back anything from me but thee, because thou art his wife: how then *can I* do this great wickedness and sin against God?” (Genesis 39:8-9) Joseph *cannot* sin because he is born of God, and he cannot *so* sin against his master who has honoured, and favoured him. The obligation of great indebtedness so controls his evil nature as to make it *impossible* so to sin against his benefactor. We are not less indebted than he. And when sin in its grosser forms is presented, or solicited, in our case also it is true that, as every believer has no doubt proved, we are repelled, outraged, disgusted at the attempt – we *cannot* so sin against Christ.

Adapted and abridged from the author’s *The Life that is Life Indeed. The Scriptural Doctrine of Holiness* (Glasgow, c.1910), pp.38-43.

Christianity has a new priesthood, benefits from a new covenant, and is based on a new sacrifice, which is effective in a new, heavenly sanctuary. These great truths are brought out in this brief survey of the central section of Hebrews.

The seventh chapter of Hebrews is the centrepiece of the Epistle's exposition of the high priestly office of the Lord Jesus. Our High Priest is great in His Person – "Jesus, the Son of God" (4:14), as the first two chapters established. God's great purpose in Him is to bring "many sons to glory" (2:10), and believers are in constant danger of despising that heavenly rest "whither the forerunner is for us entered, even Jesus" (6:20). Much of the third, fourth, and sixth chapters consist of warning about this danger. This is why we need a High Priest.

His is a new "order" of priesthood – after the order of Melchisedec" (5:10; 6:20).

Chapter 7

What does "the order of Melchisedec" mean? In chapter 7:1-2 the apostle refers to the incident recorded in Genesis 14:17-24 where Abram, having rescued Lot and others from the enemies of the king of Sodom, is met on his return by Melchisedec bringing him bread and wine. Melchisedec's *name* means "king of Righteousness," whilst Salem, the name of the city over which he reigned, means "peace"; so he was also "king of peace." And he was a priest of the Most High God. In all these features Melchisedec pre-figures the Lord Jesus.

And as regards this epistle, particularly the last. Christ is "a *priest* after the order of Melchisedec," as Psalm 110:4 says. The rest of the chapter proceeds to make a number of contrasts between the Aaronic and Melchisedec priesthoods, all of them adding up to show that there was imperfection under the law and its high priests, *but* perfection in Christ.

- Abram gave tithes to Melchisedec, showing the superiority of the Melchisedec order (7:4-7).
- Priests of the Aaronic order died, but the Priest of the order of Melchisedec *lives* – He "abideth a priest continually" (7:3, 8, 16, 23-24).

- Perfection is never gained under the law. But through the work of Christ, we draw near to God (7:11, 18-19, 27-28).
- The New-Testament order is superior to and replaces the old (7:12-16; 19, 22).
- Aaron and his successors had to offer sacrifices for their own sins as well as for the Israelites. The Lord Jesus, the Holy One of God, was undefiled and separate from sinners, but offered Himself as a sacrifice for us (7:25-28).

Chapter 8

Chapter 8 proceeds directly from the topic of the *new priesthood* in chapter 7 to the topics of the *new priestly sphere* and the *new covenant*. The service of our High Priest is superior to the old priestly service of the tabernacle. It is not connected with earth, as were tabernacle and temple, but with heaven where He now is (8:1-6). The chapter opens with a positive statement, “We have a high priest set on the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in the heavens...”

A new priesthood also requires a new covenant (8:6). If the first covenant (i.e. the one inaugurated by Moses – see Exodus 24:4-8) had been “faultless” there would be no need for a new one (Hebrews 8:7). Note that the old covenant was not faulty in itself; rather, *the people under it* were faulty – they could not keep it. So, “finding fault with *them*” the Scripture foretells a *new covenant* (8:8-12, quoting Jeremiah 31:31-34). Under the new covenant, sins and iniquities will be remembered no more (8:12). Chapters 9 and 10 will go on to lay out how this can be. As a consequence of the death and resurrection of the Lord Jesus, the sin question has been settled once and for all.

We can therefore ask, “What has the believer to-day to do with the Law and the Old-Testament order of things?” “The law was given by Moses, but grace and truth came by Jesus Christ” (John 1:17). The new covenant is “better than” the old covenant, and Jesus is the Mediator of that new covenant (Hebrews 8:6). With the new covenant we have:

- A better covenant
- Better Promises.
- A better priesthood.

The old covenant is replaced by the new!

Chapter 9

If in chapter 7 we have a new *priesthood*, and in chapter 8 a new priestly sphere and a new *covenant* (testament), then in chapter 9 we have a new *sacrifice* – the work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary, which is both the basis of the new covenant and gives the believer access to the new *sanctuary* – heaven itself.

Verses 1-5 describe “the tabernacle in the wilderness” – which was for Israel. The apostle particularly refers to its two divisions, the holy place and the holy of holies, and the veil separating them.

Verses 6-7 refer to the service of the tabernacle priests and its limitations. All priests could enter the holy place, but only the high priest had access to the holiest of all, and that only once a year. When he entered it was “not without blood” for his own sins and also for the sins of the people.

Verses 8-10 tell us that by this arrangement the Holy Spirit teaches us that under the Law men could not approach into the presence of God. The sacrifices offered failed to give a perfect conscience. The tabernacle was only a *figure* of good things to come.

Verses 11-23 give us details of the new sacrifice. The work of the Lord Jesus at Calvary and the shedding of His blood give every believer access to God the Father. When the Lord Jesus announced from the cross, “It is finished,” (John 19:30), the veil of the temple was rent in twain from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51). His was thus a *better* sacrifice (Hebrews 9:23)

Verses 24-28 give details of the New Sanctuary, which is *heaven*, and is secured for every believer by the one great sacrifice of the Lord Jesus. This section concludes by referring to three appearances:–

- *Verse 26*. The Lord Jesus *appeared* once in this world when He took up and dealt with the sin question in finality.
- *Verse 24*. The Lord Jesus *appears now* in the presence of God as our Great High Priest.
- *Verse 28*. The Lord Jesus *will appear* for His own and complete our salvation when we are taken to the Father’s House.

Notice the emphasis on the word “new” in this section of Hebrews:

- A *new* priesthood.
- A *new* covenant, or testament.

- A *new* sacrifice.
- A *new* sanctuary

All these have reference to the Lord Jesus. Central to Christianity is His Person and work. The repetition of “new” is designed to detach us from what is old and attach us to what is new.

Chapter 10

Verses 1-4 tell us why the Law and the tabernacle system could not bring salvation. They were only a shadow of Christianity and not “the very image.” Animal sacrifices offered daily and the sacrifice made on the great Day of Atonement (see Leviticus 16) could never deal finally with the sin question.

Verses 5-10 show that by coming into the world and offering Himself for sin the Lord Jesus, the Son of God, accomplished the *will* of God, and so is the only ground for salvation. He finished the *work* which was given Him to do (John 17:4). His own words were “It is finished” (John 19:30).

Verses 11-19 show that the Lord Jesus is now a *seated* High Priest at God’s right hand. His one offering for sin gives every believer a perfect standing before God, and so never needs to be repeated. The Holy Spirit is a *witness* to this great fact. As a result the barrier preventing our access to the real “holiest of all” – the presence of God – is now removed. This barrier was typified by the veil in the tabernacle, beyond which only the high priest could enter, and only once a year. That veil is now “rent” in the death of the Lord Jesus, enabling the believer to enter at all times into the presence of God through Him, our Great High Priest. It is “a *new* and *living* way” because Jesus is *alive*.

Verses 22-25 tell us what we should now do:

- Draw near to God – the Law kept people at a distance.
- Hold fast to the Christian faith and not slip back into the old order.
- Consider fellow-believers – helping as we see need.
- Meet with fellow believers for fellowship. I need to get my priorities right!

Verses 26-39 warn against the danger of falling away into *apostasy* – i.e. leaving the truth in the sense of openly denying and ridiculing what we formerly professed to believe. This can only lead to judgment. By contrast, the Christian life is a life of faith. “The just shall live by his faith” (Habakkuk 2:4).

One hundred verses of real grace

Popular ideas of grace centre on “forgiving and forgetting,” sometimes in ways doubtfully consistent with the utter holiness of God. Real grace is different, as Joseph’s dealings with his brothers manifest. Grace not only saves; it also teaches us “that denying ungodliness and worldly lusts we should live...” (Titus 2:11-12).

“I have sinned..., and am no more longer worthy to be called your son” was all that the lost son had to say to receive the best robe, the ring, the sandals and the welcome to his father’s table (Luke 15:21-24, NKJV). But God had had to do a protracted and painful work in his life to bring him this point of confession. Considering its outcome, this divine work had been *a work of grace*. Sometimes it does not come before conversion. God may have to do a similar work after conversion to bring some believers to the depth of conviction of sin whereby they truly hate it, and really appreciate the grace that has saved them. “Grace teaches...”

The first 15 verses

(Genesis 42:7-21)

Joseph’s dealings with his brothers in Egypt exemplify this protracted and

painful work of grace. According to modern ideas, true grace would have made him embrace his ten brothers as soon as he saw them, and give them all they asked for, whether or not they had repented. Chapter 45:1ff should directly follow 42:6. What are the intervening one hundred verses about? Joseph’s malice, Joseph’s revenge?

Far be the thought. Even as Joseph heard their admission of guilt to each other, “he turned himself away from them and wept” (42:24). His way of dealing with them had the objective of making them really realise the enormity of their sin, and the greatness of his love.

But surely the first fifteen of these hundred verses would have been enough for this? After all, already in 42:21 they said the moving words, “We are truly guilty concerning our

According to modern ideas, true grace would have made him embrace his ten brothers as soon as he saw them. ... What are the intervening one hundred verses about?

brother, for we saw the anguish of his soul when he pleaded with us, and we would not hear.” Why didn’t Joseph fling his arms round them at that point?

The next 54 verses

(Genesis 42:22-44:3)

Because the grace of God is *real* grace: it seeks a real result. Certainly, conviction of sin was starting in them, as they realised what Joseph’s demand to see Benjamin (42:15-20) would do to their father. Indeed it was already *grace* that elicited their confession of verse 21. They did not make it when Joseph proposed to imprison nine of the brothers, and to send the tenth home without any corn, but when he released nine to return with the corn and kept only one hostage. Joseph’s grace was directed to awakening their sense of their sin towards their father more than towards himself. Realising what they would have to tell Jacob, their guilt was awakened. But for how long? Calamity will often awaken slumbering guilt feelings, which quickly return to their slumber once it passes.

Joseph’s dealings made sure this did not happen. Finding their money inexplicably replaced in the mouths of their sacks reinforced their feeling that God was at work (42:28, 35). In their conscience-ridden state, this

grace only terrified them, as it did Peter when he saw the miraculous draught of fishes (Luke 5:8). Did they feel that they had already faced up to their sin (42:21), and wonder why these further frightening events were happening?

But Joseph’s (and God’s) plan was thoroughgoing. They had to go through with telling Jacob “the man’s” demand to see Benjamin. They had to realise the terrible effects on their father of their evil act of so many years before (42:36-38).

Eventually famine forced Jacob to accept the unthinkable. They set off again, with Benjamin. Once again, grace only terrified them. When brought to Joseph’s house for lunch, they assume it is to be arrested because of the money; but the steward’s cheery response (43:23: had Joseph personally paid their bill?), as well as the courtesy of water for their feet and provender for their asses, reassured them. However the knowledge of their respective ages underlying the seating plan at table unnerved them (43:33).

But they were men of the world. Soon they would reason that they were being treated like kings, not spies. Benjamin, so far from coming to any harm, was getting huge extra helpings from Joseph’s table. Simeon was freed. “The man” was

hard to fathom, but certainly on their side this time round. Doubtless they would all soon be on their way back to Canaan with all the corn they needed. They could rest easy at the thought of their father's glad welcome. It had been a nightmare, but it was over. The inexplicable events that had seemed like divine interventions could be pushed to the back of their minds, as could the anguish of Joseph's soul on the day they sold him to the Midianites.

So they doubtless thought as they set off from Joseph's house, their sacks generously packed with corn (44:1,3).

The last 31 verses

(Genesis 44:4-34).

But Joseph was not finished with them (nor God, acting through Joseph). "The man" had devised a worse nightmare. The "lesson" taught them by their first visit was to be repeated, but only worse. They would have to tell Jacob that Benjamin had actually been arrested and would probably be a lifelong slave in Egypt. How they were "paying for" that time, long ago, when

with smirks on their faces they had shown their father the blood-stained tunic of his son! (37:32). They offer *all* to remain as slaves in Egypt (44:16). It would be preferable to going home and telling their father. How changed they were from the time they had sold Joseph! But "the man" dismisses their offer.

Judah steps forward to speak again. He appeals to "the man's" heart by telling him the story of how Jacob had lost one of Rachel's two sons already. He pleads with "the man" to accept him as slave in the place of Benjamin. Judah had been the brother who had proposed the sale of Joseph to the merchants (37:26-27). In the hearing of the young, terrified Joseph, he had cynically suggested they could spare themselves bloodguilt, *and* make some money, by selling Joseph instead. Now Judah is brought to volunteer himself for the very fate to which he had callously condemned his brother those many years before. And yet, even at this point he cannot bring himself to admit to "the man" that he had actually caused his father's earlier grief (44:28).

Now Judah is brought to volunteer himself for the very fate to which he had callously condemned his brother those many years before.

Grace knows the heart; it knows when the work of conviction of sin has been truly done.

The 101st verse

(Genesis 45:1)

Joseph can restrain himself no longer (45:1). The brothers' offer to remain was true repentance. Judah's words and offer showed his remorse for what he had done. How it must have gone straight to Joseph's heart! Will he accept Judah's offer? No: now is the time for unlimited grace! A most private moment follows: all the Egyptians are dismissed from the house as Joseph discloses himself to them, with no recriminations, no grudges. God had meant it for good – *their* good (!), to save their lives from the famine; but, much more than that, for the fulfilment of His own promises to the patriarchs in preserving a posterity in the earth (45:7).

Viewing Joseph as a "type" of Christ (Acts 7:9-13), this episode foreshadows the fact that Israel will repent only when they *look* on him whom they have pierced (Zechariah 12:10). Taking the lesson out of it for ourselves, it teaches us that grace knows the heart; it knows when the work of conviction of sin has been truly done. Yet, even at this point we do not find any direct admission of guilt to *Joseph* (Genesis 45:3).

All grace in retrospect

Notice that nine of the brothers scarcely suffered at all, except in their fears and their feelings of guilt and compassion towards their father. Simeon was different; he spent a year or more in prison. Maybe that had to do with God's special dealings to bring home to him his dreadful, murderous looting spree of Genesis 34:25-29 which stained God's name before idolaters (cp. 49:5-7). (Then why not Levi too? Had he maybe truly repented – see Malachi 2:5,6?) But as to the other brothers, *grace* was what had taught them. Joseph's harshness was words, not deeds. And in fact, they had experienced his grace all through – their money back twice, and a lavish lunch with Pharaoh's grand vizier! Maybe the greatest grace was that Joseph had the policy, incredibly busy man though he must have been, of personally meeting everyone who came to buy Pharaoh's grain (42:6, 7). Did he do this to make sure everyone was treated fairly, because of his own appalling treatment, not only from his brothers but also from the butler (41:9)? That humble, serving attitude of Pharaoh's first minister

(41:44) meant that he met his brothers too when they turned up.

Forgiveness and judgment (Genesis 50:15-21)

There is, however, a little bit more to God's dealings with the brothers than grace. After Jacob's funeral, the brothers began to doubt Joseph. Maybe he'd only forgiven them for fear of upsetting his dad? Afraid to approach him, they revert to type and concoct a false message about their father's dying words. But they do, at last, ask for his forgiveness (50:15-17). Why now? Because of fear of deserved retribution. Along with grace, the reality of judgement is part of the gospel. But often we, like they, cannot trust the heart of God, that judgment is past for the believer.

The Joseph of chapter 50 is no different from the Joseph of 45:1 (or indeed 42:6). "For I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin will I remember *no more*" (Jeremiah 31:34). The brothers, for all their experiences, had not entirely learned his heart. He wept when he realised it. He meets them and replies, "Do not be afraid" (50:19). But now that they specifically ask for forgiveness, he adds something

to his earlier reassurances, namely, "You meant evil against me." Grace is not truly grace when it overlooks and palliates the sin. So our Saviour said to the woman taken in adultery, "Go *and sin no more*" – words of grace, *seasoned with salt* (John 8:11; Colossians 4:6). But then Joseph adds "But God meant it for good". "Thus he comforted them, and spoke kindly to them" (50:20-21, ESV). God's counsels of love are the truest comfort.

Conclusion

The grace of God is real grace. He refines us, but not as silver (Isaiah 48:10). But He wishes us all "to love much," like the woman in Luke 7:36-50. Notice, however, that we cannot assume from this that all real tragedies are gracious disciplines *for sin* (cp. John 9:2,3). The widow of Zarephath assumed this when her son died. "Have you come to me to bring my sin to remembrance?" (1 Kings 17:18). But she was wrong. God's true purpose was perfectly simple, and not at all connected to her sins. It was to bring her to trust the prophet entirely. "Now by this I know that you are a man of God, and that the word of the LORD in your mouth is the truth" (v. 24).

"You meant evil against me." Grace is not truly grace when it overlooks and palliates the sin.

What does the Bible teach about Creation?

Part I: New Testament teaching about Creation

David Anderson

Some people think that since creation comes at the beginning of the Old Testament, they can be “New-Testament” Christians whilst shelving the question of the factual accuracy of the Genesis account. If they think this, they are not “New-Testament Christians,” as this article shows!

Back-to-front?

“In over fifty years as a Christian I haven’t heard much spoken ministry on biblical creation.” So said a friend of mine in commenting on my article, “Is it necessary to believe in biblical creation.”¹ But there is a *huge* amount of literature about creation! Most published expositions start with Genesis 1:1 and work forward through Scripture. Certainly “the everlasting gospel,”² i.e. the witness that God is Creator, continues throughout the whole of man’s history. But there is further revelation concerning creation in the New Testament. Therefore, by starting our analysis of the Bible’s teaching about creation with the *New* Testament we see better its fundamental importance to the Christian faith:

- First and foremost, the New Testament revelation is what tells us that Christ Himself is the Creator, the Person by whom God created all things.
- As His disciples, we must give priority to the teaching of our Lord and Master. Of primary importance to us is the question, “What did *He* say?” – in this case, about creation. And we must not succumb to the ever-present danger of ignoring His teaching, adapting it to fit in with science, or subjugating it to someone’s interpretation of the Genesis account. “If anyone teaches a different doctrine and does not agree with the sound words of our Lord Jesus Christ and the teaching that accords with godliness, he is puffed up with conceit and understands nothing” (1Timothy 6:3-4, ESV).

¹ *Scripture Truth*, July-September 2009.

² Cp. Revelation 14:6-7.

Creation is Christ-Centred

New-Testament teaching about creation focuses on the Person of Christ Himself. For example, the fact that He is the Creator is identified as one of His distinctive glories in the passages which highlight the glories of His Person:

- “In these last days [God] has spoken to us by his Son...through whom also he created the world” (Hebrews 1:2).
- “All things were made through him; and without him was not anything made that was made” (John 1:3).
- “By him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities – all things were created through him and for him. And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together” (Colossians 1:16-17).
- Hebrews 1:3 and Colossians 1:17 state that the creation relies upon Him not only for its beginning but also for its very continuance.

When we go back to read the account of creation in the Old Testament, we do so in the light of New-Testament revelations such as these – that the Son carries out all the works of God on behalf of the Father.

Creation is Christ-Certified

During forty years of professional life, I’ve certified many a batch of drug substance as “made to the correct standard and of the right quality.” I was professionally qualified to do so, even though I was not directly involved in its production. But the Lord Jesus, being the Agent of creation, can certify that God actually did create, and we implicitly believe His words. And His telling phrase in this regard is, “*the creation that God created*” (Mark 13:19).

The Lord’s words on this matter extend to the importance and uniqueness of human beings in comparison to the rest of creation. When asked about divorce, He referred to God’s provision of family life (marriage) for their wellbeing: “But from the beginning of creation, ‘God made them male and female.’ ‘Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and hold fast to his wife, and they shall become one flesh.’ So they are no longer two but one flesh. What therefore God has joined together, let not man separate” (Mark 10:6-9). Note here that the Lord directly connects “the beginning of creation” (i.e., Genesis 1:1) with “God made them male and female” (i.e., Genesis 1:27) – there is no time gap! More emphatically, He stated that mankind existed from “the foundation of the world” (Luke 11:50).

The Gospels display the Lord Jesus as the Creator-in-action. He changed water into wine; healed all kinds of sickness; opened deaf ears; gave sight to the blind; stilled the storm; walked on water; had command over demons; and raised the dead. In Luke 22:51, when Peter cut off Malchus' right ear, a simple touch from the Lord gave him a new one! There was no search in the dark for the amputated ear, no operation to stitch it back on, and no convalescent period of recovery, etc.

The majority of Christ's miracles were instantly accomplished by His commands, and this instantaneousness validates the creation account. The psalmist captures this point when he exults, "For he spoke, and it came to be; he commanded, and it stood firm" (Psalm 33:9). In John 4:46-54, the official's son was healed by Jesus even speaking from some distance away! The Lord's certification of creation was therefore both by words and by deeds.

Christ's claims

The Sabbath was the seventh day of the creation week, when God rested from all His work (Genesis 1:31-2:2). In Mark 2:23-27, when challenged about His and His disciples' activities on the Sabbath, the Lord Jesus was able to explain the divine intent of the day of rest: "the Sabbath was made for man, not man for the Sabbath." In v.28 He went on to claim total authority over it. As the Creator, He rightly insisted that He, the Son of Man, was also Lord of the Sabbath. The Lord Jesus demonstrated this authority by performing miracles on Sabbath days.³ This authority could only mean that He was God (cp. Mark 2:7-12). In John 5:17 He stated that He and His Father could not rest in a creation which had been spoiled by man's sin.

Christian confidence

Hebrews 11:3 makes clear that believers know through faith *how* God created: "By faith we understand that the universe was created by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things that are visible." Romans 1:20 insists that mankind has clearly understood God's creative power ever since the beginning of time. But by faith believers discern *how* God created, that it was by His all-powerful word. He created the universe from nothing, *ex nihilo*, from no pre-existing materials. As Romans 4:17 teaches: "God...calls into existence the things that do not exist".

³ See, for example, Mark 3:1-5 & John 5:1-18.

In Hebrews 11:3:

- “The word “created” is usually translated “framed,” and denotes the process of the fulfilment of the divine will.⁴
- “The word of God” is *rhema* and alludes to the phrase “the Lord said” in Genesis 1.⁵

By faith, believers know *who* created the universe – God in the Person of the Son (Hebrews 1:2). But they also know *why* there is a creation and for *what* purpose. These are questions which science can never answer. But the answers are found in Revelation 4:11: “Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will⁴ they existed and were created.” Finally, believers have confidence that the Creator will sustain/uphold His creation by that same word of His power by which He spoke it into existence – until He decides to dispose of it (Hebrews 1:3 & 12).

The Holy Spirit’s Commentary

Augustine of Hippo said that the Old Testament is made clear by (“lies open in”) the New Testament. The Holy Spirit’s New-Testament commentary on creation and subsequent happenings in the Genesis account is very informative. For example, 2 Peter 3:5-7 teaches “that there were heavens from of old, and an earth compacted out of the water and amidst water, by the word of God; by *which* means the world that then was, being overflowed with water, perished; but the heavens that now are, and the earth, by the same word have been stored up for fire, being reserved against the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men” (ASV, 1901).

We know that God *created by His word*.⁶ Peter here tells us that the judgment of the Flood⁷ was executed *by His word* and that this present creation is reserved for judgment *by His word*. There is a remarkable statement here! There was an earth before the flood, which was quite different from the present earth, because the antediluvian world order (the cosmos) perished in the global catastrophe. The Creator is active throughout history, dictating the course of world events. He will intervene again with the

⁴ Translated “pleasure” in KJV.

⁵ See the exposition of Hebrews 11:3 in W.E. Vine, “Hebrews,” reprinted in *The Collected Writings of W. E. Vine* (Nashville, Tennessee, 5 vols., 1996), Volume 3.

⁶ Genesis 1:3, 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26 & Psalm 33:6-9.

⁷ Genesis 6–8.

catastrophic events of “the Day of the Lord,” when the earth will be reshaped⁸ for the millennium. Earth’s final catastrophe will be one of total destruction by fire (vv.10-12), followed by the creation of the new heavens and a new earth (v.13), so that men can enjoy the coming “day of God”.

New Creation

In 2 Corinthians 4:4-6 Paul contrasts the work of God in new creation with the original physical creation, when he talks about believers responding to the message of the gospel: “For God, who said, ‘Let light shine out of darkness,’ has shone in our hearts to give the light of the knowledge of the glory of God in the face of Jesus Christ” (v.6, ESV). The actions of God in Genesis 1 picture for us His work in new creation in us. And the new creation of all things is in and through His Son.⁹

New Testament doctrines and creation

You can’t read the New Testament without finding what happened at creation to be the underpinning of its teachings at every turn! For example, in his exposition of the gospel in Romans, Paul teaches that sin was brought into the world by Adam’s transgression (5:12-21). These verses contrast the two heads – Adam the head of the sinful race of mankind; and Christ the head of the new race. Verse 12 means that there was no death in the world before the Fall! Adam’s sin had a consequential effect upon everything that he had been given dominion over.¹⁰ Under Adam, everything ends in death. In Christ Jesus the outcome is eternal life. If we deny the historicity of Adam, we destroy the basis for believing in the fundamental effects of the death of Christ for humanity.

And in Romans 8:19-23, Paul connects suffering, sorrow and death with the Fall, and goes on to explain that the gospel gives an answer to these tragedies of life. They will be reversed for the whole of the restored creation when believers reign with Christ. Yes, the gospel shows God to be “a faithful Creator” (cp. 1 Peter 4:19).

Similarly, in his great resurrection thesis in 1 Corinthians 15, Paul continues his contrasting of Adam and Christ. Here he names the Lord Jesus Christ as the last Adam and the second Man (vv.45-48), who gives us the victory over death. In a comprehensive sweep of the unstoppable course of

⁸ See, for example, Isaiah 24: 19-20 & Zechariah 14:4.

⁹ 2 Corinthians 5:17, Colossians 1:18 & Revelation 3:14.

¹⁰ Psalm 8:6-8 shows the extent of Adam’s dominion.

Christ's resurrection in vv.20-28, Paul again refers back to creation and the situation pre/post the Fall.

In 1 Timothy 4:3-6, Paul advises Timothy that teachers should be trained in "the words of the faith and of the good doctrine" that have their foundation in a good and caring Creator who provided every creature as food for man (cp. Genesis 9:3). God's providential care for His creatures is also emphasised by the Lord Jesus in Matthew 6:26-30 & Luke 12:21-34, where He teaches His disciples to rely upon God to provide food and clothing.

The teaching of headship in 1 Corinthians 11:2-16 follows from the doctrine of creation. The order of creation is clearly taught in v.3:

- God, the Originator of creation, is head over Christ, the Agent of creation.
- Christ is head over man, who is the pinnacle of His creation.
- The man is head over the woman because she was made from man (vv.8-9).

God intends that this headship be practically demonstrated when men and women pray to Him and/or speak for Him (vv.4-16). Paul also insists on man's authority in headship (and woman's subjection) in 1 Timothy 2, by emphasising that Adam was formed before Eve. He adds an explanatory comment that Eve was deceived into usurping Adam's authority at the Fall (vv.13-14).

Eliminate biblical creation, and you fatally weaken New-Testament teaching regarding the effects of the cross, and many other matters!

Conclusion: creation is for Christ

"There is one God, the Father, from whom are all things and for whom we exist, and one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom are all things and through whom we exist" (1Corinthians 8:6).

Creation finds its source in the Father and its ultimate fulfillment in His eternal purposes. These purposes concern His Son, our Lord Jesus Christ, who brought all creation into being, and through whom there is new creation. The importance of creation, and man's place in that creation, cannot be overestimated. It has to do with the glory and honour which the Father deems to be due to the Son (cp. John 5:23). It's all for Him, the "heir of all things" (Hebrews 1:2). And we, God's children, are to share that glory with Him! (Romans 8:17)

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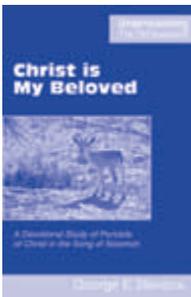
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I often think I cannot spell
the lesson I must learn,
and then in weariness and doubt,
I pray the page may turn;

Or sometimes strangely I forget,
and, learning o'er and o'er,
a lesson all with tear-drops wet,
which I had learnt before.

He chides me not, but waits awhile,
then wipes my heavy eyes:
oh what a Teacher is our God,
so patient and so wise!

Sometimes the Master gives to me
a strange new alphabet;
I wonder what its use will be,
or why it need be set.

And then I find this tongue alone
some stranger ear can reach,
one whom He may commission me
for Him to train or teach.

We do not see our Teacher's face,
We do not hear His voice;
And yet we know that He is near,
We feel it, and rejoice.

Oh! may we learn to love Him more,
by every opening page,
by every lesson He shall mark
with daily ripening age.

Frances Ridley Havergal, *The Ministry of Song* [1870]