

# Genesis... The Foundation for the Gospel<sup>1</sup>

God's ultimate purpose in redemptive history is to create a people to dwell in his presence, glorifying him through numerous varied activities and enjoying him forever.

Read... Revelation 21:3-4 *And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Now the dwelling of God is with men, and he will live with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*

The story of the Bible begins with God in eternal glory before the beginning of time and history, and it ends with God and his redeemed people in eternal glory. At the center stands the cross, where God revealed his glory through his Son. The history of salvation is the grand overarching story of the Bible; embracing it gives coherence to all of life. It calls each of God's people to own the story personally and it dignifies each believer with a role in the further outworking of the story.

The biblical story of redemption must be understood within the larger story of creation. First Adam, and later Israel, were placed in God's sanctuary... the Garden of Eden and the Promised Land, respectively. But both Adam and Israel failed to be a faithful, obedient steward, and both were expelled from the sanctuary God had created for them. But Jesus Christ—the second Adam, the son of Abraham, the son of David—was faithful and obedient to God.

Though the world killed him, God raised him to life, which meant that death was defeated. Through his Spirit, God pours into sinners the resurrection life of his Son, creating a new humanity “in Christ.” Those who are “in Christ” move through death into new life and exaltation in God's sanctuary, there to enjoy his presence forever.

## Genesis and origins

The English title “Genesis” comes from the Greek translation of the Pentateuch and means “origin,” a very apt title because Genesis is all about origins—of the world, of the human race, of sin, death, and of the Jewish people. The book of Genesis opens with a majestic description of how God first created the heavens and earth and how he ordered the earth so that it may become his dwelling place.

The creation story is structured into seven sections, each marked by the use of set phrases. The entire episode conveys the picture of the all-powerful, transcendent God who sets everything in place with consummate skill in conformity to his grand design. The emphasis is mainly on how God orders or structures everything... thus revealing his nature, character, and magnificent attributes—his holiness, glory, majesty, and sovereignty. Throughout the OT period, the stories of Genesis would have been a great encouragement to faith for the Israelites.

The first five books of the Bible are called by the Jews “the Law,” and by Christians “the Pentateuch” or “the Five Books of Moses.” The overall theme of the Pentateuch is God's covenant with Israel through Moses, which established Israel as a theocracy, a nation where God's directives rule the civil, social, and religious spheres... for the sake of the whole world.

Genesis, as the first volume of this first section of the Bible, orients the reader to the rest of the Pentateuch, and thus to the rest of the Bible.

- 1) It explains in story form the nature and character of God and the place of man in God's creation.
- 2) The creation story also offers an analysis of sin and its consequences, and describes God's reaction to it... and thus shows why true religion must be redemptive.

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<sup>1</sup> Based on the “Introduction to Genesis” and “Overview of the Bible: A Survey of the History of Salvation” in the ESV Study Bible.

It records the call of Abraham, through whom all the nations of the world will be blessed, and traces the birth and careers of the forefathers of the nation of Israel, leading to Israel in Egypt. The fact that Yahweh (Hebrew word for Lord) is the universal Creator shows why Israel has a message for all mankind.

At the same time Genesis sets out models of behavior, both in its opening chapters and in the examples of the patriarchs' faithful obedience to God. Genesis is therefore a book of instruction, and this is why Jews include it in the Law, for the Hebrew word *torah*, usually translated “law,” has the broader sense of “instruction.”

Genesis divides into two major sections:

- 1) The primeval/early history of the world... the first 11 chapters tell the story of God's creative acts, and of Adam and Eve and their first children; followed by the various historical events surrounding Noah and the Ark, the worldwide flood for the judgment of sin, the Tower of Babel and the Table of the Nations.
- 2) Section two gives the history of the patriarchs—Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob in chapters 12–50.

The proportions of the two sections are significant... essentially chapters 1–11 are setting the stage for the main drama, which is God's dealings with Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, and his sons... the main subject of the last chapters 12–50.

### **Genesis is about both beginnings and generations in a family line leading to the Messiah**

Starting with the divine ordering of creation, Genesis follows the many generations of a family line from Adam to Jacob and his sons. This family line of the promised Deliverer—revealed as Christ in the New Testament, forms the backbone of Genesis, linking its varied elements into a cohesive complete narrative. As Genesis describes how the earth's population increases over many generations, the reader's attention is constantly being directed toward one particular person in each generation and his descendants.

Another important feature of Genesis is its particular recording of genealogies. Although these can be of little interest for many readers, as they lack the dramatic tension of the narrative storytelling episodes, they contribute in a special way to the structure of Genesis. Genesis has two linear genealogies that cover 10 generations, naming only one ancestor in each generation. These play an important role in linking major narrative storytelling sections. The period of Adam and Eve is linked to Noah by the genealogy in chapter 5 and a similar genealogy in 11:10–26 connects Noah's son Shem with Abraham.

### **Themes of Genesis**

The primary theme of Genesis is creation, sin, and re-creation. It tells how God created the world as very good, but that it was destroyed in the flood as a result of man's disobedience. The new world after the flood was also spoiled by human sin (chp 11). However, the call of Abraham through whom all the nations of the world would be blessed, gives hope that God's purpose will eventually be realized through Abraham's descendant... the Messiah—Jesus Christ.

### **History of salvation in Genesis**

Many readers are likely to be familiar with selected parts of Genesis. Most, however, struggle to comprehend how the different elements of the book combine to form a unified account... one overarching story. Consequently, individual episodes are often read in isolation, with an inadequate appreciation of how the larger literary context shapes the passage in question. Grasping the big picture of Genesis is very important.

Central to this picture is the family line of Christ—the genealogies that form the backbone of the entire book of Genesis. The importance of this lineage cannot be overstated, for beginning in 3:15 the offspring of the woman/Eve becomes the source of hope for the defeat of Satan and the restoration of the earth and everything on it. In due course, Eve's offspring is traced through Seth to Noah, a “*righteous man*” (6:9) who found favor with God, so that God saved him and his family from being destroyed in the flood.

Read... Genesis 6:9 *This is the account of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless among the people of his time, and he walked with God.*

From Noah the family line moves to Abraham, in whom all the families of the earth will be blessed (12:1–3). When God establishes the covenant of circumcision with Abraham, the divine promise of blessing is linked to a future royal descendant traced through Abraham's son Isaac. As the Genesis stories unfold we see the true history of the world we live in.

The promise of blessing becomes intimately connected with the firstborn son. Eventually, the divine promises linked to the family line in Genesis come to fulfillment in Jesus Christ, the incarnate Son of God who becomes by adoption “*the son of David, the son of Abraham.*” By looking forward to a special King who will mediate God's blessing to humanity, Genesis provides the foundation on which the rest of the Bible stands and the foundation for a climatic presentation of the Gospel.

However, in saying that Genesis points forward to Jesus Christ, we must be careful because Genesis does not provide a full-grown Christology. What begins in Genesis as a divine promise of salvation linked to the Eve's offspring, in 3:15, is expanded throughout the rest of the OT. Nevertheless, the ideas that are introduced in Genesis are fully consistent with the final reality of the Messiah... God incarnate!

While the concept of all nations being blessed through a future King is at the heart of Genesis, other related themes are also developed. One of the most important of these is the divine promise to Abraham that he will become a “*great nation*” (Gen. 12:2). Central to this promise are the twin concepts of land and descendants, both being essential components of nationhood. This emphasis on a nation has to be understood in the light of God's purpose for the earth. It is to be his dwelling place, where he will live surrounded by a human population of royal priests.

However, when the first man and woman betray God they forfeited their special status.

Later, when God comes to dwell among the Israelites, they as a nation are given the opportunity to be a royal priesthood (Ex. 19:6). Unfortunately, they never fully realize all that God wants them to be. Yet even through failure, they provide an indication of how the earth should be under God's rule. With the coming of Jesus Christ, the national theocracy of Israel is replaced by an international royal priesthood that includes Jews, Samaritans, and Gentiles from every nation.

Read... 1 Peter 2:9 *But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light.*

Although the Church, the children of God, becomes the dwelling place of God on earth, evil still remains. Only after the return of Christ and the final judgment will all things be restored and a new earth be created. At that time the New Jerusalem will mark the completion of the divine project that began in Genesis. The Apostle John's vision of the new earth in Revelation 21–22 has close similarities with Genesis 1–2.

The destruction of the last enemy, death, and the last judgment will finally lead to the renewal of the entire created order, heaven and earth, to be the perfect home in which the Lamb will live forever with his bride, the people whom he has redeemed out of all the nations through his atoning death.

### **Genesis and history**

It is easy to see that Genesis aims to record actual events in the history of the world, in time, in real places rather than mythical events. The book explains to its Jewish audience how their nation came to be and why their ancestors were in Egypt. The genealogies connect Jacob and his children with the ancient generations, going back to Adam and Eve... from whom they descended.

## Genesis and science

The relation of Genesis to science is primarily a question of how one reads the accounts of creation and Adam's sin, and answer legitimate questions such as these:

- What kind of “days” does Genesis 1 describe?
- How long ago is creation supposed to have happened?
- Were all species created as they are now?
- Were Adam and Eve real people? Are all people descended from them?
- How much of the earth did Noah's flood cover? How much impact did it have on geological formations?

Should Genesis 1 be called a “scientific account”? Again, it is crucial to have a careful definition. Does Genesis 1 record a true account of the origin of the material universe? To that question a believer should be able to answer yes. On the other hand, does Genesis 1 provide information in a way that corresponds to the purposes of modern science? To this question the answer is no.

For example, the term “*kind*,” used in the English translations of the Bible, does not correspond to the notion of modern terminology for “species.” Kind simply means “category,” and could refer to a species, or a family, or an even more general taxonomic group. In Genesis 1, the plants are put into two general categories, small seed-bearing plants, and larger woody plants. The land animals are classified as domesticable stock animals (“livestock”); small things such as mice, lizards, and spiders (“creeping things”); and larger game and predatory animals (“beasts of the earth”). In Scripture, no species, other than man, gets a proper Hebrew name. Not even the sun and moon get their ordinary Hebrew names (1:16).

The creation story text says nothing about the process by which “*the earth brought forth vegetation*” (1:12), or by which the various *kinds* of animals appeared. Although, in fact, we see in Scripture that it was in response to God's command indicates that it was not due to any natural powers inherent in the material universe itself. The creation account is a well written story for its main purpose, which was to enable a community of nomadic shepherds—the Israelites, wandering in the Sinai desert to learn about the Creator/Owner of all things and to celebrate the boundless creative goodness, character, holiness, majesty, glory, and attributes of their sovereign Lord.

However, it does not say why, e.g., a spider is different from a snake, nor does it comment on what genetic relationship there might be between various creatures. When the creation story is received, today, according to its purpose, it shapes a worldview in which science is at home (It is the only worldview that really makes science possible). This is a worldview of a world that a good and wise God made perfectly suited for humans to enjoy and to rule. The things in the world have natures that people can know, at least in part. Human senses and intelligence are the right tools for discerning and saying true things about the world... which is the fundamental goal of all science. However, it is important to note, the effects of sin interfere with this God-given process.

It is clear that Adam and Eve are presented as real people. Their role in the creation story, as the channel by which sin and death came into the world, implies that they are seen as the headwaters of the human race. “*Made it the image and the likeness of God*” distinguishes mankind from all the animals. Our nature is a special bestowal of God (i.e., not a purely “natural” development). For example:

- **A mind** so that we can know the one true God.
- **Emotions** so that we can love God.
- With **free will to** make a reasoned and free choice to love God with all our heart and all our mind.

It is no wonder that all human beings share capacities for language, moral judgment, rationality, and appreciation for beauty, unlike and beyond the powers observed in the animals... therefore, any science that ignores this fact does not faithfully describe reality. The biblical worldview leads one to expect that all humans now share a need for God and a bent toward sin... as well as a possibility for faith in the true God, through the grace and mercy of God. Thus, even though it is wrong to use Genesis as if it were directly furnishing

information in modern scientific form, it is nonetheless crucial to affirm its historical account and its God-centered worldview in order to provide a proper foundation for doing good science.

### **Reading Genesis in the twenty-first century**

The book of Genesis originated thousands of years ago... a fact easily forgotten when it is read in a modern translation. It was composed and written in an age and culture far removed from the experiences of most modern readers. Allowance must be made for this distance between text and reader. While modern translations attempt to bridge this gap, it is not always possible to replicate the nuances and wordplays of the Hebrew original. Moreover, Genesis employs literary techniques not commonly used today.

Woven into stories set in an ancient Near Eastern culture, these features present obstacles that can be overcome only through the Holy Spirit's opening of hearts and minds as the multiple stories of historical events, and the folks of those historical periods unfold. We must not forget that Genesis is, in fact, the inspired Word of God and is, therefore, infallible... without error in the original manuscripts. However, Genesis is limited and selective in the information that it conveys. God does not tell readers everything that they could possibly want to know.

Frequently, readers may ask questions, legitimate in themselves, that are not answered by the text. Genesis does not tell, for instance, how the serpent that Satan used to deceive Eve came to be God's enemy or where Cain found a wife. Such questions could be multiplied many times. Consequently, our natural curiosity must be correctly channeled, for the inspired author of Genesis intentionally communicates only certain things. Yet the text does not cease to be the Word of God simply because it is limited in what it tells the reader; it need not be exhaustive in order to be true.

Put simply, the author of Genesis writes to celebrate the fact that God made the world, not to explain the details of how he made it.

Read... Hebrews 11:3 *By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.*

Through his creative acts God reveals his nature, character, and attributes. In other words... we learn who he is through what he has done. The Bible says, "*This is eternal life, that you know the one true God...*" John 17:3. The creation story simply says that God brought the heavens and the earth into being by means of his spoken word ("*And God said*"). It explains that God ordered the earth in terms of time, space, and matter. It also reveals that people were originally created by God and appointed by him as the Creator/Owner, to be his representatives on earth, to rule it for his glory and the benefit of all creation.

To the extent that scientists deny that God is the Creator of all things, a fundamental conflict will exist between the foundation and conclusions of such scientific work and the Bible. At the same time, to the extent that the focus of science is on understanding and describing the world that God created, no conflict between the Bible and scientific work needs to exist. Understood in terms of what the author of Genesis seeks to communicate, science as well as the Bible have a valuable and legitimate place. By divine revelation, Genesis provides knowledge that cannot be discovered by human investigation. If it were otherwise, there would be no need for Genesis to be a part of the Bible.

# Learning About GOD

GOD communicates with man.

GOD is holy and righteous; He demands death as the payment for sin.

GOD had no beginning and He will never end – He is eternal.

GOD is all powerful; nothing is too hard for Him to do.

GOD is everywhere all the time; He knows everything.

GOD is loving, gracious, and merciful.

GOD is greater than all and more important than all; He is the highest authority.

GOD is faithful; He always does what He says; He never changes.

Genesis is the front end of the grand narrative storytelling of creation, sin, and redemption—a narrative that has reached a glorious point in the resurrection of Jesus... the down payment of its even more glorious consummation. The story is of a good world made by a good God and man's role in that world. It is the story of how the stain of sin affects everything and the story of how God intends to reverse those effects. Thus, the life that one lives in the body, one's connection to all mankind, one's connection to and responsibility for the created world, one's dependence on God's grace—all are founded on the story that begins in Genesis.

The Christian's response, like the covenant made with Israel at Sinai, involves a need for moral purity and obedience to Christ, lived out by faith, in the daily life of each one who has believed God:

- 1) Through the historical events by which God communicates his grace.
- 2) Through each community of Christian believers to which the faithful members are bound—all affirming God's original creation intent.

Genesis also offers a paradigm for God's dealings with his creation, namely, the representative God appointed to rule over his creation. Adam represented mankind and the world, and the consequences of his disobedience—his sin and rebellion, pass to all those whom he represented. This provides the framework for the Christian understanding of how Jesus does his representative work as the second Adam, which will have consequences both for the people he represents—all who have believed; and for the rest of creation.

## **Genesis is a history book**

All of the Genesis material falls into the overall genre of true, historical narrative. But in turn, the history is not packaged as it is in the history books with which modern readers are familiar. Instead, the book of Genesis is primarily a collection of what may be called hero stories—episodic tales focused on a central character with

whom the reader is to sympathize—along with interspersed genealogies. The first three chapters belong to a genre known as the story of origins... of creation of the heavens and the earth... all that is seen and unseen. Genesis also has similarity with larger-than-life type stories because this story is one of true universal history (chs. 1–11) and the true origins of the nation of Israel (chs. 12–50).

A historical literary approach to the book of Genesis requires that the reader think correctly about the modern-day recognized concept of a literary “hero.” However, the heroes in these true historical Bible stories are not always “heroic.” They are simply the human center of attention in the story; their actions are brave or cowardly or noble or base, or (more often) a complex mixture of all these characteristics. As the narrative proceeds, the reader should be struck with the contingencies—that is, the episodes could have turned out differently... perhaps even should have turned out differently. We see that God's sovereignty and providential care for his people uses their imperfections to achieve his purposes for them.

The original audience would see their own situations as permeated with God's purpose, and would thus learn to embrace their lives as a gift from God, to be lived as he directs. An example is Isaac's servant finding Rebekah to be Isaac's wife. Any of these events could have turned out differently, and then Isaac and Rebekah would never have married—perhaps, in view of 24:3–8, Isaac would not have married at all, and then where would the promises to Abraham be? But God kept his promise (one is not obligated to think that everything the servant did was right), and the first readers could learn to see themselves under God's care as the result of reflection on what took place. The modern Christian reader is likewise the heir and beneficiary of this story... learning that God is active in and sovereign over our lives (see Philippians 2:13).

Unifying literary themes include:

- 1) The characterization of God so that man can know God through the stories of his dealings with people.
- 2) The sinfulness of the human race and individuals within it.
- 3) The story of the unfolding plan of God to redeem a people for himself despite human waywardness.
- 4) The “hero story” as the nearly constant historical story format.

Characters, characters, characters: As one reads Genesis, one is continually drawn into encounters with unforgettable characters and their stories, and lessons about wisdom and folly that can be learned from them; along with learning about God in all his glory, majesty, holiness, and his sovereignty.

### **Christ in the Old Testament**

Since God's plan focuses on Christ and his glory, it is natural that the promises of God and the symbols in the OT all point forward to him... *“For all the promises of God find their Yes in him [Christ]”* (2 Cor. 1:20).

When Christ appeared to the disciples after his resurrection, his teaching focused on leading them to understand how the OT pointed to him.

*Read... Luke 24:25-27 “And he said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe all that the prophets have spoken! Was it not necessary that the Christ should suffer these things and enter into his glory?’ And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he interpreted to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning himself.”*

Christ is showing us that the Old Testament is the foundation for the Gospel as Luke wrote, *“Then he said to them, ‘These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you, that everything written about me in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms must be fulfilled.’ Then he opened their minds to understand the Scriptures, and said to them, ‘Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer and on the third day rise from the dead, and that repentance and forgiveness of sins should be proclaimed in his name to all nations, beginning from Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things’”* Luke 24:44–48.

## Christ as the Last Adam

Christ is not only the offspring of Abraham, but—reaching back farther in time to an earlier promise of God—the offspring of the first woman—Eve.

Read... Genesis 3:15 *"I will put enmity between you [the serpent] and the woman, and between your offspring and her offspring; he shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise his heel."*

The conquest over Satan, and therefore the conquest of evil and the reversal of its effects, is to take place through the offspring of the woman.

In Scripture we can trace this offspring from Eve through Seth and his godly descendants, through Noah, and down to Abraham, where God's promise takes the specific form of offspring for Abraham. Thus Christ is not only the offspring of Abraham but he is the last Adam.

Like Adam, Christ represents all who belong to him, thus he reverses the effects of Adam's sin and rebellion. In 1 Corinthians 15:45–49 we read... *So it is written: "The first man Adam became a living being"; the last Adam, a life-giving spirit. The spiritual did not come first, but the natural, and after that the spiritual. The first man was of the dust of the earth, the second man from heaven. As was the earthly man, so are those who are of the earth; and as is the man from heaven, so also are those who are of heaven. And just as we have borne the likeness of the earthly man, so shall we bear the likeness of the man from heaven."*

## Shadows, Prefigures, and "Types" of Christ in the Old Testament

It is obvious that the NT constantly talks about Christ and the salvation that he has brought. What is not so obvious is that the same is true of the OT, though it does this by way of anticipation. It gives us "shadows" and "types" of the things that were to come such as are seen in 1 Cor. 10:6, 11; Heb. 8:5:

- For example, 1 Corinthians 10:6 indicates that the events the Israelites experienced in the wilderness were *"examples for us."*
- And 1 Corinthians 10:11 says, *"Now these things happened to them as an example, but they were written down for our instruction, on whom the end of the ages has come."*

In 1 Corinthians 10:6 and 11, the Greek word for *"example"* is *typos*, from which derives the English word *"type"* (cf. Rom. 5:14). A *"type,"* in the language of theology, is a special example, symbol, or picture that God designed beforehand, and that he placed in history at an earlier point in time in order to point forward to a later, larger fulfillment. Animal sacrifices in the OT prefigure the final sacrifice of Christ... *"the Lamb of God."* So these animal sacrifices were *"types"* of Christ. The temple, as a dwelling place for God, prefigured Christ, who is the final *"dwelling place"* of God, and through whom God comes to be with his people. The OT priests were types of Christ, who is the final high priest (Heb. 7:11–8:7). Fulfillment takes place only in Christ.

But in the NT those people who are *"in Christ"* are those who have received him by believing in his life giving death, burial, and resurrection, according to the Scriptures for the forgiveness of their sins. Those who place their trust in him and thus experience fellowship with his person and his blessings, receive the benefits and free gift of what he has accomplished for them on the cross and in the resurrection.

## Christ the Mediator

The Bible makes it clear that ever since the fall of Adam into sin, sin and its consequences have been the pervasive problem of the human race. Every person born since Adam and Eve sinned, are born separated from God. They are under the power of sin, Satan, and death. Sin and its consequences is a constant theme running through the Bible. Sin is *"missing the mark"* set by God as the standard for righteousness. God's holiness demands that *"the wages of sin is death"* and that *"without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sins."*

God is holy and righteous, and no sinful human being, not even a great man like Moses, can stand in the presence of God without dying: *"you cannot see my face, for man shall not see me and live"* (Ex. 33:20). Sinful

man needs a mediator who will approach God on his behalf. Christ, who is both God and man, and who is innocent of sin, is the only one who can serve in this role.

Read... 1 Timothy 2:5-6 *“For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men--the testimony given in its proper time.”*

Though there is only one mediator in an ultimate sense, in a subordinate way various people in the OT serve in some kind of mediatorial capacity... Moses is one of them. But if there is only one mediator, as 1 Timothy 2:5 says, how could Moses possibly serve in that way? Moses was not the ultimate mediator, but he prefigured Christ's mediation.

Because Moses was sinful, he could not possibly have survived the presence of God without forgiveness, that is, without having a sinless mediator on his own behalf. God welcomed Moses into his presence only because, according to the plan of God, Christ was to come and make atonement for Moses. The benefits of Christ's work were reckoned beforehand for Moses' benefit... *“...that God was reconciling the world to himself in Christ, not counting men's sins against them.”* 2 Corinthians 5:19a

And so it is for all the OT saints. How could they have been saved otherwise? God is perfectly holy, and they all needed his righteousness. Perfection was graciously reckoned to them because of Christ, who was to come. That means that there is only one way of salvation, throughout the OT as well as in the NT. Only Christ can save us... *“And there is salvation in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given among men by which we must be saved”* (Acts 4:12). The stories of salvation in the OT all depend on Christ. All the instances of mediation in the OT prefigure Christ. How else could it be, since there is only one mediator and one way of salvation?

Read... John 14:6 *Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”*

### **Salvation is spiritual and physical**

God brings spiritual salvation in the form of personal fellowship, spiritual intimacy, and the promise of eternal life with God. However, salvation also includes temporal, external deliverance—“salvation” in a physical sense... salvation is not merely spiritual.

Christians look forward to the resurrection of the body and to *“new heavens and a new earth in which righteousness dwell”* (2 Peter 3:13). Personal salvation starts with renewal of the heart, but in the end it will be comprehensive... physical and spiritual, and cosmic in scope. The OT, when it pays attention to the Promised Land, and physical prosperity and physical health anticipates the physical nature of the true Christian believer's prosperity in the new heavens and the new earth.

The Bible as a whole fits together even though the events and historical stories recorded in the Old and New Testaments took place over a span of thousands of years and in several different cultural settings. God's act of creation is the foundation for the entire biblical history and God's plan of salvation through Christ. A considerable number of New Testament passages refer back to creation and the Old Testament stories and people. All the rest of the Bible depends indirectly on it. The one unifying thread in the Bible is its divine authorship... every book of the Bible is the word of God.

The events recorded in the Bible are there because God wanted them recorded, and he had them recorded with his people and their instruction in mind... *“For whatever was written in former days was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of the Scriptures we might have hope.”* Romans 15:4