

## Theistic Evolution — Part 2

### A Response to BioLogos' Theistic Evolution Teaching Part 2 Views of Scripture

#### *OUTLINE:*

#### INTRODUCTION

1. THE BIBLE IS FOUNDATIONAL AS GOD'S SPECIAL REVELATION.
2. THE BIBLE HAS BEEN REVEALED PROGRESSIVELY.
3. THE BIBLE HAS AUTHORITY AS DIVINELY INSPIRED.
4. THE BIBLE IS INFALLIBLE AND INERRANT.
5. THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY TRUTH.
6. THE BIBLE IS TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY.

#### CONCLUSION

#### *INTRODUCTION*

Within this paper the reader will find the term “Our View” used to introduce a contrasting position to the BioLogos View which we believe to be in error. It should be understood that the term “Our View” is based on what we believe to be the biblical teaching.

“Christians believe that God created the world. It is one of the most central beliefs and important parts of our faith, second only to our belief in the divinity of Christ and the importance of his life, teaching, death, and resurrection. Belief in God as Creator is a wonderful affirmation. To look at the world around us and know it was created by the God we worship and who was revealed in Jesus is extraordinary in so many ways. We marvel at the elegant beauty of flowers, the songs of birds... Some of these emotions are captured in hymns like ‘How Great Thou Art’:

Oh Lord my God, when I in awesome wonder,  
Consider all the worlds Thy hands have made,  
I see the stars, I hear the rolling thunder,  
Thy power throughout the universe displayed...

“More than two thousand years ago the psalmist expressed similar sentiments: ‘When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place. What are mere mortals that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them’ (Ps. 8:3-4 TNIV)”<sup>1</sup>

The above quote is music to our ears!

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<sup>1</sup> Giberson and Collins, *The Language of Science and Faith*, pp. 15-16.

But what does the writer of these words really mean? As one who professes to be a Christian, he makes it clear that “Christians believe that God created the world... Belief in God as Creator is a wonderful affirmation.” Apparently “in awesome wonder” he considers all the worlds God has made with his hands. In the stars he sees God’s “power throughout the universe displayed.” He sees the heavens, “the moon and the stars” as “set in place” by “the work of [God’s] fingers.” And yet he is firmly convinced of what he calls “the Truth of evolution.” He, Dr. Karl Giberson, as a BioLogos Theistic Evolution [TE] promoter, believes that “God created life using [only] natural [not supernatural] forces.” He clearly states; “In embracing science, we accept that the biological theory known as evolution is a reliable explanation for the development of life on our planet.”<sup>2</sup> In fact, he even claims that if Jesus were living among us today, He [too] “would believe evolution, of course.” And why is this? “He [Jesus] cares for the Truth.”<sup>3</sup>

Has his “faith” in “the Truth” given Dr. Giberson confidence and stability? Although he totally rejects both Young Earth Creationism [YEC] and Intelligent Design [ID] arguments [in part, because of examples of what he calls “bad design”], he writes that he wishes “it were true.” He writes, “Like so many people, I believe in God and have done so for my entire life. And like most believers who go on to earn advanced degrees, I have been forced to recognize that belief in God is not a simple matter. Many of the arguments that worked so well for me in high school have since lost their power to persuade. And I have great appreciation for the counterarguments for God’s existence. I understand how honest thinkers and seekers after truth like Daniel Dennett and Michael Ruse can end up rejecting God.” [How can Giberson, who knows that both Daniel Dennett and Michael Ruse “end up rejecting God,” be so convinced that they are both “honest thinkers and seekers after truth”?] It is no wonder that he goes on to write; “Like that of most thinking Christians, my belief in God is tinged with doubts and, in my more reflective moments, I sometimes wonder if I am perhaps simply continuing along the trajectory of a childhood faith that should be abandoned.”<sup>4</sup> And we are reminded once again that only those who have their confident and eternal hope for personal salvation in our Lord Jesus Christ and His finished work both on the Cross and in the empty tomb can joyfully live with constant assurance of eternal life.

At their “second Theology of Celebration BioLogos Workshop” (Nov. 9-11, 2010), BioLogos TE scholars discussed among many matters, the “nature of divine activity in a world where life has been created through an evolutionary process.” They are convinced that “faith and science are mutually hospitable.” And they “see no necessary conflict between the Bible and the findings of science...” They “agree that the methods of the natural sciences provide the most reliable guide to understanding the material world, and the current evidence from science indicates that the diversity of life is best explained as a result of an evolutionary [non-miraculous] process”<sup>5</sup> of natural, [not supernatural] selection. They continue to believe that God has written two books: 1) the Book of Nature or Evolution and 2) the Book of Holy Scripture or the Bible. But they place much more confidence in what they call “the Truth of Evolution” than they do the Holy Bible. Even with Scripture’s clear revelation of a literal six-day creation by the supernatural act of God, BioLogos TE scholars persistently hold to and aggressively promote Darwinian evolution.

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<sup>2</sup> Ibid p.19.

<sup>3</sup> <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/04/10/my-take-jesus-would-believe-in-evolution-and-so-should-you/?hpt=C2>

<sup>4</sup> Karl Giberson, *Saving Darwin, How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution*, 2008, pp. 155-156.

<sup>5</sup> <http://biologos.org/blog/the-biologos-foundations-theology-of-celebration-ii-workshop/>

In contrast we agree with Trevor McIlwain when he says, “He [God] is the Creator of all and eternal authority over all... Besides ignoring His Word, men have refused to acknowledge Him as their Creator, so they are deaf to the daily message of His creation which He so lovingly displays for everyone to see... These [FFCC] lessons emphasize that God’s Word is true – a true history and the living message of the living, active, sovereign God. Humanistic educational systems [with their teaching of evolution] have attempted to smear lies across the face of God’s Word. But His Word still stands – clear, righteous, and true, as it will for all eternity.”<sup>6</sup>

This paper will consider some of our differences with BioLogos TE regarding the Bible.

## 1. THE BIBLE IS FOUNDATIONAL AS GOD’S SPECIAL REVELATION

**Introduction:** “The Bible is the Word of God.”<sup>7</sup> “God really wants us to get to know Him; That’s why He gave us the Bible.”<sup>8</sup> “God existed alone before the beginning and... He exists independently of all else and needs nothing.”<sup>9</sup> This implies that apart from God revealing details of the beginning, we would not know them.

**BioLogos View:** BioLogos claims to affirm the Bible as God’s revelation saying, “Foundational to the BioLogos vision is the belief that the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God. The Bible is a living document through which God, by his Spirit, continues to speak to the church today.”<sup>10</sup> However, according to BioLogos, the Bible as revelation is seriously flawed with error and cannot be relied upon to give the truth about the natural world or about any matter of which it speaks. Karl Giberson writes, “I am happy to concede that science does indeed trump religious truth about the natural world.”<sup>11</sup> Pete Enns of BioLogos writes, “Most Christians understand that, even though the Bible assumes a certain way of looking at the cosmos, from a scientific point of view the Bible is wrong. And that is perfectly fine.”<sup>12</sup> Kenton Sparks questions the Bible’s integrity as reliable revelation on any matter saying, “If Jesus as a finite human being erred from time to time, there is no reason at all to suppose that Moses, Paul, John wrote Scripture without error. Rather, we are wise to assume that the biblical authors expressed themselves *as* human beings writing from the perspectives of their own finite, broken horizons.”<sup>13</sup>

These are damnable beliefs because if the Bible is wrong on any point, it can be wrong on every point, which creates doubt as to the Bible’s claim not only to provide revelation on creation, but to provide revelation on the virgin birth of Christ, the incarnation of Christ as the God-man, Christ’s work of redemption on the cross, His glorious resurrection from the dead, and salvation by faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work. It would seem that BioLogos’s claim to believe

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<sup>6</sup> *Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ*, p. 77.

<sup>7</sup> *FFCC*, Lesson 1, p. 97.

<sup>8</sup> *FFCC*, Lesson 1, p. 99.

<sup>9</sup> *FFCC*, Lesson 2, p. 109.

<sup>10</sup> <http://biologos.org/about>

<sup>11</sup> Karl W. Giberson, Quoted in, <http://www.bpnews.net/BPFfirstPerson.asp?ID=36418>

<sup>12</sup> Pete Enns, “Evangelicals, Evolution and the Bible”, [http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/enns\\_scholarly\\_essay.pdf](http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/enns_scholarly_essay.pdf)

<sup>13</sup> Kenton Sparks, <http://biologos.org/blog/after-inerrancy-evangelicals-and-the-bible-in-a-postmodern-age-part-4> June 2010.

“the Bible is the inspired and authoritative Word of God” is a dishonest claim intended to gain the listening ear of Christians in order to persuade them to the BioLogos belief in evolution.

According to BioLogos the only truly reliable revelation is what they claim is the “truth of evolution” which “trumps” the revelation of the Word of God that BioLogos discounts as “an ancient story” contrived by “a wandering tribe of Jews thousands of years ago.” Karl Giberson writes, “But when it comes to the truth of evolution, many Christians feel compelled to look the other way. They hold on to a particular interpretation of an ancient story in Genesis that they have fashioned into a modern account of origins - a story that began as an oral tradition for a wandering tribe of Jews thousands of years ago.”<sup>14</sup>

BioLogos claims two sources of divine revelation: 1. the Bible, being God’s revelation through words (albeit BioLogos claims the words of God are flawed with error); and 2) science, being God’s revelation through evolution (which BioLogos affirms is a more accurate and trustworthy revelation). Karl Giberson writes, “Thus BioLogos affirms that evolution is a means by which God providentially achieves God’s purposes . . . We affirm without reservation both the authority of the Bible and the integrity of science, accepting each of the ‘Two Books’ (the Word and Works of God) as God’s revelations to humankind . . . [and] we affirm . . . that the earth is more than four billion years old and that all species on this planet are historically related through the process of evolution.”<sup>15</sup> BioLogos can’t have it both ways. They cannot affirm the authority of the Bible and the integrity of evolution (evolution is what BioLogos means by “science), simply because the two are diametrically opposed. BioLogos claims evolution is the means by which God achieves His purposes, but Scripture claims God achieves His purposes by the power of His Word alone. The creation of the universe and all it contains is prefaced by the words, “And God said.”<sup>16</sup>

**Our View:** We, too, believe that God has given us two sources of revelation. But we refer to them as 1) General Revelation (God’s Work in nature) and Special Revelation (God’s Word in the Bible). God has desired and determined to uncover for mankind a body of knowledge formerly hidden from mankind and undiscoverable by mankind.

God’s revelation of knowledge falls into two categories: The first category, ‘General Revelation,’ is that body of knowledge God has uncovered through means of nature, history, and conscience which all people are exposed to, and which provides sufficient knowledge to prompt people to desire to know God but not sufficient knowledge for people to know God or know how to be reconciled to God (Psalm 19:1-4; Romans 2:14-15).

The second category, ‘Special Revelation,’ is that body of knowledge God has uncovered through means of miracles, dreams, visions, angels, and especially the writings of the Old Testament prophets, the incarnation of Jesus Christ, and the writings of the New Testament which

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<sup>14</sup> Karl W. Giberson, <http://religion.blogs.cnn.com/2011/04/10/my-take-jesus-would-believe-in-evolution-and-so-should-you/>

<sup>15</sup> Ibid

<sup>16</sup> Genesis 1:3,6,9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26, 29

provide all the knowledge necessary for mankind to know God personally and know how to be reconciled to God (John 20:31).<sup>17</sup>

We recognize the Bible as God’s final authority in revealing Himself to mankind, and we examine the Scriptures to determine what is true and worthy of belief (Acts 17:11).

## **2. THE BIBLE HAS BEEN REVEALED PROGRESSIVELY.**

**Introduction:** “God’s fundamental form of teaching throughout all history is clearly progressive... God chose to make known His nature and character, His plan for the world, His purpose of redemption through Christ, and all other spiritual matters through progressive revelation... All doctrines begin in seed form in Genesis and are progressively revealed, little by little, throughout the Old and New Testaments.”<sup>18</sup> We should seek to understand and teach God’s truth in the same manner as He chose to reveal it. “The best way to teach God’s Word is to follow His progressive form of revelation. We should first lay good foundations for the believer’s faith and then build truth on truth, knowledge on knowledge. Bible doctrines can be most clearly understood if they are first seen in their beginnings in Genesis... God’s progressive revelation of all truth has also been in conjunction with His historical acts in both Old and New Testaments... The majority of doctrinal misinterpretations are due to the failure to understand the historical, progressive revelation of truth in the Bible... Doctrines can only be clearly understood in the light of their historical revelation and development.”<sup>19</sup>

**BioLogos View:** BioLogos proponents believe in a form of progressive revelation. The following statement made by BioLogos scholar Pete Enns appears to be correct: “progressive revelation implies that one should not expect the whole of Christian doctrine to reside at one point in that grand narrative—especially in the Old Testament, and even more especially in the opening chapters of Genesis.”<sup>20</sup> However, upon deeper examination it becomes apparent that what Enns means by that statement is not that the revelation of God is accurate and trustworthy at every point, and that God has built on truth He previously revealed. Instead Enns believes that later biblical authors were moving in completely different directions than their earlier counterparts, implying inaccuracy in the former revelations. Enns continues, “It may be better to say that progress in revelation clearly includes some sort of “change” or “movement” from old to new, which, according to the examples above, includes moving in wholly different directions. Otherwise, there is no progress. One would be hard pressed to think of any type of progress that does not necessarily entail truly leaving behind something of the old.”<sup>21</sup>

BioLogos believes that the need for progressive revelation proves the inadequacy and inaccuracy of revelation previously given. BioLogos takes opportunity to infer that scripture cannot be inerrant, because what earlier biblical authors wrote needed ‘correcting’ by later biblical authors. Enns writes, “Progressive revelation is an authentic and vital component of Scripture, but we do

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<sup>17</sup> “God, who at sundry times and in divers manners spake in time past unto the fathers by the prophets, Hath in these last days spoken unto us by his Son” (Hebrews 1:1-2).

<sup>18</sup> *FFCC*, p. 52.

<sup>19</sup> *FFCC*, p. 55.

<sup>20</sup> Peter Enns, “What Kind of ‘Progress’ Does Scripture Make? CSBI Article V”, <http://biologos.org/blog/what-kind-of-progress-does-scripture-make-csbi-article-v> (July 22, 2011)

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

a disservice to its very progressiveness if we say that later revelation does not “correct” earlier revelation. I realize, of course, that speaking of parts of Scripture correcting other parts is problematic.”<sup>22</sup> By insisting the Scripture needs “correcting” BioLogos disregards the truth that the Divine Author of all Scripture is immutable. “The bible has not and will not change because God is its author.”<sup>23</sup>

BioLogos understanding of progressive revelation is clarified for us when we compare it with BioLogos belief that the entire Scriptural record is parabolic. To BioLogos Scripture is not truth but merely stories, perhaps fictitious that illustrate truth or moral lessons. Sprinkle explains the BioLogos belief when he writes, “To put it another way, the Bible does not just contain parables, the Bible is, itself, parabolic . . . But going further, scriptural revelation is also part of the parabolic act of the Lord, being thrown down beside the object of the natural world as studied and described by science. Both the scriptural account and the naturalistic ones are, essentially, parables of creation, rather than descriptions, in that they are narratives given by the creator through the agency and mediation of human beings for the purpose of (together) giving us a rich picture of the mystery of God’s working and indwelling of the cosmos.”<sup>24</sup> BioLogos does not believe God progressively and intentionally built upon truth, but instead believes the revelation of Scripture merely illustrates truths by which to live, making the account of Adam only symbolic of the ‘evil tendencies of mankind.’ Enns writes, “Genesis speaks of Adam as part of Israel’s origins, not the origins of humanity; or Adam in Genesis is ‘everyman,’ a symbol of the universal tendency to reject God’s wisdom and follow one’s own path.”<sup>25</sup>

BioLogos believes progressive revelation exposes contradictory, inconsistent, and inaccurate content in the Bible, and implies a warning that the content should not be taken too seriously. Sparks claims, “If we take the Bible’s explicit content with any seriousness, then it is clear that its authors were not wholly consistent with each other, and it does not appear that they were wholly right about all matters of science and history.” He even states clearly that there are biblical texts which espouse “ethical values that not only contradict other biblical texts but strike us as down-right sinister or evil.”<sup>26</sup> He illustrates his point by showing the contrastive differences between the Mosaic Law (Deut. 20:16-18) and the Sermon on the Mount (Mt. 5:43-45). In the Matthew text, Jesus is quoted as saying “Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, but in the Deuteronomy text, Israel is commanded that they “must not let anything that breathes remain alive. You shall annihilate them – the Hittites and the Amorites. . .” Then, Sparks attempts to point out Scriptural inconsistency and error by highlighting the differences saying, “These words from the lips of Jesus and the Law of Moses are profoundly different. How can one biblical text admonish us to love our enemies and another command Israel to commit genocide against ethnic groups because they have a different religion?”<sup>27</sup> Sparks fails to see the

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<sup>22</sup> Ibid.

<sup>23</sup> *FFCC*, Lesson 1, p. 106.

<sup>24</sup> Mark E. Sprinkle, “Faithful Poetics and Christian Knowledge of the World”, [http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/sprinkle\\_white\\_paper\\_2.pdf](http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/sprinkle_white_paper_2.pdf)

<sup>25</sup> Peter Enns, “What Kind of “Progress” Does Scripture Make? CSBI Article V”, [biologos.org](http://biologos.org)

<sup>26</sup> <http://www.biologos.org/blog/after-inerrancy-evangelicals-and-the-bible-in-a-postmodern-age-part-2>

<sup>27</sup> Kenton Sparks, <http://biologos.org/blog/after-inerrancy-evangelicals-and-the-bible-in-a-postmodern-age-> June 2010.

righteous character of the “Judge of all the earth” brought out in His dealings with the nations, along with His mercy and longsuffering in giving opportunity for these nations to turn to Him in repentance and faith. Several centuries earlier God had made it very clear to Abraham that his descendants were going to be strangers in another land where they would be enslaved and oppressed for 400 years. But after He judged that nation, they would come out and enter their promised land when the iniquity of the Amorites would be completed. During the dispensation of Law, apparently God used Israel as His instruments of Judgment after the iniquities of the Amorites had been fulfilled (Gen. 15:14). It was not simply that the Canaanites had a different religion.

**Our View:** Recognition of progressive revelation is a basic feature in Biblical hermeneutics. Any failure to recognize this basic distinctive will lead to confusion in Biblical interpretation. And such confusion often leads to a lack of confidence in the integrity of Scripture. God has revealed Himself and His plan for humanity progressively or in stages, each stage building on, and further illuminating previous stages of knowledge. There is no error in God’s revelation to mankind, but every aspect of His revelation is truth and can be relied upon as trustworthy. Through progressive revelation God builds eternal truth upon eternal truth. The basic truths of Scripture are contained in the first 11 chapters of Genesis and are progressively unfolded throughout Scripture and brought to fullness in the New Testament. For example, God’s initial promise of redemption, “He shall bruise your head, And you shall bruise His heel” (Genesis 3:15 NKJV), continues unfolding in the sacrificial system and in such prophecies as Isaiah 53 until Jesus Christ appeared and was recognized and proclaimed as “the Lamb of God that taketh away the sin of the world” (John 1:29).<sup>28</sup> The basis of salvation has been, and will always be, the sacrifice of Christ on the cross (John 14:6). Likewise, the means of salvation has always been faith in God. However, the content of a person’s faith depended on the amount of revelation that God was pleased to give at a certain time.

God has revealed Himself differently in different dispensations. For instance, a major distinction is made between at least two dispensations – Law and Grace. The Bible is clear that the “Law [613 laws in the Torah] was given through Moses, grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:17). Jesus often said, “You have heard . . . [from the Law of Moses], but I say to you . . .” (Mt. 5:27-28). The Pharisees, for instance, had some understanding as to what the Law said about adultery (Lev. 20:10ff, Deut. 5:8), yet Jesus showed God’s marvelous grace to the adulterous woman (Jn. 8:10-11 and actually kept her from being put to death as prescribed in the Mosaic Law (Lev, 20:10). “For the Law was given through Moses; grace and truth were realized through Jesus Christ” (Jn. 1:17).

Progressive revelation does not indicate a change in man to the better, nor any kind of change in God Himself or His standard of righteousness.<sup>29</sup> “God progressively reveals Himself as history unfolds. But this does not mean that God’s standards grow progressively higher or that God changes along the way. Rather, it is man’s understanding of God that progresses. God never changes.”<sup>30</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> “But when the fulness of the time was come, God sent forth his Son” (Galatians 4:4). (see Romans 16:25-26).

<sup>29</sup> “Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil” (Matthew 5:17).

<sup>30</sup> Walter Henricksen, *Layman’s Guide to Interpreting the Bible* (Navpress, Oct. 3, 1978) p. 77

### 3. THE BIBLE HAS AUTHORITY AS DIVINELY INSPIRED.

**Introduction:** “In every case, the Bible is the final authority.”<sup>31</sup> 2 Tim 3:16 “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness... The Bible is the most important and unique book in the whole world because it is the Word of God... God caused the prophets to write exactly what He spoke to them... The Bible is not men’s ideas, but God’s own Word... The Bible is the only book in the world authored by God. God wrote the Bible over the course of 1600 years, using over 40 men... But the Bible has absolute unity, from beginning to end, because God is its one author... The only answer to the unity of the Bible is one author—God!”<sup>32</sup>

**BioLogos View:** The truth of the inspiration of Scripture hammers at the very foundation of the BioLogos evolutionary theology causing it to crumble as fabricated ‘scientific evidence.’ For this very reason BioLogos makes every effort to present the Bible as merely parabolic, with glaring inconsistencies between writers and with obvious errors relating to history and science. BioLogos is on a mission to cast doubt in the minds of Christians regarding the inspiration of the Bible in order to promote evolution within the church. BioLogos assailed both the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (CSBI) and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (CSBH).<sup>33</sup> Article VII of the CSBI says, “We affirm that inspiration was the work in which God by His Spirit, through human writers, gave us His Word. The origin of Scripture is divine. The mode of divine inspiration remains largely a mystery to us.” Article VII also says, “We affirm that God in His Work of inspiration utilized the distinctive personalities and literary styles of the writers whom He had chosen and prepared. We deny that God, in causing these writers to use the very words that He chose, overrode their personalities.”<sup>34</sup>

Commenting on the CSBI statement BioLogos says, “Despite their best efforts, there are still hermeneutical and theological shortcomings in the statements that pose roadblocks to the progression of the science and faith discussion.”<sup>35</sup> It should be noted that BioLogos exposes their own motive for seeking to discredit the CSBI and CSBH statements which is clearly to promote their evolutionistic theology through discussion.

In commenting on the CSBI statement above, BioLogos says, “we are now touching on an issue that affects the evolution discussion. If we are to take seriously (as we should) the mystery of inspiration, one must also be willing to grant to the Spirit any latitude he wishes in how he uses human authors. In addition to not overriding the biblical writers’ personalities, should we not also say that the Spirit does not override the biblical writers’ worldviews, particularly with respect to the question of origins—of the cosmos, the earth, and life on it?”<sup>36</sup>

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<sup>31</sup> *FFCC*, p. 74.

<sup>32</sup> *FFCC*, Lesson 1, p. 103.

<sup>33</sup> The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy (CSBI) and the Chicago Statement on Biblical Hermeneutics (CSBH) were produced by a joint effort of about 300 evangelical pastors during three-day summits purposely to define and defend biblical inerrancy.

<sup>34</sup> <http://www.reformed.org/documents/index.html?mainframe=http://www.reformed.org/documents/icbi.html>

<sup>35</sup> <http://biologos.org/blog/how-much-of-the-bible-is-actually-inspired-csbi-article-vi>

<sup>36</sup> <http://biologos.org/blog/what-happens-in-inspiration-csbi-articles-vii-and-viii>



With this last statement the objective of the BioLogos attack on inspiration is made obvious. They take a huge leap from ‘God using the distinctive personalities of the writers,’ to ‘God not overriding the writer’s worldviews.’ If BioLogos is successful in convincing the church that Scripture is merely a compilation of the human author’s worldviews, then the way is paved to claim that the Genesis account of creation in six literal days is not to be understood as God’s inspired record. This is clearly the objective of BioLogos as seen by this next statement. “And, here too, we come back to the science/faith dialogue. Coming to the conclusion, as some Christians do, that the creations [sic] stories are minimally historical (if at all), does not in any way imply that they belong to the non-inspired parts of the Bible. Rather, they may be inspired—even down to the last word—to “do something” other than give historical or scientific information.”<sup>37</sup>

From the platform of textual criticism Enns asserts, “The diverse manuscript evidence, as early as two centuries before Christ, has greatly affected the confidence with which we can claim that the Bible we have is the Bible as it was originally written.”<sup>38</sup> Actually the opposite is the truth. “Those variants that actually affect a translation are less than 1 percent of the total.”<sup>39</sup> “It may be concluded that no major document from antiquity comes into the modern world with such evidence of its integrity as does the Bible.”<sup>40</sup>

From the platform of biblical criticism Enns claims that “books of the Bible were not written at one time, but over lengthy periods,”<sup>41</sup> implying that “As the biblical books grew, earlier portions were edited and adjusted to reflect the concerns of later times.”<sup>42</sup> Enns continues, “In other words, as the argument goes, the canonical form of the biblical books is the end product that reflects how *later* communities of faith *reshaped the original*” (Italics Enns).<sup>43</sup> Then, Enns makes the following suggestive statement intended to cast doubt on the verbal and plenary inspiration of Scripture, and worse yet, to cast doubt on God’s intent to reveal Himself and His purposes perfectly and precisely to mankind. “If inspired early versions of biblical texts underwent changes, likewise under inspiration, this too suggests that preserving exact wording is not foremost on God’s mind.”<sup>44</sup> Enns is in serious error when he states: “later communities of faith reshaped the original.” The truth is, originals were faithfully copied, and the copies were faithfully copied to the smallest detail. The Jewish historian Josephus Flavius sometime between AD 94 and 100 wrote these words: “We have been given practical proof for our reverence for our Scriptures. For although such long ages have now passed, no one has ventured to add, or to remove, or to alter a syllable; and it is an instinct with every Jew, from the day of his birth, to regard them as decrees of God, to abide by them, and if need be, cheerfully to die for them.”<sup>45</sup>

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<sup>37</sup> <http://biologos.org/blog/how-much-of-the-bible-is-actually-inspired-csbi-article-vi>

<sup>38</sup> Ibid

<sup>39</sup> Geisler and Nix, *A General Introduction to the Bible*, (Chicago: Moody Press, 1970), p. 238

<sup>40</sup> Ibid p. 248

<sup>41</sup> <http://biologos.org/blog/how-much-of-the-bible-is-actually-inspired-csbi-article-vi>

<sup>42</sup> Ibid

<sup>43</sup> Ibid

<sup>44</sup> Ibid

<sup>45</sup> Randall Price, *Search for the Original Bible*, Eugene, Oregon, Harvest House 2007, p.87

**Our View:** In His desire and determination to reveal Himself to mankind, God devised a way to graciously provide an accurate written record of all the knowledge He determined mankind should have. The Scriptures are solely God’s Word recorded accurately for mankind. God, not mankind, is the ultimate source of its message.<sup>46</sup>

In order to convey His Word to mankind in an accurate written record, God used the means of inspiration, whereby through the individual personalities, intellects, literary styles, and cultural backgrounds of human authors, He composed the actual words of Scripture in its entirety, without error in the original manuscripts.<sup>47</sup> 2 Timothy 3:16 described this process by saying, “All Scripture is God-breathed.”

An accurate written record of God’s revelation demands ‘verbal inspiration,’ meaning that the actual words contained in that revelation be the very words of God. Linguistically, words are essential for the accurate expression of thought, and the human authors of Scripture were not entrusted with the responsibility of choosing words to express Divine thought. It is the repeated claim of Scripture that the Holy Spirit guided in the choice of the specific words used. Jesus used the phrase, “It is written” many times. The Bible testifies many times that God gave the very words of the prophets,<sup>48</sup> and Paul claimed to speak “not in words which man’s wisdom teaches, but which the Holy Spirit teaches” (1 Corinthians 2:13).

An accurate written record of God’s revelation also demands ‘plenary inspiration’ meaning that inspiration extends universally to all parts and equally to every part of Scripture. Jesus Christ declared the plenary inspiration of Scripture when He was tempted by Satan in the wilderness. When it was suggested, He turn stones into bread, Jesus replied that man shall live “by every word” that God has spoken, not ‘some’ or ‘most’ of the words of God (Matthew 4:4). The accuracy that verbal inspiration secures is extended to Scripture in its entirety, whether related to historical, scientific, poetical, doctrinal, or prophetic matters.

#### **4. THE BIBLE IS INFALLIBLE AND INERRANT.**

**Introduction:** “The inerrancy of the Scripture is an extremely important fact. It can be shown to be true through many avenues of proof.<sup>49</sup> “For us who teach, it is vital that we believe in the inerrancy of the Bible.”<sup>50</sup>

**BioLogos View:** The age-old attack by Satan on the inerrancy of Scripture has always been purposefully and intentionally directed against the Incarnation of Jesus Christ. Sparks writing for BioLogos says, “. . . the fact that Jesus operated mainly within the horizon of his finite human horizon . . . has implications for how we think about Scripture. If Jesus as a finite human being erred

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<sup>46</sup> “when ye received the word of God which ye heard of us, ye received it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13).

<sup>47</sup> “Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation. For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost” (2 Peter 1:20-21).

<sup>48</sup> This is just a small sampling: Exodus 20:1; 35:1; Leviticus 1:1; Numbers 36:13; Deuteronomy 4:2; Job 38:1 ff; Isaiah 1:1-2; Jeremiah 1:1-2; Ezekiel 1:3; Daniel 7:1

<sup>49</sup> See the following resources: 1) *From God to Us- How we Got Our Bible*, by Norman L. Geiser and William E. Nix, Moody Press, Chicago, 1974; 2) *What You Should Know About Inerrancy*, by Charles C. Ryrie, Moody Press, Chicago, 1981 and 3) *Evidence That Demands a Verdict*, by Josh McDowell, Here’s Life Publishers, San Bernardino.

<sup>50</sup> *FFCC*, Lesson 1, p. 98.

from time to time, there is no reason at all to suppose that Moses, Paul, John wrote Scripture without error. Rather, we are wise to assume that the biblical authors expressed themselves as human beings writing from the perspectives of their own finite, broken horizons.”<sup>51</sup>

The claim by BioLogos that the Bible contains errors has far greater consequences to the health of the church than might be supposed. The written Word of God identifies Jesus Christ as the Living Word of God. “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God . . . And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us” (John 1:1-3, 14). In the Incarnation, the fullness of Divine nature and perfection of human nature are forever united without separation in one Person, meaning that error can never be associated with the Living Word. The inerrancy of the written Word of God stands or falls with the impeccability and perfection of the Living Word of God, and vice versa. If BioLogos can convince the church that the incarnate Living Word of God erred, then it will be possible to convince the church that the written Word of God contains errors. And what is especially damaging to the church is that the reverse is likewise true.

BioLogos demeans belief in the inerrancy of Scripture as “intellectual disaster” and “theological insensibility.” Sparks writes, “Scripture exhibits all of the telltale signs of having been written by finite, fallen human beings who erred in the ways that human beings usually err. If this is the case, in what sense can we say with a straight face that Scripture is God’s word? . . . it is clear that inerrancy is an intellectual disaster.”<sup>52</sup> “Many Evangelicals would like to include Biblicist inerrancy in any list of dogmatic assumptions, but this dogma is neither a standard view among Christians at-large nor is it theologically sensible in light of the strong evidence against it.”<sup>53</sup> At the very least it is intellectually irresponsible of BioLogos to state that Biblical inerrancy is not a standard view among Christians. It was the only view of Scripture held and defended by the early church, and it is the view still held and defended by many evangelical believers today. The Apostle Paul, who was not only highly intelligent but who was also instructed theologically by Gamaliel himself, certainly did not agree with BioLogos that Divine authorship of Scripture and biblical inerrancy was “intellectual disaster” and “theological insensibility.” The Apostle praised the Thessalonians because they received the Word of God “not as a word of men, but as it is, truly the Word of God” (1 Thessalonians 2:13). Paul also made it clear in 2 Timothy 3:16 that Divine inspiration and Biblical inerrancy is inclusive of “All scripture” resulting in all scripture being “profitable” or advantageous as God’s teaching or instruction.

BioLogos applies postmodernism’s method of deconstructionism to the Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy. The CSBI statement says in part: “Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit, is of infallible divine authority in all matters upon which it touches.” Enns writes, “Claiming wholeheartedly the Spirit’s superintendence tells us nothing about the end product that the Spirit is superintending. It is possible that the Spirit is not leading the biblical writers to produce a text that the framers of CBSI have

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<sup>51</sup> Kenton Sparks, “After Inerrancy: Evangelicals and the Bible in a Postmodern Age,” [http://biologos.org/uploads/static-content/sparks\\_scholarly\\_essay.pdf](http://biologos.org/uploads/static-content/sparks_scholarly_essay.pdf)

<sup>52</sup> Kenton Sparks, “After Inerrancy: Evangelicals and the Bible in a Postmodern Age,”

<http://biologos.org/blog/after-inerrancy-evangelicals-and-the-bible-in-a-postmodern-age-part-4/> (June 2010) p.5

<sup>53</sup> Ibid p.1

in mind.”<sup>54</sup> In other words, BioLogos is saying the Spirit’s superintendence does not equal inerrancy, infallibility, and divine authority. It is indeed difficult to understand how BioLogos can suggest that God, the Holy Spirit, purposely interjected or allowed error into the original autographs that He superintended, and that God the Holy Spirit never intended that the writings He superintended would equal divine authority.

BioLogos reveals their main objection with Biblical inerrancy, which is the claim that Scripture gives a historically true and scientifically accurate revelation of the creation account. Enns writes, “What does this mean for Scripture to ‘touch’ upon something? . . . It should not be presumed that Scripture’s authority in touching on the matter of creation demands a literal reading of Genesis 1. Put differently, it is not at all clear that the Spirit’s superintendence of the biblical writers means that historical and scientific accuracy is now required of a faithful reading of Genesis 1 simply because Scripture is ‘authoritative’ and ‘touches’ on the issue of creation.”<sup>55</sup> Since the Genesis account of creation is indeed God’s own Word, having been written by men but superintended by God the Holy Spirit, then a literal reading of Genesis 1 is in fact expected by God.

**Our View:** An accurate written record of God’s revelation to mankind demands that the original autographs or writings that comprise the Scripture be inerrant and infallible. That the Scripture is inerrant means it is absolutely true and completely without error. Jesus gave testimony of the inerrancy of Scripture when in prayer He said, “thy word is truth” (John 17:17). That the Scripture is infallible means it is completely trustworthy and cannot mislead, deceive, or disappoint. Jesus confirmed the infallibility of Scripture saying, “. . .the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35).

Both inerrancy and infallibility refer to what God has declared whether related to historical, geographical, scientific, poetical, doctrinal, prophetic, or any other matter.<sup>56</sup> The basis for the infallibility and inerrancy of God’s written revelation is His very nature which is perfect and dependable. Hebrews 6:18 states, “it is impossible for God to lie,” meaning to “utter an untruth or deceive by falsehoods.”<sup>57</sup> As God is the ultimate author of the Scriptures, and God is perfect truth and completely trustworthy,<sup>58</sup> it stands that the revelation that comes from Him, even when it comes through men must likewise be inerrant and infallible.<sup>59</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Pete Enns, “Imprecise Language about the Bible’s Authority: The Second Summary Statement of CSBI,” <http://biologos.org/blog/imprecise-language-about-the-bibles-authority> (June 24, 2011)

<sup>55</sup> Ibid

<sup>56</sup> The Scriptures lay claim to inerrancy and infallibility speaking of itself as: ‘perfect’ (Psalm 19:7), ‘pure’ (Psalm 19:8; 119:140), ‘true’ (Psalm 19:9; 119:43; John 17:17; James 1:18), and ‘eternally enduring’ (Psalm 19:9; Isaiah 40:8; 1 Peter 1:23-25).

<sup>57</sup> Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary

<sup>58</sup> “the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether” (Psalm 19:9); “He that hath received his testimony hath set to his seal that God is true” (John 3:33).

<sup>59</sup> “. . . know in all your hearts and in all your souls, that not one thing hath failed of all the good things which the LORD your God spake concerning you; all are come to pass unto you, and not one thing hath failed thereof” (Joshua 23:14); “. . . all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me” (Luke 24:44).

Some evangelicals qualify the definition of inerrancy. A doctrinal statement held by many evangelicals says the Bible is “inerrant in all that it affirms.”<sup>60</sup> But that definition allows for errors in subjects like Creation where it is said, the Bible does not ‘affirm the facts.’ Other evangelicals state that the Bible is infallible but not inerrant because “there are historical and scientific errors in the Bible,” but . . . “none on matters of faith and practice.”<sup>61</sup> We reject any qualification of the inerrancy or infallibility of God’s Word. Because the Scripture is totally inerrant and completely trustworthy it is absolutely authoritative in all it declares. “If we believe the Bible contains errors, then we will be quick to accept scientific theories that appear to prove the Bible wrong. In other words, we will allow the conclusions of science to dictate the accuracy of the Word of God. When we doubt the Bible’s inerrancy, we have to invent new principles for interpreting Scripture that for convenience turn history into poetry and facts into myths.”<sup>62</sup>

## 5. THE BIBLE IS TRUSTWORTHY TRUTH.

**Introduction:** “For us who teach, it is vital that we believe in the inerrancy of the Bible.”<sup>63</sup> “We need to listen to what God says in the bible. – It is not a book of “myths.” It is a true history.”<sup>64</sup> “He is the Creator of all and eternal authority over all. . . Besides ignoring His Word, men have refused to acknowledge Him as their Creator, so they are deaf to the daily message of His creation which He so lovingly displays for everyone to see. . . These [FFCC] lessons emphasize that God’s Word is true – a true history and the living message of the living, active, sovereign God. Humanistic educational systems [with their teaching of evolution] have attempted to smear lies across the face of God’s Word. But His Word still stands – clear, righteous, and true, as it will for all eternity.”<sup>65</sup>

**BioLogos View:** The Chicago Statement on Biblical Inerrancy statement says: “Holy Scripture, being God’s own Word, written by men prepared and superintended by His Spirit . . . is to be believed, as God’s instruction, in all that it affirms, obeyed, as God’s command, in all that it requires; embraced, as God’s pledge, in all that it promises.” In critiquing this statement by CSBI Enns writes, “To say that Scripture is to be believed as divine ‘instruction’ in all it ‘affirms’ begs the question of what ‘affirms’ means and what form of ‘instruction’ is in view. Does not Genesis 1 ‘affirm’ creation in six days, with morning and evening? Of course. But does the fact that Scripture ‘affirms’ such a scenario tell us what it means to accept it as ‘instruction’? No, it does not.” “Could it not be that ‘believing’ the creation story means reading it as an ancient form of communication, where standards of “affirmation” and “instruction” are to be understood according to ancient categories, not modern ones?”<sup>66</sup> BioLogos applies postmodernism’s method of deconstructionism to the trustworthiness of the Bible as truth. The theory of deconstructionism maintains that the meaning of language is hidden and elusive and no definite interpretation can

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<sup>60</sup> “The Lausanne Covenant,” <http://www.lausanne.org/covenant>

<sup>61</sup> Stephen T. Davis, *The Debate About the Bible* (Philadelphia: Westminster, 1977), p. 115

<sup>62</sup> Brian Edwards, “Why Should We Believe in the Inerrancy of Scripture?” <http://www.answersingenesis.org/articles/2011/07/05/believe-in-the-inerrancy-of-scripture> (July 5, 2011)

<sup>63</sup> FFCC, Lesson 1, p. 98.

<sup>64</sup> FFCC, Lesson 4, p. 132.

<sup>65</sup> FFCC, p. 77.

<sup>66</sup> Pete Enns, “Imprecise Language about the Bible’s Authority: The Second Summary Statement of CSBI,” <http://biologos.org/blog/imprecise-language-about-the-bibles-authority> (June 24, 2011)

be established for a written text, including Scripture. Deconstruction has been illustrated as finding a thread dangling from a sweater, pulling it, and watching as the fabric of the garment unravels into a pile of yarn. It is precisely because the deconstructionist believes the meaning of any text is indefinite that he also believes the Bible, as a text, lacks one true meaning. This naturally leads to the belief that absolute truth simply does not exist, raising serious doubts of the trustworthiness of Scripture as absolute truth.

BioLogos further questions what it means to “obey” Scripture “in all that it requires” and “embrace” Scripture “in all that it promises.” Enns writes, “. . . unless we determine what ‘require’ and ‘embrace’ mean, we are left grasping at straws. Does Genesis 1 ‘require’ that the text be ‘obeyed’ as literal, or does it require some other type of obedience?”<sup>67</sup> BioLogos realizes that the foundation upon which it builds its case for evolution requires the deconstruction of Scripture, turning God’s trustworthy truth of a literal six-day creation into mere poetic or parabolic jargon that must be interpreted by modern scholars. Enns’ question, “Does Genesis 1 require that the text be ‘obeyed’ as literal?” bears alarming similarity to the suggestion of the Tempter to Eve when he asked, “Did God really say . . . ?”<sup>68</sup> Since the fall of man, humanity has resisted the ‘requirement’ to obey God’s Word literally and has insisted that God’s commands “require some other type of obedience” which BioLogos suggests human scholars are capable of determining.

BioLogos qualifies the trustworthiness of God’s Word saying, “The question before us is not whether Scripture’s teaching on creation is to be trusted; the question is what exactly it is the Bible teaches about creation.”<sup>69</sup> In other words, BioLogos will consent to Scripture being trustworthy truth IF Scripture is interpreted to support evolution. It should be clearly understood by the reader that BioLogos openly rejects the trustworthiness of the Bible saying, “from a *scientific* point of view the Bible is *wrong*”<sup>70</sup> (italics BioLogos).

Sparks writes, “A healthy use of Scripture should recognize that theology can by no means depend on Scripture only. Christian theology, as it reads and seeks to follow Scripture, must be ready to move beyond Scripture in some cases . . . it’s quite biblical to go beyond the Bible . . . we must also be ready to go where God, through Scripture, is pointing.”<sup>71</sup> The obvious implication BioLogos is making is that Scripture is not trustworthy, but in fact is woefully inadequate by itself to be depended upon as God’s truth. This is further emphasized by Sparks as he demeans Scripture as an inconsistent and broken book that cannot serve as our primary source of truth. He writes, “We discover fairly quickly that Scripture does not speak consistently on all matters . . . How can the Bible, as a diverse and broken book, serve as a primary source of our theological insight?”<sup>72</sup> How indeed? Sparks rejects the Bible as the trustworthy written truth of God, and instead concludes the Bible is only capable of giving a “point of view” on truth, meaning what the

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<sup>67</sup> Ibid.

<sup>68</sup> Genesis 3:1 NIV

<sup>69</sup> Pete Enns, “The Scope of the Bible’s Authority: CSBI Summary Statements 3 and 4,” July 1, 2011. <http://biologos.org/blog/the-scope-of-the-bibles-authority-csbi-summary-statements-3-and-4>

<sup>70</sup> Pete Enns, “Evangelicals, Evolution and the Bible,” [http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/enns\\_scholarly\\_essay.pdf](http://biologos.org/uploads/projects/enns_scholarly_essay.pdf)

<sup>71</sup> Kenton Sparks, “After Inerrancy: Evangelicals and the Bible in a Postmodern Age,” Part 6, <http://biologos.org/blog/after-inerrancy-evangelicals-and-the-bible-in-a-postmodern-age-part-6>

(July 10, 2010)

<sup>72</sup> Ibid.

Bible says is not “the final word.” Sparks writes, “First, if we keep in mind that every text in Scripture provides an ‘angle’ or perspective on the truth, then we are reminded thereby that all of Scripture, even its most broken elements, speak a word from God.”<sup>73</sup>

**Our View:** God’s written revelation to man is completely trustworthy and cannot mislead, deceive, or disappoint.<sup>74</sup> The greatest verification or proof of the trustworthiness of Scripture is the character of God, the divine Author of the Scriptures. God is Truth and has revealed Himself in Scripture as He really is, and His will as it really is. God is perfectly dependable and faithful. Likewise His revelation of Himself is entirely reliable and trustworthy.<sup>75</sup>

Jesus presented the entire Scriptures as unbreakable and infallible when he said, “the scripture cannot be broken” (John 10:35). Jesus also presented the Scripture as irrevocable or irreversible in Matthew 5:18 saying, “Till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in no wise pass from the law, till all be fulfilled.” Jesus included the entire Old Testament, section by section, as unbreakable and irrevocable in Luke 24:44 when He said, “...all things must be fulfilled, which were written in the law of Moses, and in the prophets, and in the psalms, concerning me.” Jesus declared the trustworthiness of Scripture by acknowledging the literal existence of ‘Abel’ (Luke 11:51); ‘Noah and the flood’ (Matthew 24:37-39); ‘Abraham’ (John 8:56-58); ‘Sodom and Gomorrah’ (Matthew 10:15); ‘Lot’ and ‘Lot’s wife’ (Luke 17:28-32); ‘Isaac’ and ‘Jacob’ (Luke 13:28); ‘Manna’ (John 6:31, 49, 58); ‘the Serpent on the pole’ (John 3:14); ‘Jonah’ and the fact Jonah was swallowed by a fish (Matthew 12:39-40); ‘Daniel’ and ‘Isaiah’ (Matthew 24:15). Peter confirmed the trustworthiness of Scripture when he said, “Men and brethren, this scripture must needs have been fulfilled, which the Holy Ghost by the mouth of David spake before” (Acts 1:16).

Scripture makes its own claim for trustworthiness. The Old Testament gives 2600 claims for divine inspiration, 680 in the Pentateuch, 1307 in the Prophets, 418 in the books of History, and 195 in the Poetical books. One half of the book of Exodus and 90% of the book of Leviticus claim to be direct quotes of God. The New Testament includes more than 80 quotations from the first 11 chapters of Genesis. The New Testament books claim divine inspiration (Galatians 1:11-12; 2 Corinthians 2:12; 1 Thessalonians 2:13; Ephesians 3:3-5; Romans 16:25-26; 1 Corinthians 14:37; Revelation 22:18-19).<sup>76</sup> The fact that although the Scriptures are comprised of 66 books, written by 40 different men, over a period of 1600 years, on 3 continents, in 3 different languages, on a multitude of subjects, yet have the one central theme of God’s redemption of mankind by the death and resurrection of Jesus Christ, underscores their coherency and trustworthiness.

Although there are no original manuscripts in existence there are over 24,000 manuscript copies or portions of the New Testament extant, which date from 100 to 300 years after the originals would have been written. The amazing number of manuscripts found allows an accurate reconstruction of the originals. As F. F. Bruce writes, “There is no body of ancient literature in the

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<sup>73</sup> Ibid.

<sup>74</sup> “Every word of God is pure: he is a shield unto them that put their trust in him” (Proverbs 30:5).

<sup>75</sup> “. . . it is impossible for God to lie” [“to utter an untruth or attempt to deceive by falsehood” Strong’s Hebrew Dictionary] (Hebrews 6:18).

<sup>76</sup> Facts regarding Scripture claims for inspiration gleaned from: *Divine Inspiration of the Bible*, [http://www.netbiblestudy.com/00\\_cartimages/theinspirationofthebible.pdf](http://www.netbiblestudy.com/00_cartimages/theinspirationofthebible.pdf)

world which enjoys such a wealth of good attestation as the New Testament.”<sup>77</sup> The trustworthiness of Scripture is further evidenced by the Dead Sea Scrolls discovered by a shepherd boy in 1947. These scrolls are dated from 250 to 150 BC and pushed back the oldest available manuscript almost 1,000 years. They represent every Old Testament book except Esther and when the content of the scrolls was compared to later copies no significant differences were found. This attests to the faithfulness of God in preserving His Word through the precision of the scribes in copying the manuscripts for nearly ten centuries.

Being completely trustworthy the Scripture must also be absolute in authority. The authority of God cannot be separated from the authority of Scripture as He is the ultimate Author. Jesus quoted the Old Testament when resisting Satan saying with finality, “It is written” (Matthew 4:4, 7, 10). Jesus referred to the Old Testament Scriptures when settling the Pharisees question about the parable of the vineyard (Matthew 21:42), and when vindicating His authority to cleanse the temple (Mark 11:17). Paul based his arguments against the Jews on authority of the Scriptures (Acts 17:2), and Peter acknowledged the authority of both the Old and New Testament Scriptures when he exposed those who rejected them, saying, “which (*referring to Paul’s letters*) they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as they do also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction” [*italics in parenthesis added for clarity*] (2 Peter 3:16).

**(AND THEREFORE)**

## **6. THE BIBLE IS TO BE TAKEN LITERALLY.**

**Introduction:** “That which God recorded in the Scriptures actually happened in time and space. God spoke. God acted. God interacted with real, historical human beings...God revealed Himself as He walked through history with man.”<sup>78</sup> The fact is, “The God of Christianity is the God of history. The faith of Christians is based on God’s great revelatory acts, beginning with God’s acts of creation...”<sup>79</sup> Only a literal interpretation of the ‘beginnings’ of human history in Genesis can provide understanding of God’s work of redemption in Christ as it is unfolded in the New Testament. “By the infinitely wise and sovereign appointment of God, all of the redemptive story and the beginning of the Church of Jesus Christ is set within the cultural, geographical, and historical framework of the nation of Israel. Therefore, no one can understand the story of the New Testament without a basic knowledge of Israel’s origin, development, and history from the Old Testament.”<sup>80</sup> “Genesis has often been criticized as being a book of myths. But recent archeology has confirmed many exact details, including names of people and cities back as far as the early chapters of Genesis...It is not a book of ‘myths’... [but] what God says happened in the beginning.”<sup>81</sup> “The message we are given in the Bible to take to the world is... that which actually happened in time and space. It is real. It is factual. It is history.”<sup>82</sup>

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<sup>77</sup> Facts regarding manuscript copies taken from: *Faith Facts*, <http://www.faithfacts.org/search-for-truth/maps/manuscript-evidence>

<sup>78</sup> *FFCC* p. 35

<sup>79</sup> *Ibid.* p. 36

<sup>80</sup> *Ibid.* p. 34

<sup>81</sup> *Ibid.* pp. 131-132

<sup>82</sup> *Ibid.* p. 37



**BioLogos View:** In an open letter to Albert Mohler, Pete Enns' writes, "One reason I and others do not accept a literal interpretation of Genesis 1 is that the text itself points us in a symbolic direction. In fact, insisting on 'total literalism' can cause big problems for readers of Genesis."<sup>83</sup> The text Enns refers to is Genesis 1:6 that records God saying, "Let there be an expanse in the middle of the waters, and let it divide the waters from the waters." Enns concludes, "It is a big problem not only scientifically but theologically to insist on a literal 'watery chaos' that was just 'there' when God began creating."<sup>84</sup> Enns sounds sardonic when he adds, "It seems to me that insisting on a literal reading of Genesis 1 would require one to accept that a firmament of some sort holds back a body of water."<sup>85</sup>

Enns writes, "...literalism leads either to ignoring some texts or at least handling them with some ingenuity that moves beyond what an author meant to say."<sup>86</sup> Enns further claims that the Old Testament tells part of Israel's history "twice and *in two different ways*."<sup>87</sup> According to Enns the story of Israel's monarchy told in 2 Samuel 7:16 "is retold differently in 1-2 Chronicles . . . in very different ways that cannot be reconciled by a literalistic approach."<sup>88</sup> Throughout their website and their published works, BioLogos characteristically and irresponsibly presents unproven statements as though they were well documented and established facts.

Giberson writes, "Multiple elements in the Genesis stories of creation suggest a figurative and symbolic, rather than a literal reading. The angel with flaming sword . . . the talking serpent . . . God strolling through the garden . . . the rib surgery to make woman, all strained the plausibility of a purely literal reading."<sup>89</sup> Why should these events be difficult for BioLogos to embrace as literal occurrences? The Scripture records one lone angel destroying 185,000 of Israel's enemies (Isaiah 37:36); God walking among men in the Person of the incarnate Christ (John 1:14); God creating Adam from the dust of the earth (Genesis 1:27); and the believer's acknowledgment, "You are the God who performs miracles" (Psalm 77:14 NIV). Charles C. Ryrie explains why a literal interpretation of Scripture is indeed plausible: "The purpose of language itself seems to require literal interpretation. That is, God gave man language for the purpose of being able to communicate with him."<sup>90</sup> "First, if God originated language for the purpose of communication, and if God is all-wise, then we may believe that He saw to it that the means (language) was sufficient to sustain the purpose (communication). Second it follows that God would Himself use and expect man to use language in its normal sense."<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Peter Enns, "Interview with Methodist Examiner," <http://www.examiner.com/methodist-in-national/biologos-responds-to-criticism-by-genesis-literalist-interpretation-advocate>, (July 13, 2010)

<sup>84</sup> Ibid

<sup>85</sup> Ibid

<sup>86</sup> Pete Enns, "The Problem with Literalism: Introduction," <http://biologos.org/blog/the-problem-with-literalism-introduction>

<sup>87</sup> Ibid

<sup>88</sup> Ibid

<sup>89</sup> Karl W. Giberson, *Saving Darwin: How to Be a Christian and Believe in Evolution*. (New York: HarperCollins, 2008) p.52

<sup>90</sup> Charles C. Ryrie, *Basic Theology*, (Chicago: Moody Publishers, 1999), p. 128

<sup>91</sup> Ibid

Godawa states that “Genesis 1 is not cryptically describing the Big Bang or instant fiat, a young earth or old earth, special creation or evolutionary creation. It is not ‘literal’ language describing the physics of the universe; it is ‘literary’ genre describing God’s sovereignty over creation and most likely his covenantal relationship with his people.”<sup>92</sup> A literary genre refers to a category of literary composition such as poetry or allegory. Godawa does not categorize of what literary genre he refers but makes the point that Genesis 1 is definitely not to be interpreted literally.

Although this Paper is primarily concerned with the ‘Evolutionistic World Views’ of BioLogos, it is significant to note that BioLogos’ rejection of the literal interpretation of Scripture is not confined to the creation account alone but extends to God’s entire revelation to man. Godawa writes, “the argument against literalism of language of the creation of the heavens and the earth is also applicable to the language of the destruction of the heavens and the earth, or what the Bible calls, “the last days.”<sup>93</sup> BioLogos rejects futurism including “a rapture of Christians, followed by the rise of an ‘Anti-Christ,’ a world dictator who initiates a Great Tribulation on the earth, requires a ‘Mark of the Beast,’ and assembles global forces for a battle of Armageddon against Israel, resulting in the Second Coming of Christ who replaces the universe with a new heavens and earth to rule forever.” Instead, BioLogos holds to a preteristic view of end time events. Godawa states, “Predictions of the collapsing universe were figuratively fulfilled in the historic past of the first century. The technical theological term for this view is *preterism*, the belief that most or all prophecies about the end times have been fulfilled in the past.”<sup>94</sup>

**Our View:** Because God’s intention is for mankind to know with certainty what He has said, He has provided an accurate, understandable, clearly written record in Scripture of His revelation. Correspondingly, God created man in His image giving man the use of language as a means to communicate in a plain ordinary sense, in order that man might be able to understand what God reveals.<sup>95</sup>

The perspicuity or clarity of Scripture is the outcome of God’s desire to provide an understandable written record of His revelation to mankind. Scripture is not mystical, nor is its meaning hidden, and although it sometimes takes study to understand the meaning of a passage, the Scriptures do not require some special use of language but can be understood by ordinary means.<sup>96</sup> Scripture should be interpreted literally, because God intentionally said what He meant and meant what He said. “Literal interpretation of the Bible simply means to explain the original sense of the Bible according to the normal and customary usages of its language.”<sup>97</sup> Literal Bible interpretation leads to understanding the Bible in its ‘normal’ or ‘plain’ meaning. This results, for example, in the interpretation that creation occurred in six literal days, just as it is plainly recorded in the Genesis record. A strong support for literal interpretation is the fact that more than

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<sup>92</sup> Brian Godawa, “The Collapsing Universe in the Bible: Literal Science or Poetic Metaphor? Part 1,” <http://biologos.org/blog/the-collapsing-universe-in-the-bible-part-1> (August 23, 2011)

<sup>93</sup> Ibid

<sup>94</sup> Ibid

<sup>95</sup> “God created man in his own image . . . and God said unto them” (Genesis 1:27-28)

<sup>96</sup> “They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people could understand what was being read.” (Nehemiah 8:8).

<sup>97</sup> Paul Lee Tan, *The Interpretation of Prophecy* (Winona Lake, Ind.: Assurance Publishers, 1974), p. 29.

300 Old Testament prophecies of Christ's first coming were all literally fulfilled in the New Testament.<sup>98</sup>

A literal interpretation means Scripture should also be interpreted historically and grammatically. Historical interpretation refers to considering the culture, background, and context surrounding the passage in order to discover what meaning the original author would have intended to convey, and what the original hearers would have understood. Grammatical interpretation insists that words have a defined meaning, and through them, God communicated objective thought and presented propositional statements. Because God determined mankind have an understandable written record of His revelation, it is certain that God did not hide or conceal His revealed truth in obscurity.<sup>99</sup> According to the Apostle Paul, the Scriptures understood in their normal or plain sense are capable of communicating the "deep things of God."<sup>100</sup> When God reveals truth in figures of speech, what He reveals is always dependent on the original literal language and should not be interpreted by 'guess-work' or with conjecture.

### **CONCLUSION**

The biblical hermeneutic of BioLogos approaches the Scripture as parabolic literary genre, containing errors, discrepancies, and inconsistencies. BioLogos believes the Bible is historically and scientifically inaccurate, suggesting that it presents values ethically sinister and evil, and requiring 'correction' by means of progressive revelation. BioLogos questions the trustworthiness of the Bible as being God's Word, insisting Scripture is a product of the world views of human authors, and concluding that Scripture is undependable by itself as a primary source of theological insight. The conclusion of BioLogos is that Scripture is a "broken book" that can only provide a perspective on truth.

Realizing the biblical hermeneutic of BioLogos, it is easy to understand why BioLogos rejects the historicity of the Genesis account of creation, including the beginning of life, the creation of Adam and Eve, the fall of man resulting in man's death and separation from God, and the judgment of a worldwide flood. A look into the views of BioLogos and a presentation of Our Views regarding The Historicity of the Genesis Account will be the focus of the next paper, *Why Teach Firm Foundations: Creation to Christ? A Response to BioLogos' Theistic Evolution Teaching, Part 3 Historicity of the Genesis Account.*

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<sup>98</sup> Examples include Micah 5:2; Malachi 3:1; Isaiah 9:1-2; 42:1; 53:5; 61:1; Psalm 16:9-10; 22:1, 15-16; 31:5; 34:20; 68:18; Zechariah 13:7

<sup>99</sup> "The secret things belong unto the LORD our God: but those things which are revealed belong unto us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law" (Deuteronomy 29:29); "We also have the prophetic message as something completely reliable, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place" (2 Peter 1:19 NIV); "Send forth your light and your truth, let them guide me" (Psalm 43:3); "Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path" (Psalm 119:105).

<sup>100</sup> "But God hath revealed them unto us by his Spirit: for the Spirit searcheth all things, yea, the deep things of God" (1 Corinthians 2:10).