

observing an apple seed will tell us precisely how many apples will be produced from the tree that springs from that seed. Observers are left with their theories and hypotheses, but little else. It seems, therefore, most prudent not to adjust the Bible to fit one's theories of science.

Contrary to Dr Helweg's assertion, I do not use his approach and neither do I believe in a 'flat earth'. It is not the curvature of the horizon that I require to understand a spherical Earth, but the written Word of God. Isaiah 40:22 speaks of the 'circle of the earth', and, rather than the world supported on the shoulders of Atlas or the back of a turtle, Job 26:7 says that God 'hangs the earth upon nothing'.

Second, and more important, is that Dr Helweg's criteria are flawed. I might be a little more at ease interpreting the written Word by the created world if this present world were the same as the one God created originally. Unfortunately, it is not. Scripture is clear that the entire universe (the 'whole creation' of Romans 8:22) was affected by the fall of Adam into sin. The whole of God's created order groans until the long-awaited arrival of our Lord. While the written Word of God is perfect, this world and this universe are not because of sin. It is more appropriate to interpret the imperfect by the perfect than the other way around. I would argue that Dr Helweg's 'two-book' hypothesis needs to be reconsidered.

Dr Helweg mentions that Augustine would not

*'have supported an interpretation of a Biblical passage that was opposed to the obvious facts in science'.*

I would remind each of us that an Earth millions or billions of years old is not a 'fact of science' but a **theory** of science. As far as we know, the only eyewitness who was present at the time of creation was God. He told us plainly what He did and how He did it.

Finally, I would like to address the 'who' and the 'how' of Genesis 1. My brother does not see the 'how' of Genesis 1 and I do. I am willing to

agree to disagree at this point. When God's Word says: 'Let there be light, and there was light' (Genesis 1:3), the clear implication is that light came into existence immediately upon God's verbal pronouncement. I do not consider that simplistic or superficial. It is consistent that if God 'Upholds all things by the word (*hremd*) of His power', He could create it the same way. Even if the 'how' of creation is not explicit in Genesis 1 (and I believe it is), it is certainly implied.

Of great importance is Dr Helweg's comment I mentioned earlier:

*'we should look to the Bible as much as possible to see how it interprets itself.'*

In the Scriptures, specifically Psalm 33:6, God clearly gives us a 'how': 'By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth'. Frankly, that is good enough for me. I regret that it is an 'embarrassment' to Dr Helweg.

There are also tangential, though not less significant, problems with Dr Helweg's approach. Adam was created on the sixth day. If the days of creation were actually thousands or millions of years, then Adam lived from whatever point in the sixth day for the thousands of years remaining in that day, and then for the many thousands or millions of years of the seventh day and beyond. Yet, Scripture is clear that all the days of Adam were 930 years (Genesis 5:5). Obviously, something is amiss. If a person concludes that Adam was not a literal individual, he runs into insurmountable problems in the genealogy of Luke's Gospel which lists Adam as an individual with real children. I doubt Dr Helweg would entertain the notion that non-literal persons can beget literal offspring. Indeed, allowing Scripture to interpret Scripture is the single most important principle of Biblical hermeneutics.

Let us do just that.

David G. Shackelford,  
Schenectady, New York,  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

## REFERENCE

1. Helweg, O., 1997. How short an evening and morning? Reply. CEN Tech. J., 11(3):304-306.

## IS GENESIS POETIC?

Dear Editor,

Dr David Fouts, in his response to Dr Otto Helweg in **CEN Tech. J., 11(3):323**, claimed:

*'Genesis 1 therefore should not be considered poetry. Historical support of this is seen in the fact that no edition of the Hebrew text of which I am aware ever indented the passage in a poetical format (though I understand the NIV could be interpreted as doing so)!*

All that paragraph is accurate and good evidence for a plain interpretation, except for that unfortunate parenthetical comment about the NIV. This was an 'own goal', giving the old-Earthers some ammunition to their empty gun. It should have been easy enough to check a copy of the NIV rather than relying on faulty 'understanding'.

The format in Genesis 1 is hanging paragraphs, that is, every line but the first is indented by the same amount. An identical format is used for the Ten Commandments and the genealogies in Genesis 10 and I Chronicles. Surely no-one would claim these are poetic. No, the NIV uses this format for **lists** — six days, ten commandments, etc.

The formatting of the Psalms, which are definitely poetic, is different. They lack the constant indentation of the passages above.

Jonathan D. Sarfati,  
Brisbane, Queensland,  
AUSTRALIA.

## PELEG, AND BIBLICAL SCHOLARSHIP

Dear Editor,

A final response to John Watson's

article<sup>1</sup> is appropriate at this late point, I think.

First, Watson was absolutely correct in calling me on the carpet<sup>2</sup> regarding my comments in my original Letter to the Editor about his work.<sup>3</sup> He correctly notes that I said that 'the whole of the context of Genesis 10-11 is on Mesopotamia' citing Genesis 10:15-20 as an obvious example of how my statement is false. I admit *mea culpa*. I should have written:

*'the whole of the context of Genesis 10-11 is on Mesopotamia as the originating point for the spread of the nations described therein'.*

On the other hand, the immediate context of Genesis 10:21-31 seems to point to Mesopotamian regions of Elam (Iraq-Iran today), Asshur (Iraq) and Aram (Syria), and it is in this context that Peleg is named. The reader may wish to consult further with Allen P. Ross on this issue.<sup>4</sup>

Too, Watson claims to have utilised Strong's gloss for *plg* as a channel in his article. The problem as I see it here is two-fold. First, he presents the gloss earthquake as the favoured reading. Second, he injects the further idea of the channel being filled with sea water because of the tectonic events. This is going too far in imposing a scientific model on the semantic field of *plg*, which basically means a channel or canal dug for irrigation. One would not like to use sea water for this purpose.

As I understand the level of Biblical scholarship coming from both the progressive creationist (and theistic evolutionist) and young-Earth perspectives, I see two problems. Both of these must be addressed on either side of the issue. First, many on both sides act in seeming ignorance (generally speaking) of scholarship done by Biblical scholars in basic grammar, syntax, etymologies and semantics. Our tendency is to think that every believer can properly interpret the Word of God. While this may be theoretically true, what has resulted is an amazing amount of difference of opinions. I think that

perhaps we often involve ourselves in eisegesis to support our scientific models rather than yielding our models to solid exegesis.

This tendency may be symptomatic of the second problem: both sides seem to be placing natural theology (general revelation) on the same plane as the supernatural (special revelation). This is certainly the case for the progressive creationists and increasingly the case of the young-Earthers. As a Biblical scholar and conservative theologian, I would not yield the testimony of God's Word to the testimony of God's world. Though both are subject to interpretation, the Word is infallible, whereas the world itself is fallen, filled with fallen, finite people with limited capacity for interpreting the vast amount of data which confronts us in nature.

Because of this I would appeal to creation scientists to thoroughly

employ Biblical scholars and scholarship in an effort to develop scientific models which are consistent with the Biblical records as interpreted within the grammatical-historical milieu in which they were written, and cease basing those same models on a stroll through **Strong's Concordance** alone.

David Fouts,  
Dayton, Tennessee,  
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA.

## REFERENCES

1. Watson, J. A., 1997. The division of the Earth in Peleg's days: tectonic or linguistic? *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(1):71-75.
2. Watson, J. A., 1997. Earth's division in Peleg's day. *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(1)325.
3. Fouts, D. M., 1997. Earth's division in Peleg's day. *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(3)323.
4. Ross, A. P., 1988. **Creation and Blessing**, Baker Book House, Grand Rapids, Michigan, pp. 221-232.

## CAINAN OF LUKE 3:36

Dear Editor,

Evangelicals should be concerned with Derel Briarley's letter in *CEN Tech. J.*, 11(3):328. In his attempt to reconcile Luke 3:36 and Genesis 11:12, he theorises that Luke used an inaccurate source to compile his genealogy. This blatantly contradicts the inspiration and inerrancy of Scripture (II Timothy 3:15-17). Certainly the Holy Spirit sometimes inspired the writers to consult sources

(for example, Luke 1:1-4), but surely we can believe that He would have made sure the sources were **accurate** in the places cited.

Note that Henry Morris in his later work, **The Genesis Record**,<sup>1</sup> has a different solution to the Cainan problem. He points out that it could not be an error in the God-breathed original autographs of Scripture, but one of the extremely few copyist's errors in the manuscripts available today. Note that the Greek New Testament was originally written without punctuation or spaces between words. So Luke 3:35-38 could have

<p>τουσερουχτουραγαυτουφαλεγτουεβερτουσαλα τουαρφαξαδτουσημουνωετουλαμεχ τουμαθουσαλατουενωχτουιαρεδτουμαελτουκαιναν τουενωστουσηθουαδαμουθεου</p>
--

Table 1. Probable original Greek New Testament text of Luke 3:35-38.

<p>τουσερουχτουραγαυτουφαλεγτουεβερτουσαλατουκαιναν τουαρφαξαδτουσημουνωετουλαμεχ τουμαθουσαλατουενωχτουιαρεδτουμαελτουκαιναν τουενωστουσηθουαδαμουθεου</p>
---

Table 2. Probable original Greek New Testament text of Luke 3:35-38 with possible copyist insertion.