

fore, it seems best to understand it as a reference to the absolute certainty of physical death as a result of our separation from God due to sin. Indeed, this understanding also coincides nicely with Genesis 2:17. Naturally, Ephesians 2:5 should be understood in the light of verse 1.

Regarding Jesus' conversation with Nicodemus in John 3:3–7, Jesus' use of such language as 'born again' and 'born of the Spirit',¹ is clearly metaphorical, and shows the need to be spiritually renewed.

Furthermore, Titus 3:5 refers to spiritual renewal not spiritual death.

In addition, Gurney's parallel construction between Adam and Christ fails at both his second and fourth points. I am at a loss to understand how he can state as proven fact that 'Adam then regained life spiritually through saving faith in God's mercy and His plan of redemption through a future descendant'. This may be true, but it is certainly not a direct or even indirect teaching of Scripture which should be the only basis for making any theological claim. Furthermore, there is no indication at all in Scripture that 'Adam will physically rise from the dead with all believers that have died in Christ', and the verse Gurney cites (1 Thessalonians 4:16) does not demonstrate this.

In conclusion, I would like to suggest here that we stick to using terms and language which the Bible itself uses. There is a place for words not used in Scripture, e.g. Trinity, to describe a complex but vital doctrine clearly taught in the Bible. But 'Trinity' conveys accurately what is meant (three Persons in one God), while the term 'spiritual death' is misleading. Thus, I think we should avoid using it. It is better to write a few extra sentences which explain precisely what we mean by that term. In theology, precision is essential, and if we use Biblical terms then it should minimize

the amount of woolly thinking and, possibly, even heretical ideas.

Andrew Kulikovsky
Adelaide
AUSTRALIA

Reference

1. Note that this is a reference to being born of the Spirit (i.e. the Holy Spirit), not that a *non-believer's* spirit's need to be reborn, because it is presently dead.

rest of the universe, contrasts with the white hole cosmology in which cosmic-scale differences from the standard model exist (at least as Dr Humphreys intends it). Thus, given this proposal, no need would arise to reconsider the many pieces that already fit the standard model quite well.

J. Brian Pitts
Texas

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

White hole cosmology

After reading the latest volleys in the debate over Dr Humphreys' 'white hole cosmology' in *CEN Technical Journal* 13(1), I have a few comments that might be of use to the Christian community.

First, whatever the merits of his work, one ought to remember that the conceptual door to the use of relativistic physics in constructing young-Earth models is now open, as Dr Ross has noted. This development should cheer Christians of all positions. Other models than Dr Humphreys' might be conceived.

Second, I suggest that young-Earth models would be more promising if they decoupled Earth's history from that of the bulk of the universe until some time in day 4, while admitting the standard homogenous Friedmann-Robertson-Walker-type behavior for the rest of the universe. Earth would do its own thing for the first few days, not aging much in comparison to the rest of the universe, until, say, it passed through a wormhole, or a change of topology occurred in a trousers-like space-time, and Earth joined the rest of the universe. (I mention these examples to illustrate the proposal, not to assert that they are technically viable.)

This special treatment for Earth, along with standard behavior for the

Sojourn of the Jews

Pete Williams¹ mentions that chronologists have differing views as to the length of the sojourn of the Jews. Some say 215 years, some say 400 years, and some 430. I think it would not be a problem for anybody if they just collect all the relevant verses. When the Bible says 430 years it refers to the whole time, beginning with the covenant to Abraham as he entered the land, and when it says 400 years it refers to starting with Abraham's seed.

Here are the verses which say 430 years:

'Now the sojourning of the children of Israel, who dwelt in Egypt, was four hundred and thirty years' (Exodus 12:40). 'And it came to pass at the end of the four hundred and thirty years, even the selfsame day it came to pass, that all the hosts of the Lord went out from the land of Egypt' (Exodus 12:41). '... the covenant, that was confirmed before of God in Christ, the law, which was four hundred and thirty years after, cannot disannul' (from Galatians 3:17).

Here are references to 400 years:

'And he said unto Abraham, Know of a surety that thy seed shall be a stranger in a land that is not theirs, and shall serve them; and they shall afflict them four hundred years' (Genesis 15:13). 'And God spake on this wise, That his seed should sojourn in a strange land; and that

they should bring them into bondage, and entreat them evil four hundred years' (Acts 7:6).

Hebrew scholars say to read the above verses like this: the passage first lists items of seed, stranger, serve, afflict; then it adds the information that all this happened within 400 years. The 400 years applies to all the preceding items, not just the to last one of 'afflict'. In other words, do not connect the last phrase too closely with the next to last; it refers to the whole time.

When does the 400 years begin? It begins with Isaac thirty years after Abram entered the land. Abraham was 75 years old when he entered the land and was 100 years old when Isaac was born. That's twenty-five years. And five more years of Isaac's life would make a total of thirty. In Genesis 21 we find an event that could qualify as changing the count from Abraham to Isaac. It is the weaning of Isaac, upon which they had a great feast, and upon which Abraham cast out Hagar and her son. Weaning children at age five is common in some cultures.

The 215 years comes from adding the years the patriarchs were in Canaan (Genesis 12:4, 21:5, 25:26, 47:9) and subtracting that 215 years from the total sojourn of 430 years.

Ruth Beechick
Golden, Colorado
UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



Pete Williams replies:

Ruth Beechick gives an interesting exposition of the classical view of Ussher and others that the sojourn of the Israelites in Egypt was but 215 years. I would be the last to encourage any to lightly reject this view. Most Hebrew scholars, however, find her preferred translation of Exodus 12:40 (the KJV's 'who dwelt') less plausible, and prefer 'which they dwelt'. The translation 'which they dwelt', which was also adopted by the earliest translations of Exodus namely the Greek Septuagint and the Syriac Peshitta, does not fit her interpretation, since it specifically ties the time to residence in Egypt. Nor does she deal with the objection that she is interpreting the phrase 'children of Israel' in Exodus 12:40 to include Isaac, who was father, not child, of Israel.

She conjectures that the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 began with Isaac's weaning, aged five. But 2 Maccabees 7:27 suggests that (at least in the second century BC) weaning to solids took place after three years of a child's life. I would be interested in details of cultures where weaning takes place aged five. At any rate, the speculation that the 400 years of Genesis 15:13 began with Isaac's weaning, seems to me no more compelling than the speculation that the 430 years of Exodus 12:40 began with the renewal of the promise about residence in a foreign land given to Jacob before he went down into Egypt (Genesis 46:1-4).

Pete Williams
Cambridge
UNITED KINGDOM

Reference

1. Williams, P.J., Some remarks preliminary to a Biblical chronology, *CEN Tech. J.* 12(1):98-105, 1998.

Core issue

Is the world, I mean all the galaxies that there are, the totality of everything, is the world fact or is it a creature? Is it just there or is it created? Now somebody who knows that that question makes all the difference in the world to everything is somebody who either genuinely believes in God or who genuinely doesn't because most people are either very lazy theists or very lazy atheists who don't see what's at issue.

[John Henry] Newman, like Nietzsche, knew that it makes all the difference in the world whether or not we are creatures, and therefore what Martin Buber used to call the eclipse of God going on, like the dark shadow coming over the moon, going on in the 19th century, greatly disturbed the great believers like Newman and the great unbelievers like Nietzsche. They had in common that they know that this matters. The disturbing thing for some of us about the present condition of our culture is that so many people, even so many religious believers, think that it really doesn't matter at all.

Nicholas Lash, Professor of Divinity at Cambridge
ABC Radio National, Australia
Encounter program with Margaret Coffey
Sunday 4th February/02/01
<<http://www.abc.net.au/rn/relig/enc/stories/s240534.htm>>