

Genesis and fundamentals

‘**W**hy is the issue important?’, many people say today. ‘Can’t we just ignore the subject of origins and get on with experiencing our lives now?’ Many believers in the Bible still say, ‘Why be so concerned?’ when the subject of origins comes up.

To answer this, in this introductory chapter, let me illustrate. If you meet a stranger, your first query, if not immediately expressed, is ‘Where do you come from?’ To understand who that person is and how they relate to you, it is important to know about their origin. Suppose now we develop this idea and someone comes saying they represent a landowner from afar who lays claim to all our house and possessions, our indignant response might well be ‘Who do you think you are?’ followed by a demand for proof of identity. The legal wrangling which follows would be very much to do with original documents and proof of ownership. Eventually a vital document is found showing beyond doubt that the absent landowner not only owns the land, house and possessions, but built the house to begin with. The plans and title deeds are all in his name.

So the analogy follows through. Today in our society, there is no concept of Divine ownership of this world. Atheistic humanism has so dominated western civilization, that there is no sense of responsibility to a Master who owns us, let alone a master builder, planner and Redeemer. How do we counter this man-centred philosophy? Do we join the majority and say ‘I don’t know clearly where you and I are from, but I’ve come to say you are nevertheless accountable to the real owner of this world.’ This call will only be understood by those who have some sense of God already in their knowledge. But we must realize today that we are up against the powerful forces of atheism (denial that God exists), pantheism (there is a power/life force in the world—some leading thinkers believe that somehow the world and its ecosystem are alive—the Gaia¹ type philosophy), or deism (that God wound up the Universe at the beginning and then left it). There is very little awareness of the true God/Creator. We have to go back to grass roots. We have to start by clearly showing the credentials of the Divine Authorship and Ownership of this world.

It is certainly true that this issue of origins is not of itself vital for salvation, just as a first time parachutist may not know all the details of the parachute which breaks his headlong fall to earth. But if you are responsible for equipping a regiment of paratroopers, you will make it your business to know all there is to know about parachute design!

I anticipate there will be two main types of readers of this book: those who are curious, but who do not claim to be believers in the Bible, and those who are Christians but as yet are uncertain on the question of origins. Let me say first to those of you who are seeking, that the question of origins is important, for you need to know at the very least, that the Bible *does* speak on these matters and has answers regarding such questions—however unpopular those answers are. What is more, you need to be aware that there is a growing body of professional, educated opinion which does not accept atheistic humanism and its portrayal of evolution as a fact. Often it is a startling revelation to many sincere thinking people that there is any other way of thinking! We have got so used to the ‘box in the corner’ giving us pre-digested ideas that we are surprised to see that there is an alternative. What is more, the media is *heavily biased* against a Christian stance. It is significant that Professor Richard Dawkins in March/April 1996 was given three multicolumn opportunities in *The Times*² to publicize his overtly atheistic views with excerpts from his latest book *Climbing Mount Improbable*³ and it is also significant that the BBC promotes one-sided presentations on origins (e.g. David Attenborough’s *Life on Earth* series), and anything which attempts to undermine orthodox Christianity. For example, in the autumn of 1996 the BBC screened a major series on the old Gnostic claims to finding the body of Christ. The truth will wear such attacks, but the real danger is that many serious-minded people are led to thinking only from one side, without a clear recognition that there is a wealth of biblical, archaeological, historical and scientific evidence, which is entirely consistent with a belief in Christ as the Son of God, the Creator and Redeemer.

There will be other readers who are already believers in Christ, but who have not yet faced the issue of origins. For you, it is important to realize that the whole basis of our salvation hinges upon Genesis. Without

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Genesis and a real Garden of Eden, a literal serpent, a genuine historical Fall, the whole account of redemption itself falls like a stack of dominoes. Sadly, even evangelical writers have brought the historical basis of Genesis into question.⁴ This then weakens considerably the high view of Scripture which is necessary in order to preach against sin and unfold God's plan of redemption. Though you may believe in Christ, to avoid putting stumbling blocks in the way of others it is essential you have clear-cut views on the authority of Genesis, scientifically, historically and socially.

As Ken Ham ably brings out in his uncompromising book *The Lie—Evolution*,⁵ Genesis is not only the basis of the gospel, but gives the basis for the fabric of our entire society—clothing; marriage for life of man and woman (not man-man, or woman-woman); the value of human life from the womb (no abortion); good government and care for the land and animals; scientific enquiry and many other issues. All these find their roots in Genesis. The aim of this book is to show how in the West, we need to take stock as to where we are and how far we have moved from the clear-cut well-tryed principles of Scripture. In this nation of Britain today, we think we have become 'free', 'emancipated from the shackles which held down our fore-fathers'. How wrong we are. Far from being free, whole sections of our communities are increasingly slaves to gambling (the National Lottery), vice, pornography and crimes of the worst sort. Is it freedom if caring parents cannot walk with their children from a swimming trip without fear of being assaulted? This happened in the spring of 1996 in Kent when a mother and her two children with their dog were viciously attacked leaving all but one child dead. If only men and women would realize that, as the Bible says, our hearts will never naturally go the way that even our consciences say is right. Rather than shackling us, the opposite is true when we turn to the Bible. Belief in the Scripture and the Christ of the Scripture, enables us to *turn* from our sin and failure and gives us a fresh start; a transformed life in which we are no longer a slave to doing wrong. Calling on the name of Christ as the one who came to take the punishment for our sin liberates and frees individuals from the grip of sin and death. When whole groups of people turn, it transforms communities and the nation is affected. My purpose in writing this book is

that from whatever angle, we shall see the fundamental relevance of Genesis for Today.

Chapter 1 notes

- 1 **JE Lovelock**, *Gaia—a new look at life on Earth* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1987).
- 2 *The Times*, London, 29/3/96, 1/4/96 and 2/4/96.
- 3 **R Dawkins**, *Climbing Mount Improbable* (London: Viking, 1996).
- 4 **R Clements**, *Masterplan* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994), pp. 12–14; **MA Noll**, *The Scandal of the Evangelical Mind* (Leicester: InterVarsity Press, 1994).
- 5 **K Ham**, *The Lie—Evolution* (Colorado Springs: Master Books, 1988).