

## Origins

Father Abraham – Part VI

Romans 4:17

### Introduction – Man’s Theories of Origin

In 1808, no less than eighty theories of man’s origin were catalogued. There were theories that man evolved from seaweed, from apes, and from material left behind by some prehistoric intelligence.

In the last two hundred years, Darwin’s Theory of Evolution has achieved the status of factual truth, although not one shred of evidence has been revealed to support interspecies evolution. His theory continues to be considered truth, in spite of the fact that evidence is continually mounting against it, so much so, that many evolutionists are scrambling for a new theory.

It fascinates me that leading evolutionists are finally verbalizing their frustration. The evidence of DNA alone, which Darwin knew nothing about, is so supportive of a Designer that many unbelievers are now referring to, what they call, “intelligent design”. They cannot quite form the words “Creator God,” or “the Bible says”.

One example is a group of biochemists at UCLA at Berkeley. Several years ago, they concluded, as a result of their study of mitochondrial DNA, that if family trees were taken indefinitely backward, they would ultimately converge on a small group of ancients who were ancestors of us all. In other words, if we went back far enough, we would go back to one family. They went further to say, in their article, that they believe a single female is the ancestor of everyone on earth today. And, they nicknamed her, “Eve”.

Another important development to note is that many evolutionists are admitting that their theory demands a measure of faith. Dr. Herbert Nilsson, a Swedish botanist, who is an evolutionist and not a believer, wrote this intriguing admission,

*My attempts to demonstrate evolution by experiment, carried on for more than forty years, have completely failed. It may be firmly maintained that it is not possible to find nor construct new species. Deficiencies are real. The idea of an evolution from one species to the next rests on pure belief.*

The relentless truth remains, however, that man searches for his origins. Our trips to the moon were motivated largely by man’s search for evidence of origins. The Hubble Space Telescope provided spectacular pictures, as it searched the universe for clues to our genesis.

The world wants an explanation of its beginnings. While scientists study the world around them and the expanse of the universe to discover amazing things, they cannot discover the origin.

John Phillips illustrated the handicap of science in these words,

*Science can measure the swing of a clock’s pendulum and come up with an equation that will state exactly where the pendulum bob will be at any future moment. By changing certain factors in his equation he can probe into the past. However, the measurements and laws that now govern the swing of the pendulum do not explain how the pendulum first began to swing. Second, he cannot determine how the*

pendulum began to swing in the first place. The only way he could state with confidence, "This is how the pendulum began to swing," would be if someone who was there when it happened were to tell him. In other words, that kind of information is not to be obtained by reasoning, but by revelation! That is exactly how Moses derived the information for the writing of Genesis chapter 1.<sup>i</sup>

## Biblical Facts of Origin

Listen to Paul's amazing statement, as he writes of Abraham's faith in God. It is found in Romans, chapter 4, verse 17.

*(as it is written, "A father of many nations have I made you") in the presence of Him whom he believed, even God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.*

If that isn't a great verse for a creation weekend conference, nothing is! Paul provides two key expressions that not only reveal God's power over death, but His creative power of giving life.

### Foundations for the believer

Now, let us note several foundations that Paul's summary statement provides for the believer.

### The objective basis for our faith

1. First, it provides the objective basis for our faith.

Look again at the last part of the verse,

*. . . who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.*

When did God call into being that which does not exist? Paul is obviously referring to the Genesis account, which is the inspired account of origins. Paul is summarizing, in a few words, that which Moses recorded in a few verses.

God gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist. Hold your place at Romans, chapter 4, and turn back to Genesis, chapter 1. We will discover, in this chapter, that what Paul has just declared, Moses has already detailed.

In Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1a, we are given this stunning announcement,

*In the beginning God[!] . . .*

That is the stunning part. We have not gotten to the creation part yet.

*In the beginning God[!] . . .*

We discover, in this verse, not a deduction about God, nor even a defense for the existence of God, but a declaration that God exists. This is not an explanation of *who* He is, but a revelation *that* He is!

Now, I have never read a book that did not have some sort of biography on the author. It is usually accompanied by a picture that is fifteen years younger than the author actually is. That is not the case in God's Book, however. He does not say anything about *who He is*, He only tells *what He did!*

Continue in verse 1 of Genesis, chapter 1.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

Ladies and gentlemen, Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, and every other verse that repeats its truth; such as, Romans, chapter 4, verse 17, is the foundation for faith upon which every other verse in the Bible rests. In fact, if you can believe, by faith, these first ten words of scripture,

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

then, you can believe ten additional words, that we are given in II Corinthians, chapter 5, verse 17a,

*. . . if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creature . . .*

If you can believe Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, then you can believe John, chapter 1, verse 1, and verse 14a,

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. . . . And the Word became flesh, and dwelt among us, and we saw His glory . . .*

If you can believe in the first creation that is revealed in Genesis, chapter 1, then you will have no trouble believing the next creation that is revealed in Revelation, chapter 21, in verses 1 through 4.

*Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth; for the first heaven and the first earth passed away, and there is no longer any sea. And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, made ready as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne, saying, "Behold, the tabernacle of God is among men, and He will dwell among them, and they shall be His people, and God Himself will be among them, and He will wipe away every tear from their eyes; and there will no longer be any death; there will no longer be*

*any mourning, or crying, or pain; the first things have passed away.”*

John goes on to describe the heavenly city. Skip to verse 21.

*And the twelve gates were twelve pearls; each one of the gates was a single pearl. And the street of the city was pure gold, like transparent glass.*

Now, wait a second! Try to explain one item in this verse. Where will you get a pearl big enough to serve as a city gate? Where will you find an oyster big enough to make a pearl that big?! You will not, which means that God is going to create that pearl. He cannot do that, can He? Well, if He can create pavement made out of solid gold, He can certainly create a gate made out of a single pearl. In fact, if God can manipulate matter, space, and gravity to suspend a literal city in the sky above Jerusalem, I think He can probably make a big pearl, don't you?! Continue to verse 23.

*And the city has no need of the sun or of the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God has illumined it, and its lamp is the Lamb.*

John MacArthur asks the question,

*Do you really believe God can create this new world? Or will it take billions of years to evolve to get the new heaven and the new earth in working order? If we really believe He can destroy this universe in a split second (according to 2 Peter 3) and immediately create a whole new one, what's the problem with believing the Genesis account of a 6-day creation in the first place? If He can immediately create a world at the end of the age, why can't He do it at the beginning of the age?!*<sup>ii</sup>

Notice, back in Romans, chapter 4, verse 17, the statement that Abraham believed by faith,

*. . . A father of many nations have I made you . . .*

Notice that God did not say, “A father of many nations will I make you.”

This statement is not future tense. The verb “have made” is in the perfect tense (“tetheika,” in the Greek), which indicates a status and fulfillment already established and operative. Yet, at that time, Abraham was one hundred years old and did not even have a son! In our next discussion, we will uncover the absurdity of this promise from old Abraham's perspective. And his wife, Sarah, by the way,

laughed out loud when she heard the promise given that she would deliver a son.

It was an incredible promise! However, in light of creation, it was nothing!

### The answer of origins

2. Secondly, Paul's declaration provides the answer of origins.

The language of Romans, chapter 4, states it clearly. You could literally translate the last part of verse 17, which says, “. . . who . . . calls into being that which does not exist,” as, “He, calling things not being, being!”

With one creative word after another, things that did not exist in any way, shape, or form, came into being.

That is the idea behind the Hebrew verb “bara,” which is found fifty five in the Old Testament. It carries the idea of instantaneous, miraculous creation. The verb appears for the first time in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1, and Paul alludes to it in Romans, chapter 4, verse 17. So, the Genesis verse could be read, “In the beginning God ‘bara’ . . .”; that is, He miraculously, instantaneously created.

God called out, “Let there be light . . .,” and light there was. His word was creative fiat!

You might say, “I don't understand how He can do that.”

It is as if, in some way, His creative ability was held hostage by your lack of understanding!

Solomon wrote, centuries ago, in Ecclesiastes, chapter 11, verse 5,

*Just as you do not know the path of the wind and how bones are formed in the womb of the pregnant woman, so you do not know the activity of God who makes all things.*

Notice, in Genesis, chapter 1, verse 1 again, that Moses introduces the origin of several things. In fact, you have the introduction of those things which science can only measure, but cannot explain where they came from or when they began to operate. God declared through Moses:

- “In the beginning” – that is the origin of time and measurement;
- “God” – that is the origin of cause, force, and personality;
- “created” – that is the original action and movement;

- “the heavens” – that is the origin of space and cosmos;
- “and the earth.” – that is the origin of matter.

Time, measurement, cause, force, personality, action, movement, space, cosmos, and matter! In the first ten words of Holy Scripture, ten origins are introduced to humanity.

Furthermore, the Genesis account gives us:

- the origin of species, planets, vegetation, fruit, water, and the animal kingdom – chapter 1;
- the origin of man and woman – chapter 2;
- the origin of marriage – chapter 2 (when Adam referred to Eve as his wife);
- the origin of sin – chapter 3;
- the origin of guilt and blame – chapter 3;
- the origin of disease and difficulty – chapter 3;
- the origin of crime and punishment – chapter 4;
- the origin of nations and people groups – chapter 10; and,
- the origin of diverse languages – chapter 11.

The evolutionist and the theological liberal would say that Moses borrowed from pagan and ancient epics of creation. However, Acts, chapter 7, verse 22a, tells us that,

***Moses was educated in all the learning of the Egyptians . . .***

You may remember that Moses was raised by the daughter of Pharaoh.

So, what do the accounts of ancient Egypt say? The Egyptian myth of creation postulated a primeval ocean upon which appeared an egg. From the egg was born the sun god, and the sun god had four children. From the fighting and rivalry of these god-born children of the sun, the creation was spun into existence. Clearly, Moses did not borrow from them.

The Babylonian account was similar, with its pantheon gods fighting between themselves, creating the universe in the midst of their banquets and conquests.

The Greeks pictured a mythical giant, named Atlas, standing at the borders of the earth upholding the wide heavens on tireless arms.

The Hindus believe the world rests on the backs of three elephants, which in turn, stand on the back of

a giant tortoise, which swims around in a cosmic sea.<sup>iii</sup>

Your contemporaries believe that everything started with a bang. They believe that chaos, in some way, created the perfect conditions necessary for life on earth. And, all living creatures began without design or intelligent supervision, yet evolved, by chance, to their current creative design.

Believe whichever one you want. Know, however, that you are believing it by faith. I choose to place my faith in God and His word.

For the believer who believes, in some way, that mixing evolution with the Bible is justifiable, you need to know that in every New Testament reference to Genesis, the account of Moses is treated as literal, historical truth. For example:

- James 3:9 refers to the literal creation of Adam;
- I Timothy 2:13 and I Corinthians 11 refer to Adam as literally created first, then Eve;
- I Corinthians 15:22 tells us that in Adam all die and in Christ all shall be made alive. (This verse, and others, indicates the importance of Adam being the head of the human race, for, like him, Jesus Christ is the head of a new race. In other words, if you get rid of God’s created order, you lose the ground for redemption through Christ.)
- Mark 10:6 records that the Lord Jesus referred to the creation of Adam and Eve as a historical event.

Even more importantly, notice that whenever the New Testament speaks of the creation of mankind and the universe, it consistently refers to creation as a finished product; a past, completed event; an immediate work of God. It does not speak of it as a long, drawn out, still occurring process of evolution.

That is great news for us. It tells us that, just as God, through Christ, created, in a series of words, all of creation, so He can speak one word, one shout, and we will immediately be glorified and with Him in the clouds. Our heavenly bodies will not have to evolve to a state of perfection over millions of years, but will be instantly, completely glorified.

### **The special place of mankind in God’s creation**

3. Paul’s statement in Romans, chapter 4, verse 17, not only provides the objective basis for our faith, and insight into the matter of

origins, but it reveals the special place of mankind in God's creation.

In Genesis, chapter 2, we discover a powerful, yet personal God breathing into Adam his "nephesh," which translated from the Hebrew means, "his soul, his life". The only living being that God breathed a soul into was Adam, and through him, Eve. He did not do that with any of the teeming animals that swam in the sea or ran in the fields. He also did not breath some sort of soul into Earth, making it, in some way, capable of being the mother of nature.

The biblical account tells of a personal relationship between God and man. Man was created after the image of God; that is, God gave male and female, a mind, emotions, and a will. He gave man and woman the ability to reason, to plan, to pray, to faithfully love, and to worship. If you remove the Creator and His purposeful creation from our minds, then you have stripped mankind of his unique place in creation; you have taken away his special meaning, dignity, and purpose in the world.

It will get worse than this, however. Dostoevsky's classic work led Ivan Karamazov (one of his leading characters) to summarize that if God did not exist, everything was permissible.

We have seen, in our own culture over the last fifty years, on the heels of evolutionary propaganda that teaches man is just another animal, the results of such a philosophy. Mankind can now act like an animal because that is all he is. Males can breed with as many females as will allow them. Gone are character, integrity, and fidelity. As one rock band sang, "We're just another mammal, so let's do it like they do it on the Discovery channel."

The sexual revolution was logically and consistently born out of the teaching that we are simply animals that are just a little more highly evolved than the ape.

We are also reaping the startling loss of human dignity and an alarming rise in the rights of animals. Those two things always go hand in hand. The fastest growing segment of law is animal rights law.

People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) is well known for its stance that animal rights are equal to human rights. They maintain that killing any animal for food is the moral equivalent of murder; eating meat is virtually cannibalism; and man is a tyrant species.

By the way, this gives insight into what they must think of the Creator God of the Bible, who informed the apostle Peter that Jews could now eat

meat from any animal they chose. According to Acts, chapter 10, three times God showed Peter a large number of animals and three times God said to Peter, as recorded in verses 13 and 15,

**. . . Get up, Peter, kill and eat! . . . What God has cleansed, no longer consider unholy.**

Even in the Old Testament system of worship, during the high days of Passover, God commanded the people of Israel to kill the lambs and eat them as families before the Lord. During the wilderness wandering, God provided quail that flew into the Israelite camp for the people to capture and eat.

If you want to be a vegetarian, that is alright with me. In fact, you can have all of my squash and spinach and green peas. As far as I am concerned, that stuff is still unclean. I will trade all of that for your meatloaf and fried chicken and pork chops, and, while you are at it, your banana pudding and sweet tea.

Evidence of the shrinking distance between animals and humans was provided in a recent clipping that I was given from the *Wall Street Journal*. The article explained legislation that was recently passed in Germany, requiring pig farmers to provide for their pigs: state of the art central heating, homeopathic medicine, and even toys to help them enjoy their lives. They were also mandated to spend one on one time with their pigs. If all the new rules are passed, many large pig farms will be regulated out of existence. One such farmer, with 1,500 pigs, estimated that he would need to hire a full time farm hand to spend twenty seconds a day with each pig in order to meet the requirements.

How do you come up with such regulations? Germany's national minister for consumer protection, food and agriculture, is a member of the Green Party. The Green Party is a social democratic party that is geared to, basically, saving animals from humans.

Tragically, in America, PETA is not only following its European neighbors, but attempting to add further nonsense to our law books. It opposes the keeping of pets and even "companion animals," including guide dogs for the blind.

What is the basis for their beliefs? Ingrid Newkirk, PETA's controversial founder, said it all when she alleged, "There is no rational basis for saying that a human being has special rights . . . a rat is a pig is a dog is a boy."

She told a *Washington Post* reporter that the atrocities of Nazi Germany pale by comparison to the killing of animals for food. She said, "Six million

Jews died in concentration camps, but six billion chickens will die in slaughterhouses.”

In other words, she is more troubled by chickens dying than humans dying. But that is the logical conclusion of someone who denies the special place of humanity as God’s crown of creation.

She told a reporter, “I don’t have any reverence for life, only for the entities themselves. I would rather see a blank space where I am. This [sounds strange], but at least I wouldn’t be harming anything.”

By the way, if you are not helping your kids spot the propaganda related to the view that, “all humans do is mess up the world and mistreat nature and if it weren’t for humans, mother nature would be so much better off . . .,” then you are not countering for them by providing a biblical world view. A world view taken from Genesis, chapter 1, counters that mankind is given the privilege, by Creator God, to rule over the planet and all of the animal kingdom. Mankind is not to mistreat it, but is to harness it and enjoy it.

The radical evolutionary theory ultimately calls for the extinction of humanity as a solution to earth’s problems. Do you think I am exaggerating?

Listen to an article that was published in *Wild Earth* magazine, which is a radical environmental magazine. The article said,

*If you haven’t given voluntary human extinction much thought before, the idea of a world with no people in it may seem strange. But, if you give it a chance, I think you might agree that the extinction of Homo sapiens would mean survival for millions, if not billions, of earth-dwelling species . . . phasing out the human race will solve every problem on earth, social and environmental.*

What an irrational, immoral, humiliating, demoralizing view this is.

*No purpose for mankind . . . he’s just another animal that evolved from amoeba . . . and he’s taking up space and energy and resources that ought to go to the animals a little lower on the evolutionary ladder.<sup>iv</sup>*

To put it simply, evolution is the latest theory that eliminates God, but, in the process, eliminates meaning for mankind.

Carl Sagan was one of the most prolific and articulate evolutionists. He was a man who disliked Christians, to put it mildly. He recently died and discovered the truth of his Creator. He was

interviewed by Ted Koppel on *Nightline*, after he knew he was dying. Koppel asked him, “Dr. Sagan, do you have any pearls of wisdom that you would like to give to the human race?”

Sagan responded, “We live on a hunk of rock and metal that circles a humdrum star that is one of four hundred billion other stars that make up the Milky Way Galaxy . . . this is well worth pondering.”

So much for pearls of wisdom.

In a book that was published near the end of his life, Sagan wrote with the characteristic pessimism of someone who has ignored his Creator and found only meaninglessness in life,

*Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.<sup>v</sup>*

I could not help but think of Christ’s wonderful declaration in Luke, chapter 19, verse 10, when He said,

***[I have] come to seek and to save that which was lost.***

Carl Sagan reflected the truth of something that I read, years ago, about an ancient Greek custom. People would often display three Latin words above their doorway. The words were “nice dominus grustra,” which means, “without God, frustration”.

Bill Brown, the outgoing president of Byron College, recently wrote an article to his constituency. He told the story of Nancy Granna, who endured a lifetime of disappointment and failure.

The Alsip, Illinois, native dropped out of high school and then, lost her job. She separated from her husband, after she suffered two miscarriages. Whatever she did, wherever she went, she felt that failure marked her. She met her failures with alcohol, which only made her life darker and more meaningless.

She found a kindred spirit in Karen Logan, who had her own problems with life. Together, they developed a tragic bond of mutual misery and sadness. Together, they tried to fight the ugliness that life had become. Then together, they decided to give up.

One cold day in March, Karen moved into Nancy’s house, where they drank, laughed, and cried. After four days, they went into the garage and shut the doors. Climbing into Nancy’s car, they started the engine. Nancy slumped down behind the steering

wheel, crying and clutching her wedding album, the symbol of her only moment of happiness. Karen hugged a stuffed animal and a rose. In less than an hour, their lives ended.

On the dashboard, they left nine sealed letters to family and friends. Between them, on the seat, was a sheet of paper with the lyrics to a song by the rock group Metallica. The song expressed their reason for calling it quits. The lyrics read,

*I have lost the will to live*

*Simply nothing more to give*

*There is nothing more for me*

*Need the end to set me free*

*Death greets me warm, now I will just say good-bye.*

Nancy was nineteen. Karen was seventeen.

They were two girls who had grown up in a society that told them to live without morals; to live without absolute truth which gives absolute hope; to live and die without meaning, while the song urged them on and away from God.

*Francis Schaeffer once remarked that if he had only sixty minutes to spend with an unbeliever, he would spend the first fifty five of them talking about creation and what it*

*means for humanity to [be the special creation of God]; and then he would use the last five minutes to explain the way of salvation.<sup>vi</sup>*

Why? Because if God created the world, and He created human beings with such care, then maybe He did so love the world, that He sent His only begotten Son into the world, that whoever would believe in Him, would not perish, but have everlasting life.

Now, how can God promise to give eternal life, if He did not create life to begin with? Only the creator of temporary life can create eternal life.

That is wonderful news. So:

- since God created your life originally, He has the ability to give you life eternally;
- since God is your designer, He knows how to become your Redeemer;
- since God is your Creator, He knows what it takes to become your Savior.

Carl Sagan was wrong; tragically, eternally wrong. Help *has* come to this island of rock. God moved to redeem mankind. He *did come* to save us from ourselves!

This manuscript is from a sermon preached on 10/20/2002 by Stephen Davey.

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<sup>i</sup> John Phillips, Exploring Genesis (Chicago, Moody Press, 1969), p. 39.

<sup>ii</sup> John MacArthur, The Battle For The Beginning (Word Publishing Group, 2001), p. 45.

<sup>iii</sup> Phillips, p. 37.

<sup>iv</sup> MacArthur, p. 33.

<sup>v</sup> Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>vi</sup> Ibid., p. 43.