

The Human Story

by Dr. J. Vernon McGee



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P.O. Box 7100
Pasadena, California 91109-7100
(800) 65-BIBLE
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There is a question which every thinking mind has asked. You have asked it. It has even invaded the field of nursery rhyme as found in George MacDonald's poem:

*Where did you come from, baby dear?
Out of the everywhere into the here.*

"Whence came man?" has been the common question down through the ages, and it demands an answer. The statement of reply given in this little rhyme is neither scripturally nor biologically accurate, but it faces the problem of origin.

Where did the human race begin? What is the origin of man? Many explanations have been offered. Some have been popular for awhile and then discarded as lacking evidence. When I was sixteen years old I read Darwin's *Origin of Species* and then his *Origin of Man*. But Darwinian evolution is discredited today.

Dr. Arnold Brass made a tremendously revealing statement in his little pamphlet concerning Dr. Haeckel, an evolutionist. He said that Dr. Haeckel published forgeries in his book to prove his theory. Dr. Haeckel, admitting he had done that, replied saying,

I should feel utterly condemned and humiliated by the admission were it not that hundreds of the best observers and most reputable biologists lie under the same charge. The great majority of all morphological, anatomical, historical, and embryological diagrams are not true to nature, but are more or less doctored, systematized, and reconstructed.

And it was Dr. Watson, the great English evolutionist, who made the statement, "Evolution is a theory universally accepted, not because it could be proven to be true, but because the only alternative – special creation – was clearly incredible."

One of the reasons, I suppose, for the acceptance of evolution by so many is that it offers an "out" for man so that he does not have to accept the biblical account of creation. Without evolution man today is on the horns of a dilemma and has no theory. One agnostic recently declared, "We do not have to offer an explanation for the origin of man." In spite of his statement, man's mind cries out and wants a reply to the question, "Whence came man?"

The Act of Creation

For more than three thousand years Scripture has presented a written record of the origin of man. At first it had to overcome the superstition and idolatry of bygone days, and today it withstands the speculation of this agnostic, scientific age. The biblical account is couched in noble terms; it is written in lofty language. The latest findings, when laid parallel with the Genesis account, give cause for singing the Hallelujah Chorus. How majestic Genesis reads in our day!

As important as man is in our thinking, the Bible does not open with the story of his creation. It opens with the fact of God; He is the One who is preeminent in this Book. Should the whole world turn to atheism it would not alter the fact that there is a God and that He created all things.

God's first act of creation was to bring into existence the heavens and the earth. One summer I had the privilege of listening to Mr. Chestnut, a wonderful Christian layman who at that time headed up General Electric's Department of Research. He told us that it has been demonstrated

in the laboratory that matter can be created out of energy. This is a more difficult process than that of breaking down the atom, but it has been accomplished. Having told us this, Mr. Chestnut then cited this profound passage from God's Word:

Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear.
(Hebrews 11:3)

In other words, energy and power have been translated into matter. The Word of God is "living and powerful." God spoke and energy was translated into matter. This fact we have understood by faith. Today it is demonstrated in the laboratory.

Let us get another thing clear in our thinking. Genesis was not written as a scientific statement. Does that surprise you? I thank God that it was not, and here is my reason for that statement: It will compare with present-day scientific statements, but science is a changing subject, and if Genesis were written in the science of the hour it would be wrong twenty years from today. The nebular hypothesis of the French astronomer Pierre Laplace was good science a hundred years ago, but it is now discarded. Man changes his theories as he progresses in searching. No, the Genesis record is a *religious* record, and we should learn to compare it with the cosmogonies of that day.

Does the Genesis record contain scientific error? Constantly we hear the accusation that it does. A few years ago we were told that it would not stand, for it mentions light on the first day and does not mention the sun, moon, or stars until the fourth day and that light cannot be had without light-holders. But Genesis was accurate in those days of scientific attack, for we now know that there was light before there were light-holders, for cosmic light is a light that needs no light-holder. So the Genesis account stands.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

I hold the view that following God's creative act a great catastrophe occurred – earth *became* without form and void. A curtain went down on the pre-Adamic creation, an iron curtain. There was, and is, no penetration of that curtain, and anything man says is pure speculation. You can put behind that curtain all the ages you may care to for this earth, but never forget that you are dealing with a God of eternity, and this little earth on which we live may have been here a long time – perhaps millions, billions, or terms of years known only in the language of eternity. Our God of eternity is not crowded for time. He has eternity behind Him, He has eternity before Him – and what are a few billions of years in His economy?

The Record of Man

What many consider six days of creation in Genesis 1, I believe to be *renovation*, preparatory for a new tenant arriving. When man is created, and we are vitally concerned with him, this little earth becomes the center of interest in the universe so far as the Bible record is concerned. Formerly it was uranic – pertaining to the heavens; then the record changes to the geocentric – pertaining to the earth as the center. The telescope has been laid aside and now the microscope comes into use. No longer is it the study of the macrocosm – the universe, but the microcosm – man, human nature.

Here is the record that is given:

These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens. (Genesis 2:4)

Now I have discovered that each time I read the Scriptures I find something new. It has been embarrassing for me to find something new in so familiar a chapter as this, but this I have done. Notice how it reads, “These are the generations of the heavens and of the earth...” The heavens are mentioned first. Then when He begins to talk about man it reads: “In the day that the LORD God made the earth and the heavens.” There is a right about-face; the earth becomes the center of interest because man is to be created and put on this earth.

Now here we note a word, the use of which is peculiar to Genesis. It is the word *generations*, and every time it is used it always gives the generations that are to follow, and the generations of the heavens and the earth are the generations of man. Now notice something that is quite wonderful, and keep in mind that when He speaks of the generations of the earth He is not speaking of what has preceded, but of what follows – He speaks of results and not causes; it is a superscription not a subscription – and the creation of man follows. Will you notice it:

And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. (Genesis 2:7)

Man is at once the offspring of heaven and earth. These are the generations of the heavens and the earth, and now God takes dust – man is of the earth and earthy – but God breathes into his nostrils the breath of life. Man is not only of the earth, but man is of heaven. In fact, three stages are given here of creation:

(1) The creation of the world of matter:

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth. (Genesis 1:1)

(2) The creation of life:

And God created great whales, and every living creature that moveth, which the waters brought forth abundantly, after their kind, and every winged fowl after his kind: and God saw that it was good. (Genesis 1:21)

(3) The creation of man with spiritual capacities:

So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. (Genesis 1:27)

These three phases find their conclusion in Paul’s great statement: “... your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ” (1 Thessalonians 5:23).

On the physical plane man is similar to the animal world. Now, just because a Ford automobile has four wheels, two headlights, and one steering wheel does not mean that it was made in the same factory as a Chevrolet. They are different though they both have the same basic parts. They are made this way because they are both going to operate on the same place, the highway. Man has two eyes, he has two ears, and he has a mouth, as also does the animal world, because both live in the same environment. This does not prove that one evolved from the other but that on the physical side man was made of dust, as the Scripture says. On the psychological side he has a soul, the functional part of man with his drives and his urges – which are too often depraved and perverted.

Then there is his spiritual side which came from God when God breathed into him the spirit of life. Man has a humble origin, and he has a high origin. He is both earthy and heavenly. God created out of dust one in His own image, and we are told that He remembers that we are dust. Too often we forget this. The psalmist said, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.”

Man the creature was made a free, moral agent. He was given the right of choice between good and evil, which is essential to personality; otherwise he would be an automaton. Having been given this right of choice he was put to the test, not to prove he could commit a crime, but rather to test his obedience to God. And here we find that when the devil tempted man, instead of resisting, he listened. God could have made man an automaton, but He did not. So man was able to break from this divinely arranged fellowship. Man doubted God, denied His Word and disobeyed Him. Disaster came and man became depraved.

Genesis 3 is the most important chapter in the Bible in explaining the tragic fruits of disobedience, from the Garden of Eden through the centuries of man’s march to the present hour. This chapter draws a clear picture of the life of the town in which you live. In Genesis 1 and 2, you see man created and placed in the Garden of Eden. Now read chapter 3 which delineates our modern life, and you cannot but conclude that man is not in the Garden. Something tragic has happened – man disobeyed God. If you want to know how great was that disobedience and how tragic the results, listen to the Apostle Paul as he looked at the human story, and said:

Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things. Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness.... (Romans 1:21-24)

If you will look around you in your town today, you will see that uncleanness in countless thousands of lives.

An illustration of this comes from our own American Indians. Mr. Theodore Epp, who founded the “Back to the Bible” radio broadcast, told me that his father was one of the first missionaries to the Hopi tribe. He said that the missionary work was so unsuccessful at first that the Mennonite folk thought they would leave the mission, but Mr. Epp’s father said, “I will go on with it. I will remain here.” God rewarded his faith when one of the chiefs of the Hopi tribe was converted. This gave the first avenue of approach, and he could at least read the Bible to the Indians that gathered there.

One day he read in their hearing the first chapter of Romans. After the reading was over, one member of the council took him aside and angrily said, “Don’t try to deceive us by saying that

you got that out of the Bible. The chief has become a Christian and has told you about us, and you are telling us off by reciting our sins to us.” This Indian was amazed to discover that this record had been written of mankind almost two thousand years ago by the apostle Paul. My friend, when man fell, his disobedience plunged an entire race into sin.

And when man’s tragic fall took place it was flashed to the far corners of the universe. God’s created intelligences read the headlines and mourned for little man who had lifted his midget fist in heaven’s face and had defied God.

The Judgment of Mankind

As the result of his sin, a fourfold judgment came upon mankind. There was first of all a judgment upon the serpent.

And the LORD God said unto the serpent, Because thou hast done this, thou art cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; upon thy belly shalt thou go, and dust shalt thou eat all the days of thy life. (Genesis 3:14)

Upon the animal world about us is this judgment of God. Paul, writing of it in the eighth chapter of Romans, says,

For the earnest expectation of the creature waiteth for the manifestation of the sons of God. For the creature was made subject to vanity, not willingly....
(Romans 8:19, 20)

Now while there is this judgment resting upon the serpent, beyond the serpent there was another one – Satan, and we read that there was a judgment to come upon him:

And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the Devil, and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him. (Revelation 12:9)

And still another judgment was pronounced – this was upon woman. God said that in sorrow she would bring forth children, but He also said:

And I will put enmity between thee [the serpent] and the woman, and between thy seed and her seed; it shall bruise thy head, and thou shalt bruise his heel.
(Genesis 3:15)

Beloved, go to Bethlehem and look at the event that transpired there about two thousand years ago. That is God’s work, not man’s:

Behold, a virgin shall be with child, and shall bring forth a son, and they shall call his name Emmanuel, which being interpreted is, God with us. (Matthew 1:23)

Now go to Golgotha and see the bruising of the woman's Seed. That is God's work, not man's. There was a transaction between God the Father and God the Son when He bore the penalty for the sins of the whole world. Yes, judgment came upon woman and upon this earth, and today the whole creation is travailing in pain, waiting for a deliverance that is coming through the redemption that is in Christ.

Then we find that a fourth judgment came, and it was upon man. Listen as God speaks to man:

In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return.
(Genesis 3:19)

Whether we consider man laboring with a crude implement of the Stone Age or see him laboring under the tensions and pressures of this push-button civilization, it is still true that it is by the sweat of his face that he eats bread. It is God's judgment upon man.

This then is the human story. It is a sad story – the sob of the city and the sigh of the countryside. We find life filled with irritations, annoyances, disappointments, and resentments. Men's hearts are filled with frustrations, tensions, and complexes which can often lead a person to some high bridge or building and the plunge to death. It is a story of broken homes, hungry children, and neglected old people. The lullaby of Broadway is a theme in which the drunkard, the harlot, and the thief weave their way into the stream of honest folk. The light of liberty is gone out. Bitterness and wrath are in the hearts of men; envy and hatred are among nations, and strife and gossip are in the house of God. Such is the human story. Scripture says:

For men shall be lovers of their own selves, covetous, boasters, proud, blasphemers, disobedient to parents, unthankful, unholy, without natural affection, trucebreakers, false accusers, incontinent, fierce, despisers of those that are good, traitors, heady, highminded, lovers of pleasures more than lovers of God; having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof.... (2 Timothy 3:2-5)

But that, thank God, is not the final chapter. It is true that "by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin," but it is also true that "*as by the offence of one judgment came upon all men to condemnation, even so by the righteousness of one the free gift came upon all men unto justification of life*" (Romans 5:18).

Today there stands a cross between us and the Garden of Eden. That cross is not an ambulance sent to a wreck! The Lord Jesus Christ is the Lamb of God slain before the foundation of the world. The cross is not God's second best; it is His very best. God closes the record of man's fall with this verse:

So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life. (Genesis 3:24)

The cherubim were not to block the way, but God was saying in effect, "In spite of man's sin, I will keep the way of life open for him."

For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life. (John 3:16)

And before the curtain goes down on man's little day, God lets us hear the strains of the finale, a mighty crescendo of praise –

And they sung a new song, saying ... Thou wast slain, and hast redeemed us to God by thy blood out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made us unto our God kings and priests: and we shall reign on the earth. (Revelation 5:9, 10)

Now listen to God's assurance found in Romans 8. Although guilt came upon man, today

...who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. (Romans 8:33, 34)

There is now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus – because Jesus died, arose from the dead, and today is at the right hand of God where He ever lives to make intercession for us. Paul asks the question, "Who shall separate us from the love of Christ?" Back in the Garden of Eden man was separated from God. But now we have the comfort and security of knowing that nothing can separate us from His love.

For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. (Romans 8:38, 39)

Today we have gained more in Christ than we lost in Adam, and I would rather be in the midst of this perverse civilization with Christ than in the Garden of Eden without Him. In Christ we have hope, salvation, deliverance, and security!