

# *How It All Began*

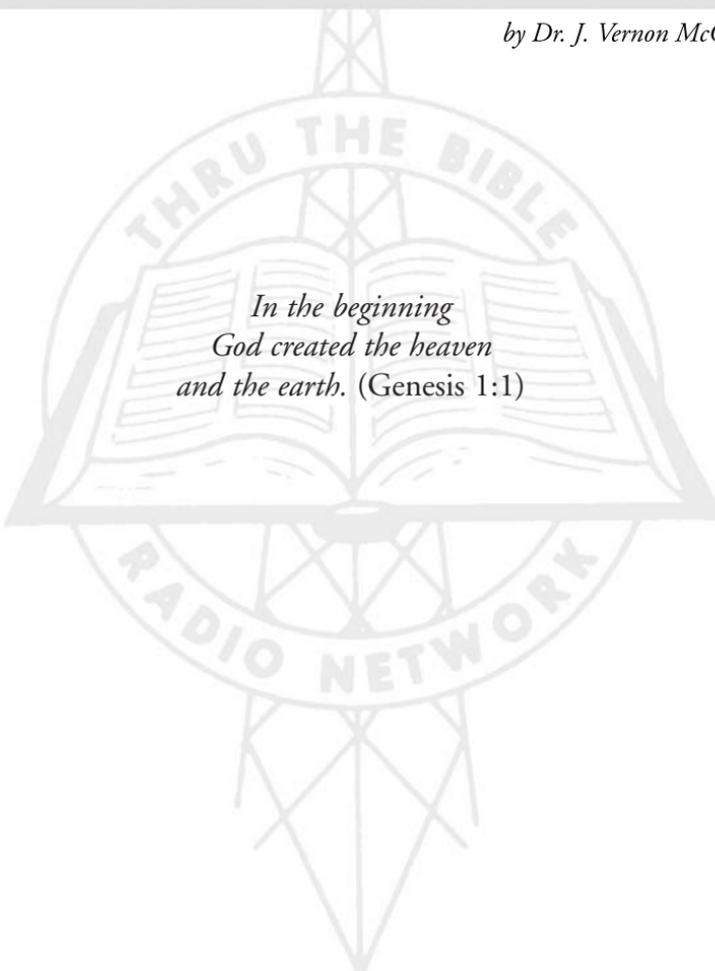
*by Dr. J. Vernon McGee*



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# *How It All Began*

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

Unless noted otherwise, all Scripture references  
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# How It All Began

The problem of origins provokes more violent controversies, wild theories, and wide disagreements than any other subject in the Bible. The intrusion of human hypotheses has produced a babel of voices that has drowned out the clear voice of God in the Book of Genesis.

There are today extreme groups that have blurred the issue and muddied the waters of understanding by their dogmatic assumptions and assertions concerning the first chapter of Genesis. Representing one group is the arrogant scientist who assumes that biological and philosophical evolution are gospel truth. His assumed axiom is “the assured findings of science,” and he acts as if this is something cut and dried for time and eternity. Representing the group at the other extreme is the young and proud theologian who arrogates to himself a super-knowledge that he has discovered just how God did it. He writes and speaks learnedly about some clever theory that reconciles science and the Bible, and he looks with disdain upon the great giants of Bible expositors of the past. Candidly, I think that both of these groups need to be deflated with the pinpoint of God’s question to Job:

*Where wast thou when I laid the foundations of the earth?  
Declare, if thou hast understanding.* (Job 38:4)

Silence must be the only answer to this humbling question. Where were the scientist and the young theologian when God laid the foundations of the earth? Neither happened to be in the area; not one was a spectator to it.

Now let us examine both of these extreme theories and see if their dogmatism is warranted after all these years. I would like to put them into the test tube and then pour upon them the acid of the Word of God, after which I shall make an induction and a deduction from Scripture.

## Theories of Evolution

First of all let us consider the hypothesis of evolution. It is not our purpose to investigate all the ramifications of this theory, but there are certain self-evident facts that every Bible believer should consider before he throws overboard his understanding of the first chapter of Genesis.

### *After All These Years – No Universal Agreement*

The first factor that should be considered is that after all these years in which the theory of evolution has been number one on the scientific hit parade, there is no universal agreement as to the exact origin of the universe and of life. In fact, there is a wide divergence of opinion among the scientists; it is a modern Babel that produces confusion today.

How did the universe begin? Listen to their answers.

A team of six British scientists say they have obtained proof to explain how the universe began. They said Friday they have determined the positions of unknown stars and planets far out in space by receiving radio signals from them. Most of their radio signals came from an immense spherical belt that is continually receding farther out into space like an inflating balloon.\*

This, of course, is Sir James Jeans' theory of an expanding universe (Sir James Jeans was, by the way, a Christian astronomer).

This means, they said, that the universe is expanding and must have started with a colossal bang – probably from a single, primeval and mammoth atom.

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\*As you study this message, please keep in mind that it was presented by Dr. McGee in 1966. While the biblical truths are timeless and we feel that Dr. McGee's discussion and thesis are still relevant today, we cannot help the fact that more modern arguments for or against evolution are not represented. Also, most (if not all) of the scientists and educators quoted by Dr. McGee throughout the message are now deceased, although he refers to them in the present tense.

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That, of course, discards the old theory altogether.

Then, a Cal Tech scientist, Dr. William A. Baum, speaking at the University of California, Los Angeles, told the National Academy of Science that new findings tend to rule out the “steady state” theory that the universe has always existed and that new matter is continually being created. A dozen years ago that was the accepted theory, now it is gone by the board and we have a new theory for the origin of the universe.

If evolution is the solution to the problem of how it all began, certainly by now they should have something rather conclusive, and there should be a certain amount of agreement.

We find just as much disagreement about the beginning of life, or the beginning of man. They have now come up with this:

Man is not an animal but a plant which evolved from brown seaweed, a biologist declared today. Describing a new theory of evolution, he said: “All animals are in reality a type of highly modified plant life, derived a billion years or so ago from a common ancestry with the brown seaweed.” From recent new evidence “we are forced to conclude that all life belongs to only one kingdom, which in all honesty must be recognized as the kingdom of plants,” said Lawrence S. Dillon, Ph.D., associate professor of biology at Texas A&M College.

That is a new one, and of course does away with the idea that we came from amoeba in a mud bank somewhere. I think, frankly, that it does make a great deal of difference whether our grandfather was a baboon, a barracuda, or a bean stalk. Ancestry is important, and we would like to know more about this. But nothing conclusive is offered.

Several years ago this appeared in the press:

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Biologists are convinced they have identified the vital letters in the alphabet of genetics, and believe they are closer than they have ever been to creating life.

That was asserted in 1961, and still they are working on that theory.

Another theory is that man began on this earth from garbage that some prehistoric intelligence left on this earth in the dim and distant past. Your great, great grandfather crawled out of a garbage can according to this supposition! These theories merely reveal how indefinite all of this is.

Another idea appeared in a leading periodical:

After centuries of bitter argument over how life on earth began, an awe-inspiring answer is emerging out of shrewd and patient detective work in laboratories all over the world – an answer even more startling than Darwin's theory that all human beings evolved from a common ape-like ancestor. Scientists, probing to the very dawn of life, have traced mankind's beginning to an astonishing and peculiar scum of the primordial seas.

You can see that there is no real agreement today on just how man began.

### *Blur of Uncertainty*

Then there is a second factor that enters in. There is a blur of uncertainty, when the evolutionist is pinned down to specifics, as to the origins of the universe and of man. For instance, go back to the days of Herbert Spencer and you will find that he was somewhat indefinite when he gave what is probably the best definition of evolution:

An integration of matter and concomitant dissipation of motion during which the matter passes from an

indefinite, incoherent, homogeneity to a definite, coherent heterogeneity, and during which the retained motion undergoes a parallel transformation.

Whatever that means!

Featured in *Life* magazine several years ago was an article entitled “Two Billion Years of Evolution.” Their cover picture was a dinosaur, and the introduction read thus:

For perhaps one half of the long span of earth history the planet Earth lay barren and lifeless under its canopy of air. The waters of its oceans rose and fell with the pulse of the sun and moon and stirred with the respiration of the winds. But in them no living thing moved. Above them the great continental platforms loomed rocky and bleak, devoid of green as the landscapes of the airless moon. Then at some indeterminate point – some say two billion years ago, some say a billion and a half – the entity called life miraculously appeared on the surface of the deep. What form it took, what concatenation of physical circumstances brought it into being, science cannot specify – nor indeed reply with assurance to the question, “What is life?” All that can be said is that through some agency certain giant molecules acquired the ability to duplicate themselves.

Now, I read better fairy stories than this in Grimm’s. This is nothing but mere speculation. It has nothing to do with fact whatsoever.

The Tigris-Euphrates Valley has long been considered the cradle of human life. Now Dr. L. S. B. Leaky of Great Britain claims that Africa, not Eden, is the first cradle of humanity. He claims that he has found evidence of prehistoric Africans in the iron age while Asians were still limited to the use of stone, but he admits,

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“There are still many missing links in the chain of evidence.”

With this type of uncertainty, no intelligent person can accept these findings as being absolutely definite.

### *No Unanimous Acceptance*

Then there is a third factor: There is no unanimous acceptance of evolution even by scientists. Here is a quotation from Dr. G. A. Kerkut of the Department of Physiology and Biochemistry at the University of South Hampton in England. Though he himself is an evolutionist, in his book, *The Implications of Evolution*, he writes:

There is a theory which states that many living animals can be observed over the course of time to undergo changes so that new species are formed. This can be called the “Special Theory of Evolution” and can be demonstrated in certain cases by experiments. On the other hand there is the theory that all of the living forms in the world have arisen from a single source which itself came from an inorganic form. This theory can be called the “General Theory of Evolution” and the evidence that supports it is not sufficiently strong to allow us to consider it as anything more than a working hypothesis.

Dr. Heribert Nilsson, the Swedish botanist and also an evolutionist, says:

My attempts to demonstrate evolution by experiment carried on for more than forty years, have completely failed....At least I should hardly be accused of having started from a preconceived anti-evolutionary standpoint....It may be firmly maintained that it is not even possible to make a caricature out of paleobiological facts. The fossil material is now so complete that it has been possible to construct new classes, and the lack of

transitional series cannot be explained as due to the scarcity of material. Deficiencies are real. They will never be filled....The idea of an evolution rests on pure belief.

Dr. Klaus Mampell, a German biologist and evolutionist, says:

I don't see any more reason for seeing us (the human race) connected with apes than with canary birds or kangaroos.

Dr. Loren C. Eiseley, Office of the Provost, University of Pennsylvania, was asked a specific question and has given this answer:

We do not know any more about matter and how it is produced than we know about spiritual things. Therefore, I think it is unwise to say, in our present state of knowledge, that the one precludes the other. The universe seems to exist as a series of emergent levels, none of which is like the level below. That man and all the rest of life have evolved and changed is undeniable, but what lies beneath these exterior manifestations, we do not know. I wish I could answer your question, but to clothe my ignorance in big words would benefit neither yourself nor me.

That, I think, is an honest statement of an atheistic evolutionist, and one that befits a man in his position. Certainly a professor in a junior college would be considerably more dogmatic!

Biologist Edwin Conklin has made this statement:

The probability of life originating by accident is comparable to the probability of the unabridged dictionary originating from an explosion in a print shop.

That is, in my opinion, the best explanation of evolution that we have – like an explosion in a print shop.

### *“Assured Findings” of Science*

Someone asks, “What do you mean the ‘assured findings of science?’” That is probably one of the most overworked clichés and tired platitudes of our day. When they speak of the “assured findings of science” what science are they talking about? Professor Lyle made this observation:

In the year 1806, the French Institute enumerated not less than eighty geological theories which were hostile to the Scriptures; but not one of these theories is held today.

What science do they mean? Do they refer to that which goes back in history even to the time of Moses? At this particular point Dr. Albert Palmer of the Chicago Theological Seminary was greatly in error when (speaking of the Bible) he said:

Neither is it a treatise on science, for, although its authors used the best science of their day, that cannot compare with the science of today.

I would categorically deny that. Moses was not using the science of his day, for the science of his day was *mythology*. Go to the Babylonian account and compare it with Moses’ statements in the Word of God and you will find a vast difference between the two. The Babylonian account begins with chaos; the Bible begins with cosmos, perfection. In the Babylonian account the heavenly bodies are gods; in the Bible they are nothing but matter. The Babylonian account is polytheistic theology – many gods; the Bible is monotheistic truth – one God who creates and speaks. The Babylonian account is puerile and grotesque, while in the Bible are grand and solemn realities of the Creator God who is holy and a Savior. The Babylonian account is entirely out of harmony with science; the Bible account does not contradict science at all, as we shall see. When it is said that the Bible is scientific or unscientific, what science is meant?

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The Bible is not a book of science at all. When Moses wrote Genesis he did not write a scientific account, he wrote a religious history – which does not contradict science. Suppose he had written in the science of his day, in mythology. Suppose he had written in the science of the nineteenth century – that would have been the nebular hypothesis, which was exploded by the atom. Suppose Genesis had been written in the atomic science of the present hour – no generation would have understood it until now. God has given us merely a religious history, and for a very definite reason:

*Now all these things happened unto them for examples, and they are written for our admonition, upon whom the ends of the ages are come.* (1 Corinthians 10:11)

This is the reason it was given to us just as it is. It was not God's intention to give us a book of science.

### *Believing Scientists*

There are scientists today who are Christians. One such man is Wernher von Braun, the German-born rocket expert who heads up the Army's missile program in this country, and certainly a man who merits an audience. He sees in space exploration "evidences of God's immense plan." And he warns that unless man will accept divine guidance, he may be tempted to "exploit space with aggressive designs" and try to dominate earth by conquering the universe. This man is a Christian and he puts out the warning. He further states:

The first ventures into regions beyond the sensible atmosphere have produced new knowledge which points up the beauty and order of creation, which verifies the natural laws governing all life and which logically should enhance our reverence.

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Herman Goering was a different German altogether. H. F. Gerecke, the chaplain at Nuremberg Prison where the Nazis were placed, dealt with all of them before they died. He writes of his interview with Goering:

That evening around 8:30 I had a long session with Goering – during which he made sport of the story of creation, ridiculed divine inspiration of the Scriptures and made outright denial of certain Christian fundamentals.

In less than two hours he committed suicide. It is interesting to contrast the lives of these two Germans. One a blatant unbeliever who had sinned so grievously against his fellow men; the other an outstanding scientist, appreciating the order and plan of God's creation.

Another believer was Dr. Harry J. Deuel Jr., Dean of the University of Southern California's graduate school. When he was head of U.S.C.'s biochemistry department, he said:

Believe in God? Yes, I think a great engineering intelligence underlies the very foundations of science....Out of the chaos of elements from which our world was formed has come order and direction. Order so exact that it can be measured with minute precision and predicted to the split second. Everywhere is the reign of perfect law....No man, not even the most brilliant scientist, has penetrated life's ultimate mystery. But when he does, I'm sure he will stand face to face with God.

Many scientists are Christians even today.

## Theories of Theology

Now I want to turn to the other extreme, to this group of young theologians who think that they have devised some clever explanations of the first chapter of Genesis whereby they can reconcile modern science with the Genesis account. They seem to know exactly how God did it. And many of them, unfortunately, are in our Christian colleges. Genesis 1 for them is a sacred cow; they do not want anybody dealing with it but themselves, because they feel that they alone can speak with authority on the subject.

Many of these men and women are actually theistic evolutionists. That is, they feel that God created the spirit and soul of man, but the body of man – the physical part of man – evolved. They accept the viewpoint that God created the amoeba that started the whole thing, and then left it to development. Most of them will take the six days of so-called creation in the Genesis record and apply them to this theory. May I say to you that this is probably the most inconsistent theory of them all. I personally believe that it is incongruous and incompatible with the Bible and also with science. It is the least logical of all the theories, and if you want to know what one scientist says about it, read what Kirtly Mather says in *Science Ponders Religion*:

When a theologian accepts evolution as the process used by the creator, he must be willing to go all the way with it. Not only is it an orderly process, it is a continuing one. The golden age for man – if any – is in the future, not in the past....Moreover, the creative process of evolution is not to be interrupted by any supernatural intervention. The evolution of the first living cells from previously existing non-living materials may represent a quantum-jump rather than an infinitesimal step along the path of progress, but it is an entirely natural development.

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So you see, the theistic evolutionist is probably the most unrealistic of all.

The category in which most of them find themselves is known as “progressive creationism.” This means a development from vacancy, and they take Genesis 1:2 “the earth was without form, and void” to support their theory. Void does mean vacancy – God started with nothing, from which emerged what we have today. This theory holds that Genesis 1:1, 2 is not referring to ruin and destruction, but to vacancy awaiting and forming. And that God from time to time, when vertical progress in living organisms was called for, created anew. In other words, the creative process was spread over long periods of time. It interprets the creation days as periods, and holds that Adam and Eve were two successful mutations and were part of a race of anthropoid-like men who first crossed the border of humanity. To these He gave a soul and they became the ancestors of the human race. This, again, is totally inconsistent with what the Word of God says.

## **Induction**

With these two extreme viewpoints, what can a Christian believe about the first chapter of Genesis? Let us now make an induction and a deduction.

The record of creation is very brief. At best there is one chapter, and there are 1195 chapters in the Bible. Evidently God did not intend to give us very much information. I personally believe that only one verse deals with creation – Genesis 1:1 – and there are 31,173 verses in the Bible. Evidently God is not emphasizing creation. He has something else in mind altogether. And of course the reason there has been so much controversy over the creation account is that God has been so brief.

A whimsical story is told by Paul Bellamy, editor of the *Cleveland Plain Dealer* years ago. He tells of making the rounds one night of the reporters' desks and noticing that one of his men was grinding out a "tape worm" – that is, making a long story out of a relatively unimportant event. He stopped and looked at it. He said, "Cut it down! After all, the story of creation was told in Genesis in 282 words." This reporter shot right back with, "Yes, and I've always thought we could have been saved a lot of arguments later if someone had just written another couple hundred."

He was right, it would have saved a lot of arguments; but God did not add those 200 words for a very definite reason. I believe we can see that reason if we look very carefully.

Chapters 1 through 11 of Genesis cover probably 2,000 years *plus*. I believe that *plus* could be 2,000,000 years or 2,000,000,000 years or 2,000,000,000,000 years. Somebody says, "You don't really think it goes back that far!" Why not? We have a God of eternity. He has eternity behind Him, He has eternity ahead of Him, so He is not crowded by time. You could put in there all the years you need.

However, from Genesis 12 through the remainder of the Old Testament only 2,000 years are covered. Where is God placing the emphasis? Why, the Bible is the story of Abraham and his descendants! He devotes ten chapters to the man Abraham; He devotes one verse to creation. Evidently God thought more of Abraham than He did of His entire creation.

Look again at something. The four Gospels in the New Testament are contained in 89 chapters. Of these, only four chapters deal with the first 30 years of the life of our Lord; 85 chapters deal with the last three years; 27 chapters deal with the last eight days of His life on earth. Where is God putting the emphasis? He puts it upon the death and resurrection of Christ, of course.

## Deduction

Recognizing that this is God's method, we see that God was not stressing the creation in the Genesis record, but was hurrying in these first few chapters to get to His story – and His story happened to be Abraham, not creation.

Today the theologian and the humble Bible believer need to realize that God has told us practically nothing about creation. The method of creation is entirely omitted from the Word of God. There is here an area of silence, and neither science nor theology can speak – though for years both have been trying to fill in this vacuum and have clashed repeatedly in their attempts. No one can be dogmatic where there is so much ignorance. We all need to go back to what Paul said in his letter to the Romans:

*For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead....*

(Romans 1:20)

That is all you will ever find out about creation. God has revealed only two things: His eternal power and His Godhead. His person and His power are all that He wants to tell you and me in the creation account. And, by the way, that is all He tells us today in the universe. He says no more. We are cast upon God; we are thrown back upon the Bible. Listen to these majestic words:

*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)

He is saying that God did not tell us for the reason that we would not understand it. I do not think that man today could understand how God created this universe. Man does not know enough yet, and certainly he did not at the beginning.

Therefore God says that it is by *faith* that we understand that the worlds were framed by the Word of God, so that the things you see today were made out of things that do not appear. God *spoke* them into existence. For years the theory was held that matter was eternal. The atomic blast revealed that matter can be destroyed. God spoke and it came into existence. Today even man can speak it out of existence. God expects us to walk by faith.

Creation stares us in the face and is shouting to us – the stones are crying out, the stars are singing together, and they all are saying, “He made us! He made us! He made us!” Man in this day, having learned so much, ought to be brought closer to God.

A very brilliant young scientist with the Texas Instrument Company in Richardson, Texas, took me through a place where experiments are being conducted. I want to tell you, friends, there are tremendous things coming up in the next few years. He showed me a little piece of cardboard called the “memory card.” It is a transistor that can be put in a rocket to guide it for the next ten years. He showed me other amazing things. This keen young experimenter is a Christian, and he said to me, “Most of the men here are atheists. I cannot understand why in this day when we see so much of intelligence in creation that men are not brought to a belief in a living, personal God.” They are not, my beloved. Do you know why? Because they must come to God by faith. Creation and salvation must be accepted by faith. Creation deals with matter and space, and it is out there, my friend – you cannot deny it. Salvation is a matter of history, and you cannot deny that. But if you accept either one of them, or both of them, you will have to do it by faith. By *faith* we understand.

Speaking of salvation, Isaiah wrote, “Who hath believed our report? And to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed?” (Isaiah 53:1). God keeps you at arm’s length if you try to rush Him. You

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cannot crash His door. And the Lord Jesus says, “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me” (John 14:6). Someone says, “That’s too dogmatic.” Sure it’s dogmatic. Every sign on the highway is dogmatic. Driving from Memphis up through those beautiful Ozarks, over a highway that was unfamiliar to me, I came to a sign that read, “15 miles to such-and-such town” – the most dogmatic statement in the world. But I rejoiced in it because I knew I was on the right road. Aren’t you glad that He said, “I am the way, the truth and the life; no man cometh unto the Father, but by me”? If you are in doubt, why not get on that way and see if it is the right way? You will have to step out by faith.

You can not put one little star in motion,  
You can not shape one single forest leaf,  
Nor fling a mountain up, nor sink an ocean,  
Presumptuous pigmy, large with unbelief!

You can not bring one dawn of regal splendor,  
Nor bid the day to shadowy twilight fall,  
Nor send the pale moon forth with radiance tender,  
And dare you doubt the One who has done all?

– Ella Wheeler Wilcox