

# Where Do We Come From?

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Roots: A Study of Genesis 1-11 Series

Genesis 1

Many of you who are at least in your late 30's will remember the television mini-series called "Roots" that was just a blockbuster hit back in the late 1970's. It was a story of how an American author named Alex Haley, who also insisted in the writing of the autobiography of Malcolm X, traced his ancestry back through seven generations to Africa. The book woke up an interest in genealogy, particularly among African-Americans. Alex Haley used to hear stories when he was a child from his maternal grandmother about the African. He was the great-great-great-great grandfather and he was an African named Kunta Kinte. He was brought to America on a slave ship.

Well, years later in 1965 Alex Haley stumbled upon the names of his maternal great grandparents while he was going through some post-Civil War records at the National Archives in Washington. And he spent the next eleven years looking into various stories that had been handed down in his family. His journey finally took him to an African village on the River Gambia, where he met this African oral historian who traced the genealogies of various people. Finally he heard this oral historian, as he was reciting all of these different ancestors who begat another ancestor who begat another ancestor, finally he heard the name Kunta Kinte. He had found the African who was put into slavery and dragged over from Africa and sold. He had found his roots.

One of the ultimate questions in life is where do we come from? When we meet a person, a lot of our initial questions have to do with where you come from, to figure out who the person is. If you are a counselor, a therapist, a psychologist, you would spend a lot of time initially investigating a person's past so you could figure out who they are now. You would ask lots of questions about family background and relationships and their parents' relationships and any childhood trauma that was suffered.

We feel like we know something about a person when we find out that one of their parents died when they were very young. Or if you were a child of divorce or the child of an alcoholic – that may tell us something about who you are. Most of us feel like it makes a tremendous difference if you were raised in a healthy, two-parent home, or if by way of contrast, you bounced around from one foster family to another and you lived with seven different families growing up.

Counselors will often probe people's backgrounds as do physicians. If you are being checked out by a physician, you normally have to fill out a lengthy, 2-3 page, intake form, which asks about not only your own health background, but heredity – the health of your parents, grandparents and siblings. Did they have heart problems? Does cancer run in your family or high blood pressure? Or asthma or allergies?

Even in casual conversations we are always asking background questions, aren't we? So, what high school did you go to? Did you grow up around here? What college did you go to? What city are you from?

Before you are hired your employers ask to know about your academic and employment history. Before you get car insurance, the insurance company will want to know about your driving record. The universal feeling that we all have is that if I know where a person comes from, if I know something about his origin or her origin, then I know something about him or her.

There is a best selling series from National Geographic which attempts to portray the origin of the human race. There is a book out now called *In the Footsteps of Eve* which is propounding a new theory of the origin of the human race, placing it in South Africa rather than East Africa. People have been offering origins theories for several millennia. We are fascinated by recent discoveries of the first upright human being. The press always covers a new discovery of some fossil remain with breathless excitement. Paleontologists have been working away for four years at this dig and they finally found this skeletal remain of our first ancestor.

If you read biographies like I do, you hear of folks who made great contributions to humanity or who were great criminals. All of the biographies have a roots philosophy to them. They try to trace back the influencing factors in a person's life – back to their origins, back to their childhoods, in traumas suffered in adolescence, their early love life. It makes a difference to us what background someone is from.

A few months ago I mentioned that Marlene and I went to Italy for our 25<sup>th</sup> wedding anniversary. We visited the city of Florence while we were there. I was standing outside the museum that houses Michelangelo's famous statue of David, the museum is called Galleria

Academia. Anyway, while we were standing there waiting in line to get into the museum, there was a woman who was talking with her daughter standing in line right next to us. She had a very, very heavy New York accent.

So I said to her, “You’re from New York?”

She said, “How did you know?”

I said, “I don’t know, I just thought you might be.” I asked her where she was from. It turned out she was from a place not too far from where I grew up. We had something in common. Then I said to her, “Is this your only stop in Italy or are you going to other cities?”

She said, “No, we spent two days in Rome. That St. Paul’s is really something.”

So I said, “You mean St. Peter’s?”

She said, “No, St. Paul’s?”

So I said, “St. Paul’s in London?” Because there is a very famous cathedral in London named St. Paul’s, but no such place in Rome.

She said, “No, St. Paul’s in Rome.”

So I turned to my wife, Marlene, and asked, “Gee, honey, I don’t think we got to see St. Paul’s.”

The woman said, “You know, where the Pope lives.”

So I said, “You mean the Vatican? St. Peter’s?”

She said, “Yes...St. Paul’s.”

I said, “OK...St. Paul’s.”

She said, “That St. Paul’s is really something. I couldn’t believe all the nuns there.” [There tend to be a lot of nuns in places like the Vatican.] She said, “It just reminded me of the Sound of Music.” Then she turned to her daughter who was 21 and waved her hand dismissingly at her daughter and said, “But she doesn’t know from that.”

Well, we walked into the museum. Our New York friend went in another direction. We ended up being in the same room with Michelangelo’s massive statue of David. One of the grand works of Renaissance art. We were on one side of the room, but I heard my New York friend about 50 feet away on the other side of the room very loudly make an incredibly lewd comment about the statue of David, which I can’t repeat here because this is a church. But I found it extremely funny.

I thought to myself, “This person needs to be bottled. She is the proto-typical New Yorker. She is a caricature of New York.” It was just wonderful.

But if you are interested in people you will find it fascinating learning about people’s backgrounds, hearing their stories. It absolutely makes a difference where someone comes from.

Now, I want to start a new series from the book of Genesis. We are going to be looking at Genesis 1-11 over the next few months. It is a series I have called “Roots.” We are going to look at how the world began and what our first parents were like and what they went through. It is very obviously the case that it makes a difference as we trace back our roots and our family background, if we are derived from the animal kingdom, if we are merely mammals with opposable thumbs and larger brains. We are simply products of time and chance, a cosmic accident that just as easily may not have existed. Or, if instead, you believe that you were in the thought of almighty God from all eternity. It absolutely makes a difference where you think you came from and where you think other people came from.

Many of our contemporary problems in terms of a sense of boredom in life, a loss of meaning, a loss of purpose, a feeling like nothing in life makes sense, it all springs back to our loss of our roots. Millions of Americans feel absolutely rootless.

And so in this first message from the book of Genesis, we are going to explore our origins. We are going to look at the Christian doctrine of creation. I have called today’s message, “Where Do We Come From?” Let’s pray.

The Bible opens with these words: *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* These are some of the most important words ever written. If you wanted to really offer help to people, talk to someone who is lost or confused about life, someone who is making a mess of everything – to the person whose life is totally spinning out of control, I don't think you could do a lot better than to try to communicate the truth that is found in the opening words of Genesis. They are seven words in the Hebrew. They are packed full of meaning. *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

The first subject of the Bible is God. God created the heavens and the earth. The main subject of the Bible is God. You want to know what the Bible is about? It is the story of God and his dealing with men and women. From the opening sentence, the Bible tells us that God is the theme of life. We find God at the beginning of the Bible. We find God at the end of the Bible. And at every point along the way, between the beginning and the end, there is God. In all the twists and turns of people's lives, in all the various journeys of God's people, there is God dealing with people, blessing people, judging people, answering people's prayers, hearing about their little cares and anxieties.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* reminds us of the basic truth that God is the theme of life. He is the starting point of all good thinking. He is the lens through which you look at life.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* tells us that everything in this universe must be ultimately related to God – your marriage, your child, your trials, your difficulties, your

suffering, your losses, your success, your joy, your sorrow, your family, your dating, your sex life, your job.

When you realize that everything comes from God, that he is the theme of life, then you recognize that in all of life basically what you are doing is wrestling with God. You think you are wrestling with another person, but you are really wrestling with God. You think you are wrestling with your health, but you are really wrestling with God. You think you are wrestling with a decision, a job choice, a choice of a major, but ultimately you are always grappling with God.

God is the theme of the Bible. God is the theme of life. Is God the theme of your life? Are you clear enough to see that all of the various presses that you experience are to be seen in terms of their relationship to God? *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.*

We find not only is God the theme of life, but goodness is the foundation of life. Seven times in this opening chapter of the Bible, Genesis 1, we read the words, “*God saw that it was good.*” Beginning in verse 4: *God saw that the light was good and he separated the light from the darkness.* And God separated the water and the land in verse 9. We read, *And God saw that it was good.* And after God created the vegetation, the plants on earth, it says in v. 12, *God saw that it was good.* And after God creates the sun and the moon in v. 18, we read, *And God saw that it was good.* And similarly with the creation of life in the seas, the fish, and the birds in the air, God saw that it was good. And after all is done we read in v. 31, *God saw all that he had made and it was very good.*



Because God is the originator of life, at the foundation of the screwed up world we live in, at the foundation, is goodness and love and justice and peace. If you drill down to the core of this universe, what you will find is not the incredible pain that we cause to each other, or our sin or stupidity – the way we mess up our lives by getting involved in various addictive behaviors. We are not going to find at the heart of the universe family fights or substance abuse or arguments or abandoned children. At the origin of the universe, at the core, we find goodness, not badness.

Our experience of the world might be one of wrestling with an addiction. Or constantly fighting with an ex-spouse, or someone's unfair judgment against us, or job pressures, or wrestling with a failed test or a broken bone, or making a sports team or not making a sports team – sitting on a bench or being cut – but all this crazy stuff we go through, all of our busyness, our activity, our slanted comings and goings, fixing up our houses and shopping for one more little antique to put in some corner of our bathrooms, all of our competitions and worrying about our weight – all of this stuff is at the surface. But if you drove down to the core, to the foundation, Genesis 1 says that the foundation of life is goodness. God saw that it was good. It was good. It was good. It was good.

And then when he is all done, he saw that it was very good. The foundation of the world is not craziness, not randomness, not meaninglessness. It is goodness and love and justice and peace because the universe is built on God. And God's Word.

See, this Genesis account is totally different from other theories of origins that were offered in the ancient near East. One of the most popular Near-Eastern stories was a Babylonian

myth written sometime in the second millennium BC. It was called Enuma Elish. This story said that God fashioned out of the dead body of one of his defeated enemies the universe. So the stuff from which everything came was the dead body of God's defeated enemies. Therefore, when life goes bad, we say, "Well, it is just expressing its fundamental nature. The dead enemy's stuff is bubbling up to the surface."

See, it makes a difference what you think is at the core. If modern theories of origin are true, that the universe is simply a product of accident, of chance, no designer, no God - just sort of happened - it could just as easily not have happened. We could just as easily not have had a sun in this part of the galaxy and this piece of rock that we call earth spinning around it. Well, if the modern theory of origin is true, then when life seems crazy and out of control, it is just expressing its fundamental nature. But, of course, traced back to its roots, it is all an accident anyway. So when I experience meaninglessness, when nothing makes sense, when I scratch my head and ask, "Why?" it is because there are no answers. Life is just expressing its fundamental nature of being product of time and chance.

But then God speaks. He speaks the words that we find in the Bible, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*. And each time he creates something else, it says, *God saw that it was good*. He saw it was good. He saw it was good. He saw it was good. He saw it was good. And at the end he saw it was very good.

And so when life goes badly or something is crazy we say the universe is not now expressing its fundamental nature. There is something alien here. There is something out of sync with our roots. There is corruption. There is wickedness that we find in the government, in

business, in our homes, this corruption is an alien force. It is like a virus that has invaded a healthy body.

This truth that at the core there is goodness is fundamental of your understanding of other people and your understanding of yourself. To say below my shame and below my stupid mistakes and below my rebellion and my sin there is an I, a person, a being, that was made good. There is this truth found in the Bible that you are not the same as your sin. Because goodness is at the foundation of the universe, when we look at people we see a pearl that is lying in a mud puddle.

Now a lie will often enter your mind and discourage you in your fight against your bad habits and in your fight against your sin. This lie will come in: “why bother fighting? You are just that way. You are just a bad person. You are promiscuous. You are just an angry individual or a depressed individual or a homosexual. You are this thing – this mud.”

You say, “No. There is a pearl in the middle of the mud puddle, a pearl that is me that is worth saving. A pearl that is not the same as my sin.” When people separate from the creator, when they turn their backs on the Creator, you separate yourself from believing that there is goodness in there. When you start believing that you really were made by God, you were. When you say, “God, I came from your hand. Oh, this pearl might have fallen in a mud puddle, but I came from your hand,” then I can begin to believe in the biblical doctrine of salvation. I begin to understand why God would reach into the mud puddle of my life and in the mud puddles of this world and through his son, Jesus, find the pearl and wash you off by the blood of his son and the outpouring of his Spirit.

To say goodness is at the foundation of life is revolutionary because we live in a time that is so cynical about life and so pessimistic about the future.

*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.* What this means, in part, is that everything in the universe has a beginning. By the heavens and the earth, the ancient Hebrews were using an expression to refer to the totality of existence, what we might call the cosmos. Unlike Carl Sagan, who passed away a few years ago and was a popularizer of astronomy, who said, “The universe is all there ever was or is or ever will be,” – he believed in an eternal universe, there have been theories of origin, of roots, that suggested that matter was eternal, that the universe had no beginning point, but most science today is in agreement with Genesis that the universe had a beginning point.

Albert Einstein suggested the universe had a beginning point when he came up with his general theory of relativity at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. In Einstein’s theory of relativity, he suggested that the universe was simultaneously expanding and also was decelerating. It was slowing down. The only phenomena in which things both expand outward and also slow down over time is an explosion. And so Einstein postulated that the universe was the aftermath of an explosion that happened at a certain point in time.

Well, today we learn in high school what is called the “Big Bang.” An astronomer named William Hubbel, for whom the space telescope was named, proved that the galaxies are expanding away from one another in a manner exactly predicted by Einstein.

On at least a dozen occasions over the last twenty years, scientists, through various experiments, have offered evidence that the universe does have a beginning point. That all that exists started at a certain point in time. The Bible says it all began by the sovereign free decision of God to speak: *Let there be light*. Before God spoke the first words of creation, the only being that existed was the Triune God.

And the biblical picture of existence is that God created everything out of nothing. Theologians use the phrase “creation ex nihilo” – creation out of nothing. God didn’t create the universe out of stuff from himself, like Eastern religion claims, that creation just oozes out of God through some kind of cosmic emanation. There is a growing idea in a lot of America today that somehow we are part of God. This has been popularized by the New Age, by people like Shirley McClaine, who run around saying things like, “I am God and you are God. The only thing is we don’t realize it.”

The Bible teaches something totally different than that. The Bible doesn’t say you were made out of the stuff of God. Or that the world around us is part of the stuff of God. That we can look into a tree and find the stuff that God is made out of. Or that we can look into the eyes of a dog or a rock and we say, “There is a piece of God.”

The Bible says that all that exists was made by a separate distinct Triune being named God, who created everything out of nothing. This is hard for us to wrap our minds around because everything we make starts with other stuff. If you paint a painting, it begins by taking paint that exists and a brush that exists and applying the paint to a canvas that exists. If you build a house, it begins with taking boards that exist and nails that exist and nailing

those boards together. Everything we make comes out of stuff. But God created out of nothing. No original stuff. Not a part of him. Not a part of any primordial matter. Nothing.

So what does all of this mean for me and you? What it means is that because God created everything out of nothing, all of life is on loan from God. I am not eternal. The stuff I am made of is not eternal. You are not eternal. The stuff you are made of is not eternal. What I call my kids, my wife, my job, my health, my friends, my...my...my...my vision, my hearing – it is all on loan. It was all made by an act of free will by God.

Since God made everything, there is no such thing as a self-made man or a self-made woman. We just work with what God has given us. We just shape the stuff that we have. We build on it. We strive. We study. We press in. But none of it is ours. It all came from his hand.

And one day God is going to ask for it all back. He is going to call in the loan. We don't like when God asks back from us what belongs to him. But because he made it out of nothing, no one can say to God, why have you taken what is mine? How could you steal from me my one possession? My one source of happiness? My one joy? My one love? My one precious person?

Creation out of nothing means, friends, that every atom in the universe, every proton on light, every piece of genetic material that makes up your body, every breath, every firing of

the synapses in your brain, along side of your career, your house, your car, your stereo, your looks, your parents, your kids – it is all on loan from God.

Is that the way you think about life? That all I have, all I experience, all of my relationships, it is just all on loan. It is all borrowed from God, who made all of this stuff out of nothing? Do you say that life is like a car that I am borrowing from a friend? It really is. Life is like a car that you borrow from a friend. Initially, you are really grateful. You say, “Thanks, friend, I really needed your car to get around.” One day the friend comes and says, “Well, I have come to take my car back.” Would anyone say, “How dare you come and take your car back. How could you be so cruel? Who are you to take the car that I need to get to work? How could you be so insensitive to take back what was helping my life work out so well? You have no right to take my car?”

I hope no one would say that about a loaned vehicle. You would probably say, “Friend, thank you for your kindness. I can’t believe you were so generous as to give me a car for so long.” That’s where Job started in the book of Job. I realize that everything is on loan from God. *The Lord gives and the Lord takes away. Blessed be the name of the Lord.*

Again I ask you, how many of you live life with this idea that all that you have is on loan from God? And that one day or in a series of days along the way, everything is going to be taken back by life’s creator and owner, God. When you grieve loss over a job, or grieve loss over your health, or grieve loss over your declining vision or declining hearing, or grieve loss over a precious one, a relative, a mate, a friend that has been taken home, while you grieve, have you ever been able to say, “God, thank you that I had my dad, my mom, my mate, my

child, for this long. Thank you God, that you loaned me this precious one. Thank you God, for the time I had at this job or the time I had my vision.”

Creation out of nothing means that it is all on loan. We have nothing that we own. And bit by bit, God will take it back.

There is something else that as we start this series that may be on your mind. This account of creation is not in conflict with the findings of science. I think that there are quite a few people who find it very difficult to consider the claims of Jesus or what Christians are saying about life, about salvation, about what we need as human beings, because they think that to become a Christian you have to believe that the world was created in seven-24 hour-days and that the universe is only 6000 years old, maybe at most 10,000 years old. And since they can't believe that, they write off Christianity.

I want you to hear this. Faith does not mean trying to believe something that you know isn't true. Faith means digging until you find the truth and then believing that. It is not do you believe in a 10,000 year old earth that is in conflict with all of the findings of science everywhere. Faith comes to people who don't give up because they really want something more than they want the truth. It is I want the truth. I am going to keep digging about life and digging into the evidence until I discover what's true.

Sometimes science and scripture do conflict. Sometimes they do. They conflict when someone makes an idol out of science – what I call scientism, which is really quite popular today. It is the idea that science should be looked to to answer every single question of



ultimate concern to us. Scientism – the exaltation of science to places and arenas where science is simply not competent to speak.

Let me give you an illustration. Scientists, no matter how brilliant they are and where they got their PhD from – whether MIT or Harvard or Cal Tech – scientists, contrary to media portrayal, are not competent to answer every one of life’s questions. I realize that when people have a lab coat on and they have a major degree next to their name it appears that they ought to be competent to speak about anything. But scientific training does not train you to deal with all questions in life. Mainly, it trains you to deal with some of the “how” questions. How something works. What are the mechanisms involved in making it work? But nothing in science will help you to answer “why” questions, values questions, purpose questions, meaning questions.

Let me give you a concrete illustration. You are driving along the road and in front of you a car stops suddenly. Science can explain to you how the forces of a driver’s foot applied to the brake pedal results in the car’s energy being dissipated by friction and how friction works. Science can lay out equations regarding the conservation of momentum and equations relating to friction. What it can’t ever tell you, however, is why the driver in front of you stopped. Was she feeling ill? Did she miss her turn? Did she see a dog run out in front of her? Was there a red light? They can tell you how the car stopped. They just can’t tell you why. They can’t answer ultimate “why” questions.

And so it is absurd when society turns to scientists to answer questions of values. Scientists could explain to you how to clone genetic material. What they can’t tell you, what their

training does not equip them to answer is whether we should engage in cloning. Scientists can tell you how to perform an abortion. Or how to euthanize a dying patient. What a scientist can never answer, based on science alone, is whether we should engage in abortions or euthanasia.

And so we parade these doctors before some congressional hearing or we hear what doctors think about these values questions and we think that they know more by way of their medical school training. They know no more than a brick-layer would know or a kindergarten teacher or a mail clerk. It is outside their range of expertise.

We turn to the Bible for values answers – what’s right and what’s wrong. We turn to the Bible, we turn to God, for purpose answers. Why is life this way? Whether we should engage in this act or that? Much of the conflict between science and faith is the result of science overstepping its bounds. Moving away from explaining mechanism to pretending expertise where it has no expertise.

Now the other side of scientism is what I would call irrationalism. You see it in New Age spirituality. There is a growing sense of irrationalism in corporate offices. Someone hangs a crystal in their office saying that it makes them a more productive worker and the boss shrugs his shoulders and says, “I don’t know. Maybe it works.” I don’t know if scientifically you can prove whether the moon affects your moods, but hey...if it works for you.

I am concerned when I meet conservative Christians who are engaged in irrationalism. People who read Genesis in a certain fashion and say, “Well, I don’t care how much

scientific evidence you pile up, I won't listen to it." There is no verse in the Bible that you can point to that requires you to believe in a 6000 year-old earth or that people were walking around with dinosaurs. And you don't have any more orthodox credentials than people who believe the universe was 15 billion years old.

This is an area, in my humble opinion, that the Bible leaves open and that it is appropriate for Christians to listen to scientific claims. What do the fossil records say? How can we make sense of the fact that we are receiving light here on earth from stars that are 10 billion light years away? If it takes 10 billion years for light to reach us, how can the universe be only 6000 years old?

Now please don't email me with supposed explanations of these kinds of things. I have read the arguments back and forth. All I am saying is that some of the conflict in the science verses faith realm come from two extreme positions – one that I would label scientism, the encroachment of science into areas that it simply has no competence to speak and irrationalism – the refusal on the part of people of faith to even really evaluate or hear scientific evidence where science can speak.

Well does science and faith come together at any given point? Is there ever an overlap? Or are they just in two separate realms?

I believe there is a huge overlap. And one of the places of overlap is in the Genesis account of creation. Genesis tells us that in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

And you see, throughout the chapter, God ordering everything- the land and the sea, the atmosphere and the earth. Everything is designed by God.

Now, what does science say about the notion that the universe has been intelligently designed? Do we find any evidence out there of intelligent design? Does science support the notion of design in creation or does it undermine it and point to randomness, to accident, to chance, to simply unguided evolutionary theory?

Listen to me. From a perspective of science, and I speak as a Christian pastor now, you can not mathematically prove the existence of God or an intelligent designer. You cannot mathematically prove it. It is not  $2+2=4$ . What we can do from the perspective of science is say that looking at the universe the way it is, it is infinitely more probable than not that the universe was designed by an intelligent designer that we Christians would call God.

Let me give you a simple analogy and then I will give you a few scientific facts. The year is 2020. America has launched its first manned mission to Mars. Our landing craft lands on the surface of the planet Mars and ten men and women get off the landing craft. Using a hover craft, they hover along the surface of Mars for about twenty miles picking up Mars rocks, until they come upon the most startling discovery – an enormous biosphere. It is this 20-square mile domed structure in which everything inside is perfectly adjusted for life to exist. They enter through a door. In the biosphere they find that the temperature inside is set at 70°. The humidity is 50%. It has this incredible oxygen recycling system. There is a system set up for the production of food. There is an energy gathering system. This dome structure appears to be a fully functioning biosphere.

Now, what conclusion do you think those ten men and women entering that biosphere would draw? Would they say, “This is incredible”? Through volcanic eruptions various metals and compounds bound themselves through chance combinations; to separate themselves out in just the right proportions; and they formed this biosphere by accident.

Or would the ten men and women entering the biosphere looking around at it, being able to breathe oxygen and drink water, unanimously conclude that this whole biosphere was designed by some intelligent designer or designers. They almost certainly would conclude that someone has been here before. Someone with great intelligence made this.

We live on not a 20-square mile, but on a several hundred million square mile biosphere – Planet Earth. That finds itself revolving around the sun every year and rotating on its axis every 24 hours. If a mission from another planet landed here, what would they think, if they weren’t trained to think in terms of randomness and chance? But people just came down here from Outer Space would they say, “This just happened”?

For the last 20 or so years, many scientists have written, now it is in the hundreds of scientific papers, the scientific evidence for the intelligent design of the universe. Let me give you a couple of facts of intelligent design or what scientists are calling the fine tuning of the universe. If you have taken physics and you remember anything from it, there is something in Newton’s Laws called the gravitational constant. It is expressed by a big  $G$  – a gravitational constant. It is basically a number that determines the force of gravity in any

given circumstance. For those of you who are taking physics, you remember the formula for  $\text{Force} = G \times M_1 m_2 \text{ over } R^2$ . There is this thing called  $G$  – the gravitational constant.

Now, according to our best scientists, gravity has to be fine-tuned to one part in ten to the 40<sup>th</sup> power in order for life to exist. Let me explain what all this means. Let's say we had a radio dial that stretched from here to the moon. And you broke up that dial into ten to the 40<sup>th</sup> power parts – a little tick mark along the way – that is 10,000 billion billion billion billion evenly spaced tick marks. What scientists are saying is that gravity has to be fine tuned to just one of those little tick marks out of the 10,000 billion, billion, billion, billion tick marks. So that while you are rolling the dial along, it is not the next one next to it, it has to be just this exact one, otherwise life could not exist.

Could gravity have been determined just by accident? Or is it more likely that someone was adjusting the radio dial to the exact tick mark?

Let me give you one other evidence for design. There are literally hundreds of these facts that have been written in scientific papers over the last 20 years. If the initial explosion of the big bang had differed in strength by as little as one part in ten to the 60<sup>th</sup> power, scientists say that the universe would have either collapsed back in on itself, or expanded to rapidly for stars to form. If the initial explosion of the big bang had differed in strength by as little as one part in 10 to the 60<sup>th</sup>, there would be no stars, no universe.

One scientist said, “You know what 10 to the 60<sup>th</sup> power is? It could be compared to firing a bullet at a one inch target at the other side of the universe twenty billion light years away and hitting the target.”

I mean some of the evidence for design is so overwhelming. One scientist said it would be like covering the state of Texas with silver dollars five feet deep and marking just one of those silver dollars with a red dot and then taking a blindfolded person and saying to them, “Walk the length and breadth of Texas. Put your hand down and just by chance find the one silver dollar marked with the red dot.” You would have a greater chance of finding that silver dollar with the red dot than of chemicals just arranging themselves by accident into an amino acid chain.

See, all of the different things that it takes to make life necessary indicates to us and proves beyond a reasonable doubt that the universe is finely tuned so that water can exist, so that carbon of which we are made can exist. Let me give you one more word picture, so that you get the idea. Let’s say we are back 100 years ago and you were tried for military treason and faced a firing squad. There were 1000 sharp shooters with guns that were perfect. And these 1000 sharp shooters all aimed at your heart. You are blindfolded and have said your last words. You heard the drummer drumming and then the Captain of the Guard yells out, “Ready, Aim, Fire.” 1000 guns go off at once. And beyond all surprises you are still alive. What should you think?

Well you could think, “What a lucky accident. What an amazing quirky bit of chance.” No, what you would think is these 1000 people conspired together to deliberately miss you.

There was a design to keep you alive. When too many things fall in line and you have piled all these factors up one upon another, you say, “There is some intelligent design to keep my life alive.”

Let me ask you a question. Do you live this way? Are you deeply rooted enough in the truth that a brilliantly wise God created and designed the heavens and the earth and you. So that you know that you are no accident? Do you live with a constant sense that your life has been designed by brilliant God?

Many people in America today don’t have a view of the creator and live without a sense of design. They don’t believe in an ultimate direction of life. They don’t feel there is any purpose or meaning. Is it any wonder that it is that America, being the wealthiest country in the history of humanity, also has a country that experiences the highest rates of depression in world history. Is it any wonder that millions of people around the world end their lives by deliberate suicide because they have not come to believe in intelligent design? That life in this universe is going somewhere? That there is some purpose?

Let me make one last point. It says, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth and the earth was without form and void and darkness was over the face of the deep and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.* What we see throughout the chapter is God taking the chaos and bringing order. He imposes order by separating the light and the dark and the land and the seas. All is chaos and then the Spirit of God comes and he brings order.



Creation teaches us that we are designed. The doctrine of creation teaches us that everything we have and everything we are is on loan to us by God. The doctrine of creation teaches us that goodness is at the foundation of the world and that God is the one with whom we have to do. The doctrine of the creation teaches us that the lordship of Christ brings order to our world.

Do you find your life chaotic? Do you feel like there is no order anywhere in your life? Your car is a mess. It requires several snow shovels to dig out from under the McDonald's wrappers and old coffee cups and gas station receipts, newspapers and dog hair. Is your life chaotic? Are your drawers stuffed with junk and papers and dried up pens and wadded up rubber bands and loose staples and check stubs from 1987 and old Sohio credit cards? Are your clothes closets stuffed with clothes that you haven't worn for a decade and you will never wear again?

Do you find chaos in your relationships? Where you have a number of relationships where things are kind of strained between you and your brother, you and your mother, you and your sister-in-law? Do you need a mathematician to balance your check-book because it has not been balanced for a decade? Is there chaos in your eating habits? Everything in your life is topsy-turvy and chaotic.

Genesis 1 is teaching that the cure for the disordered chaotic life is not just attending another seminar in bringing order to your world. The cure for a disordered life is not just learning how to put a budget together. That you just don't need a good diet or exercise program or a giant vacuum to vacuum out your car and vacuum out your home – all of these

would be useful. But Genesis 1 says that you need more than time management. Genesis 1 says that chaos in your outer world is a symptom of chaos in your inner world. Very simply, the disorder that you find in your life is the result of having a heart that is disordered. And no amount of externally imposed discipline will cure a disordered heart. The only cure for a disordered heart is bringing yourself under the Lordship of Jesus Christ and the mastery of the Holy Spirit.

You need to trade your out of control life in. You need to confess, “Lord God, my life is out of control. Things are chaotic.”

“I am a single woman. I don’t have kids. But my life is chaotic.”

“I am a single man going through a divorce.”

“I am a person going through separation. I have had a number of relationships in my life.”

“I am a married person, but my home life is out of control. It is chaotic.”

You need to come before God and say, “Dear God, Creator of the heavens and the earth and my life, my life is totally out of control. No matter what I do, I push on one side of the balloon and the other side pops out. The only way that my out of control life will ever be brought under control is if I give you my life entirely and ask you to be my ruler and Lord.”

Do you know the Lordship of Jesus brings peace. The Lordship of Jesus brings goodness. The Lordship of Jesus brings purpose and meaning. The Lordship of Jesus brings order. Let’s pray.

# Where Do We Come From?

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Rich Nathan

September 16-17, 2000

Roots: A Study of Genesis 1-11 Series

Genesis 1

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