

Chapter 1

Fingerprints in Stone

The year 1968 was a bitter pill to swallow. January stormed in with the North Korean capture of the U.S.S. *Pueblo* and the shocking Tet Offensive in Vietnam. Springtime cursed us with the assassinations of Martin Luther King and Robert Kennedy. Summer brought no relief as the Vietnam peace talks dragged on and anti-war protests intensified.

No doubt about it, 1968 was a year we would just as soon forget.

That is, except for Christmas Eve. A beacon of hope came to us that night, the thrill of accomplishment. For the first time in history men were orbiting the moon. And they were Americans!

We could hardly believe our eyes as television relayed the dramatic lunar vista beneath *Apollo 8*. Astronauts Frank Borman, James Lovell, and William Anders sent their Christmas greetings from a quarter million miles away. Then they read to us the first chapter of an old Book. Comforting words, somehow familiar and yet nearly forgotten: “In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.”

The *New York Times*, commenting on that Scripture reading from lunar orbit, observed, “Somehow it was exactly right.”

Yes, what could have been more appropriate for our astronauts than to recognize that the blue sphere they looked back upon exists not by accident, but because God put it here?

Some months after the mission of *Apollo 8* I learned of a rather unusual incident that had taken place that Christmas Eve. Naturally, many reporters were present at the Space Center in Houston, some of them from foreign nations. Among them were two from a country without a Christian background. These men had been deeply impressed as the astronauts read from Genesis.

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The stark splendor of those grand words touched their minds and hearts.

Not realizing they had been listening to Scripture, they approached someone from NASA and asked if a script from which the astronauts read might be available.

The American official replied with a meaningful smile, “Why, yes, when you get back to your hotel room, just open the drawer of your desk or your nightstand. You will find a book bound in black. And the script from which the astronauts read is on the very first page.”

“In the beginning God created.” Strange as it may seem, many Christians in America are not as moved by these immortal words as those atheist journalists were. Even many churchgoing scientists and educators, searching for the origins of life, find themselves unable to accept any answer that points to a Creator. They would gladly spend millions of dollars probing outer space to find our roots. They would welcome some ancient legend or embrace some dusty artifact.

But not the Bible account of creation!

They seem to enjoy bobbing like corks on the sea of uncertainty.

If they knew something for sure, they couldn’t speculate anymore. All this to escape a Creator! All this to escape moral responsibility? I’m convinced that doubting God’s Word is not just a problem of logic. It’s more a problem of attitude. Human nature wants to “do its own thing,” although we might not want to admit it. So we hide our doubts amid intellectual verbiage.

It was Aldous Huxley who said, “The philosopher who finds no meaning in the world is not concerned exclusively with a problem in pure metaphysics, he is also concerned to prove that there is no valid reason why he personally should not do as he wants to do.” - *Ends and Means*, p. 315.

You see, if there is a Creator, then we stand accountable before Him who gave us life. But if we are only sophisticated animals, arriving here by chance, then we have no

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responsibility. We can do as we please. Or at least whatever we can get away with.

No doubt about it, a God powerful enough to create is unpopular in scientific circles. But lately we hear word of unrest among scientists. Not a few have come to realize that life is too complex to have sprung unannounced from a puddle of chemicals sparked by random lightning bolts. Here and there we find movement toward the Genesis account, what one writer calls “a sheepish resort” to the idea of a Creator.

Some scientists have stepped out boldly to declare their faith in the Bible account of creation. One of them, Robert Gentry, has caused quite a stir among his peers by his discovery of what one evolutionist calls “a tiny mystery.”

We will discuss Gentry’s fascinating discovery in a moment, but first let me tell you his story.

Bob Gentry had grown up in a Christian home believing the biblical account of life’s origins. But while taking a freshman biology course at the University of Florida he began doubting the Scriptures. By the time he finished his studies there he had become a theistic evolutionist - one who disbelieves the Genesis creation account but still believes God exists.

One day an agnostic friend recommended a television program called “It Is Written.” Gentry had no idea religion was involved until he tuned in to our telecast the next Sunday evening. But he then became one of our regular viewers.

When I visited Orlando in the spring of 1959 to conduct some lectures, the Gentrys invited me to their home. We discussed creation and evolution. I expressed my conviction that those who discard the account of Genesis also discredit the rest of the Bible. For instance, the Ten Commandments teach beyond question that God created the world in six literal days. We looked at the fourth commandment together:

“Remember the Sabbath day, to keep it holy. Six days you shall labor and do all your work, but the seventh day is the Sabbath of the Lord your God. In it you shall do no work: ... For in six days the Lord made ... the heavens and the earth

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...Therefore the Lord blessed the sabbath day and hallowed it.”
Exodus 20:8-11.

This Sabbath commandment directly challenged Bob Gentry’s confidence in evolution. He had been trying to maintain faith in the Bible by equating the six days of creation with six long geological eras. But now he realized that if such were the case, the commandment would be saying something like this:

“Six billion years you shall labor, and do all your work; but the seventh billion years is a sabbath of the Lord your God; in it you shall not do any work ...for in six billion years the Lord made heaven and earth ... and rested the seventh billion years; therefore the Lord blessed the seventh billion years and hallowed it.”

That gets a little ridiculous, wouldn’t you say? Well, Bob Gentry thought so too.

So now he had a puzzle to solve. The Sabbath commandment proved that Genesis 1 required six twenty-four-hour days in the Creation week. But science seemed to indicate otherwise - radiometric dating appeared to prove the earth to be billions of years old.

This conflict between Scripture and science caused quite a dilemma for Gentry. At first he thought he must either reject the Bible as unreliable or surrender his belief in science. Instead, he decided to search out the scientific evidence to see for himself if it could be reconciled with the Creation account in God’s Word.

Gentry began to realize that the case for evolution rested on shaky ground. Everything depended upon a questionable assumption known as the “uniformitarian principle.” This theory supposes that the universe evolved through the ages by means of physical laws that have never changed.

If evidence could be found disproving this uniformitarian supposition, the evolutionary theory would fall apart. Geologists would have no basis for assuming that radioactive decay has been constant throughout history, no basis for believing the earth has existed for billions of years.

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With these thoughts churning in his mind, Bob Gentry moved his family to the Atlanta area. There he taught physics while pursuing graduate studies at the Georgia Institute of Technology.

Gentry's quest for truth led him to investigate radioactive halos. (These are imprints of radioactivity in rocks which reveal the radiation present long ago when the earth came into existence.) But the department chairman wasn't enthusiastic about this new area of study. For a year he tried to discourage Gentry.

Finally he said, "Well, look, Bob. The time has come for me to tell you frankly, if you want to do this research, fine. But you can't do it at Georgia Tech. I don't think you're going to find anything. But what if you did? If you published evidence that disrupted the evolutionary time scale, what would happen to Georgia Tech? You would be an embarrassment to everyone."

And so Bob Gentry took his conscience away from Georgia Tech, forfeiting his doctoral dreams under those circumstances. Now, in the summer of 1964, he found himself nearly destitute, without a regular income. The family exhausted their savings as well as funds borrowed from relatives in launching new research into those promising radioactive halos. All for the sake of reconciling science with the Bible.

For the next few months things remained rather bleak for the Gentry family. Nothing much turned up in Bob's research. Then he began noticing under the microscope that certain rocks had unusual ring patterns. These mysterious "radiohalos" showed evidence of radioactivity with a fleeting existence. Lasting just a very brief time and then disappearing.

Bob explains it this way: "Suppose I have a glass of water and I put an Alka Seltzer tablet in it. The bubbles flow out and then disappear within just a few seconds. Either I freeze that water instantly and catch the bubbles in transit, or else they're gone forever.

"That's exactly what I was looking at under the microscope. Radioactivity in rapid transition, like those bubbles, had been quickly trapped in earth's foundation rocks. If those rocks had

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taken hundreds of thousands of years to cool and solidify, as evolutionists believed, these radiohalos could never have been formed. Something with such a fleeting existence must have been trapped in a matter of minutes. How had that happened?”

Finally one spring afternoon in 1965 Bob Gentry received his answer. Here’s how he tells what happened:

“I was home alone with my three children. The house was silent - it was our “quiet hour,” and my boisterous little ones were asleep. I moved my borrowed microscope from the back room to the front of the house to re-examine those fascinating halos.

“Suddenly, as I stared into the microscope, two verses from Scripture flashed into my mind: ‘By the word of the Lord the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.’ ‘For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.’ Psalm 33:6, 9.

“As I sat there stunned, a solution suggested itself. These radiohalos in earth’s foundation rocks revealed radiation that had been active long ago but since had ceased. So what most geologists thought would have taken ages could have happened quite quickly. Could this be scientific evidence of an instantaneous creation event? Could these radiohalos, in a sense, be God’s fingerprints?”

Evidently Bob Gentry was onto something here. Something really big!

Gradually he realized the tremendous implications of his discovery. He determined to test his findings by subjecting them to inspection by his peers in the world’s most reputable scientific journals. Before anything could be published, it would have to survive cautious and critical analysis. And once in print, the article would be further scrutinized by evolutionists everywhere. Any errors in his methodology would be quickly exposed.

Gentry managed to publish more than twenty reports in noted scientific journals. The basic criticism he met was, “This can’t be true because evolution is true.” But his conclusions remained intact.

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Eventually Bob Gentry came to be recognized as the world's foremost authority in his particular subspecialty. The U.S. Atomic Energy Commission invited him to do research at the Oak Ridge National Laboratory.

October 27, 1981, Gentry was at work in his office at Oak Ridge when the phone rang. The attorney general's office from the state of Arkansas was calling - they needed Gentry to testify at the forthcoming Arkansas creation trial as one of the expert science witnesses for the state. The teaching of creation in public schools had been opposed by the American Civil Liberties Union as being unscientific. Gentry was asked to help meet the challenge by presenting his scientific evidence for creation.

At the trial, Gentry's research was scrutinized again by some of the world's most distinguished evolutionists. Then it came time for the ACLU's geologist to be cross-examined. Asked specifically about the fleeting existence of radioactive halos, he conceded that evolution had no satisfactory explanation for them. The courtroom listened in awe as he could only say, "Gentry has found a tiny mystery which scientists some day will solve."

Yes, the testimony of earth's granite rock halos is creation's tiny mystery. But scientists will never solve it. They will never solve it because the Creator of the universe has placed in those halos His eternal fingerprints. Evidence that cannot be contradicted.

Many honest minds these days are becoming convinced about creation because of Bob Gentry. But whether or not we accept his compelling conclusions, one fact remains self-evident: It does matter what we believe about our beginnings. For what we believe about how we got here determines what we believe about God. If He has misled us in the Bible about creation, how can He be a God worth worshipping?

And what we believe about our beginnings determines what we believe about the future. For if we discard the book of Genesis as myth and legend, why should we take the prophecies of Revelation seriously?

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What we believe about our origin affects what we believe about ourselves; it affects our sense of self-worth. For if we just evolved from some lowly cell in the sea, we would not have the dignity of being formed in the image of God. And if the human race did not fall from that high position, if Adam didn't sin, then why did we need a Saviour for the human race? The mission of Jesus becomes pointless and the cross only a meaningless drama!

We could go on and on. I think you can see that what we believe about our beginnings could well determine our eternal destiny. Is it any wonder that the devil, fighting against our souls, aims his sharpest arrows at the first seven chapters of Genesis?

Why is this generation, obsessed with piecing together our beginnings; why is it looking everywhere but in God's Word? There can be only one answer. It wants to find Adam. But it doesn't want to find him in Genesis!

Yet all the while the simple statement of Scripture stands firm, quietly inviting our faith: "In the beginning God created."

Could it be that the evidence collected by Bob Gentry and many others was left by the Creator to help establish faith in the Genesis account? After all, the Bible itself says; "Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen." Hebrews 11:1.

Though the Genesis account will never be proven beyond question, God has given all the evidence we need for strong confidence in His creation.

Doubt is in the air. But so are the birds, who fly above us better equipped for navigation than the latest air force fighter jets, able to traverse unmapped oceans with their built-in instruments.

Controversy swirls around us. But so do the bats, who effortlessly operate their ultrasonic radar, reminding us that neither technology nor wisdom are exclusive with the human mind.

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Skepticism encircles the earth. But so do the stars, speeding along in their unerring orbits, keeping their appointments with a precision that boggles the mind.

Book after book insists authoritatively that this earth evolved over millions of years. Evolutionists talk confidently about the magic of the ages, of happy accidents that exploded us ever upward - with never a need for intelligent direction, never a need for God. But all the while birds and bats and the stars eloquently challenge their entrenched beliefs.

Long ago David proclaimed, "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, and night unto night reveals knowledge. There is no speech nor language where their voice is not heard." Psalm 19:1-3.

Nobody can escape the grand harmony as all nature joins in the unmistakable chorus, "There is a Creator!" But the One who made this world also let His creatures nail Him to a rough, splintery cross outside Jerusalem - so that lost sinners might find eternal life in Him. And even the evidence of the birds and the bats, of suns and racing constellations, convincing as it is, pales before the mighty argument of the cross!

You may have heard the story of the unbeliever who rescued an orphan boy from a burning building. Having lost his own wife and child, he wanted to adopt the lad.

Christian neighbors were skeptical about the wisdom of placing the boy in an infidel home. But the applicant won his case when he held up his hand, badly burned in the rescue of the lad, and said, "I have only one argument. It is this."

He proved to be a good father, and little Jimmy never tired of hearing how Daddy had saved him from the fire. And he liked best to hear about the scarred hand.

One day with his new father he visited a display of art masterpieces. One painting interested him especially - the one of Jesus reproving Thomas for his unbelief and holding out His scarred hand.

"Tell me the story of that picture, Daddy," the little fellow pleaded.

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“No, not that one.”

“Why not?”

“Because I don’t believe it.”

“But you tell me the story of Jack the giant-killer, and you don’t believe that.”

So he told him the story. And Jimmy said, “It’s like you and me, Daddy.” And then he went on, “It wasn’t nice of Thomas not to believe after the good Man had died for him. What if they had told me how you saved me from the fire and I had said I didn’t believe you did it?”

The father could not escape the sound reasoning of a little child. He had used his own scarred hand to win a small boy’s heart.

Could he continue to resist the scarred hand of the Man who had died for him - and say He didn’t do it?

The mightiest argument of all is the cross of Calvary. The scarred hands of Jesus. Hands that were wounded in His encounter with the forces of evil - so that you and I could live!

What can we do but fall at His feet and say with Thomas, “My Lord and my God!”