

Persuaded

↳ by the evidence



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True Stories of Faith, Science, & the Power of a Creator



↳ **DOUG SHARP & DR. JERRY BERGMAN** Compilation Editors

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Introduction

It has been my pleasure to review and edit the personal testimonies of individuals whose lives have been changed by the knowledge of and a personal experience with our Creator. I have had the privilege of interviewing many of these people, and I interact with some of them often. Many have advanced degrees. And a few have not yet had that privilege or opportunity, yet each one has had his faith in God strengthened by scientific evidence for creation.

Persuaded by that evidence, they have integrated biblical principles in their lives, and each one tells a story of how that has satisfied his hunger for God. One of the facets of the Christian faith is that a person's experience with Christ is subjective and personal, and often it isn't easy to share this with someone who hasn't had that experience. That only comes through faith, and a person who has a logical mind will want more proof. These testimonies share both aspects — a personal experience as well as the scientific evidence that convinced the individual to take the steps needed to establish a relationship with the risen Christ.


What is amazing about each of these stories is that they are all different, and yet God individually tailored the evidence for each person's personality, causing a defining moment that persuaded him to consider his spiritual life. Some received Christ first and sorted out their belief in Him as Creator much later. Others grew up in a Christian home but were never taught that science and Scripture could be reconciled, and eventually went through a crisis motivating them to research the issue. Still others had no Christian influence at all in their early years, but were confronted with the evidence only later in life. There were also a few

who wanted to submit their stories, but they felt that if they did so, it might jeopardize their employment. Discrimination against creationists is a real problem discussed by several of the contributors. It is also interesting to note that evidence that causes some to make a pivotal decision in their spiritual life might not be as convincing to others. Although I do not think that these individuals are in complete agreement on every aspect of Christian doctrine, I do know that the hand of the Master has touched each of their lives.

As you read these testimonies, ask yourself, “What is it that motivates me in my Christian faith?” Do you have unshakable reasons for your faith that stand the test of careful scrutiny? Or if you are not yet persuaded or are an unbeliever, ask yourself if you should be skeptical of your skepticism. Are the reasons given in this book enough motivation for you to take the challenge of following Christ? Or is your skepticism rooted in tradition, fear, or comfort?

Evolution is a stumbling block for many people that will prevent them from accepting simple faith in Jesus Christ. This collection of personal experiences will give you some idea of what helps many people overcome this common stumbling block.

— Douglas B. Sharp



Information Tends Toward Chaos

Chapter 1
Eric Blievernicht

Because I grew up in the public school system where censorship of creation is rampant, I was not exposed to a creationist viewpoint until I was in college. *I believed in the Darwinian story for the origin of the earth, living things, and mankind by default.* As a rationalistic teen, I had deduced that the concept of God was a “philosophically necessary” concept to make sense of the world, but I had no concept of a personal, loving, involved Creator.

As a bookworm, I was always reading everything I could get my hands on. In the public schools, this meant a heavy indoctrination in secular humanism, whether from school textbooks (which I usually read cover to cover early in each semester) or from the library. Most sci-fi authors, such as H.G. Wells, Arthur Clarke, and Isaac Asimov, for example, were hardcore Darwinists whose beliefs are strongly reflected in their writing.

I was fascinated by the principle of natural selection in my early teens and spent a great deal of time pondering it. I quickly realized that in the absence of natural selection — that is, if most mutations persisted whether good or bad — the result would be a degeneration of the genetic pool, because most mutations that cause phenotypic changes are, in fact, harmful. This early thinking about *degenerative* evolutionary trends would later play a significant role in my development as a creationist.

Another early conclusion I reached was that Darwinism had no competent explanation for the origin and development of dynamically stable ecosystems. Darwinism is only concerned with the origin and persistence of mutations that benefit individual organisms. It did not

explain why the ecosystem recycles numerous biological waste products so that life does not become buried in its own wastes and die out.

For example, suppose an organism arose that utilized photosynthesis, producing oxygen as it broke down carbon dioxide in the photosynthetic cycle. Why should it in turn give rise to life that did the exact opposite, inhaling oxygen and replenishing carbon dioxide in the atmosphere? There was no valid reason for blind Darwinian evolution, which cares only whether a mutation brings immediate benefit to its host, to create such cyclical systems. Yet this is only the simplest of many examples necessary for life to persist indefinitely on earth. And so I became a skeptic of totally atheistic Darwinism, unaware that I was not alone in my dissent.

Further movement away from Darwinism came during my sophomore year in college when I attended a church youth rally and heard a speaker *criticize evolutionism*. After his presentation, I picked up *Blind Faith: Evolution Exposed*¹ by Howard Peth. The book had limited effect. Since I read books by the dozens, it was unusual for any one book to have a major effect on my thinking. It did continue my movement away from Darwinism, since I could see now that rejection of Darwinism was not unthinkable. This rejection was based upon sound theoretical objections, absence of mechanisms to explain it, scientific laws hostile to it, and an unhelpful fossil record. After my sophomore year in college, I was a theistic evolutionist, or even an anti-evolutionist, though not yet a creationist in any positive sense. *I knew what I didn't believe, but I didn't know what to believe.*

Peth's appeal for faith in Genesis was simply a foreign concept to me. I had attended church while growing up, but "Bible history" was a fantasy history in my mind, completely divorced from the "real history" I learned in school and in textbooks. The idea that the Jesus of the Bible was an inhabitant of the same historical Roman Empire I studied with such interest in school, for example, was practically unthinkable to me. Genesis as real history, supplanting the textbook orthodoxy of Darwinism, was not even an option in my mind.

Nevertheless, God was guiding me home. By my senior year in college, I was visiting Internet newsgroups such as talk.origins (this was

1. Howard Peth, *Blind Faith: Evolution Exposed* (Roseville, CA: Amazing Facts, Inc., 1990).

before the web), sometimes speaking against naturalistic Darwinism. I soon discovered the fanaticism and fury of many committed Darwinian fundamentalists. This did nothing to persuade me of the accuracy of their beliefs, but actually helped prime me for a final break with the Darwinian worldview.

The break came in the winter of my senior year at Michigan State University when I discovered a cache of creationist literature in the back of a church I was attending. Almost simultaneously, the Christian apologist Dr. Josh McDowell came to speak on campus. Suddenly I was being confronted with an array of evidence supporting the historical *accuracy* of the entire Bible. Even more importantly, Dr. McDowell emphasized God was a personal, loving, caring being — not a cold philosophical concept.

Between McDowell's *A Ready Defense*,² Henry Morris and Gary Parker's *What Is Creation Science?*³ and other books, I soon realized that I was in no position to stand in judgment over the Bible. It stood in judgment over me. I found that I could trust Genesis. Now, once a skeptic finds that he can believe in Genesis, the rest of the Bible is easy. Indeed, God loomed so large before me in those days that to put Him off would have been impossible. I was no longer a "churchian"; I had become a young-earth creationist, and so I could hardly avoid becoming a Christian.

My acceptance of faith has since been confirmed both by reading creationist and Christian works on the one hand, and anti-creationist works on the other. The latter (such as Niles Eldredge's *Monkey Business*,⁴ Hugh Ross's *Creation and Time*⁵ and Karl Giberson's *Worlds Apart*⁶) uniformly fail to cope with most creationist arguments, either caricaturing or ignoring them in favor of minor criticisms. Although they do point out occasional errors in creationist thinking, they do not hold a candle to works like Leonard Brand's *Faith, Reason and Earth*

2. Josh McDowell, *The Best of Josh McDowell: A Ready Defense*, compiled by Bill Wilson (Nashville, TN: Thomas Nelson Publ., 1993).

3. Henry M. Morris and Gary E. Parker, *What Is Creation Science?* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 1982).

4. Niles Eldredge, *Monkey Business: A Scientist Looks at Creationism* (New York: Washington Square Press, 1982).

5. Hugh Ross, *Creation and Time* (Colorado Springs, CO: NavPress, 1994).

6. Karl Giberson, *Worlds Apart* (Kansas City, MO: Beacon Hill Press, 1993).

History,⁷ Lee Spetner's *Not by Chance!*⁸ or *The New Answers Book*⁹ from Answers in Genesis.

The biblical record of Genesis was exciting to me because it helped fulfill a major intellectual goal of my life — a demand for intellectual consistency across all disciplines and realms of thought. For example, I had long heard that God was perfectly loving and good. Why did I not accept this belief until my senior year?

Like most people, I could not make sense of that claim in terms of what we see in the world around us. Around us we see suffering. We see death. We see people in pain and agony. If God is (1) all-powerful and (2) perfectly good, then how can this be? Logic seemingly demanded that either (1) or (2) had to be false. Since the concept of an all-powerful First Cause is something that *can* be deduced from sheer logic, I rejected (2).

But this raises further questions — as the former atheist intellectual C.S. Lewis pointed out in *Mere Christianity*,¹⁰ good and evil are concepts that only make sense if they originate in the will of an Almighty God. Otherwise, they are mere personal opinions. I do not like anchovies on my pizza, but I do not call such a thing evil *in the same way the Holocaust was evil*. If the universe is “unjust” only in my personal opinion, then how can that be an argument against a perfectly just God? In order for it to be a valid argument, the universe really must be unjust whether I think so or not, but that requires an absolute standard of justice that can only come from God himself.

Genesis untangles this paradox. It teaches that there is a perfect, loving, good God, but that He created a world in which humans had freedom to choose obedience or disobedience, and that Adam did, in fact, choose the latter. It teaches that the universe was originally perfect, but that our disobedience led to the introduction of death, pain, and decay. In response, God set in motion a path of redemption that would save those who turned back to Him in repentance and sorrow, without any cost. His perfect love was reflected on the Cross and in Christ's payment for our crimes against God.

7. Leonard Brand, *Faith, Reason and Earth History* (Berrien Springs, MI: Andrews University Press, 1997).

8. Lee M. Spetner, *Not by Chance! Shattering the Modern Theory of Evolution* (New York: Judaica Press, 1999).

9. Ken Ham, ed., *The New Answers Book* (Green Forest, AR: Master Books, 2006).

10. C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (London: G. Bless, 1952).

I now had an explanation for the co-existence of suffering and evil in a universe with a perfect, all-powerful, good Creator. By contrast, consider the theistic evolutionary view. In this model, pain and suffering and death, such as are reflected in the fossil record, pre-date the fall of man. They are instituted by God not in response to mankind's sin, but are a reflection of His own will and character. The result is a sadistic, malicious god who prefers pain and suffering in his creation. This is not the God of the Bible.

This intellectual reality was reflected in my personal outlook in life. Earlier in my sophomore year in college, I had attempted suicide over a failed romantic expectation, leaving a scar along one side of my neck. Fruitless time wasted with psychologists grounded in Darwinian beliefs did nothing to help me, for my depression was grounded in a false worldview. Belief in Genesis *and* the resulting Christian faith was the *perfect* antidote.

Genesis also brings consistency to science. For example, the law of entropy in thermodynamics demands that, in a closed system, entropy (that is, disorder) always increases. Since the whole natural universe can be thought of as such a system, it follows that the universe was maximally ordered in the very beginning and has become more disordered since then. This is not very consistent with popular naturalistic models such as the big-bang theory (where disorder gives rise to order on a *universal* scale) but it is completely consistent with Genesis.

Finally, consider evolutionary biology itself. I am not speaking here of Darwinism (the belief that life evolves from primitive to complex, with all life stemming from one or a very few ancestors), but rather of the scientific study of changes that are occurring in life today. Biological change itself does not prove Darwinism, as is commonly claimed. Darwinism requires millions of *innovative* mutations. That is, for Darwinism to be true, most beneficial mutations must add information to an organism, generating new systems and integrating greater and greater complexity into organisms as they evolve from single cells to the present vast array of life.

Genesis teaches the opposite: not stasis, but rather a perfect creation that was marred by a Fall that has resulted in decay throughout the universe. Biological changes (such as the appearance of carnivorous animals and thorns) are *known to have resulted from the Fall*. From a perfect

beginning, there is only one direction that change can take: downward. The difference between Darwinism and Genesis is not change versus stasis but rather innovative evolution versus degenerative evolution.

Darwinists frequently proclaim that there is a vast amount of evidence for “change” in biology. There is, but they do not admit to the nature of the change. The result is the curious fact that modern Darwinian fundamentalists vaguely proclaim evolutionary biology to be the great proof of their belief system, yet it is 180 degrees the opposite of what they claim. Ironically, Darwinian fundamentalism is in an all-out war *against* evolutionary biology.

There are no exceptions: all known cases of beneficial mutations are either neutral or result in loss of information and are therefore degenerative in nature. There are no examples of beneficial mutations that create new functions or biological systems in an organism. Genesis explains and predicts this pattern, which is completely incompatible with Darwinism.

Consider, for example, vestigial organs. Darwinists relying on their caricature of “Genesis = stasis” long proclaimed them to be proofs against creation, because they claim a God would not create useless structures in living things. It is true a perfect Creator would not create structures with no function, but vestigial organs by definition are structures that were once useful. The argument is refuted by the recognition that degenerative change is vital to the creationist paradigm.

Most claims of “vestigial organs,” such as the human appendix, coccyx, and tonsils, were based on ignorance of their true functions. The advance of science has thus debunked most claims of “vestigial organs.” Nonetheless, examples such as loss of eyesight and pigmentation in cave-dwelling creatures remain. Flightless birds and wingless beetles are other good examples. These fit more naturally with the degenerative paradigm of Genesis than the innovative paradigm of Darwinism. Darwinism needs to explain how sight *and wings and pigmentation* arose, not how they disappear!

What about the hundreds of examples of antibiotic, herbicide, and pesticide resistance arising by mutation? These are frequently held up as proofs of Darwinism, but are they?

Antibiotic resistance occurs by several mechanisms, none of which involve innovation. For example, penicillin resistance in *Staphylococcus*

bacteria is observed due to damage to a control gene that leads to unregulated production of penicillinase, which breaks down penicillin. Under normal circumstances, these bacteria are just wasting resources overproducing penicillinase, but in the presence of penicillin, only they survive. *Mycobacterium tuberculosis* bacteria have an enzyme that, in addition to useful functions, alters the antibiotic isoniazid into a lethal form that destroys the bacteria. A mutation that eliminates the enzyme cripples the bacteria but prevents the antibiotic from killing it.

Some toxins work by binding to certain sites on target cells. A point mutation can alter the geometry of the binding site and protect the organism while degrading or destroying the useful function for which the site exists in the first place. For example, 4-quinolone is an antibiotic that attacks the gyrase enzyme in bacteria. A neutral mutation in one amino acid alters the binding site on the enzyme and as a result, prevents the interaction.

Streptomycin kills bacteria by binding to their ribosomes and interfering with vital protein production. Mutant bacteria have been observed with *damaged* binding sites. As a result, the antibiotic can no longer bind, but the speed and efficiency of protein production is reduced due to the *altered* binding site. Some cases of pesticide resistance occur because of damage to the cell membrane that slows the uptake of the pesticide into cells, preventing cells from accumulating toxic concentrations of the pesticide.

Warfarin is a rat poison that works by inhibiting an enzyme that metabolizes vitamin K, which is vital for life. Resistant rats have a damaged enzyme so that 13 times as much vitamin K is needed for them to stay alive. However, warfarin does not recognize the damaged enzyme, so when warfarin is used on rats, only the crippled mutants survive.

Examples could be multiplied, from seedless fruits that proliferate because of human preference for them, to farm animals and crops with increased yields due to damage to protein regulator functions. This damage leads to uncontrolled protein production, wasteful in most circumstances but preferred by farmers trying to maximize food production.

As this new degenerative paradigm takes over evolutionary biology, further insights will be gained. For example, parasites *now appear to be* degenerate forms of once-helpful symbionts or independent, free-living organisms that lost the ability to survive on their own. Bacteria

and viruses that now cause disease show evidence of degeneration from their original altruistic roles in supporting the ecosystem of life. Far from stifling scientific research, insights from Genesis are opening new frontiers for research and understanding of God's fallen, yet still wondrous, creation.