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Introduction

Genesis: Creation and Salvation

In 1997, a physicist¹ who won the Nobel Prize, made a shocking announcement. He wrote, “The more we seem to understand the universe, the more the universe seems pointless (useless)” (adapted). In answer to this, one astronomer² wrote, “Why should the universe have a point? What point? The universe is just a physical system.” Another scientist agreed by saying, “I am willing to believe that we are flotsam and jetsam”³ (adapted).

Flotsam and jetsam? Even if we are here by pure chance alone—what other conclusion (idea) would they get? After all, one day we just are born. Sooner or later, we become aware of ourselves. Pain, fear, and hunger are often the first to tell us who we are. Life is forced upon us without us asking to be born. But we cannot give life back if we do not want it. And life is impossible to keep if we do want it. We are given something no one looked for, planned for, or wanted. We are not sure what life is, what life means, or even why we have life. Life’s most real experiences—pain, sorrow, loss, fear—remain a mystery.

These scientists tried to understand our beginning by themselves. So they saw the universe as pointless. To them, the universe is nothing more than a physical system.

How thankful we should be that God has not left us alone in trying to understand our beginnings. Genesis is God’s way of telling us about our beginnings. Genesis presents a view very different from what most science presents. Without God’s guidance, science has decided we are the creation of meaningless and purposeless forces. This is proof of how we can get it all wrong without God’s guidance.

The “scientific” view says we are here only by chance. But Genesis says we are here because God created us. Genesis shows that our life came from the purposeful act of a loving God. He made us “in his own likeness. He created him [us] in the likeness of God. He created them as male and female” (Genesis 1:27, NIV).

But Creation is only the beginning of Genesis. Genesis teaches us about the Fall,⁴ the great Flood, and the Tower of Babel. These events⁵ help us understand the world we live in.

But, Genesis also tells us about Abraham and his children. Abraham was the

¹physicist—a person skilled in natural sciences.

²astronomer—a person who studies the stars and planets.

³flotsam and jetsam—floating things on the ocean after a ship sinks.

⁴the Fall—when Adam and Eve first sinned.

⁵events—things that happened.

one in whom “all the nations” would “be blessed” (Galatians 3:8, RSV). Genesis does not focus only on the Fall and its results. Genesis also shows the great hope of salvation through Jesus. This hope is offered to everyone who, like Abraham, claims it by faith. Paul, who knew Genesis thoroughly, wrote, “So those who have faith are blessed along with Abraham. He was the man of faith” (Galatians 3:9, NIV). He was the father of “all who believe” (Romans 4:11, NIV).

This quarter, we will study the inspiring story of the miracle that created us. We will also study the miracles that save us. These miracles are the life, death, and resurrection⁶ of Jesus. All this is in Genesis. Genesis is about Creation and salvation, not “flotsam and jetsam.”

Born in Germany, the late Arthur J. Ferch moved to Australia. There he worked for many years as a pastor, teacher, and leader.

⁶resurrection—return to life from death.