



## INTRODUCTION

**S**ome experts have been examining a letter. They take turns presenting their research: the chemist details the basic chemicals of which it consists; the physicist outlines the electrons, protons and quarks which form the basic building blocks of the paper and ink; the mathematician concludes by speaking of the fundamental equations that govern the movement of the electrons. The listeners know a great deal about the letter at the end of these presentations, but they still have no answer to some important questions: who wrote it and why? Their curiosity is only finally satisfied when Matt stands up and announces that he wrote it to his girlfriend, Ruth, to ask her to marry him.

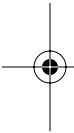
Science can explain much about the world we live in, but it does not have all the answers. It can tell us how things work but it cannot give us an ultimate answer to the great question of meaning: why are we here? Nor can it give answers to questions of morality: how should we behave? But the Christian





### FOUR BUILDING BLOCKS TO A CHRISTIAN WORLDVIEW

<b>Creation</b>	God made everything.
<b>Fall</b>	The rebellion of human beings against God has marred his perfect creation.
<b>Redemption</b>	God in his love has begun to fulfill his plan to restore all things through his Son Jesus.
<b>New Creation</b>	God's plan of salvation will be completely fulfilled when Jesus returns to introduce the new creation.



conviction is that where science is silent, God the Creator has spoken, giving us answers that we could never find by mere observation and experiment.



There are four building blocks to a Christian worldview: creation, fall, redemption and new creation.<sup>1</sup> In my previous two books (*God's Big Picture* and *Life's Big Questions*<sup>2</sup>) I have followed the Bible's story line from Genesis to Revelation as it has described each in turn. In *God's Big Design* I plan to focus on the first building block, creation, and on only two chapters of the Bible, Genesis 1—2. They provide the essential foundation for any Christian understanding of the world and our place as human beings within it.

We will be considering what Genesis 1—2 teaches about the Creator and his design for humanity, the earth, sex and marriage, and work. But even if our focus is on the very begin-

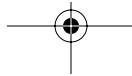




ning of the Bible, our attention is bound to be directed often toward its end. The Creator is also the Redeemer. His original design has been spoiled by human sin but will one day be fully renewed in Christ. Genesis 1—2 provides the blueprint not just for life in this present world but also for life in the world to come—God’s new creation.

You will be disappointed if you look to this book for answers to your questions about how Genesis 1—2 relates to modern science. Such discussions have their place, but there is a danger that they distract us from the Bible’s message. Gordon Wenham, author of an excellent commentary on Genesis, writes:

The Bible-versus-science debate has, most regrettably, sidetracked readers of Genesis 1. Instead of reading the chapter as a triumphant affirmation of the power and wisdom of God and the wonder of his creation, we have been too often bogged down in attempting to squeeze scripture into the mold of the latest scientific hypothesis or distorting scientific facts to fit a particular interpretation. When allowed to speak for itself, Genesis 1 looks beyond such minutiae. Its proclamation of the God of grace and power who undergirds the world and gives it purpose justifies the scientific approach to nature. Genesis 1, by further affirming the unique status of man, his place in the divine programme, and God’s care for him, gives a hope to mankind that atheistic philosophies can never legitimately supply.<sup>3</sup>





It is hardly surprising that Genesis, coming from a prescientific age, does not address many of the questions we bring to it. However, as we study these ancient chapters we will find they offer many searching questions of their own and provide answers which are as relevant and challenging today as when they were first written.

