

SECRETS
OF
GENESIS

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**Discovering
the Depths
of God's Word**

STEVEN BENSON

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For joJO, who awakened the giant within me...

*For Erica, who made it so clear that I should follow my heart to
happiness...*

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INTRODUCTION

As of the writing of this book, I have been clean from alcohol and drug abuse for fourteen years. When I finally got help for my substance abuse problem back in 1988 with the help of a Twelve Step recovery program, I had already failed twice at quitting my destructive behaviors by becoming a born-again Christian. Many have had success with addiction problems by holding fast to the advice of their church congregation, but for me the answer was in letting go of all preconceived notions about God and starting again from scratch in my search for deeper meaning in life.

Back in 1995, after seven or so years of being clean, the time had come to take a serious look at the God who got me where I was with two college degrees, a decent position as a CPA, and most importantly – laying off the drinking. This God for me had been somewhat unformed since I had migrated away from seeing things as “born again” Christians do. He was now the Higher Power I had been told about in the Twelve Step rooms seven years earlier.

In my newfound search for God, I dabbled with such alternate paths to truth as Zen Buddhism, Islam, and East Indian religion. Though I was open-minded to all sources of truth, I could not shake my curiosity about the uniqueness of the Christian message. But if I was going to get involved with this again, this time it all had to be different! I firmly decided that I would rather not be a Christian at all if it meant I had to check my brains in at the door every time I opened the Bible.

I remember the day I locked myself into my room and I said to the Lord, “Lord, I know your Word is filled with some kind of somethin’ that I don’t yet see. I know that you don’t want your children to blindly follow

where good sense does not prevail. Help me to learn what is locked up in the meaning of these words.” I then prepared to start fully anew with the very first chapter of the very first book of the King James Bible, Genesis. I opened to the first verse and committed myself to read it as if I had never before seen the words.

The first verse says, “In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” But something strange happened as I started to read the second verse. When I came to where it says that the “earth” had become “without form, and void” something told me to re-read this, substituting the word, “earth” with “Steven.” Now it read, “And Steven was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep.” How appropriate, I thought. The next verse says, “And the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters.” Hmm. What if the “face of the waters” really was talking about the face of my life which was devastated and made void from alcohol and drug abuse? I couldn’t deny the parallel that was forming before my eyes. After all, my past drinking definitely led me to a place that was pretty formless and void and the only way I was able to stop drinking was with the help of what the Twelve Step programs called a Higher Power who definitely “moved upon the waters” of my life.

As I continued to read the first chapter of Genesis, I wondered deeply that maybe all of the creation story was really written to describe the regeneration of a human life gone bad. If it was, then the I knew I would need help researching this “inner-meaning” theory since there are so many details about creation in the first few verses of Genesis, let alone the whole book! I prayed, and waited.

One summer day a couple of weeks later, I was accompanying a friend to return some overdue books to the library. While she was at the counter, I happened upon an interesting paperback book in the religion section I wandered into. It was about a Christian

gentleman who lived about 250 years ago in Sweden. His name was Emanuel Swedenborg. According to the small paperback, Swedenborg had what were termed “waking visions” for many years of his life. During these visions, he was supposedly shown heaven, hell, and what interested me most, the inner-level of meaning in the scriptures. Based on what he saw, this visionary wrote many books.

The paperback told me that the name of the writing about scripture meaning was *Arcana Coelestia*, which means “heavenly secrets” in Latin. When I finally found the work in the Central Branch of the Free Library, it turned out that the “book” was actually twelve books, each with 400-600 pages! But this made sense in a way since this Swedenborg guy had actually started with the book of Genesis and worked through explanations for every individual verse. His approach was complete and not based on revelations about a few unrelated verses considered without concern for context.

It took me about four months to get through all the books of the *Arcana Coelestia*. When I was done, I started again at the beginning and read them again. Why? Because this Swedenborg guy had chimed in exactly where I was at in my search for truth. In his explanations of the meaning of the very first verse of Genesis, he said that the creation story was actually the regeneration of an individual human life in disguise!

The third time I read the six thousand plus page work, I became concerned that few Christians knew about this immense writing that revealed secret meaning about the context of the Bible stories of Genesis and Exodus. But it was no wonder, because the translation from Latin to English brought with it a very scholarly tone that made reading the books quite difficult for the average truth-seeker. This didn’t surprise me since Emanuel was a scientist and philosopher before he wrote the *Arcana Coelestia*. In Emanuel Swedenborg’s work I had

finally found a source of knowledge that was in agreement with my long-time urge to see the inner-meaning of Bible scripture.

You may also know of this urge if you have contemplated some of the larger questions of Bible meaning as depicted in some of the more well-known allegorical writings such as C. S. Lewis' *The Chronicles of Narnia* and John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*. I've learned that *Arcana Coelestia* shows us that the Genesis and Exodus narratives are actually parable-like accounts that are seated within a greater pattern and context that contains plentiful knowledge about the spiritual history of humanity, the issues and course of an individual's spiritual journey, and even the interaction between the Divine and human sides of Jesus.

That such concepts exist in the writings of Genesis and Exodus may not seem foreign to even the less-frequent attendee of Sunday school. Everyone knows that the fall of Adam and Eve insinuates our need of salvation and that the Noatic flood indicates that God punishes the wicked and preserves the faithful. What *Arcana Coelestia* purports that makes it different is that the common stories we have all heard are still just a covering for a deeper theme of knowledge that is meant to be understood only by those who are initiated. For he who has ears to hear, Adam and Eve, Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob are meaningless. Though they are historical figures in the linear dimension of biblical events, they are only pointers to greater other-worldly realities for the person who has learned how to correspond them to their higher, eternal significance which is understood by angels. In sum, the Bible is actually written with multiple adaptations built into its singular form. The same book contains fullness of meaning for the child or uninitiated, the initiated adult human being who is a believer, and finally the angels of the spiritual realms. Most Christians

know only of the meaning presented for the mind of the child or uninitiated.

Let me give you an example of what I'm talking about. Do you remember the song called "*Brand-New Key*", by the sixties singer Melanie? I used to enjoy listening to it as a teenager during the seventies. The song is about a girl who just bought a new pair of roller skates and then met a boy who happened to have a brand-new key that was needed to adjust the skates. The words of the lyrics were:

"I've got a brand-new pair of roller skates, you've got a brand-new key --

I think that we should get together and try them out, you see."

Because of the song's popularity, a short Saturday-morning TV animation was eventually spun off from it. The cartoon was loved by children. To the mind of the child, the song's simple theme taught important lessons about sharing. But isn't there something additional in the song for the mind of the adult? Think about it. The girl has skates that need the boy's key. Isn't this hinting at a sexual encounter? That's not hard to figure out. So you see, though there is a simpler, singular level of meaning in the lyrics for the child, the adult gets to appreciate the same lyrics on two levels because of life experience and natural human development. I wouldn't doubt that this dual-meaning embedded in the words had something to do with the song's success.

Let me now ask you a question. As the mind develops in a child who knows this song, shouldn't he or she eventually get curious and ask, "Why didn't the new roller skates come with their own key?" What I'm saying here is that there is an awkward component in the literal words of the song that should be challenged at some point as the mind matures.