

Life's Most Basic Questions: Part 2

Acts 17:22-31

I. INTRODUCTION: I Last time: Life's Three Most Basic Questions: Part I

1. **3** We answered the question: **How did I get here?**
2. We considered that there are only three possible explanations for the origin of the Universe:
 - ❶ The Universe is eternal.
 - ❷ The Universe created itself from nothing.
 - ❸ God created the Universe.
3. **4** We applied three basic laws of physics to determine which of the three is correct:
 - A. Law of Causality: every material effect has an antecedent adequate cause:
 - (1) Fundamental principle upon which all the sciences are based.
 - (2) **All** the sciences would crumble to dust without it!).
 - B. First Law of Thermodynamics: law of the conservation of mass and energy (Matter and energy can neither be created or destroyed. Explain w/burning log example).
 - C. Second Law of Thermodynamics: law of decreasing order (All matter and energy tends toward disorder, less useful forms; continue w/burning log example; increased entropy)
 - D. **5** Application of these three laws to explain the origin of the Universe:
 - (1) **** Eternal Universe:**
 - (a) The Universe is a material effect; hence, it's eternalness violates the *Law of Causality*; an eternal Universe would be a material effect without a cause.
 - (b) Empirical evidence tells us material effects without a cause are an impossibility! Who's being unscientific?
 - (c) If the Universe were eternal it would also violate the *Law of Entropy*. If the Universe were eternal, all useable energy would have dissipated in an "eternity past."
 - (2) **** Universe created itself from nothing:** i.e., Big Bang theory. Is all we see just some grand cosmic accident?
 - (a) Violates the *Law of Causality*. What comes from "nothing"? NOTHING!
 - (b) Aristotle: "Nothing is what rocks dream about."
 - (c) The "Big Bang" also violates the *First Law of Thermodynamics*: matter and energy can neither be created or destroyed. If so, energy and matter cannot spontaneously generate from "nothing."
 - (d) Empirical evidence tells us matter and energy cannot spontaneously generate; it's an impossibility! Who's being unscientific?
 - (3) **** God created the Universe:**
 - (a) Doesn't violate *Law of Causality*: Gen. 1:1 God is the Chief Builder—the Uncaused Cause:
Heb. 3:4: "For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God."

Psa. 33:6, 9: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. 9 For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast.”

- (b) Doesn't violate *First Law of Thermodynamics*: God is an entity Who exists apart from space, time, and matter. Hence, He can intervene and create space, time, and matter and the laws that govern them.
- (c) Doesn't violate *Second Law of Thermodynamics (Law of Entropy)*: In fact, scripture confirms this law.

Heb. 1:10-12: “You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands. 11 They will perish, but You remain; And they will all grow old like a garment; 12 Like a cloak You will fold them up, And they will be changed. But You are the same, And Your years will not fail.”

E. 6 We also pointed out that the existence of God does not violate any of these three laws.

- (1) God is not a material entity; He is a spiritual entity (Jn. 4:24).
- (2) He exists independent of time, space and matter.
- (3) He originated time, space and matter and the laws governing them!

Psa. 90:2: “Before the mountains were brought forth, Or ever You had formed the earth and the world, Even from everlasting to everlasting, You are God.”

Psa. 33:6-9: “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made,
And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth.
7 He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap;
He lays up the deep in storehouses.
8 Let all the earth fear the LORD;
Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.
9 For He spoke, and it was done;
He commanded, and it stood fast.”

- (4) God is the Chief Builder, the Great uncaused Cause:

Heb. 3:4: “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.”

II. DISCUSSION:

2. 71 Why am I here?

A. The majority of modern society subscribes to the philosophy of scientific naturalism.

- (1) Sometimes called scientific materialism: i.e., matter is all there is to reality.

******“The Cosmos is all that is or was or ever will be.” —Carl Sagan

- (2) In other words, the only reason I'm here is a grand cosmic accident!

B. The Bible presents a much different picture:

- (1) ****** Man was created in God's image: Molecules-to-man theory is wrong; we didn't crawl from the slime!

Gen. 1:26-27: “Then God said, ‘Let Us make man in Our image, according to Our likeness; let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over the cattle, over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth.’ 27 So God created man in His own image; in the image of God He created him; male and female He created them.”

- (2) ****** Man was created to glorify God: Not created to be self-absorbed “navel gazers”!

Isa. 43:7: “Everyone who is called by My name, Whom I have created for My glory; I have formed him, yes, I have made him.”

(3) ** Man was created to have fellowship with God:

Eph. 2:19-22: “Now, therefore, you are no longer strangers and foreigners, but fellow citizens with the saints and members of the household of God, 20 having been built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ Himself being the chief cornerstone, 21 in whom the whole building, being fitted together, grows into a holy temple in the Lord, 22 in whom you also are being built together for a dwelling place of God in the Spirit.”

C. 8 Naturalism has some very serious logical consequences that I find totally unacceptable.

- (1) ** Determinism: if matter is all there is, free will doesn't exist, choice is only an illusion.
- (2) I imagine right now after that statement you might be thinking, “Surely not, who in their right mind doesn't understand and believe humans have free will?”
- (3) Scientists who have the scientific naturalistic worldview understand and believe firmly in determinism (i.e., no human free will):

“The assumption of an absolute determinism is the essential foundation of every scientific enquiry.” —Max Planck, famous German physicist

Humans are “survival machines—robot vehicles blindly programmed to preserve selfish molecules known as genes.” —Richard Dawkins

**“DNA neither cares nor knows. DNA just is. And we dance to its music.”

—Richard Dawkins, *River Out of Eden: A Darwinian View of Life*

**“I regard the brain as a computer which will stop working when its components fail. There is no heaven or afterlife for broken down computers; that is a fairy story for people afraid of the dark.” —Stephen Hawking

**“You don't choose to choose what you choose in life!” —Sam Harris

“Free will is an illusion. Our wills are simply not of our own making.... We do not have the freedom we think we have.” —Sam Harris

“You will do whatever it is you do, and it is meaningless to assert that you could have done otherwise.” —Sam Harris

**“‘You,’ your joys and your sorrows, your memories and your ambitions, your sense of personal identity and free will, are in fact no more than the behavior of a vast assembly of nerve cells and their associated molecules.” —Francis Crick, Nobel Prize winner, in *The Astonishing Hypothesis*

“We have no more free will than a bowl of sugar.” —Anthony Cashmore, biology professor, University of Pennsylvania

(4) 9 There are striking ironies in the position these atheists take as they deny free will.

- (a) ** Why would these men write books and articles; engage in public debates, in an attempt to persuade anyone to believe their “no free will” position if no one can decide for himself to change his mind?!
- (b) What is the point of trying to convince a person who believes in free will, if that “belief” is nothing more than the consequence of the cause-and-effect, natural processes that are banging around in his brain?
- (c) If the reader or listener does not have the ability to choose his or her belief, what is the point of trying to “show” the superiority of the “no-free-will” position?

(5) **10** Scientific naturalism has no objective basis for ethics and morality: very dangerous!

******“Naturalistic evolution has clear consequences that Charles Darwin understood perfectly.

1) No gods worth having exist; 2) no life after death exists; 3) no ultimate foundation for ethics exists; 4) no ultimate meaning in life exists; and 5) human free will is nonexistent.”

—William Provine, a professor in the Department of Ecology and Evolutionary Biology at Cornell University (keynote address at the University of Tennessee Knoxville’s annual Darwin Day) (William Provine (February 19, 1942 – September 1, 2015) was an American historian of science and of evolutionary biology and population genetics. He was the Andrew H. and James S. Tisch Distinguished University Professor at Cornell University and was a professor in the Departments of History, Science and Technology Studies, and Ecology and Evolutionary Biology.)

“Let me summarize my views on what modern evolutionary biology tells us loud and clear, and I must say that these are basically Darwin’s views. There are no gods, no purposeful forces of any kind, no life after death. When I die, I am absolutely certain that I am going to be completely dead. That’s just all—that’s gonna be the end of me. There is no ultimate foundation for ethics, no ultimate meaning in life, and no free will for humans, either.” — William Provine

“No inherent moral or ethical laws exist, nor are there any absolute guiding principles for human society. The universe cares nothing for us and we have no ultimate meaning in life” —William Provine

******“[A]n individual cannot be held responsible for either his genes or his environment. From this simple analysis, surely it follows that individuals cannot logically be held responsible for their behavior.” —Anthony Cashmore, biology professor, University of Pennsylvania

“Almost all of you here don’t believe in moral responsibility. Think about that. ...I don’t consider myself morally responsible, because I don’t have a choice.” —Jerry Coyne, University of Chicago

(6) **11** If scientific naturalism is true; we are merely a bag of chemicals randomly thrown together by chance.

(a) If true; not responsible for our behavior; we only do what biochemistry demands.

(b) It is pure determinism; it’s Darwin’s “survival of the fittest”; it strips man of free will.

(c) It obliterates any notion of an objective moral code.

(d) There is no rational, objective basis to define “right” and “wrong” (postmodern mindset! The ends justify the means.).

(e) Who are you to say it is wrong for me to murder? I’m only dancing to the music of my DNA!

(7) Atheists don’t like these moral implications of atheism, but no rational basis for doing so.

(8) If we are just the result of the random collision of molecules; it’s irrational to argue for an objective moral standard.

(a) Atheist cannot even supply a rational explanation for consciousness.

(b) How is consciousness possible if our thoughts, attitudes, etc. are simply the result of chemical reactions?! How rational is that?!

(9) Atheists like to blame “Christianity” for the senseless slaughter of millions (e.g., ~150,000 in Spanish Inquisition; such is true of false versions of Christianity but ignores the pure teaching of Jesus! **Matt. 5:44-45:** “...love your enemies, bless those who curse you, do good to those who hate you, and pray for those who spitefully use you and persecute you, 45 that you may be sons of your Father in heaven...”).

(10) **12** But what does atheism (scientific naturalism) lead to?

- ☛ ****WWII** (Nazi Germany & Imperial Japan): 75-80 million dead (Hitler: ~19.3 million civilians and POWs died from execution, starvation, worked to death).
- ☛ ****Stalin**: ~1.2 million executed in his “purges”; ~1.7 million died in the gulags; ~7.5 million starved in the *Holodomor*; plus, countless others (e.g., famine in Kazakhstan, ~2.3 million died).
- ☛ ****Mao**: ~55 million died in four years (1958-1961, “Great Leap Forward”; mainly of starvation; plus “cultural revolution,” ~2 million, 1966-1976).
- ☛ ****Pol Pot**: ~3.0 million (Khmer Rouge, 1975-1979; most from execution, some from starvation & disease).

(11) **13 Think**: Atheism, based on scientific naturalism, leads to the logical conclusion of determinism.

- (a) Determinism means no free will; we simply dance to the tune of our own DNA; our very being is due to physics and chemistry.
- (b) If that is true, there can be no objective moral code; your moral code (or lack thereof) is as good as my moral code and vice versa.
******“No inherent moral or ethical laws exist, nor are there any absolute guiding principles for human society. The universe cares nothing for us and we have no ultimate meaning in life” —William Provine
- (c) ****** If that’s true, there is no rational basis to condemn the actions of Hitler, Stalin or Mao murdering millions. None? Nada! Zip!
- (d) Why even have prisons and a criminal justice system? We should shut it all down!
- (e) So what if some pervert kidnaps pre-teen girls and brutalizes, rapes and murders them?! He is only dancing to the music of his own DNA!
- (f) **14** I don’t need to have a PhD to know that is total nonsense. I don’t even need any formal education to know that is total nonsense; all I need is a small dose of common sense.

******“It starts by giving up an active deity, then it gives up the hope that there is any life after death. When you give those two up, the rest of it follows fairly easily. You give up the hope that there is an imminent morality. And finally, there’s no human free will. If you believe in evolution, you can’t hope for there being any free will. There’s no hope whatsoever in there being any deep meaning in life. We live, we die, and we’re gone.” —William Provine

****Psa. 14:1-3**: “The fool has said in his heart,
‘There is no God.’
They are corrupt,
They have done abominable works,
There is none who does good.

2 The Lord looks down from heaven upon the children of men,
To see if there are any who understand, who seek God.

3 They have all turned aside,
They have together become corrupt;
There is none who does good,
No, not one.”

- (g) ** Fyodor Dostoevsky (author of *Crime and Punishment* and *The Brothers Karamozov*) put it well when he said, ***“If there is no God, everything is permitted.”***

3. 15 **Where am I going?**

A. The majority assume one of three things about this question:

- (1) ** Everybody is going to heaven (i.e., default is heaven; funeral home: “At least he/she is in a better place now.”).
- (2) ** Or, flat out deny the existence of an “afterlife.”

**“I would love to believe that when I die I will live again, that some thinking, feeling, remembering part of me will continue. But as much as I want to believe that, and despite the ancient and worldwide cultural traditions that assert an afterlife, I know of nothing to suggest that it is more than wishful thinking.” —Carl Sagan (*Billions & Billions: Thoughts on Life and Death at the Brink of the Millennium*)

**“I don’t believe in an afterlife, so I don’t have to spend my whole life fearing hell, or fearing heaven even more. For whatever the tortures of hell, I think the boredom of heaven would be even worse.” —Isaac Asimov

“My belief system is that when this is over, it’s over. That you don’t look down from heaven and wait for your loved ones to join you... your molecules continue and in due time become something else.” —William Shatner
- (3) ** Just aren’t paying attention.

B. I think most folks fall into the first and third categories.

- (1) They spend the vast majority of their lives giving little, if any, thought about eternity.
- (2) Then when death comes, they assume pretty much everyone goes to heaven (only exceptions would people like Hitler, Stalin, Mao, or Ted Bundy).

C. 16 So, why are so very many **not** Christians?

****2 Cor. 4:3-4:** “But if our gospel be hid, it is hid to them that are lost: 4 In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” (KJV)

D. ** Has God not given us enough evidence for His existence?

- (1) Carl Sagan was an agnostic. He didn’t think God gave enough evidence for His existence.

**“Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.” —Carl Sagan
- (2) He said that meaning God has not left adequate evidence to validate His existence.
- (3) I have a boatload of material on “Evidences” and have talked about it a great deal. We don’t need to cover that ground in this lesson.
- (4) ** God has left “extraordinary evidence.”

****Psa. 19:1-4:** “The heavens declare the glory of God;
And the firmament shows His handiwork.
2 Day unto day utters speech,
And night unto night reveals knowledge.
3 There is no speech nor language
Where their voice is not heard.
4 Their line has gone out through all the earth,
And their words to the end of the world.” (NKJV)

****Rom. 1:20:** “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse,”

E. **17** So, where are we headed?

****Heb. 9:27:** “And as it is appointed for men to die once, but after this the judgment,”

(1) ****** There is an objective moral standard! God’s moral standard!

****1 Jn. 1:5-10:** “This is the message which we have heard from Him and declare to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all. 6 If we say that we have fellowship with Him, and walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. 7 But if we walk in the light as He is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus Christ His Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make Him a liar, and His word is not in us.”

(2) ****** God will hold us responsible and accountable to His standard:

****Rom. 14:10-12:** “For we shall all stand before the judgment seat of Christ. 11 For it is written:

‘As I live, says the Lord,
Every knee shall bow to Me,
And every tongue shall confess to God.’

12 So then each of us shall give account of himself to God.”

****Rom. 2:5-11:** “...the righteous judgment of God, 6 who ‘will render to each one according to his deeds’: 7 eternal life to those who by patient continuance in doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; 8 but to those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness — indignation and wrath, 9 tribulation and anguish, on every soul of man who does evil, of the Jew first and also of the Greek; 10 but glory, honor, and peace to everyone who works what is good, to the Jew first and also to the Greek. 11 For there is no partiality with God.”

III. CONCLUSION: **18**

1. I’ve presented three logical and cogent answers to life’s three most basic questions:

① **How did I get here?** Gen. 1:1, 26-27; Rom. 1:20

② **Why am I here?** Isa. 43:7; Eph. 2:19-22

③ **Where am I going?** Heb. 9:27; 2 Cor. 5:10

2. ****** It is now “decision time.” What will your answer be?

Eccl. 12:13-14: “Let us hear the conclusion of the whole matter:

Fear God and keep His commandments,
For this is man’s all.
14 For God will bring every work into judgment,
Including every secret thing,
Whether good or evil.”

3. Invitation

4. **24** Quotes:

“If there is no God, nothing matters. If there is a God, nothing else matters.” —H. G. Wells

“Christianity, if false, is of no importance, and if true, of infinite importance. The only thing it cannot be is moderately important.” —C.S. Lewis

—An original sermon by Craig Thomas, Westside church of Christ; Bloomington, IN.

Notes:

First Law of Thermodynamics:

“Conservation of mass-energy is exactly what we would expect on the basis of Scripture. First, the Bible indicates that new material can come into existence. This is indicated in John 1:3 and Genesis 2:2. John 1:2 states that all things were made by God, and nothing has come into existence apart from Him. Furthermore, God ended His work of creation by the seventh day of the creation week, according to Genesis 2:2. Since only God can bring new things into existence from nothing, and since God ended His work of creation by the seventh day, the no new material will come into existence today.

Second, the Bible suggests that nothing will cease to exist. This is because God is upholding all things by His sustaining power (Heb. 1:3) and by Him all things consist (Col. 1:17). Neither matter nor energy will cease to exist, because God is sustaining them, and since nothing new will come into existence, we can conclude that the amount of material in the universe is constant. Of course, the Bible makes room for miracles—supernatural intervention by God, but miracles (by definition) do not conform to the laws of physics; they are exceptions by their very nature. The universe itself obeys the law of conservation of mass-energy.” (pp. 32-33)

Lisle, Jason. 2018. *Taking Back Astronomy*. Masterbooks. Green Forest, AR.

Interestingly, in the last line of the article, Shiga admitted: “[T]he quest to understand the origin of the universe seems destined to continue until we can answer a deeper question: why is there anything at all instead of nothing?”¹ The fact is, a logical, naturalistic explanation for the origin of the “original” ball of matter that supposedly led to the Universe does not exist. It cannot exist so long as the First Law of Thermodynamics is true (that matter and energy cannot create themselves).

Cosmological argument: “an argument for the existence of God which claims that all things in nature depend on something else for their existence (i.e. are contingent), and that the whole cosmos must therefore itself depend on a being which exists independently or necessarily.