

Why are you on Earth?

by Armin A. Wolff

Every day everyone, especially young people are bombarded by modern communications, by many messages, voices and opinions. There are a multitude of individuals and organizations that want your loyalty to a cause and in many cases your money. Which of these multitudes of many voices are you going to listen to? *Originally written in 2013*

• *Whom do you believe?*

What you believe is not nearly as important as whom you believe.

Are you going to believe people who adhere to Eastern religions, who tell you that in a previous life you might have been a cockroach or perhaps a cow on your way through endless reincarnation cycles the ultimate timeless state of “*moksa*”, a kind of perfection in Nirvana?

Are you going to believe someone who tells you that you will have 72 virgins at your disposal, if you sacrifice your life in killing others who do not obey the prophet Mohammed? Are you going to believe someone who claims to be a prophet of God with new and updated information that augments the Bible with additional information to help you to become a god yourself or is more relevant to our modern world? Are you going to believe some televangelist who promises you to have increased blessings from God if you contribute to “the work of the Lord” which in practice primarily increases their bank account?

Are you going to believe the government and its education establishment, that if you get an education in a prestigious university will be guaranteed a good high paying job, enabling you to pay off tens of thousands of dollars of debt?

Are you going to believe a science teacher who tells you that you are nothing more than a random collection of molecules that somehow became alive in a warm primordial ocean and eventually evolved into a conscious human being by means of impersonal natural processes?

Are you going to believe your social studies or philosophy teacher that right and wrong are flexible and open to individual interpretation?

Are you going to believe Jesus Christ who claimed to be God, in human form? Are you going to believe the one who said, “I am **the** way, the truth and the life?” Are you going to believe this One who asked and still asks you the searching question: “What shall it profit a man to gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?” (Mark 8:36-37)

Mark 8:36-37 For what does it profit a man to gain the whole world and forfeit his soul? For what can a man give in return for his soul?

• *An engineer's perspective*

As an engineer I have been “into” science and technology all my life. Because of this I have mostly been interested in the *how* of things, rather than why. Science and the scientific method have
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been and still are relatively successful at answering our “*how*” questions, but singularly poor at answering “*why*”.

• *Evolution vs. Creation*

Any discussion of Genesis I have had, usually involved a debate over evolution versus creation. I would like to share with you a few points not over the “*how*” of creation, which is usually discussed, but *why* God would create the universe and all that is in it in the first place. The answers to the “*why*” question are not open to discovery or logic of man. They can come only by revelation from the Creator himself. You can guess or speculate why someone else does a certain thing, but you can never be sure unless that person tells you. If they do tell you, you have to believe and trust that they are telling you the truth, because there is no way you can independently verify what you are being told. How will the person or organization benefit if you trust and believe what you are being told? Do they want to control your life and/or get into your wallet in the name of God? Whom then are you going to trust to give you a truthful answer? If you really think about it, “*how*” questions are not as important and fundamental as “*why*” questions.

• *A Gift*

Suppose someone gave you a gift. You open the package and find that there is an iPad or iPhone or other modern gadget inside. Would your first thought be to find out when or how it was made and how long it took to make it? Of course not! First you would want to know the purpose of the device and who gave it.

Similarly, should we not seek to learn first and foremost why God made the natural world, its purpose and our place in it? Is that not more important than asking the question of how or when it happened and how long it took to do it? The main point is, that God made you. (Psalm 139:13-18)

Psalm 139:13-18 For you formed my inward parts; you knitted me together in my mother's womb. I praise you, for I am fearfully and wonderfully made. Wonderful are your works; my soul knows it very well. My frame was not hidden from you, when I was being made in secret, intricately woven in the depths of the earth. Your eyes saw my unformed substance; in your book were written, every one of them, the days that were formed for me, when as yet there was none of them. How precious to me are your thoughts, O God! How vast is the sum of them! If I would count them, they are more than the sand. I awake, and I am still with you.

• *A message from beyond time and space*

We read this in the Bible, the most ancient book in general circulation. The Bible is like no other book ever written. It was not penned or translated by only one or two writers over a time span of less than one or two years or even during a single human lifetime, but was recorded by 66 different writers in 40 different books over a time span of more than 1500 years. The amazing thing is that it shows the distinct hallmarks of a single author, namely God. It is a message to all of mankind from beyond time and space.

• *Believing God is the key*

When you make something such as a painting or pottery or a wood carving or whatever, you have certain rights over and expectations from that work. Similarly, God has certain expectations from you. The most important is that you truly believe what he tells you. Failure to believe God is the reason that the world is the state it is in. If you truly believe something, you will act upon such belief and it shapes how you live. It is because you truly believe that your car will start that causes you to perform the action of turning the key in the ignition. Failing to believe God is the reason why many if not most people are not truly happy.

• *Poetry and Song*

Genesis 1 is not so much given to us to tell us how, but why God created. A great clue is the fact that Genesis 1 is a song about creation and Genesis 2 a historical account. The two are not contradictory, as some have charged. Poetic language is very repetitive and there are some phrases repeated over and over again in the first chapter of the Bible. There are some other biblical passages where we get a historical report, as well as a poem celebrating that event. Exodus 14 and 15 are examples.

Psalm 19:1-6 To the choirmaster. A Psalm of David. The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world. In them he has set a tent for the sun, which comes out like a bridegroom leaving his chamber, and, like a strong man, runs its course with joy. Its rising is from the end of the heavens, and its circuit to the end of them, and there is nothing hidden from its heat.

CS Lewis, in one of the Narnia Chronicles tells us how Aslan sang the world into existence. I like to imagine that God experienced great joy when spoke the universe into existence out of nothing and all the stars responded by singing praises to Him on that creation morning.

• *Who and why*

Genesis 1 then is really a praise song that tells us *who* created the world, namely God. The universe is not an accident nor is it the result of random forces. We read that He *created* it. That word is "bara" in Hebrew and is only used in connection with God and his (*ex nihilo* -- out of nothing) creative activity. God created the heavens and the earth, but we are not to worship

anything created, only the Creator. In this praise song, one of the things that is repeated over and over is the phrase "and God saw that it was good." This is still true, even though the first man's unbelief and resulting disobedience not only estranged mankind from God, but also caused nature no longer to be what it originally was.

• *Two Myths*

There are two mythologies about nature. One of them is our modern myth and the other one is ancient in that it was held and still is held by much if not most of humanity. The modern mythology says that the universe is an accident and is the only thing that exists and is real. There are many ancient mythologies, but they all hold in common that whatever exists came into being from something else. The Earth rests on turtles all the way down. Only the biblical creation account tells us that everything came into being out of nothing. In the book of Job God tells us that the Earth is suspended in space. (Job 26:7)

Job 26:7 He stretches out the north over the void and hangs the earth on nothing.

Only the Bible teaches us, that the material world is important and valuable. Eastern religions concentrate on the hereafter, elevating the spiritual and considering the material somewhat of a prison to be ultimately set free from. The God of the Bible is interested in all of creation, both material and immaterial. Jesus, being God, came into this material world, died, and then was physically resurrected in a new arrangement of matter.

The modern myth of secularism and materialism teaches that this world is all there is. Those that have embraced this, live for wealth and power. In contrast, the ancient mythologies mostly insist that this world is not important, but the world to come is. That is why science never arose out of any of the ancient religions. These ancient philosophies and religions do not consider this world important. You never got social justice either, such as for example the ending of slavery.

• *The Giver of Pleasure*

Because God created the physical creation complete with all its pleasures, means that pleasure itself is good, but we are admonished not to live for it. In ancient cultures, such as the Greek and Roman, the pleasures of this world were looked down upon as something to be avoided, in order to achieve salvation. This idea spilled over into the church in the building of monasteries and the denial of material worldly pleasures as a means of salvation. Martin Luther, himself a monk, realized that this was not biblical and ushered in the Reformation.

• *God's Kingdom right here on Earth*

Ancient and many present religions teach salvation is escaping Earth by some kind of effort, but only the Bible teaches, in Revelation 21, that the city of God comes down right here to the Earth. Jesus was always talking about the presence of the kingdom of God here and now on earth. For centuries, Christians have been praying, "...thy kingdom come," and "thy will be done on Earth..." Some day, perhaps very soon, this prayer will be answered literally.

• *Body and Soul*

God redeemed both the body and the soul. The physical, bodily resurrection of Jesus is evidence of that. Paul tells us in Romans that all of nature is groaning right now, waiting for the revealing of the sons of God, in the new Creation. Then he also writes in 2 Corinthians Chapter 5, that redeemed Christians are a new creation.

2Corinthians 5:17 Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.

God tells us in his word that this creation, including the old nature inherited from Adam within man cannot be fixed. It is beyond repair and must be replaced with something entirely new. In due time, God will complete the redemption of this physical world. Christians believe that after God cleanses this earth by a fiery judgment that destroys all unredeemed sinners, there is a glorious future for this earth, where every flaw will be corrected and every wrong eliminated. The wolf and the lamb will feed together and the lion and other carnivorous animals will become vegetarians. (Isaiah 25:65)

Isaiah 11:6 The wolf shall dwell with the lamb, and the leopard shall lie down with the young goat, and the calf and the lion and the fattened calf together; and a little child shall lead them.

Isaiah 65:25 The wolf and the lamb shall graze together; the lion shall eat straw like the ox, and dust shall be the serpent's food. They shall not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain," says the LORD.

The law of tooth and claw will be repealed or greatly modified.

• *God speaks*

In Genesis 1 a refrain of God's song, "... and God said," is repeated. God never creates without speaking. When God said "Let there be light," he didn't then go out and make some light, but light came into being. When God speaks, it happens. We read that the Spirit of God was "hovering" over the waters. The only other use of this word is found in the Hebrew Bible in connection of a mother bird fluttering or brooding over her nest.

• *In our Image*

When creating man, God says, "Let us create man in our image." Us? Who is he talking to? The answer is given in the Gospel of John chapter 1, which refers to the person of Jesus Christ, who is the personified Word of God. We are told there that nothing was created without the Word, the son of God, Jesus.

• *Circle of eternal Love*

In God from all eternity, before time and all of creation, there is a community, a circle of love. The Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are delighting in each other and enjoying each other's beauty before anything else existed. The biblical concept of the Trinity puts our finite brains into overload. Without the biblical concept of a triune God, there is no possibility of love before creation, because love is never self-directed, but always *other* oriented. God did not *have* to create man or any other being in order to experience love.

• *Extending the Circle*

The biggest reason *why* He created the whole universe and especially man in it, is because he wanted to extend this circle of love. The persons of the Trinity said to each other, "Let us create beings to bring into our circle of love so we can all enjoy each other." This is what Jesus expressed so beautifully in Chapter 17 of John. Love is the music to which the poetry of Genesis 1 was sung by Jesus Christ.

• *Creation glorifies God*

Another reason why God created is to show His glory and majesty. In Psalm 19 we read that the heavens bring glory to God. With the invention of the Hubble space telescope and other modern astronomy instruments, humanity is getting a glimpse for the first time, of the incredible beauty and variety of the distant universe and its galaxies which God called into existence by his all-powerful word. A butterfly is a marvel of beauty and complex engineering. Modern microscopes have extended our ability to enjoy and appreciate the tiniest objects of God's creation. God created countless communities of creatures to bring glory to Himself. Over and over again He sings the refrain, "It is good." He enjoys and rejoices over his creation and pronounces it very good. God is still creating a community of beings who in love can praise and reflect him. In Jesus Christ the God-man, He completes the circle and says that he delights in and adores his redeemed sons and daughters. Every human being is invited into the circle, but only those that accept the redemption done by the work on the cross of Jesus Christ are able to enter.

• *The Effect of Beauty in Nature*

The purpose of nature is singing and community. Why does the beauty of nature, such as a glorious sunset or a place like Yosemite affect humans so strongly? Why do so many enjoy the great beauty of our Southern Oregon mountains, lakes, rivers, fields and forests and the abundance of wildlife we have here?

Even those who do not believe in God are often deeply moved by nature. Is the entire universe nothing more than "one verse," one song, shouting the praises of the Creator and calling you to join? I believe that nature is calling to every human being about God. At present, many, if not most, human beings are not content to merely see love and beauty, but want to enter in, to be united with it. At present many feel like they are on the outside, the wrong side of the door of nature, trying to get in. We sense the freshness and beauty of a morning sunrise, but it doesn't make us fresh and beautiful.

• *Man, His own Master*

Although nature is affected by the fall of man, it still displays great joy, whereas man, especially unredeemed man, is mostly sad. If you are without genuine joy in your life, it is because you along with all other humans have rebelled against God, declared yourself your own master. You along with all other humans cannot fully enter into the joy of nature, although deeply moved by the music of praise the creation sings to its Creator. Sinful man cannot join in the chorus the morning stars sang as a response to God's song of creation as recorded in Genesis. God asked Job about this also.

Job 38:7 when the morning stars sang together and all the sons of God shouted for joy?

The reason we cannot fully join in nature's praise song, is because human beings have chosen to be their own master. Natural man does not want to be subject to the King that nature obeys without question.

• *Animals generally avoid humans*

Most of the time, animals bark, growl or screech at us, or avoid us entirely, unless they have been domesticated and know us. Why? Is it because they know that we have a quarrel with their master? Although creatures in nature are suffering, because of man, under the curse of God, still by and large they are under the benediction of God. Their song expresses the knowledge that their Maker loves, enjoys and delights in them and pronounced them good. They sing in quiet hope, that one day soon their Creator will restore the entire creation that was wrecked by human unbelief and resulting sin.

• *Independence from God*

Human beings were designed to live under the full benediction of God, but we rebelled and declared our independence. God respects your freedom to disbelieve and rebel against him, if that is what you want to continue to do. You are not a computer or robot that has to unthinkingly obey God. Christians proclaim the message that God sang in Genesis. That song is, "You were good in the beginning. God again, through the Redeemer, Jesus Christ, wants to restore that goodness, even though you rebelled and sinned." Once you have accepted God's restorative work, through Jesus Christ on the cross, the song of God is once again, "You are very good and I take great delight in you."

• *The invisible One becomes visible*

In the Gospel of John 1 we read that the invisible, creative Word of God became flesh. The one who created matter became matter. The one through whom everything visible originated, became visible Himself.

• *Opposite of Creation*

What took place on the cross is the opposite of what we read in Genesis 1. Jesus on the cross spoke, even cried out, but nothing happened. He cried out, "My God, my God", instead of my Father. There was silence, because God had turned away from Him who became sin for us. He became without form and void. As Isaiah says, he was marred beyond recognition. Paul writes that the Creator emptied Himself, so we might be made full. The Spirit of God was not hovering over Him, but he was forsaken because of our iniquity. What happened to Jesus Christ on the cross, was in a sense, the opposite of creation. Our Maker was deconstructed in a sense, unmade, so we can be remade. To get remade, re-created, all anybody has to do, is to believe and accept for him or herself, what Jesus has accomplished on the cross and resurrection. The beauty of nature is calling us to sing, but we can't sing, until we understand that nature's Maker was unmade so that we can be re-made.

• *Now we can know true Love*

He died the death you should have died, but now you can live and know, that He loves you and because of Him you will

rejoice and sing with Him forever, provided you believe and trust him while you are alive on this earth. God can once again rejoice, as he did in the beginning and sing the song He sang at Creation. The refrain of that song He is singing to His redeemed sons and daughters is, "You are very good." Today, are you one of those that has been redeemed? If not, you can be right now by simply praying something along these lines, preferably in your own words:

Dear God, I am not always even sure that you exist, but by faith I believe you do. I want with all my heart be to accepted in your inner circle of love made possible by Jesus Christ on the cross. Please make me the kind of person you created me to be, to live in peace and harmony with you and all my fellow human beings. Forgive me for my past where I have not lived up to even my own resolutions and expectations and definitely not according to your laws. Enable me to live the rest of my life in your love and power through your son Jesus Christ. – Amen.

If you have sincerely prayed something along the lines of the above prayer, Jesus has forgiven every sin and trespass you have ever done or still will do until you close your eyes forever. God has sealed the Holy Spirit within you as a down payment for all of God's promises and your inheritance with him is guaranteed. (Ephesians 4:30) If you endeavor to live a righteous God pleasing life, depending on your own strength, you will surely fail, but from this moment on, by the power of the indwelling Holy Spirit, you can have victory over sin and live a good and pleasing life in the sight of and in intimate fellowship with God. Always be grateful for the great work Jesus Christ has done on your behalf and be thankful every day He gives you life here on earth, doing whatever work he has assigned to you. When you stand before him on judgment day you will not receive what you deserve, because Jesus paid the penalty for you. Whatever good you do in life will accrue to your eternal benefit and you will not stand before God empty-handed, but will receive a reward according to your faithfulness.