

# Is Anybody Home?

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TEXT: Genesis 1:1

*When Soviet Russia put her first man into orbit about the earth, upon his return her leaders gleefully announced that in his travel through outer space he saw nothing to prove the existence of God.*

Which suggests our topic for this message. "Is Anybody Home?" When I was a child living on a farm it was customary for a visitor to come to the house, rap on the door, and cry, "Is anybody home?" An answer, or the lack of one, indicated whether anyone was at home or not.

As you rap on the door of the universe and call, "Is anybody home?" what answer do you get? Is it merely the echo of your own cry? Or do you receive an intelligent answer? Varied have been the replies to these questions.

The *atheist* says he receives no answer. To him the universe is merely a soulless system which is the result of pure chance or trial and error. The *pantheist* says that everything is God who is a prisoner in His own universe. The *deist* says that if God created the universe, He wound it up like a machine, threw it out into space, and went off and left it to grind out its own operation devoid of personality or care.

Suffice to say that none of these attitudes is supported by the Bible. Furthermore, they have been largely discarded by pure science. The more science learns about the universe the more it tends to confirm the teachings of the Bible. Indeed, it is of interest to note that a few years ago in a Chicago newspaper, the physicist, Doctor Arthur H. Compton, declared that the opening words of the Bible, "In the beginning God . . ." are the most majestic words ever penned.

I want to talk with you about God. Doctor E. Y. Mullins defined God as

"the supreme personal Spirit; perfect in all his attributes; who is the source, support, and end of the universe; who guides it according to the wise, righteous, and loving purpose revealed in Jesus Christ; who indwells in all things by his Holy Spirit, seeking to transform them according to his own will and bring them to the goal of his kingdom."

Let us examine this definition as we note, first, God in creation; second, God in providence; third, God in redemption.

## God IN CREATION

God is "the source, support, and end of his universe."

Moses began the first book in the Bible with the sublime words "In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth." Thus the Bible does not argue for the existence of God. It only declares Him. And its first avowal is that He is the Creator of the universe.

Paul is more explicit when in Romans 11:36 he says literally, "*For out of him, and through him, and unto him, is the universe: to whom be glory for ever.*" We could multiply scripture abundantly to this effect. But we could not say more. For both Moses and Paul declare God to be the Source and immediate Agent in creation. Paul adds that He is its Goal.

There is not a single word in these statements of Moses and Paul that pure science can successfully refute. Indeed, with few exceptions, the leading scientists of today hold to a theistic basis of creation—that is, that the cause back of creation is an intelli-

gent Being. Sir James Jeans, a leading English physicist, regards the Creator as a "Mathematician." Of interest at this point is the fact of the present-day emphasis upon mathematics as the key to the secrets of the universe.

Doctor Andrew M. Fairbairn, in his *The Philosophy of the Christian Religion* (Doran, 1902, p. 55), says, "We cannot conceive either Nature or its creative work otherwise than through Mind . . . To affirm the transcendence of thought is to affirm the priority of spirit, for spirit is but thought made concrete . . . and how can we better express this thought in its highest concrete form than by the ancient name of God?"

## BLIND CHANCE?

Reason itself rules out chance as the explanation of the marvelous structure of the universe. Doctor A. Cressy Morrison makes an interesting observation. If you number ten pennies from 1 to 10, put them in your pocket and draw them out one at a time, the chances are one in ten billion that you will draw them out in the order from 1 to 10.

Is it within reason, therefore, to suggest that this marvelous universe is the result of blind chance? A leading astronomer recently declared that there are more solar systems in the universe than there are grains of sand on every beach of every ocean on the earth. Physicists tell us that there is a solar system in every atom. And every one of these systems moves in perfect precision.

When scientists put satellites into orbit they can tell the exact second that they will pass a certain place in their journeys around the earth. This is the result of mathematical minds, not blind chance. In infinitely greater degree the planets move with such exact precision through the heavens that astronomers can predict years

ahead the exact moment that a given planet will be at a precise place in the heavens. Blind chance? It takes more faith to believe that than to believe that an infinite God not only created the universe, but orders it in its operation.

## A GRADUAL BLENDING

If you will lay the order of the creation account in Genesis alongside the order of creation held by geology, you will find that they coincide. The former is in the popular language of an ancient people; the latter is the exact language of science; but they, in essence, tell the same story. We may well agree with Doctor Bernard Ramm (*The Christian View of Science and Scripture*, Eardmans, 1954, pp. 226-27). "The theologian knows that God is Creator, but that fact does not tell him the *how* and *when*. The geologist knows the *how* and *when*, but the *Who* is a mystery to him. The Christian geologist, and the geologically minded theologian, alone can put together the *Who* of theology and the *what* of geology, and can show the connectedness between primary causation and secondary causation."

So theology and science are gradually blending their voices to declare "*In the beginning God created . . .*" And quoting Doctor Ramm again: "Genesis 1 now stands in higher repute than it could ever have stood in the history of science up to this point." (p. 154).

## GOD IN PROVIDENCE

Doctor Mullins says, ". . . who guides it [universe] according to the wise, righteous, and loving purpose revealed in Jesus Christ. . ."

What do we mean by "providence?" It refers to God's preservation, care, and government over all things that He has created, in order that they may accomplish the ends for which they were created. This providence is

related to three realms: the inanimate or physical; the animate, such as vegetation and animals; and the reasonable or human. We have already noted how God orders the planets in their spheres.

He is no less careful in the vegetable and animal kingdoms. Need I dwell upon the endless order of the seasons adapted to seedtime and harvest? Nor do I need to labor the fact of vegetation being adapted to its climate and terrain, whether it be a cactus plant or a palm tree. The first chapter in the Bible says that God ordained that both vegetation and each animal should produce after its kind. You never gather thorns from thistles nor grapes from an apple tree. The covering of every animal's body is adapted to the climate and natural habitat in which it lives. Animals bereft of reason live by an inborn law which we call instinct. Geese fly north in the spring and south in the fall. Swallows annually arrive at Capistrano never a day early or late. Are these things due to chance? Reason says otherwise.

Jesus said that foxes have their holes and birds their nests. Who taught a bird how to build a nest? Who equipped bats with antennas enabling them to fly in the dark? Why are ducks equipped with feet and feathers made for water? And why do they take to water, while chickens avoid it? Why is the clumsy, helpless porcupine equipped with quills? Why are fishes and birds equipped with hollow bone structure, oval shaped bodies, fins and scales or wings and feathers respectively—except that each is so made to live and move in its natural habitat?

The illustrations could be endless. Is it not all explained by Jesus' words that even a sparrow does not fall to the ground but that God takes note of it? God is concerned about every one of His creatures. We often explain

these things as the laws of nature. May we not more accurately say that they are the providential work of God within His natural laws?

## A THORN IN THE FLESH

The supreme evidence of providence is seen in God's dealings with man, God's creature endowed with reason. The Bible abounds in such a relationship between God and man. I need only cite the experience of Joseph in Egypt as one example of which there are many. Furthermore, He causes His rain to fall on the just and on the unjust.

To be sure in personal relationships God works with man in the realm of man's reason and free moral agency. As a responsible being man must accept the consequences of his choices. But God's will is always for man's good and never for his misfortune.

To the man who follows Him the Lord is ever his Shepherd. He is his Rock, his Hiding Place, his Shield and Buckler. And when God's benevolent will is thwarted for the moment, either by man's rebellion or by the evil principle which sometimes aborts the laws of nature, God works in all things for good to those who love Him and who are endeavoring to fit into His will and purpose (Rom. 8:28). He may not always remove the circumstance, but like Paul's thorn in the flesh, God says, "*My grace is sufficient for thee*" (II Cor. 12:9). The greatest example of God's providential care is seen in His will and work to save man from his rebellion against God's will.

## GOD IN REDEMPTION

Again quoting Doctor Mullins. "... seeking ever to transform them according to his own will and bring them to the goal of his kingdom."

The story of the Bible from beginning to end is that of redemption. It begins with man's creation for God's

fellowship, and man's sin and fall. Ever thereafter it unfolds the quest of a brokenhearted and loving God after His sinful creature. It climaxes with God's act in becoming Man, His death on the cross, His victory in the resurrection, and His continuing intercession for man's forgiveness. It is God in Christ reconciling the world unto Himself (II Cor. 5:19). It was God reconciling not only man but the whole universe unto Himself (Rom. 8:19-39).

The first recorded words of God to man after his fall are "*Where art thou?*" (Gen. 3:9). The last words in the Bible, apart from a warning and a benediction, are "*And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely*" (Rev. 22:17).

Does this sound like blind chance working by trial and error in an evolutionary process? Is this the work of a God who is a prisoner in His universe? Can you reconcile this with a God who made the universe, wound it

up like a machine, threw it out into space, and went off and left it to its own fate?

One day in Bangkok, Thailand, I looked upon the famous Sleeping Buddha. A thirty foot long idol, it lay on its side, with its head resting on one hand, asleep. What a contrast to our God who never slumbers nor sleeps, whose ear is ever open to our cry, who is with us always, everywhere! That is the God of the Bible, ever-present, all-powerful, completely holy and righteous, tender in mercy, and forgiving to all who come to Him through Jesus Christ His Son.

Immanuel Kant, the German philosopher, once said that two things never failed to inspire reverence in his heart, the starry heavens above and the moral law within. Both are the work of God. But there is a far greater word than this. Here it is.

*"For God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life"* (John 3:16).

## ***Text of a Nuclear Physicist***

*A nuclear physicist from Los Alamos, New Mexico, speaking to a church men's meeting used Colossians 1:17 as his text. Said he, "The most unstable element known to science is the atom. We call the force which holds the atom together the Colossian Force, taking the name from Colossians 1:17."*

And what is Colossians 1:17? "*And he is before all things, and by him all things consist.*" Literally, "*And he is before any single part of the universe, and the universe as a whole in him holds together.*" Thus science joins its voice with the message of the New Testament in declaring the glory of Christ.

The New Testament exhausts human language in glorifying Christ. It would be difficult to select one passage above any other in this regard. But if I had to make such a selection, I would choose Colossians 1:15-20. And verse 17 is the center about which the entire passage revolves. It declares Christ to be the cohesive Force