

What We Believe: Creation

A psychologist at Yale University named Paul Bloom reports that when children are asked about the origins of animals and of people, they prefer explanations that involve an intentional creator, even if the parents who raised them do not. Psychologist Justin Barrett from Oxford University reports that scientific evidence shows that children see the natural world as designed and purposeful and conclude that there is an intelligent being behind that purpose. He adds that if children were placed on an island and raised themselves, "I think they would believe in God." It appears, from a scientific point of view, that in order to convince people that there is no God we have to educate them away from a faith in the Creator and that's what our media and our education system is attempting to do.

The apostle Paul begins his letter to the church in Rome by addressing this issue directly. We may think that the term "living in denial" is based on some modern psychological discovery, but Paul knew it in the first century. He wrote, in Romans 1:18, that people "suppress the truth". They choose not to admit what has been made obvious to them, but choose evil over good in denying the truth.

He goes on in verses 21 and 28 to say this:

Although they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks to Him.
(v. 21)

They did not see fit to acknowledge God (v.28)

Why would people want to suppress the truth about God? The reasons haven't changed that much over the centuries, but they have a unique flavor today as many are looking for a spiritual dimension to their lives, an experience of 'something more'. But what appeals to people who suppress the truth is not the something more of the Bible, but something they can tap into ... or out of. It comes down to the age-old issue of who or what is going to be in control of our lives. The great appeal of some of the eastern mysticism that became so popular in North America in the early 1980's is that it is centered in us, in our interpretations of our experience and in the choices we make in "tapping into" the spiritual dimension on our own terms. That's not the experience of people who are living in the Kingdom of God. We are not in control of the universe, or even of our own destiny. We believe in a God who is supreme over all, who created the heavens and the earth and who, therefore, has the authority, the right, to tell us what is evil and what is good, how we should respond to Him and relate to one another.

That gives us the motivation for suppressing the truth - the will, the urge, to be the rulers of our lives - but what truth is being suppressed? Isn't the truth on the side of naturalism or some sort of non-supernatural cause to the universe?

Part One: the beginning of the cosmos. Up until the last century, people believed that the universe had always existed - scientists included - largely because Aristotle had said so and no other theory arose that was opposed to the biblical, or Islamic, view that described a creation in time. In 1927, the Belgian Catholic priest Georges Lemaitre

proposed an expanding model for the universe to explain the redshifts of spiral nebulae that had been observed. And in 1929, Edwin Hubble confirmed that theory through observation, showing that the universe was expanding and in 1931, Lemaitre proposed the idea that the universe began with an explosion, the event which would later be called "The Big Bang". In 1978 the Nobel Prize for Physics was awarded to two American radio astronomers who had discovered the Cosmic Microwave Background (CMB) which further confirms the Big Bang theory.

Now, most scientists accept that the universe had a beginning, but what caused that beginning? What existed before the universe existed, how did it come into being and how did it kick off the expansion that that has produced uncounted numbers of galaxies?

Let's stand back from these questions for a moment and take a look at the big picture. What we see in the cosmos itself is something of immense size, incredible complexity and a beautiful order or symmetry. There are laws that govern the movements that we see, laws that are so finely-tuned that if there were only the most minute variations in those laws, life anywhere in this universe would be impossible.

Where do these laws come from? In preparation for today I read an article from the website "strongatheism.net" and this is how the article concludes, with arrogant confidence that the writer has successfully dismissed the argument from design:

The more we learn about the universe, the more we observe the power of natural law in developing existence into complex and wondrous forms. We do not, however, observe any divine agency. "God's fingerprints" are nowhere to be seen. The fingerprints of the eternal laws of nature, however, fill the heavens.

Francois Tremblay, "The Many Problems of the Fine-Tuning Argument"

In other words, he is saying that, rather than believe in God and God's actions in creation, he has chosen to believe in the creative power of the eternal laws of nature. To which I have to ask, "What evidence do we have that the laws of nature have created, can create or will create anything?" And who creates the laws? Earlier he claimed that the fine-tuning of the universe is actually an argument against a Creator because he doesn't understand why a wise Creator would make the line between the conditions that allow for life and the conditions that prohibit life so narrow, so tight. As if that was somehow a significant argument or even made sense. All he is saying, which I've read from several atheists now, is that if he were making a universe he would make it differently. But in our world view, we don't assume that we would make a better universe than God did, or that the precarious balances of the laws of nature are not His way of speaking some wisdom to us - that He is, in fact, the One who holds it all together.

Actually, none of the arguments the author presents in this article hold together except under a naturalistic world view, a view which won't allow for God to exist and which believes that science has the answer for everything. But we already know that that isn't true, because science will not give us a satisfying explanation for origins, for fine-tuning,

for miracles, for consciousness, for the inexplicable gaps in the fossil record which Darwin thought would be filled in within 50 years of his death, for irreducible complexity - yes, they have retorts and scorn for those who believe in God, but not the kind of answers that should persuade anyone to believe that naturalism is true.

So, getting back to the big picture, we see this vast and intricate universe and we have to make a call on it: did it make itself or was it made by someone with great wisdom and great power. The believer in naturalism says confidently that it made itself and the believer in God says just as confidently that it was made by a superior intellect - a conclusion that Einstein reached many decades ago. Let me quote from him:

The human mind, no matter how highly trained, cannot grasp the universe. We are in the position of a little child entering a huge library whose walls are covered to the ceiling with books in many different tongues. The child knows that someone must have written those books. It does not know who or how. It does not understand the languages in which they are written. The child notes a definite plan in the arrangement of the books, a mysterious order, which it does not comprehend, but only dimly suspects. That, it seems to me, is the attitude of the human mind, even the greatest and most cultured, toward God. We see a universe marvelously arranged, obeying certain laws, but we understand the laws only dimly.

So, if and when you are reading the arguments of those committed to naturalism, which many of them equate with science, know that they are not claiming to know that God doesn't exist, but they are claiming that they believe in something else; the laws of nature, the creative power of evolution, the ability of mindless matter to organize itself into living organisms.

Back to the question that I left 2 1/2 pages ago - what caused the beginning of the universe? One of the rock stars of the atheist movement, perhaps second only to Stephen Hawking, is Dr. Lawrence Krauss, a theoretical physicist and professor at Arizona State University. He has written a book called [A Universe From Nothing: Why There Is Something Rather Than Nothing](#). When Dr. Krauss uses the word "nothing", he doesn't exactly mean nothing. He means things like the laws of physics and a quantum vacuum and other things that, whatever they may be, are NOT nothing. And another atheist professor, Dr. David Albert, a PhD in theoretical physics and professor at Columbia University called him on it. In a scathing review of Krauss' book, he wrote:

That's just not right. Relativistic-quantum-field-theoretical vacuum states -- no less than giraffes or refrigerators or solar systems -- are particular arrangements of elementary physical stuff . . .

He goes on in some detail to debunk Krauss' argument and then adds this:

But all there is to say about this, as far as I can see, is that Krauss is dead wrong and his religious and philosophical critics are right.

Again, this coming from an atheist physicist. And Krauss responded, as so many of these militant atheists do, by hurling an insult, calling Albert "a moronic philosopher".

Now, I've spent a very long time on the origin of the universe, because the principles behind where our culture stands and what the sciences teach in schools and universities and what the media presents as fact and what the atheists mock us for are pretty much the same all down the line.

1. They believe so strongly in naturalism that they tend to dismiss any evidence for a Creator as something that still needs an explanation. Faith in God is seen as an escape from rigorous scientific investigation, although what passes for "investigation" is often mere speculation; such as the theory of the multiverse that we have no way of testing empirically and which is really just a dodge to get around the fine-tuning of this universe that we can observe.
2. Instead of answering objections, many of the militant new atheists resort to slandering the people they disagree with. Dr. Krauss' dismissive remark against Dr. Albert is just one example of this. When people resort to hurling insults rather than answering honest questions, it's most likely that they don't have satisfying answers to the questions they face.
3. The naturalistic world view infects everything they write. It is embedded in their philosophy, in their scientific speculations and in all the conclusions they draw about origins. Instead of searching for truth, they find themselves searching for naturalistic explanations for everything, which makes it difficult for them to accept any truth that lies outside their world view. What often happens, then, is that the writings of these atheistic scientists will contain internal contradictions, just because they will use the same word to mean different things in different contexts. An example of this is the way Dr. Krauss uses the word "nothing" in the title of his book, but doesn't really mean "nothing" when you read its contents.

So, this is what Paul meant when he said that people will "suppress the truth", even though they know God, being able to clearly see God's invisible qualities through what He has made. This is what we see confirmed by modern psychology as its studies of children tell us that they tend to explain the physical universe as the product of an intentional creator. It's obvious to people that this world, this universe, had a creator, but they suppress the truth for their own purposes, primarily so that they can throw off the constraints of religious faith, especially the moral constraints, the idea that Someone Else can tell them what to do, what is good and what is evil, but also to follow the appeal of a belief system that they can control, that elevates their intellectual abilities.

One of the basic laws of science is the law of causality. Everything that comes into being must have a cause, something that caused it to come into being. When a person bursts into tears, we want to know what's wrong. Why do we think something is wrong unless we suspect that there is a painful cause to the tears? We know that when a baseball comes screaming towards us as we stand in the batter's box that some person or machine must have thrown that ball.

This law of causality is accepted in scientific circles, but not quite fully accepted when it comes to the origin of the universe. We have to return for a moment to Dr. Krauss and his use of language in relation to first causes. In relation to what he calls "the vexing problem" of the beginning of the universe, he says, "All things that begin *may* have a

cause, even if the cause is rather obscure and purposeless.” Do you see all that’s loaded into that one brief statement? Now, the law of causality is not a law, per se, but can be considered a possibility. “All things that begin *may* have a cause.” And the universe itself, he suggests, however caused, is purposeless. And the cause itself, if there is a cause, is “obscure”. He is deliberately casting doubt on any causal agent that is responsible for the existence of our universe.

But the law of causality has a way of coming back to bite the person who is a committed materialist, a committed believer in naturalism. The troubling issue has to do with the human mind. We will ask the question, “Is your mind a strictly material thing, and your thoughts controlled by the laws of physics?” In Dr. Krauss’ case, we will ask if the book he wrote, in which he claimed that all physical things have physical causes, was written by a strictly physical mind, or are there immaterial aspects to it.

If he answers that there are immaterial aspects to the human mind, then he has contradicted his argument that all physical things have physical causes. If he answers that the mind which produced his book is only a physical or material thing, then we have to question why we should believe any of it. It was simply produced by the chemical reactions taking place in a human brain and has no authority to speak to the rest of us. That’s one of the dilemmas of materialism. In a debate that he had with Christopher Hitchens, Doug Wilson concluded that, if materialism is true, we are no different than a can of Coke fizzing.

The main problems that I have with materialism or pure naturalism, are twofold: it not only defies the teaching of Scripture, one, but it also defies common sense and human experience. I’ve read and listened to many fine-sounding arguments from atheist philosophers, scientists and debaters, but when you take the time to dissect the arguments, you find that there are these internal contradictions and fuzzy language.

Here is what Paul has to say in Romans about the evidence for a Creator - and I’ll read the longer version so you can get the context:

The anger of God is being revealed from heaven against all the godlessness and wickedness of those who suppress the truth by their wickedness, since what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities - His eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. For although they knew God, they neither glorified Him as God nor gave thanks to Him, but their thinking became futile and their foolish hearts were darkened. Although they claimed to be wise, they became fools (1:18-22)

This is a serious accusation, one that we can’t take lightly. Paul is saying that we have all the evidence we need to believe in God, just from the creation itself, and not only to believe but to know what God is like. But he also says that many have chosen to suppress that truth, that knowledge of God, through actions he calls evil, actions which

lead to a futile way of thinking and on into absolute foolishness. This is serious stuff, although those who deny God's reality might not think so.

So, let's close this round with some applications:

1. Pray for those individuals who are caught in this deep faith in naturalism. This is more than science - it is the belief that everything that exists came about without God and it is a spiritual bondage leading to an intellectual bondage, a straight-jacket of unbelief.
2. Understand the basics of science, things like the law of causality, and use those basics in conversations with people about ultimate issues, dealing with questions like "how did this all begin?" Read some good books on Christian faith in the midst of an often hostile scientific community. Here are a few that I've been reading this summer: Stealing From God by Frank Turek, Finding Truth by Nancy Pearcey, Is Reality Secular? by Mary Poplin - there are so many others. Call me when you've finished those three.
3. Use your common sense. Look around you at the world with eyes that see what's there. And ask the questions that need to be asked: "Can I believe that the DNA of human chromosome #1, consisting of 220 million base pairs, just got itself together, that those 220 million base pairs were destined to form in the precise way they did so that I could live?" "Can I believe that life itself is a happy accident, knowing how complex and multi-functional, each cell of each organism is?" "Can I believe that the observable fine-tuning of the universe is another cosmic accident that allowed life to form on this planet?" "Can I believe that consciousness evolved from nothing?" We need to be thinking.
4. Finally, be aware of the world views of the people you live next door to, work with, chat with online, whatever your encounter. Know that most of the Western world is being bludgeoned into thinking that this is truth, that this is the real world, and be skeptical. If it doesn't make sense on a foundational level, it probably isn't true -- but we know the One whose word is true, who is, in His words, the way, the truth, and the life.