

From Creation Until Now

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Creation

“In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth” (Genesis 1:1), the first verse in the Bible, accounts for the existence of the created universe in a way with which no alternative, God-hating, human theory or any manmade, world religion can begin to compare. This explanation for the existence of all that is, consistently populates the Bible throughout. “You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You” (Nehemiah 9:6). “By the word of the LORD the heavens were made, And all the host of them by the breath of His mouth. He gathers the waters of the sea together as a heap; He lays up the deep in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD; Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him. For He spoke, and it was done; He commanded, and it stood fast” (Psalm 33:6-9). “And: You, LORD, in the beginning laid the foundation of the earth, And the heavens are the work of Your hands” (Hebrews 1:10). “By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible” (Hebrews 11:3). (See also Exodus 20:11; 31:17; Psalm 8:3; 102:25; 115:15; Jeremiah 51:15; Revelation 4:11; 10:6.)

Hebrews 3:4 reads, “For every house is built by someone, but He who built all things is God.” It is logical or reasonable to conclude that this earth and the universe were created by someone superior to the inhabitants of this planet. It is illogical, unreasonable and unscientific to conclude that life sprung from lifeless matter and that the intricate design evident in all of creation haplessly occurred without a Master Designer. The divinely inspired apostle

Paul affirmed in his letter to the Roman Christians that mankind cannot excuse itself from acknowledging the existence of God, because the evidence of God is everywhere.

“For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. 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, because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things.” (Romans 1:18-24)

Notice that God refers to His creation of the universe as well as the creation of mankind as the basis of the authority by which He gives humans divine instruction (e.g., Isaiah, Jeremiah, Acts 4:24; 14:15, 17), and the authority by which He will punish disobedience.

There is one God, but three persons who share the attribute of being God, designated in Scripture as the Father, the Son and the Holy Spirit (Matthew 28:19). Just as there are five fingers or digits on one hand, and it is still one hand, there are three persons that possess the quality of being God (divine), but there is still only one God or Godhead. All three of these divine persons participated in creation (Genesis 1:26), but creation is especially attributed to the Son, Jesus Christ (Ephesians 3:9-10; Hebrews 1:2-3). It is important to understand that the same power by which the universe was created is the same power by which the universe continues to exist (Nehemiah 9:6; Hebrews 1:2-3; 2 Peter 3:7; Revelation 4:11). “For by Him [Jesus Christ] all things were created that are in heaven and that are on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or principalities or powers. All things were created through Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things consist” (Colossians 1:16-17).

God is the **first cause** by which the entire universe with its intricate design came into being. He is **eternal**, which means that He had **no beginning**. God is not subject to the laws of nature or science, but He is responsible for the existence of what mankind calls the laws of nature, and He makes true scientific rules possible, by which the universe works in harmony with itself. God is to be awed, heeded, worshipped and served. “God, who made the world and everything in it, since He is Lord of heaven and earth, does not dwell in temples made with hands” (Acts 17:24).

A Book of Divine Instructions

The great Creator-God did not leave mankind without guidance for properly interacting with each other and properly interacting with Him. By dictating His will to about 40 humans over approximately 1,600 years (2 Timothy 3:16-17; 2 Peter 1:20-21), God provided mankind with an instruction manual, the Bible. It contains 66 books, divided into two sections, the Old Testament and the New Testament. About 2,500 years after creation, God inspired Moses to write the first five books of the Bible, and in Genesis, the first of those books, God gave details about the creation of everything, including mankind (Genesis 1-3). The first man was named Adam, and the first woman was named Eve; the entire human race descended from this first couple.

The Old Testament contains 39 books and covers two related but distinctly different and successive systems of God-given religion: Patriarchy and Judaism. The New Testament contains 27 books and covers the transition from Judaism to Christianity, this latter God-given religion to which every person living today is obligated to obey. Not only so, but every blessing for this life and eternally that are available to people living today can be found in the New Testament portion of the Bible (John 10:10; Ephesians 1:3). Every religion practiced today besides Patriarchy, Judaism and Christianity is younger than these God-given religions, and only Christianity remains as a valid, God-given religion today. Everything else is either a hollow, manmade religion (Matthew 15:9) or a form of something that once implemented by God is no longer authorized by God (Romans 7:1-7; 2 Corinthians 3:11; Ephesians 2:14-16; Colossians 2:14; Hebrews 8:6-13; 10:9). True, biblical Christianity is the only valid religion today, but not everything that represents itself to be Christianity abides

by the divine instruction in the New Testament; there are counterfeits (Matthew 15:13).

Patriarchy

The word "Patriarchy" means father rule and represents well the system of religion that God initially gave to humanity. God spoke to certain fathers of families, who were expected to convey God's instructions to their families and the families of others. Some of the prominent fathers to whom God imparted divine instruction were Adam, Noah and Abraham. This was a family-type of religion, and it continued for about 2,500 years before God gave another, successive religion to one family and its descendants.

Part of the religion of Patriarchy involved the sacrifice of animals in worship of God. God Himself sacrificed the first animals to make clothes for Adam and Eve (Genesis 3:21). The first pair were created naked (Genesis 2:25), just as babies are born naked, and as babies are innocent and unaware in many respects, Adam and Eve were created innocent and unaware of the full consequences of disobeying God. However, when our first parents ate fruit from a tree that they were forbidden to touch or from which to eat (Genesis 2:16-17; 3:3), they disobeyed God or sinned (1 John 3:4). In addition to being guilty of sin, by which they displeased God, Adam and Eve became aware that they were naked.

Thereafter and throughout the time of Patriarchy, mankind worshipped God, inclusive of animal sacrifices. The animal sacrifices were unable to compensate for the sin that occurred (Hebrews 10:4) and stood between mankind and God (Isaiah 59:1-2), but the animal sacrifices prepared the thinking of mankind (Galatians 3:23-4:5; Hebrews 10:1-4) for the perfect sacrifice (Ephesians 5:2; Hebrews 9:26; 10:11-12) that could remove the barrier of sin between mankind and God (1 John 3:5).

Judaism

About 3,500 years ago, God chose a man named Moses, a descendant of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob (also called Israel) and Levi to inaugurate the next God-given religion, Judaism. The family of Jacob had grown into a nation. Judaism was instituted at Mt. Sinai in the Sinai Peninsula at

the head of the Red Sea (just east of Egypt and west of the Arabian Peninsula). Whereas Patriarchy was a family-type religion, Judaism was a national-type religion for what became known as the Israelites.

Judaism also included animal sacrifices in its worship, again which were incapable of removing the barrier of sin between mankind and God, but likewise prepared the mind of mankind for the perfect sacrifice that would come later (Hebrews 9:22-24). This God-given religion continued for about 1,500 years before God inaugurated the third and final God-given religion, Christianity. Divine instruction for Patriarchy and Judaism, as well as historical information corresponding to those periods, make up the 39 books of the Old Testament.

Christianity

Through the God-given religion of Christianity, God provided for the true removal of the barrier of sin between mankind and Himself, through a perfect sacrifice. The second person of the Godhead, the one we know as Jesus Christ or the Son, was born of a virgin about 2,000 years ago in Bethlehem, five miles south of Jerusalem (Isaiah 7:14; Matthew 1:18-26). He who participated in creation took on the fleshly form of the creation, man (John 1:14; 1 Timothy 3:16). The first four books of the New Testament are a biography of Jesus during his earthly life and ministry.

At the conclusion of three years of ministry, Jesus permitted Himself to be taken by wicked Jewish rulers who persuaded the Roman authorities to crucify our Lord on a cross. Thereby, Jesus Christ became the perfect sacrifice (Hebrews 10:10) for the removal of sins, which all the sacrifices of animals under Patriarchy and Judaism were unable to accomplish (Hebrews 10:1-4). Rather than remain in the grave, after three days, Jesus Christ arose from the grave (1 Corinthians 15:1-3). After encouraging His apostles and disciples for 40 days (Acts 1:3), Jesus Christ ascended into the sky and back to heaven where God is (Luke 24:51; Acts 1:9-11).

Worship

Now for nearly 2,000 years, Christianity has been and is the only God-given religion authorized for mankind to practice. Animal sacrifices are no longer performed after the perfect sacrifice, Jesus Christ, has come. Each first day of the week, Chris-

tians worship God in His own appointed way as recorded in the books of the New Testament (Acts 20:7; 1 Corinthians 16:1-2). This worship involves five activities: singing worshipful songs (Ephesians 5:19; Colossians 3:16), teaching or preaching (Acts 20:7), observing a memorial of the death of Jesus Christ in eating unleavened bread (symbolizing the body of Christ) and drinking grape juice (symbolizing the blood of Christ) (1 Corinthians 11:23-29), prayer (1 Corinthians 14:15) and a contribution of the increase of one's wealth (1 Corinthians 16:1-2). These are performed in no particular order.

Salvation

The New Testament teaches about salvation from past sins with the promise of an eternity in heaven for the faithful. One can only know what God expects of him or her and what God promises by reading or hearing read to him or her God's Word in the New Testament; faith that Jesus is the Son of God develops from trusting the revealed, Word of God (Romans 10:17; John 8:24). Repentance is the realization that there is sin in our lives that separates us from fellowship with God and the determination to turn from committing sin to obeying God (Luke 13:3; Romans 6:17). Anyone who believes that Jesus is the Son of God ought to be willing to acknowledge that faith to Christian witnesses, as anciently the Ethiopian treasurer of Acts 8:37 did. Then, a person desiring to be saved from his or her sins must submit obediently to our Lord's command to be immersed in water for the remission of sins (Mark 16:16; Acts 2:38; Romans 6:3-5; Colossians 2:12). Finally, after baptism, a Christian must try to live faithfully as long as he or she lives. However, on those occasions when Christians sin, by repenting and praying a Christian's sins can be forgiven (Acts 8:22; 1 John 1:9).

Christian Living

The New Testament contains instructions on how Christians are supposed to conduct themselves as Christians in general, as parents (Ephesians 6:4), as children (Ephesians 6:1) and as citizens (Romans 13:1-7; Titus 3:1; 1 Peter 2:17), irrespective of in which nation they reside. God has always designated differing roles for men and women in the family and in religion (1 Timothy 2:8-15), and the same is true under Christianity. In addition, the New Testament calls upon Christians to be morally pure (Titus 2:12),

honest (Romans 12:17; 2 Corinthians 8:21; 1 Peter 2:12), charitable, hard workers (Ephesians 4:28; Colossians 3:22-24) and obedient citizens. New Testament-guided Christian living makes Christians the best possible people on earth and prepares them for an eternity where God resides, in heaven.

Christian Service

Conscientious Christians happily serve a risen Savior, Jesus Christ. At the same time, we serve the Heavenly Father and the Holy Spirit. The only way that a Christian can serve God acceptably is to serve God in the ways that He designates in the New Testament. Christian service includes practicing benevolence toward both Christians and non-Christians (2 Corinthians 9:13; Galatians 6:10), as well as teaching or edifying both Christians and non-Christians (2 Timothy 2:2; 1 Corinthians 14:12). However, the primary area of Christian service is to share the good news about the Gospel (Matthew 28:19-20; Mark 16:15-16), which highlights the death, burial, resurrection and ascension of the Savior. Only in compliance with the teachings of Jesus Christ and the inspired writers of the New Testament can anyone have confidence that his or her sins have been forgiven and that heaven with God forever awaits. A Christian's purpose in life, as was the case under Patriarchy and Judaism, too, is to prepare for spending eternity with God in heaven (Ecclesiastes 12:13-14; 2 Corinthians 5:10-11).

Christian Doctrine

In addition to instructions about Christian living and Christian service, the New Testament contains Christian doctrine or teaching about a number of subjects. Complying with whatever God has caused to be penned in the New Testament amounts to obedience. Our lives on earth will not only be happier and more pleasant, but we prepare for Final Judgment and eternity with God by complying with Christian doctrine. "Though he were a Son [Jesus Christ], yet learned he obedience by the things which he suffered; And being made perfect, he became the author of eternal salvation unto all them that obey him" (Hebrews 5:8-9). Obedience is not the same as perfection, but when we do the best one

possibly can do to obey God, through the sacrifice of Jesus Christ as well as through divine grace (Ephesians 2:8) and mercy (Titus 3:5), God will make up what we lack in perfection so that we can enjoy the rewards and blessings that He has reserved for His children (John 14:1-3).

Proof

There are two broad areas of proof regarding the existence of God and the Bible that He has given us, by which we are to live, serve, worship and prepare for eternity. **First**, the created universe around us with its intricate design trumpets the truth that a great Designer, God, is responsible for everything that exists. **Second**, the Bible itself provides sufficient internal evidence to verify the existence of God and His book, the Bible.

The Bible is filled with ancient prophecies that were made hundreds of years before their fulfillment, all of which prophecies were fulfilled and in every detail. These prophecies include references to the establishment of the spiritual kingdom or the church (Isaiah 2:2-3; Daniel 2:31-45) by the Son of God, our Savior. Approximately, 332 prophecies about Jesus Christ appear in the Bible, many of which were made 700 years before they were fulfilled (Isaiah 7:14). No merely mortal predictions so ancient and so many come true, and exactly true; this indicates that the Bible is divine in origin, given by God. Therefore, the very existence of the Bible verifies the existence of God Who gave it. Since God exists, and He has given us divine instructions through the Bible about salvation, Christian worship, Christian living, Christian service and Christian doctrine, we are obligated to comply with all that God in the New Testament has instructed us to do. God has reserved wondrous blessings for those who become His children, including forgiveness of sins (Acts 2:38; 22:16) and valid hope of an eternity in heaven with Him (Revelation 22:14).