

Timothy Ministries News & Insight

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Photo by Roderick Graciano, 2015

WHY IS THERE SOMETHING RATHER THAN NOTHING?

Science has correctly inferred that our universe had a Beginning (there was absolutely nothing, then there was suddenly something), but science cannot tell us *how* or *why* the Beginning began. The reason for that inability is that science today concerns itself only with “natural” and material phenomena. Before there was anything, there simply could not have been a “natural” or material cause to prompt what is popularly called the Big Bang. And so, science remains agnostic regarding the *how* and *why* of the Beginning.

Experience tells us, though, that there are *two* kinds of causes, *material* (as when a baseball **impacts** the glass of a window and causes it to break), and *volitional* (as when a boy **chooses** to hit a ball with his bat and causes a whole chain of physiological and material events). Before the universe existed, the only possible cause (philosophically speaking) for its sudden appearance is a volitional one. In other words, a non-material Someone had to have *willed* the material universe into existence.

Consistently with this philosophical conclusion,

our Holy Bible answers the ultimate question of physics — “Why is there something rather than nothing?” — with the simple answer: “In the beginning, **God created...**” Happily, the Creation narrative (of Genesis 1.1 to 2.4) gives us much more than the answers to *Who?* originated the universe (God), and *how?* (by an act of His will) — it also serves as the preface of a progressive revelation about *Why?* In other words, besides answering the ultimate question of physics, Genesis begins to answer the ultimate question of teleology: *What is the purpose for everything?*

Someone will say, “Why does there have to be a purpose?” Philosophically, we can *imagine* a universe without purpose, but doing so does nothing to assuage our innate longing for purpose. So, why not consider what the Bible has to say about it?

The Bible implies a purpose for creation in the words of Genesis 1.4, “God saw that the light was **good**” This is the first of seven divine assessments of goodness in the Creation narrative. But, on what possible basis could God assess the light (1.4), the beaches (1.10), the vegetation (1.12), etc., as *good*? There had never been fish or birds before, so how could God assess the ones He made as *good* (1.21)? Surely, rather than comparing the newly created fish to an arbitrary standard of “fish-ness” in His mind, God assessed them as *good teleologically*. In other words, God saw that the things he made were *good* in that they suited His **purpose** for making them.

Does the Creation narrative reveal anything about what that purpose might be? Yes. The Bible’s hints about the purpose for creation begin in Genesis 1.3, with God’s words, “Let there be light.” Our English words “let there be” translate a Hebrew third-person jussive verb. That means that God did not speak *to* the as-yet-nonexistent light, but He spoke to someone else *about* the

light. In other words, the volitional statement, “Let there be light,” begins the primeval conversation that culminates with the words, “Let Us make man in Our image” (Genesis 1.26). This divine conversation tells us from the outset of plurality within the Godhead, and thereby of the relational character of the Creator. We can infer that God’s purpose for creating had to have been a **relational** one.

The next hint about God’s purpose is in His declaration regarding the heavenly luminaries: “let them be ... to give light on the earth ...” (Genesis 1.15). The Creation narrative has, by this point, already concerned itself greatly with terrestrial matters, but now we see God appointing extraterrestrial entities to benefit the earth. This strengthens our perception that God’s purpose in creation is **earth-oriented**.

Next, God’s statement, “Let us make man in our image ...” (Genesis 1.26) tells us a great deal! What has the Creation narrative already revealed about God Himself? By the point in the story at which God makes man, we see that God is almighty, volitional, relational, purposeful and a ruler (the last item is inferred from God taking it upon Himself to name *Day, Night, Heaven Earth* and *Sea*). It is philosophically incoherent to imagine that God would make another Almighty, so, setting that idea aside, we can infer that by making man in His image, God made man volitional, relational, purposeful and with the capacity to rule. God’s words confirm this last point, “... and let them rule ...” (Genesis 1.26).

We must add one more observation regarding man’s creation. The ancient Greek translation of Genesis in the Septuagint uses *only one* perfect verb in the Creation narrative, “I have given” (Genesis 1.29). This verb choice emphasizes God’s gracious concern for man (contrary to deistic thinking), and assures us of what we have already inferred from man’s mandate to rule: God’s purpose for creating is **mankind-oriented**.

Now, to say that God’s purpose for creating the universe is **relational, earth-oriented, and mankind-oriented** in no way detracts from what we learn later in Colossians 1.16 about Jesus

Christ: “... all things have been created through Him and **for Him**.” Though we don’t find it explicitly stated in the Creation narrative, God’s purpose for creation is **Christocentric**. Taken all together, this unfolded revelation implies that: **There is something rather than nothing because God has an earth-oriented, mankind-oriented, relational plan for His Son.** Revelation 21.7 describes the culmination of that plan: “Let us rejoice and be glad and give the glory to Him, for the marriage of the Lamb has come and His bride has made herself ready.”

❖ Roderick Graciano

Book Of Revelation Course Begins In North Seattle Sept. 27

The Book of Revelation becomes increasingly relevant to us with each passing year. With the declaration of an Iraq-and-Syria-based caliphate in the Middle East, and with the accelerating moral decay of western culture, we have a growing sense that God is now allowing the pieces to move into place for the End Time drama.

The greatest value of the Revelation, however, is not in addressing our curiosity about the Antichrist or the Great Tribulation (as important as these topics are!), but in what it tells us about Jesus Christ Himself. Whatever happens in our world, *Jesus is the answer*. It is the lordship and supreme example of Jesus that will guide every true believer through whatever trials lie ahead.

For this reason, we joyfully present an extended study of the “Revelation of Jesus Christ” this fall and winter at Living Way Foursquare Church, 400 N. 105th St., in Seattle. As always, there is no charge for this 18-week course, but we do need to know ahead of time if you plan to participate. Please email us at tmin_admin@tmin.org and let us know of your interest!

