

**No Doubt About It Part III**  
***Evidence or Accident?***  
**June 13, 2021**

**Feature – Calling Out Your Name (4)**

**Welcome – Price (4)**

**Worship Songs – Holy Water / God of Wonders (8)**

Good morning everyone.

I'm so glad you've joined us especially if this is your first time with us or your first time in a long time ...

... and especially if you're someone who has questions or doubts about the reality of what Christians and Christianity claim to be true.

... because that's what we've been talking about for the past month or so.

We started out with more of a general sense of

how to think about and deal with questions concerning faith in part one of this series.

And then, in part two which we finished last week, we took a look why we can trust the foundations on which Christianity rests – specifically ...

- The resurrection of Jesus ...
- And the primary documents that tell us about Jesus (the NT Gospels) ...
- And then, the Old Testament which Christianity basically inherited from Judaism because, after all, Jesus was Jewish and that was *His Bible* (so to speak).

And if you missed any of the messages in either of those series, I strongly encourage you to go back and watch, listen to or read the manuscript ... all of which you can find in the media section of our website and app.

Now, today, we're beginning part III of this series which is going to deal with questions and issues specifically pertaining *to God*; questions which were raised by many of you when you filled out the "doubt survey" two months ago.

And the number one question by far had to do with the existence of evil in this world.

**Basically ... if God is all-powerful, all-knowing, ever-present *and good* (all the "omnis" Ladell talked about in a message a few weeks ago), then why do bad things happen?**

- Why is there injustice and unfairness?
- Why do babies and children die?
- Why do evil horrible people escape or go unpunished?

Those were literally some of the questions I got.

But that's not what we're going to talk about today. That's next week.

Instead, today – as Price said and as our music illustrated – we’re going to talk about creation (the *noun*, not the verb).

And we’re starting with that because some of you raised the question of “Creation vs. Evolution.”

**But, also, because the question of God’s culpability for the existence of evil logically implies that God is somehow responsible for creation ... again, the noun not the verb.**

By that – by “creation-*the-noun*” – I mean “the universe as it exists in its natural state” filled with planets and galaxies and quarks and dark matter as well as dogs and cats and flowers and oceans and people and ... well, you get the idea.

All three of the major monotheistic religions – Christianity, Judaism and Islam – hold that all of those things exist because of “creation-*the-verb*”

...

... which is the activity of *creating* supposedly initiated and completed by a supernatural Creator, i.e. “God.”

## **God and Gaps**

And I say “supposedly” because there are a lot of people in this world – maybe even some of you – who believe that creation-the-noun had nothing to do with a creation-the-verb initiated by a supernatural Being.

Instead, they (and maybe you) believe – and just to be clear ... when I say this, I’m not intending any disrespect ...

They (maybe you) believe that creation-the-noun *is a fortunate cosmic accident.*

In other words, *we just got lucky* that a universe like ours at some point came into existence.

Furthermore, a lot of people who believe in “cosmic good fortune” would point out that ...

**1. Humans throughout the ages have used “God” (or “the gods”) to explain things they don’t understand.**

Philosophers call this “god of the gaps” thinking.

Wherever there is a gap in knowledge of how something works (like creation), people tend to assign a supernatural cause to that gap.

For example, when a thunderstorm destroyed livestock and crops, people – who had no understanding of how the atmosphere works – would think “oh, the gods are mad” or maybe “demons did this.”

**2. But as scientific knowledge has increased, the “god gap” has decreased ...**

... so that “God” or “demons” seem to be less and

less of a reasonable explanation for something like a violent thunderstorm or a virus like COVID-19.

And because this is the trend – because the more we know, the less “god” or “the gods” seems to be called for as an explanation ...

**3. Eventually, at some point, there will be *no area of life* which calls for an explanation which is supernatural.**

This is the logic of people who – and again, I’m not being derogatory ... this is the logic of people who do not believe in creation-the-verb but believe that creation-the-noun is the result of hitting the cosmological lottery.

And I understand that logic – particularly the part about “god of the gaps” thinking because, as a person with a scientific background myself (I have a bachelors degree in Math / CS and a Masters in Computer Science) ...

- It drives me crazy when Christians attribute things to God that aren't God.
- And it drives me crazy when Christians are airheads about science.
- It drives me crazy when Christians refuse to believe scientific evidence.

That said, I also understand why Christians are wary of science because not only is science typically in flux (such as “a mask is of little value” which became “you’ll kill grandma if you don’t wear one”) ...

Not only is science typically changing, there's a difference between science and *scientists*.

- Science is what science is – the objective assessment of evidence that proves or disproves a hypothesis.



- But many *scientists* are not objective because scientists are human.

And they, like the rest of us, are susceptible to “the madness of crowds” ... meaning that they sometimes hedge on their objectivity because of other pressures – and so it’s wise to be a little wary.

In any case, my point is ...

As much as I appreciate the decreasing need for “god of the gaps” thinking because of science ...

**It does not logically follow that this proves “God does not exist.”**

All it “proves” is that people don’t understand science and where God fits in the picture.

In fact, I think the case can be made – and many scientists are making it – that an increase in scientific knowledge about the universe is

actually *raising the possibility* of the existence of a god-like Being ...

**... which, if true, gives credence to the assertion from the Apostle Paul that ...**

*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. Romans 1:20  
(NIV)*

## **Things That Make Me Go “Hmmm”**

So, I want to talk to you about four realities of creation-the-noun that *everyone* – whether theist or atheist – agrees *are* realities.

And these realities actually ...

- Raise the possibility of creation-the-verb  
...

- ... which then implies the presence of some kind of supernatural (outside or above nature) Creator or Designer.

And just so you'll know, there are many more than these four that we could look at, but, because I have a lot of personal interest in this area, I've picked the four that are most significant and impressive to me.

I mean, I think about these a lot. I read about them and study them because I'm fascinated by them.

In fact, if I weren't already a theist, these four realities would at least (in the words of that great philosopher Arsenio Hall) make me go "hmmm."

They would make me at least question the assumption that undergirds modern science which is that everything must have a natural

explanation.

Now, for the first two realities, after I tell you what they are, I'm going to turn the explanation over to scientists who are way more knowledgeable (and hopefully more interesting) than I am.

So, here we go.

**1. The first reality is the “Big Bang” i.e., the beginning of our universe.**

Has everybody heard of this?

As I said, I want to show you a video which explains what it is and how it was discovered.

And I realize that, for some of you who are more scientifically minded, this might seem a bit overly simplified but, for the rest of us, it's a good introduction.

So, here we go.

It's interesting – the discovery of low-level background radiation by Wilson and Penzias really was an accident.

At first they thought something was wrong with their equipment, that it was generating some kind of interference.

Then they thought it might be pigeon poop on the receiver they were testing.

After they cleaned it off and the noise still remained, they made some phone calls to ask for ideas from astronomers. They learned from Princeton astronomer Jim Peebles that they were looking at the radiation left over from the hot initial explosion predicted by the Big Bang theory of cosmology.

Now, I want to show you one more video on this issue by one of my favorite speakers on this kind

of thing, J. Warner Wallace, who is a cold-case detective who became a Christian after applying his forensic techniques to the Gospels and the story of Jesus.

In this small portion of his talk, he explains some of the implications of the Big Bang – especially how it relates to Christianity.

Here we go.

And Genesis 1 – the very first sentence of the Hebrew Bible, the Old Testament, says that “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.”

... which until recently did not agree with “the science” because the science held that the universe was eternal. And had no beginning.

But now, in a sense, science has “proved” the one of the most remarkable and controversial statements of the scripture.

By the way, if you'd like to know more on this ...

**An excellent book to check out is Michael Strauss' *The Creator Revealed: A Physicist Examines the Big Bang and the Bible.***

It's pretty short and a fairly easy read.

And Strauss is more than just a "a physicist." He's a researcher working on the Large Hadron Collider which is a pretty big deal.

The second reality that would make me wonder about the existence of a Creator is ...

## **2. The apparent "fine tuning" of our universe.**

And this clip I'm going to show you is a bit longer than the others, but it explains it so well that I didn't trim it.

Also, I should let you know that some of the quotes from scientists that appear near the end

might make it sound like they agree on the existence of a supernatural “Fine-Tuner.”

They actually don’t. And I’ll explain that after we watch.

Here we go.

“It *seems* as though somebody has fine-tuned nature’s numbers ... the impression of *design* is overwhelming ...” according to Paul Davies.

But that can’t be the case because of the preconceived notion that everything *must* have a naturalistic cause.

So instead of God – a proposition which obviously can’t be scientifically proven, it must be that we’re the lucky universe out of the infinitely generated multiverses – a proposition which also cannot be scientifically proven.

For me, personally – I’m with King David of



Israel who wrote that the heavens declare the glory of God.

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So, reality number one – the Big Bang.

Reality number two – the “fine tuning” of the universe.

The third reality that makes me think there’s something super-natural going on in creation-the-noun – and I should say that this one isn’t as scientifically based as the others but it’s something I think about all the time.

### **3. It’s our ability as humans to reason ...**

... to think logically ... to be able to break a problem down into steps ... the ability to hypothesize and then test ... basically, to do what science does.

To me ...

- The fact that science and scientists exist ...
- The fact that we can even consider this question of how and why we're here ...

... seems like evidence for a Creator.

But not just any Creator. I'm talking about the Creator that's described in Genesis chapter one who ...

... **according to Moses said ...**

*“Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky, over the livestock and all the wild animals, and over all the creatures that move along the ground.” Genesis 1:26 (NIV)*

According to this, God made people to be like Him; to be *above* the rest of creation, to be stewards of it.

And to be in that position requires a rationality – an ability to think and reason – that no other aspect of creation has which is exactly what we see.

I mean (as far as I can tell) my dog Zoe isn't sitting around thinking about the questions of origins and the implications of the answers. She isn't thinking about God.

Actually, if she *could* think about God, she would probably conclude that *I* am God since I feed her, give her shelter, and take care of her.

... which I'm sure you've heard is the difference between a dog and a cat.

A cat looks at its owner and thinks “hmmm ... you feed me, give me shelter and take care of

me. What do you know? *I must be God.*”

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Ok, one more thing that makes me go “hmmm” when it comes to whether creation is evidence for God or just a fortunate cosmic accident.

And I should probably say that this one has the greatest impact on me personally and experientially because it can be pretty emotional at times ...

... which is kind of odd because, as you can probably tell from this message and others in this series, I am primarily intellectual. I don't do emotions very well.

#### **4. The final reality that puzzles me is the existence of beauty.**

I think about this one a lot while I'm working in my yard and taking care of my lawn and the flowers.

- Why are things beautiful?
- What purpose does beauty have in the overall scheme of things?
- Why does a beautiful sunset create such a deep emotion of joy and sadness and longing in me?
- Why does driving through the mountains of Colorado or through the canyons of Utah produce such a sense of awe and wonder in me?

Yes, it's the amazement at the geology and the natural processes that created the majestic scenery but there's something more.

Anyway, check this out.

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Now, obviously, you can go on the Internet and find opposing points of views and creative videos that will deconstruct everything I just said.

And that's fine. All I'm saying is that these things make me go "hmmm."

Actually, that's not totally true.

The do make me go "hmmm" but when I combine them with my conviction that ...

- The Gospels are telling us the truth about Jesus of Nazareth ...
- And the most logical – to me – conclusion is that He really did die on a Roman cross and then rise from the dead ...

I'm even more confident in what I believe as a Christian and why.

To me, the preponderance of evidence points to a Creator God who looks a lot like the God described by the Bible; a Creator God, who at some point took on flesh and became a human in the person of Jesus.

To me, that seems to be the most reasonable conclusion of the whole thing.

Of course, that doesn't mean there aren't still some major challenges to my faith.

For one thing, the Universe, and our place in it, isn't all sunshine and rainbows.

**As one internet skeptic put it:**

“Whether we like it or not, the fact of the matter is that in the state of nature, life is solitary, poor, brutish and short. It's an

ugly place, and one that only a sick and twisted maniac would deliberately create.”<sup>i</sup>

If that seems a bit much, Neil DeGrasse Tyson says that when he looks at “all the ways Earth wants to kill us,” he just doesn’t see how God could be all-powerful and good ... which is why he is not a believer.<sup>ii</sup>

But we’ll talk about that – the problem of evil – next week ...

## **Implications of Creation**

... because what I want to talk about for just a few more minutes today is the implications of creation-the-verb.

In other words ...

- What it means in real life if it’s true that



creation-the-noun was the result of a supernatural being that the both the Old and New Testaments call “God.”

- How it affects your life and my life if it’s true that “in the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth?”

... because here’s the thing – and some of you know this and some of you don’t.<sup>iii</sup>

In nineteenth and twentieth centuries, archeological finds created doubt regarding the origins of the Jewish or the Genesis creation account ...

... when they discovered that the Egyptians, Sumerians, Canaanites, and Babylonians also had stories about creation in *their* literature.

And the initial assumption was that the ancient Hebrews borrowed from those stories and just slapped the name “Yahweh” in where

appropriate.

But here's the truth: not only does Genesis *not* borrow from other creation myths. Genesis stands in stark contrast to them.

That's because Moses is writing the story of an ancient group of people who all they know is slavery. All they've heard for 400 years in their enslavement is the "power of the Egyptian gods."

And Moses is trying to help them become *atheists* as it relates to *the Egyptian gods* and become believers in the *one God, Yahweh*.

So, in Genesis, his point isn't *how* God created the heavens and the earth--and this is where we get mixed up.

**κ Moses is making the point that it's *God* who created the heavens and the earth, not "*the gods*."**

And so, he says, “In the beginning, *God* created.”  
Not Amon-Ra of Egypt or Marduk of Babylon.

Now, in *those* myths, the gods are at odds with themselves. They war with each other.

And then they create other gods out of body parts and out of body fluids.

And then, for example, in the Babylonian myth, after becoming the chief of the gods, Marduk, says:

“I will establish a savage. *Man* shall be his name. He shall be charged with the service of the gods that they might be at ease.”

In all of the ancient creation myths of surrounding nations, humans are merely an afterthought to lighten the load of the gods.

... which, because of the way ancient people embraced these ancient mythologies about

their gods, meant that individuals had absolutely no rights and there was no intrinsic value in anyone.

Furthermore, the violence and the injustice of the gods justified the violence and the injustices of their leaders.

But Moses, in stark contrast, says something quite different about humanity that no other pagan myth dared to say.

He says that what happened next was that “God said, let us make humans in our image.”

... which means that ...

**In the Jewish text, the creation of humanity is *the pinnacle* – not the afterthought – of creation ... which means—don’t miss this—*dignity for all*.**

- The dignity of every man

- The dignity of every woman
- The dignity of every child ...

... is established at the very beginning of creation.

This was unheard of in that time. There was no parallel anywhere.

Ladies, in the very beginning, the God of the Jews, who became the God of the Christians, gave you dignity that the world is still trying to catch up with today.

Only recently has modern civilization begun to respect women and their dignity. And yet Moses told us how it was established at the very point of creation.

Now, again, we miss all of this because when we read Genesis, we think, “Oh, Moses is trying to explain how God created the world.”

But his point wasn't *how* God created the world. His point was that *God* – not “the gods” – created the world.

And it was that people weren't an afterthought. People were valuable because they were made to reflect God.

Which means that you are here *on purpose*, *with* a purpose.

You are not the result of some cosmic conflict between the gods, and you were not created by an accidental universe.

And it means that every man, woman and child you meet bears the image of their creator. So, be careful how you treat them.

## **Closing**

And there's so much more that could be said on this if we had the time. But we don't.

We'll come back to this a bit in next week's message but for today, as we close ...

- I want to give everyone who is willing the opportunity to go beyond just saying "hmmm" about the realities of creation-the-noun.
- I want to give everyone who is willing the opportunity to actually worship the Creator ...

... which by the way, is another unique aspect of what Moses wrote: that it's the Creator who is to be worshipped and not the creation itself.

Unheard of in that day. We'll talk more about that next week, too.

But now, we're going to worship.

And, as I always say, if you're not there yet, that's OK. You can just listen and enjoy the music.

So, let's stand together and let me pray and then we'll sing.

God thank you that you have made it possible to know you are there through your creation.

Thank you for the creation which day after day and night after night sings of your glory.

And in this moment, we join them.

Amen.

## Endnotes

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<sup>i</sup> <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=f3IUpt10Aeg>



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ii From <https://bigthink.com/robby-berman/michio-kaku-believes-in-god-if-not-that-god>

iii From Andy Stanley <https://yourmove.is/videos/part-2-%e2%80%a2-in-the-beginning/>