

October 4, 2009

## THE REASON

Jeffery D. Woodhams

Humans are curious creatures. We want to know the reason for everything. We may justifiably dread when our toddlers learn that ubiquitous word, *why?* even though we actually do want them to learn.

Recently there's been an evidence of this right here in this church. Almost weekly now, someone comes to ask me something after the service--something from Genesis that this person has wondered about since childhood.

Our minds will sometimes construct reasons for the things we partially witness as a means of filling in the gaps in what we did not see; this becomes an issue sometimes where witness testimony is called for. This is also why police prefer to interview several witnesses--not because most people are untruthful (although some undoubtedly are) but because our minds tend to extrapolate reasons leading up to the events we actually saw; and that reconstruction takes the form of an actual memory. This also makes it possible to *implant* memories, but that's another discussion. We want to know *why*.

We naturally want to know the reason that things exist. There are several possible explanations for the existence of the universe.<sup>1</sup>

1. *Once there was absolutely nothing and now there is something.* No one seriously pursues this line of thought, though. The nearest thing I know of to this line of reasoning lies with who point back to a possible quantum flux in a vacuum as the beginning of the universe, and I suppose that constitutes *something*.
2. *Everything began with an impersonal something.* This is the position of modern man and of most Eastern belief systems.
3. *Everything began with a personal something.* This is the premise of the Biblical worldview and some other religious worldviews.
4. *There is and always has been a dualism.* This one doesn't actually stand on its own for long, because there must be a unity behind the dualism that makes sense of the relationship between the two; and this unity had its beginning in one of the other three explanations.<sup>2</sup>

The two things we long for most in life, things which we know beyond a doubt are real, are things that we have the most difficult time understanding why they exist. Those things are love and communication. What are these, and where did they come from? Why do we need them? How do we know they are real? Most importantly, why do they exist at all? The same could be said of our personalities. How and why did our personalities, our human qualities, arise?

The modern man has no answers for these questions. Operating from the philosophic worldview that everything began with an impersonal something leaves man to be the unintentional result of non-

---

<sup>1</sup> I want to refer you to Francis Schaeffer's book, *Genesis in Space and Time*. I'm going to summarize parts of this book, but it is well worth reading for yourself.

<sup>2</sup> Francis Schaeffer, *Genesis in Space and Time* (Downers Grove, IL: InterVarsity Press, 1984), pp. 19-20.

rational, undirected chance and time. Man has no purpose, no destiny. Mankind's past is the uninspiring story of unknown mechanical processes coupled with incredible coincidences. Mankind's present is simply learning to cope with misery. Mankind's future is his only hope, since we can use our scientific understanding to forge a perfect world and direct the future of evolution--which incidentally was the belief of Hitler and a host of other people that you might not suspect, past and present.

I'm going to tell you about a once-prominent scientist that the modern establishment would like you to forget. His name was Ilya Ivanov. At the beginning of the twentieth century, he was widely recognized as a master of artificial insemination and was respected for his successful hybridization of different animals, such as zebras and donkeys. According to the best experts of the day, black people descended from apes, yellow people from orangutans, and white people from chimpanzees, and it was believed that it would almost certainly be possible to produce hybrids of each. Because a successful outcome would be regarded as full and final proof of evolution, Dr. Ivanov was able to secure support from the Soviet government and a number of British and American organizations, including the American Association for the Advancement of Atheism. Prominent scientists from the West enthusiastically supported his work. As part of his research, he went to Guinea in French West Africa in 1926 where he promised to give a number of black females medical examinations; but instead he inseminated them by apes without their consent. A number of the women died, and the French government found out and intervened.<sup>3</sup> How could American and British intellectuals so openly advocate such monstrosity?

Dr. Ivanov carried out his experiments about the same time as another movement was happening in America: the eugenics movement. Margaret Sanger founded Planned Parenthood as part of this eugenics movement, which taught that not all humans should be able to reproduce. Some humans--the poor, the deformed, the ugly, the mentally ill, the promiscuous, even entire racial "subclasses"--should not be able to propagate. As a result of this movement, 50,000 Americans were sterilized without their knowledge or consent! I don't normally use Wikipedia as a source, but today I am going to read you this paragraph as it appears there because it is well-documented:

The modern field and term were first formulated by Sir Francis Galton in 1883, drawing on the recent work of his half-cousin Charles Darwin. At its peak of popularity eugenics was supported by prominent people, including Margaret Sanger, Marie Stopes, H. G. Wells, Woodrow Wilson, Prescott Bush, Theodore Roosevelt, Emile Zola, George Bernard Shaw, John Maynard Keynes, John Harvey Kellogg, Winston Churchill, Linus Pauling and Sidney Webb. Its most infamous proponent and practitioner was however Adolf Hitler who praised and incorporated eugenic ideas in *Mein Kampf*, and emulated Eugenic legislation for the sterilization of "defectives" that had been pioneered in the United States."<sup>4</sup>

Did you catch that? Hitler "emulated Eugenic legislation...that had been pioneered in the United States!" Not only that, but the first part of the paragraph explicitly states that the idea for eugenics came from Charles Darwin. Here is what Darwin himself said:

With savages, **the weak in body or mind are soon eliminated**; and those that survive commonly exhibit a vigorous state of health. **We civilized men, on the other hand, do our**

---

3 Jerry Bergman, "Human-Ape Hybridization: A Failed Attempt to Prove Darwinism." *Acts & Facts*, May 2009, 12-13. See also "The Forgotten Scandal of the Soviet Ape-Man" in *New Scientist* 2670:48-49 by Stephanie Pain. Available by subscription at <http://www.newscientist.com/article/mg19926701.000-the-forgotten-scandal-of-the-soviet-apeman.html>.

4 "Eugenics." Available at <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Eugenics>.

**utmost to check the process of elimination;** we build asylums for the imbecile, the maimed, and the sick; we institute poor-laws; and our medical men exert their utmost skill to save the life of every one to the last moment. There is reason to believe that vaccination has preserved thousands, who from a weak constitution would formerly have succumbed to small-pox. Thus the weak members of civilized societies propagate their kind. No one who has attended to the breeding of domestic animals will doubt that **this must be highly injurious to the race of man. It is surprising how soon a want of care, or care wrongly directed, leads to the degeneration of a domestic race;** but excepting in the case of man himself, **hardly any one is so ignorant as to allow his worst animals to breed...**[emphasis added].<sup>5</sup>

Although these ideas seem monstrous to our current society, these ideas are far from dead. There are scientists even today promoting the “science” of eugenics; and we see how very easily such beliefs could be implemented under universal health care as advocated by Dr. Zeke Emmanuel, who was appointed by President Obama to two important positions: health-policy adviser at the Office of Management and Budget and a member of Federal Council on Comparative Effectiveness Research. Dr. Emmanuel says that medical care should be reserved for the non-disabled, not given to those “who are irreversibly prevented from being or becoming participating citizens . . . An obvious example is not guaranteeing health services to patients with dementia.”<sup>6</sup>

How can so many prominent people, then and now, hold and promote such horrendous beliefs? It all goes back to the foundational worldview. If everything came from an impersonal something (time + matter + chance), then humans are no better than animals or plants or rocks. We might praise human accomplishments; but we also might begin to see ourselves as the ultimate judges of humanity--*and that is exactly what happens to educated, elite people who follow Darwinism to its logical conclusions.* Into the moral vacuum left by such beliefs, our only choice is to insert faith in a scientific elite. Let scientists determine what is right and wrong. Let scientists guide politics. Let scientists guide human social and biological evolution. Do you understand that this is the landscape of our world today? You need look no further than the oft-spouted words, “Most scientists believe...” Let me explain something: consensus among scientists is the *weakest form* of scientific evidence. It means that the factual evidence is lacking; yet this consensus is brought out to *silence opposition* and *stifle genuine scientific inquiry.* One need look no further than the issue of global warming to see that scientific consensus is used to pressure all scientists and ultimately all of us into believing the party line and therefore accepting a political solution.

Yet for all of this effort, all of this inquiry and study, science cannot prove that something came from an impersonal nothing; nor can it tell us the most important things about ourselves--the reason that we have personality, communication, and love. What is the source of these? If we are the products of time and matter and chance, how are we able to communicate, to feel love, to be unique individuals? How do we recognize and respond to these traits in others? The modern man sees these traits, but cannot account for them. Most people simply don't think too hard about the issues; but those who do develop a blackness of soul and a despair of hope, such as the blackness and despair of philosopher Jean Paul Sartre:

Sartre says that if one considered a paper knife, one would assume that the creator would have

---

5 Charles Darwin, conclusion of *The Descent of Man*.

6 Betsy McCaughy, “Deadly Doctors,” *New York Post*, 24 July 2009. Available at [http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/deadly\\_doctors\\_PU6S0iok2FbS368B7d7mAM](http://www.nypost.com/p/news/opinion/opedcolumnists/deadly_doctors_PU6S0iok2FbS368B7d7mAM).

had a plan for it: an essence. Sartre said that human beings have no essence before their existence because there is no Creator. Thus: “existence precedes essence.” So, for that reason, the Sartrean man with his free will becomes a god, but he will always remain only a bankrupt god.<sup>7</sup>

In other words, life is futile. There is neither plan nor purpose for people.

The idea that everything was produced by an impersonal something has two philosophical shortcomings: first, what exists has form, on every level. The universe is not a handful of pebbles thrown at random. Second, we have personality. We have an undeniable humanity. We recognize the form in the universe and we recognize humanity in others. We find personality in all people, both now and in antiquity. Man has, and always has had, “mannishness,” as Schaeffer puts it.<sup>8</sup>

In contrast to this empty philosophy, we look to the Bible. Only the Bible has satisfactory answers--only the Bible! The Bible, as you know, does not tell us everything we may want to know. It's not exhaustive in its scope of any particular subject. However, it does tell us everything we *need* to know. It tells us certain things about angels, but does not tell us everything. It tells us certain things about heaven, but not everything. It tells us certain things about the beginning of the universe, but not everything. The Old Testament told humanity all we needed to know about redemption before the first coming of Christ. The New Testament tells us what we need to know about redemption until the second coming of Christ. The Bible gives us information selectively. God reveals what we need to know and much of what we'd like to know; but He does not reveal all, nor could He. We are finite creatures and He is infinite. Even in a state of perfection, we could not know all there is to know. We cannot *comprehend* the infinite, but we can *apprehend* the truth God has revealed.

What light can God's Word shed on man's personality, and on man's ability to love and communicate?

The biblical answer is quite otherwise: Something was there before creation. God was there; love and communication were there; and therefore, prior even to Genesis 1:1, love and communication are intrinsic to what always has been.<sup>9</sup>

Consider carefully what John has to say in chapter one of his gospel:

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.*

*The same was in the beginning with God.*

*All things were made by him; and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

In the first two verses, the Greek verb tense is the imperfect, and it would be better think of *was* as *already was*. But in the third verse, the verb tense changes to aorist, which is essentially past tense in English (although this is not always the case). The change in tense marks the beginning of something new at a definite point in the past. The idea conveyed here is that God already existed, and the Word already existed, before the beginning of the universe. Who is the Word? John tells us in a few verses: *And the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us*. The Word is Jesus. Get this: the word translated *was made* (one word in Greek) is also aorist tense, indicating the beginning of something new at a

<sup>7</sup> “Jean-Paul Sartre.” Available at [http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul\\_Sartre](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jean-Paul_Sartre).

<sup>8</sup> Schaeffer, pp. 20-21.

<sup>9</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 22.

definite point in the past. The Incarnation of Jesus Christ as a human stands in contrast to His “always was-ness” as God.<sup>10</sup>

Greek philosophers had long realized that finite men could never communicate with an infinite God unless that God chose a form of communication that men could understand. Jesus Christ is the Word of God to men. He entered into our humanity, into our weakness and sufferings, to communicate to us the truths that God wants us to know in a way that we could understand. But this is not my point today.

I’m going to simply read a number of other verses here.

Hebrews 1:10 emphasizes that Jesus was there before creation and was in fact the Creator:

*And, Thou, **Lord, in the beginning** hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:*

Colossians 1:16-17:

*For by him were all things created, that are in heaven, and that are in earth, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers: all things were created by him, and for him:*

*And **he is before all things**, and by him all things consist.*

I Corinthians 8:6:

*But to us there is but one God, the Father, of whom are all things, and we in him; and one Lord Jesus Christ, by whom are all things, and we by him.*

We see then the work of the Father and the Son in Creation (and we know of the Spirit’s involvement from Genesis 1:2); but we also see that they were there *before* creation. Would it surprise you to know that the Bible gives us glimpses of what is behind that seemingly impenetrable barrier of the beginning of time?

In John 17, we have a record of Jesus’ High Priestly Prayer. In this prayer, Jesus alludes to His existence before time began:

*(v. 5) And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.*

*(v. 24)...for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.*

Before the foundation of the world, there was glory, which means that there was communication and recognition among the Godhead; and there also was love.

There is more, though. Look at Ephesians 1:4:

*According as he hath chosen us in him before the foundation of the world, that we should be*

---

<sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 23.

*holy and without blame before him in love:*

We--the Church, the Bride of Christ--were chosen in Him (Jesus) by God before creation. Choice means there is a will at work. There is thought and intent.

We absolutely must consider two more verses. We find in Titus 1:2,

*In hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began;*

God made a promise of eternal life before the world began. To whom was such a promise made? It was made to the Son or to the Holy Spirit, or to both. “[A]fter all, at his particular point of sequence here was no one else to make the promise to.”<sup>11</sup>

Finally, let us read II Timothy 1:9:

*Who hath saved us, and called us with an holy calling, not according to our works, but according to his own purpose and grace, which was given us in Christ Jesus before the world began,*

God’s promise to Jesus was redemption for fallen man. Because God made the promise to Jesus, we receive this promise “in Him,” that is, in Jesus Christ. That is why it makes sense to see the formation of Adam’s bride--from deep sleep and a wounded side into a living companion for Adam--as a foreshadowing of God’s creation of a bride for Jesus Christ, which is the Church.

Notice then that there was no “Plan B” for redemption. God the Father made a promise to Jesus that mankind would be redeemed, and we were included in that promise--before “in the beginning”! If you have not accepted your part in this promise, why wait?

One final quote from Francis Schaeffer:

Consequently, when we read, “in the beginning God created the heavens and the earth,” we are not left with something hung in a vacuum: Something existed before creation and that something was personal and not static; the Father loved the Son; there was a plan; there was communication; and promises were made prior to the creation of the heavens and the earth.<sup>12</sup>

The point of this all is that there was *personality* and *love* and *communication* before Genesis 1:1, before the words “in the beginning.” Mankind recognizes that these exist but cannot account for them outside of Scripture--and it is this understanding of Scripture that answers the big questions for us. Why are we here? How did we get here? What is our purpose? These questions are only satisfactorily answered in the light of Scripture.

We can know who we are, why we are here, and why we feel the need for love and communication only in association with an understanding of Scripture. The Bible is God’s revealed Word to us, framed in a way that we can understand what we need to understand. Because we are made in the image of God, we can understand His revelation and thereby enter into fellowship and love with a personal God.

---

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 18.