



What I Would Say to an Atheist Part 2

Do You Think God Exists?

When I was quite young, maybe seven or eight, my parents brought our family to Disneyland. It was a wonderful experience for me. Rides like "It's a Small World" and "Mr. Toad's Wild Ride" were mesmerizing. My favorite though was the Submarine. I remember the sheer wonder I had as I walked merrily down the ramp and stepped in through the hatch. I looked out the windows and saw the world of the underseas...coral and beautifully colored fish swimming about. Aglow with what a spectacular experience I had, when the submarine redocked, I stepped out back onto the dock and considered all I had just witnessed under the water. My parents let me stand in amazement as another collection of passengers worked their way into the submarine. I stood and watched as the submarine left its mooring and headed out to sea. However, to my shock, it never went below the surface. The submarine never submerged. It was all fake, an illusion. I wanted to cry. How could I have been so snookered, so taken in by what I had seen? It was a landmark moment in my life.

Many former believers in Christianity and plenty who have never believed think the Bible is much like that submarine. It is not what it seems Dr. Hugh Ross, the astronomer points out to us. I though have come to realize that the Bible is much more than it seems, has far greater insight than many realize. Let me give just a few examples. Science is finally coming to grips with the fact that the Universe has a beginning. It is commonly known as the "Big Bang" but it isn't exactly that. At some point, and Einstein showed this with his calculations in the Theory of Relativity, time and space had a start. Time has a beginning. Space has a beginning. Those scientists who do not believe in God will not agree with what the Bible says about how it started but it is now clear to the scientific world that the universe began in a moment in time just like the Bible says. It is not, like so many atheist scientists believed before Einstein, an eternal universe. They were very wrong about that. It was the dream of atheist scientists that the universe had no beginning because then they thought they did not need a God. It does have a beginning though and that is clearly stated in the Bible, far before modern science came to be. **In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.** (Genesis 1:1 NIV) The Apostle John makes the same assertion. The Universe began at a moment in time. **In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning. Through him all things were made; without him nothing was made that has been made. In him was life, and that life was the light of men. The light shines in the darkness, but the darkness has not understood it.** (John 1:1-5 NIV)

Not only does the universe have a beginning and the Bible made this clear well before science believed it to be true but also the universe is expanding. Scientists in the last one hundred years have discovered and it is proven again and again by data collection that like a balloon filling with air, the universe is growing apart. Before this, scientists believed the universe was static, that it had been staying the same for eternity. What is important to realize is that thousands of years before science ever realized this, that the universe is expanding, the Bible told us this was the case. The prophet Isaiah noted this. **This is what the Lord says — your Redeemer, who formed you in the womb: I am the Lord, who has made all things, who alone stretched out the heavens, who spread out the earth by myself,** (Isaiah 44:24 NIV) He repeats this idea later. **"I, even I, am he who comforts you. Who are you that you fear mortal men, the sons of men,**

who are but grass, that you forget the Lord your Maker, who stretched out the heavens and laid the foundations of the earth, (Isaiah 51:12-13 NIV) The prophet Jeremiah echoed this revelation. **But God made the earth by his power; he founded the world by his wisdom and stretched out the heavens by his understanding.** (Jeremiah 10:12 NIV) The Hebrew word used here that is translated stretched has the idea of expansion, of being spread apart. Since the beginning of time, since when time and space were created by God, the universe has been spreading apart...both matter as well as energy at a growing rate. While science floundered about in the ignorance of the belief that the universe was continually staying put, God revealed to us that it was in fact spreading out.

There is a third point to be made here. The universe is decaying. Well before science understood this to be true, before the second law of thermodynamics was formulated, that decay of the universe was taking place and Paul the Apostle stated this clearly. **For the creation was subjected to frustration, not by its own choice, but by the will of the one who subjected it, in hope that the creation itself will be liberated from its bondage to decay and brought into the glorious freedom of the children of God.** (Romans 8:20-21 NIV) As the universe expands from its beginning point, it is decaying, in a sense, it is dying. We know that the universe is cooling which the second law of thermodynamics insists has to happen. That cooling is the steady loss of energy which will result in the universe coming to its end. For centuries, scientists believed that the universe was eternal and staying the same. We now know the Bible is correct. It is not staying the same and it certainly is not eternal. It is dying and will come to an end.

Consider this for a moment. The Bible tells us that the earth is securely placed in the universe. It uses symbolic language to describe this. **My own hand laid the foundations of the earth, and my right hand spread out the heavens; when I summon them, they all stand up together.** (Isaiah 48:13 NIV) The metaphor of a house and its foundation is used to describe the secure way God has established the earth. We see this again in Isaiah. **I have put my words in your mouth and covered you with the shadow of my hand — I who set the heavens in place, who laid the foundations of the earth, and who say to Zion, 'You are my people.'**" (Isaiah 51:16 NIV) Of course the prophet does not think of the earth as resting upon some sort of giant concrete slab. He is telling us that just as a strong foundation is critical for a house to rest secure, so too, the Lord has made the earth secure in how He has placed it in the cosmos. A different metaphor is used by the Psalmist to declare just how marvelously God keeps the earth stable when everything seems shaken and in danger of collapse. **When the earth and all its people quake, it is I who hold its pillars firm.** (Psalm 75:3 NIV)

How wonderfully the Lord has prepared the placement of the earth! Now I realize that many atheists would say it is just lucky that we are in such a spectacular location that life could exist. It is not planned this way, it just happened. Chance and quantity of options just worked out to make life possible. That of course is just wishful thinking. It is like saying that the tooth fairy took away your molar. The evidence points clearly to a parent and in this case God getting that \$5 under your pillow. If the surface gravity was any stronger, there would be too much ammonia and methane for life to exist. If it was any weaker, the atmosphere would lose too much water. If the earth were any farther from the sun, it would be too cold for the water cycle to work perfectly for life. Any closer to the earth and it would be too hot for the water cycle. If the axis tilt to the earth was any greater or less, the temperature differences would be too much for life. If the rotation period of the earth was any longer, the temperature fluctuations between day and night would be too great for our survival. If the rotation was shorter, the atmospheric wind velocities would be too much to bear. The earth is perfectly calibrated for life and although you could insist it is just good luck for us, it seems that is like telling your friend it sure is lucky my dad loved me enough to read to me each night. How about giving some credit to your dad!

I find it amusing that so many atheists want someone like me to explain how God could always exist, that He doesn't have a beginning. Yet how would my atheist friend explain how energy exists or even matter. Can a single scientist explain what energy is? How about conscious thinking? What is that? We know we

think in a conscious way, and we can tell there is energy in the universe. We may not understand either but to deny they exist would be like saying there is not existence. The same is true of God. The evidence of His work in the universe is too great to deny. Something, that is beyond matter, space and time had to create what we have in this universe. It is impossible to have it otherwise. I might not have a single bit of an explanation for how God can be eternal but that does not mean it is not so.