

# Life, the Universe & Everything

Why am I here? What's the meaning of life? Does life even have a purpose? Does the universe have a purpose? Is there anything beyond death?

These are the biggest questions humans have grappled with over thousands of years. And every day we are confronted with the most in-your-face question: How did this universe get here? The law of "cause and effect" is something our own experience teaches us from toddlerhood. We know there's a cause for everything. The universe itself therefore presents the most enormous challenge to us: Where did it come from? What caused it?

The law of cause and effect has been hammered out by careful thinkers to be expressed like this: *Every material effect must have an adequate antecedent cause.* "Material effect" simply refers to what happens in the observable universe—the physical universe. "Adequate cause" is something we recognise all the time. For example, if you drop a brick into the middle of Port Phillip, and a three metre wave hits the beaches all around the bay, you know that your brick is not an adequate cause. Something else must have caused a wave that size. "Antecedent cause" recognises that the cause must precede the effect. If the window smashed before you threw the rock, your rock is in the clear.

Along with humans over the ages, we too have grappled with these facts as they apply to life and the universe. We have concluded from the evidence that the most reasonable explanation for this enormous, complex, "finely tuned" cosmos is that it must have had an intelligent power deliberately bring it into existence. {There's plenty of information on the internet which details this, so we won't repeat it here.} Just as we don't accept it as reasonable to believe that a two-storey house came into being purely by chance, we don't consider it reasonable to believe that the (far more complex) universe came together by random chance.

But who is this powerful intelligent being which must have created the universe? That's the next big question raised by the universe's very existence. The answer was summed up well in ancient Athens, about 2000 years ago. Challenging the Athenians' belief in many gods, represented by many idols in many temples, Saul of Tarsus spoke these words:

The God who made the world and all things in it, since he is Lord of heaven and earth, doesn't dwell in hand-made temples; nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all life and breath in every respect; and he made from one blood every nation of people to inhabit the whole earth, having determined the times and the boundaries of their habitation, that they would seek the Lord, if perhaps they might reach out for him and find him, though he isn't far from each one of us; for in him we live and move and exist, just as some of your own poets have said, 'For we also are his offspring.'

So, being the offspring of God, we shouldn't think that Godhood is like

gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and thought of man. Therefore, having overlooked the times of ignorance, God now commands all people everywhere to repent, because he has fixed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness through a man whom he has appointed, having given proof to all by raising him from the dead. *Acts 17:24-31*

Have a good think about the explanation put forward here. It is still vital for us to understand today. He says who created the universe (including us), why he created us (“that they would seek the Lord...and find him”), and what we should do about it (repent, seek God and find him).

At some point in your life (to quote David Byrne) you may ask yourself, “Well, how did I get here?” It’s a question we should indeed ask ourselves, and God answers it for us in the scriptures, like the passage quoted above. Just as a mother or father tells their child how they got here — because the child has no way of knowing that himself — so also God tells us how we came to be here on this planet. He also tells us why: so that we would seek him and come to know him. Since that’s why you and I were created, we’ll never experience true and full personal fulfilment until we come to know the One who made us, God our Creator. Jesus came to earth to make this possible. He said, “I have come that they may have life, and have it abundantly.”

If you’d like to talk about this, and about your relationship with God, contact us. We’d love to help.

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