

even slightly altered, temperatures would be too extreme for us to survive. Those are just three of over 100 finely tuned constants that the existence of life requires.

Anyway, I say all of that to say this. The **“heavens and the earth,”** the universe, is a wondrous reality.

God

But it isn't the only reality. According to verse 1, there's another far more wondrous one, **“God.”** It's no accident that the word **“God”** is the subject of the Bible's first sentence. That it is reveals a defining fact. He exists just as surely and objectively as the universe does.

And the verbs in chapter 1 that have Him as their subject disclose something about Him. Commentator Derek Kidner says it this way. They **“express an energy of mind, will and judgment which excludes all question of our conceiving God ‘in the category of the “it” instead of the “Thou.”** He is living and personal in other words. He has limitless powers of consciousness and activity and uses those to love, act upon, and interact with the universe and everything in it, including us.

At the same time though, He is an utterly different and superior kind of reality. Nothing else is even remotely like Him.

First, He is **“spirit,”** which means non-material. He isn't made up of elements as everything in the universe is. He is living, for example, but doesn't have amino acids and proteins. He has powers of consciousness and activity without a body and brain. He is spirit.

Second, He is infinite. And everything else that exists is finite. He is limitless. Everything else is limited. Take power, for instance. Think of a AAA battery and the sun. God has more power than the sun does than the sun has more power than the AAA battery does. He has infinitely more power in fact. He is limitless in all things.

The bottom line is that we can divide all of reality into two categories: (1) that which is God, meaning Yahweh, the God of the Bible; and (2) that which is not God, meaning literally everything else. God is

the dominant of all realities in other words. He is immeasurably different than and superior to all others, including the universe.

In the Beginning

Now, notice what the first three words in the Bible reveal about that universe. It had a beginning. The 118 elements did not exist. Then, they did. There were no hydrogen atoms. Then, there were hydrogen atoms. That's what the first three words in the Bible teach us.

Many disagree! Most ancients believed that the universe is eternal. Aristotle was one of those. He argued in his foundational work, *Physics*, that matter is eternal and almost all Greeks agreed. They considered the idea of an ultimate beginning to be rationally absurd. The rediscovery of classical literature in the Middle Ages eventually revived their point of view. It was then given further impetus in the 18th century when scientists formulated the law of conservation of matter. Matter, they declared, can be neither created nor destroyed.

That's the way things stood into the 20th century. But then, various lines of evidence, including Einstein's theory of relativity and Hubble's red shift, converged and led to the "**Big Bang Theory.**" At first, many scientists opposed it because of what it meant. Einstein himself fiddled with the equations of his theory hoping to avoid their inevitable implication, which is this. At one time, the universe didn't exist. At another time, it did. It had a beginning in other words. It came into existence. Secular scientists today, like renowned theoretical physicist Stephen Hawking, are still trying to get around that clear implication. But all their speculations are either groundless or, like Hawking's "**imaginary time**" thesis, fantasy.

While the Big Bang theory itself isn't true, what it manifestly implies is. As the first three words in the Bible teach us, the universe began.

Created

We've now examined all the words in Genesis 1:1 except one. That

word addresses a vital issue. How do we explain the existence of the universe? There are three generally accepted views.

One is that something came from nothing. Acclaimed theoretical physicist Michio Kaku explains it this way in the *How the Universes Works* series. We now know that something, the universe, came from nothing. There was nothing. Then there was something. Philosopher Quentin Smith agrees. He proposes that the universe **“came from nothing, by nothing, for nothing.”** The universe, in other words, just popped into existence. That’s one view.

Another view, which I’ve already mentioned, is that it’s eternal. All the atoms that make it up have always existed. Remember the famous opening line in Carl Sagan’s highly popular television series and book, *Cosmos*, **“The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.”** He went on to write, **“A universe that is infinitely old requires no Creator. We are, in the most profound sense, children of the Cosmos for it is the Cosmos that gave us birth and daily sustains us.”** A Christian named Nancy bought a Berenstain Bears book for her son. In it, the bear family invites the child reader to take a nature walk with it. During the walk, the family and the reader come across a sunrise upon which is written, in bold print, these words, **“all that IS, or WAS, or EVER WILL BE.”** That’s obviously taken from Sagan’s *Cosmos* series and illustrates how widely accepted this second view is.

There’s a third view that explains the existence of the universe. It’s verse 1’s. God **“created”** it. That He created it means three things.

First, He invented it. He conceived it in all of its details. The 118 elements, the 75% hydrogen mass, or the 23 degree axis tilt of the earth began as ideas in His mind.

Second, He made the universe. As the rest of Genesis 1 reveals, He willed and spoke it into existence. He had and has the **“e”** side of the equation **“e=mc²”** available to Him and used it to make matter.

And third, He sustains the universe. As Colossians 1:17 and Hebrews 1:3 make clear, He is the glue of the universe that holds it

together. It's remarkable (materially impossible) that the earth's precise 23 degree axis tilt stays that way. Why does it? It's because God **"upholds it"** to quote Hebrews 1:3. Please grasp something. God sustaining the universe is as miraculous as creating it was.

Those then are the three views and the evidence supports the third. It takes far greater faith to believe matter popped into existence out of nothing or that it's eternal than it does to believe what verse 1 teaches. How do we explain the existence of the universe? God created it!

Application

And we need to live as if He did. Genesis 1:1 is the starting point of human life generally and our lives particularly. That's because of what it means. Everything in the universe, including you and me, is subject to God. Think of it this way. Because God created the universe, reality is ordered by Him. And because it's ordered by Him, we're answerable to Him for our conduct in it. By answerable, I mean He rewards us for acting according to His order and punishes us for acting contrary to it.

That explains the vitriolic opposition of secularists to creationism. They believe God doesn't exist and didn't create the universe because they don't want to be subject to Him. That belief then directs the methods by which they gather the evidence and the conclusions they draw from it. Richard Lewontin, a Harvard geneticist and skeptic, admits just that. He writes, **"We are forced by our *a priori* adherence to material causes to create an apparatus of investigation and a set of concepts that produce material explanation."** That is a stunning confession. He admits it. The science of his colleagues and he isn't objective. They don't follow the evidence when it leads to any non-material explanations, especially if the explanation is God.

But we do. That's why we believe what we believe. God exists and created the universe. And that's why we do what we do. Subject ourselves to Him in all things. We act according to His order in all things. Several examples speak a thousand words.

We act according to His order in food. He created food for two reasons: to live and enjoy. So, we don't live to eat because that's gluttony. But we also don't just eat to live. We eat to enjoy as well.

We act according to His order in sex. He created sex to reflect the Trinity (Song of Songs 8:6). So, we make sure the degree of our physical intimacy with someone matches the degree of our relational commitment to him or her – with the most intimate act, intercourse, reserved for the deepest commitment, marriage.

We act according to His order in sports, which is a form of play. He created play to give us a taste of what heaven will be like. So, we don't follow Vince Lombardi's old adage in sports, "**winning is everything.**" We follow God's instead, "**having fun is everything.**"

We act according to His order in conversations. He created our abilities to speak and listen to foster intimacy with others. So, we make ourselves "**You-deep**" not "**Me-deep**" in conversation.

We act according to His order in our feelings. He created feelings to enliven our lives not direct them. So, we make them our servants not our masters. We decide and do with our heads not our hearts.

Those examples make the point. Because God created the universe, reality is ordered by Him. And because it's ordered by Him, we're answerable to Him for our conduct in it. So, we learn what His order is and act according to it, in all things: food, sex, sports, conversation, feelings, business, marriage, child-rearing, music, art, dress, appearance, entertainment, and on it goes. We subject ourselves to Him in all things.

Conclusion

I close with the words of Chuck Colson, "**for whatever you take as the starting point of your worldview does function, in effect, as your religion.**" He was absolutely right. So, let's make the starting point of the Bible the starting point of our worldviews and lives as well, "**In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.**"