

Being Prepared to Answer (Part 2) Pastor Joel McPherson 8.1.21

This message is adapted from "The Mystery Unveiled" & "Defend Your Faith" by Delwin Sargent & Daniel Abbatiello.

Introduction & Review

¹ Peter 3:15-16- "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. **Always be prepared to give an answer** to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behavior in Christ may be ashamed of their slander."

All these people need answers.

I need to be PREPARED to give ANSWERS for the HOPE I have, and that is what I am trying to do right now with you.

What is my hope?

My hope is to spend eternity with Jesus in Heaven.

What or Who do I base my hope/faith in? **Jesus**

I have put my hope & my faith in Jesus & I have committed my life to Him, but I cannot make that decision for anyone else.

What is the foundation for what you believe? Is it consistent & strong or always changing & weak?

I. The Mystery of the BIBLE Revealed

A. The Bible (God's Word) is the solid foundation for

1. Our hope/faith in eternity with Jesus in Heaven.

B. The Power of the Bible is Unlocked by the Key of Faith.

Hebrews 11:6 "And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him."

1. You have to believe God's Word & live it to truly understand & benefit from it.
2. Example of Tightrope walker and the wheelbarrow.

The Word of God will unlock the answers to the questions you have, but you have got to want the answers it provides. You have to have enough faith to get in the wheelbarrow & trust Jesus.

"Dear God, please open my heart and mind to hear and receive Your Word. Amen!"

Where did we & everything else come from?

II. The Mystery of the ORIGIN OF LIFE

A. God created the universe & the laws that govern it.

Genesis 1:1, 14- "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.. 14 And God said, Let there be lights in the...heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, and for seasons, and for days, and years." (KJV)

Colossians 1:16-17- "16 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: 17 And he is before all things, and by him all things consist." (KJV)

1. The universe & the laws that govern it are not the product of random chance.

a. Example: A Puzzle

- 1) How many times would you have to throw up an unassembled 9-piece puzzle into the air to have it be put together perfectly?
- 2) How about a 300 or 1000-piece puzzle?
- 3) If you see a completed 1000-piece puzzle, you wonder, "Who did this?" You never say, "I bet these pieces randomly fell from the sky and joined together."
- 4) A completed puzzle clearly calls for someone with intelligence putting it together.
- 5) The complexities of the universe, the earth & especially the human body are infinitely more difficult to put together than a puzzle.

b. Example: A Smart Phone

- 1) Parts are made from materials specifically harvested, manipulated & crafted.
- 2) Parts are put together in special ways (sometimes beyond the capability of human hands).
- 3) Parts are put together in such a way as not to damage other parts and to hold together securely and safely.
- 4) Even after all this, it is still not a smart phone. It is coded with information & rules/laws that govern how it receives information, makes decisions & performs functions.
- 5) Even after this, it is still not complete. It has to connect to information provided through the internet to do all it is supposed to do.
- 6) No one looks at a smart phone and says, "I bet this randomly came together in this form for me to use." They say, "Who made this? Was it Apple, Samsung or another company?"

7) The mind far surpasses a smart phone and lasts more than 2-4 years, yet some people choose to believe that it is a product of mere chance.

- c. Dr. Richard Dawkins from the Department of Zoology at Oxford University said, "The more statistically improbable a thing is, the less we can believe it happened by random chance. Superficially, the obvious alternative to chance is an **intelligent designer.**" (*New Scientist*, April 15, 1982 p. 130; Hovind, page 9)
- d. Even if you choose to believe that given enough time, the impossible will happen, the obvious flaw/weak point in the belief of a Bing Bang explanation of the origin of life & the absence of a Creator God is "**Where did the 2 things that banged together to create everything come from?**".

1) What caused them to come together?

2) Where did they get the power to be in motion?

- e. Sir Author Keith (who wrote the forward to the hundredth-anniversary edition of Darwin's *Origin of the Species*, 1959) said, "Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it because the only alternative is special creation, and that is unthinkable."

1) A lot of people don't believe God created the universe because they don't want to believe in God.

2) They don't want to believe in God, because they do not want to be accountable to Him.

3) They want to live like there is no God and therefore no consequences to going against what He wants.

2. Only God could create the universe & make it run with such precision & order. He is the intelligent designer, behind all that is.
3. He not only created it. He sustains it, keeping it going.

B. God has always existed & will always exist.

Psalm 90:2- "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.." (NIV)

Revelation 22:13- "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." (NIV)

1. Something or Someone has to have always existed before & outside of time.
2. What is easier to believe?
 - a. Some particles that always existed randomly hit each other and randomly created everything is.
 - b. God has always existed and created everything with detailed intricacies & order.
3. Since both beliefs cannot be verified (through observation) and therefore require faith, I believe it takes a lot more faith to believe in evolution than it does to believe in the Creator God.

4. Don't forget. We are basing our beliefs on a foundation that doesn't change: God's Word.
5. We are basing our faith in the fact that Jesus is the Truth, and His Word is trustworthy.

C. God created mankind uniquely & with purpose.

Genesis 1:26-28- "Then God 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.'

27 So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. 28 God blessed them and said to them, 'Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish in the sea and the birds in the sky and over every living creature that moves on the ground.'

 (NIV)

1. God created mankind & put them in charge of ruling over and taking care of all His creation.
2. God created mankind specially in His image (with a Spirit / Soul).

Genesis 2:7- "Then the Lord God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

- a. They were & we are given a soul that once created will never cease to exist.
- b. They were & we are given free will to choose to love & serve Him or to reject & hate Him.
3. God created mankind to be in relationship with Him. They walked with God in the garden in the cool of the day.

Where did evil come from? Why does God allow it?

III. The Mystery of SATAN & EVIL

A. The Betrayal & Fall of Satan

1. In addition to the physical universe and its inhabitants, God created a supernatural one, full of angels.
 - a. Angels were created to serve God & mankind.

Psalm 103:20-21- "Praise the Lord, you his angels, you mighty ones who do his bidding, who obey his word, ...who do his will."

- b. Angels were created with the ability to turn away from God.
- c. Lucifer (also known as Satan, the Devil) was a chief angel, thought to be one of 3 angels serving closest to God.
2. Motivated by prideful ambition, Lucifer rebelled against God and tried to overthrow His kingdom and take His place, leading 1/3 of the angels into battle against God.

Ezekiel 28:12-15 & 17- “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. 13 You were in Eden, the garden of God; every precious stone adorned you: ...Your settings and mountings were made of gold; on the day you were created they were prepared. 14 You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. 15 You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. ...17 Your heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendor. So, I threw you to the earth;”

Isaiah 14:12-15- “How you have fallen from heaven, morning star, son of the dawn! You have been cast down to the earth, you who once laid low the nations! 13 You said in your heart, ‘I will ascend to the heavens; I will raise my throne above the stars of God; I will sit enthroned on the mount of assembly, on the utmost heights of Mount Zaphon. 14 I will ascend above the tops of the clouds; I will make myself like the Most High.’ 15 But you are brought down to the realm of the dead, to the depths of the pit.”

a. It was no contest. Lucifer and the angels who followed him faced an immediate & future judgment.

- 1) Immediate- They were kicked out of heaven, losing their position and former rights. (Revelation 12:4)**
- 2) Future- God has prepared the Lake of Fire for them to be tortured in for eternity for their ongoing treachery.**

Matthew 25:41- “Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the **eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels.**”

b. Since Satan realized defeating God was impossible, he turned to defeating those God loved the most- Adam & Eve (mankind made in God’s image).

B. The Betrayal & Fall of Man

1. Mankind was created by God with free will to choose to follow him or not.
2. Adam & Eve (mankind) were given just one rule to keep the life-giving connection & relationship with God.

Genesis 2:16-17- “16 And the Lord God commanded the man, “You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; 17 but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die.”

3. In Satan’s desire to wreck the lives of the ones God loved dearly, he...
 - a. Tempted Eve to doubt what God said.

Genesis 3:1- Now the serpent was more crafty than any of the wild animals the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God really say, ‘You must not eat from any tree in the garden?’”

b. Lied to Eve, telling her that there would be no consequences for disobeying God.

Genesis 3:4- “You will not certainly die,’ the serpent said to the woman.”

c. Tempted Eve

- 1) To doubt that God had her best intentions at heart (to doubt God’s love).**
- 2) To believe that she could be like God.**

Genesis 3:5- “For God knows that when you eat from it your eyes will be opened, and you will be like God, knowing good & evil.”

4. Mankind betrayed, rebelled against & sinned against God.
 - a. Eve ate the fruit & offered it to Adam.
 - b. Adam ate the fruit.

C. The Fruit/Consequences of the Betrayal

1. Just like Satan, they lost their...
 - a. Place- They were kicked out of the garden of Eden.
 - b. Position- They came under the rule & influence of Satan.
 - c. Relationship- They severed their life-giving relationship with God.
2. Just like Satan, they faced immediate & future consequences.
 - a. Immediate-

Genesis 3:17-19- “17 To Adam he said, “Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, ‘You must not eat from it,’ “Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. 18 It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. 19 By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.”

1) The earth would be under a curse because of their sin.

- a) Sickness, disease, disaster, difficulty (Romans 8:22)
- b) Suffering, injustice, atrocities, rape, incest, abuse & all manner of evil.
- c) Death

2) Work would become exhausting.

3) Childbearing would become painful. (Genesis 3:16)

b. Future-

1) A Physical Death

2) The Lake of Fire prepared for Satan & his demons to be tortured in became mankind’s destiny when it chose to believe & follow Satan instead of God.

D. Evil exists because...

1. Satan & his negative influence still exist.

John 10:10 *The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy.*

2. God gave Satan & mankind free will to rebel against Him.
3. Mankind chooses evil over God and His good ways.
 - a. God doesn't force us to love & obey Him.
 - b. God doesn't want us to love Him because we have to (like a robot).
 - c. For us to have real love for Him, we have to have the ability to not love Him.

What is death like? Should we be afraid of it?

IV. The Mystery of PHYSICAL & SPIRITUAL DEATH

A. Death is separation.

1. It is not the end of existence.
2. It is separation.
 - a. Physical death is the separation of your immortal soul from your physical body.
 - b. Spiritual death is the separation of your immortal soul from God.
 - c. Example-
 1. Death is like a branch (us) being broken of the tree (God- our source of life.) In spiritual death, we are no longer part of the tree.
 2. Physical death of the branch (us) doesn't happen immediately, but the process of death has begun and is inevitable, unless grafted back into the tree.

B. Death is the fruit/consequence of sin.

1. God did not want mankind to face physical or spiritual death (separation).

2 Peter 3:9- *"The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."* (NIV)

2. If mankind would have never sinned, death would not have entered the world.

C. Death is passed down to all.

We come into this world already cut off (separated) from the tree (God).

Romans 5:12- *"...By one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned"* (KJV)

D. Death is certain.

Physical & spiritual death is inevitable without divine intervention.

Hebrews 9:27- “...It is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment:” (KJV)

E. Physical death leads to one of two unchangeable destination pathways.

1. Hell -> Judgment -> Lake of Fire (for eternity)

Luke 16:19-31- The rich man ...**died** and was buried. 23 In Hades, where he was **in torment**, he looked up and saw Abraham far away, with Lazarus by his side. 24 So he called to him, ‘Father Abraham, have pity on me and send Lazarus to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue, because **I am in agony in this fire.**’ ...27 “...I beg you, father, send Lazarus to my family, 28 for I have **five brothers**. Let him **warn them**, so that they will not also come to this **place of torment.**’

a. After physical death, you will still be...

1. Conscious & aware.
2. Feel the pain, agony & torment of the flames of Hell & the Lake of Fire.
3. Able to remember your life on earth.
4. Have concern for others you left.
5. Able to feel deep regret.

b. After physical death, you will not be able to change your mind

2. Heaven -> Reward -> New Heavens & New Earth (for eternity)

2 Corinthians 5:6 & 8- “...Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. 8 We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

John 14:2-3- “My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? 3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am.”

F. The only reason to fear death is if you have not been restored back into relationship with God.