

Talk It Over

The Story of Reality
(Week 1)
Reality Is Puzzling

SMALL TALK

1. Can you describe a favorite story or movie in terms of its: 1) beginning, 2) problem/conflict plot 3) solution/resolution 4) ending?

VIEWPOINT

2. **READ Genesis 1:1; Isaiah 45:18.** Do these sentences answer the “How” question or the “Who” question?
3. **READ Romans 1:19-20.** What kinds of attributes of God, the creator, are reflected plainly in his creation?
4. **READ Romans 1:18.** What is the reason given for why so many people do not believe these naturally revealed truths?
5. **READ Psalm 104.** From the examples in this Psalm, how can our worship be aided by contemplating God’s creation?

GETTING PERSONAL

6. What practical difference does it make for you to believe that God actually did create the heavens and the earth? What do people miss when they don’t believe this?
7. How aware are you of the created world and what it teaches you about God? How does the created world affect your opinion about God?

MAKING PROGRESS (THIS WEEK)

8. Ponder over Job 38, Psalm 104, Psalm 148, and/or Isaiah 40:12-31 with regard to your own heart response to God as Creator. Then, express your own heart responses to Him the way some of the writers of the scriptures did.

October 30, 2023

The Story of Reality: (Week 1) Reality is Puzzling

All of us, even when we were very little, began to put the puzzle pieces of our worldview together. We were trying to make sense of reality. We asked countless questions.

Some of us ran into dark days when we did not know the answer to questions like these:

Why am I here? Where did I come from? Where did everything come from? What happens after I die?

Then some of us ran into other people's answers to our questions that sank us deeper into darkness. Do any of you remember this one?

"The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be."
–Carl Sagan, PBS documentary, COSMOS

Then some of us ran into answers like this:

In a universe of blind physical forces ...the universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is at the bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil and no good. Nothing but blind pitiless indifference.
–Richard Dawkins, River Out of Eden p. 133

This worldview feels particularly dark and frightening.

If matter is all that we are then how much do we really matter?

These are just a couple of examples of worldview. But do these accurately reflect reality?

I believe "The Story of Reality" as revealed by God in history. It is not a "fairytale," it is **a particular kind of story. It is history.** Do you see the word story in the word history? "The Story of Reality" is a **worldview** that makes sense

of all of history, from the beginning to the end and everything important in between.

Every thinking person is puzzling together their worldview to make sense of it all. As you are puzzling together all the pieces for your view of REALITY. I offer to you for your thoughtful consideration “The Story of Reality” as HIS-Story. **Do you see the word HIS in the word history?**

The main character of “The story of reality” is God. If this is true, then we are in the story but we are not the main character even in our own story.

Perhaps your mom or dad told you, “*Now son, remember, the world does not revolve around you.*” It’s a good thing to remember.

I. **The BEGINNING of the story**

Genesis 1:1 (NIV) In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

What does the story begin with? It’s a good question, but the wrong question. “The Story of Reality” does not begin with a “what” but with a “Who”. Everything else comes from him.

But then we might ask, “Where did God come from?” God did not come from anything. God is self-existent. If he was not, and he came from something else then he would not be God, because something else caused God. God has no beginning and no end, and everything else came from him. In history he revealed himself to Moses as the self existent “I Am that I am.”

Hebrews 11:3 (NIV) By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God’s command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible.

When Moses wrote Genesis 1:1, it was STRIKINGLY DIFFERENT from every other pagan religion of his day!

Pagan religions believed matter was eternal and the god’s shaped it. Darwin believed matter was eternal and evolution shaped it.

Only a few decades after Darwin, science no longer believed that the universe is eternal.

The “big bang theory” is how astronomers explain the way the universe began. It is the idea that the universe began as just a single point, then expanded to grow as large as it is right now, is still growing, and losing energy over time!

What you believe affects your conclusions and how you live life. SO...

II. What do you believe is REALLY REAL?

AND how do you decide what is really real? Is there a God? Was the world created? Or did the cosmos suddenly appear on its own?

REALITY IS PUZZLING :

In the Christian Worldview, although reality is puzzling, we have an advantage because we have more than just the puzzle pieces (**natural revelation**) we also have the puzzle box top picture (**special revelation**).

Obviously, there are other competing worldviews to the Christian Worldview, and everyone believes their worldview is describing reality. But we must consider this.

The story of reality is the worldview that makes the most sense of everything.

In an ATHEISTIC WORLDVIEW all we have is a **Closed Box**. **Atheism does not have a design, or master PICTURE to puzzle it together. Atheism, can only make observations from what is within the box alone!** Atheism insists that the universe is a closed box and can be fully explained without a God outside of the Box.

Secular science (atheistic, or agnostic) is convinced **they can explain everything from within the box without a design, or a builder!**

HERBERT SPENCER (the originator of the phrase “survival of the fittest” from evolutionary theory) sometime before 1903 when he died, he discovered and declared that there were 5 categories of the knowable that created the matrix within which everything occurs. Here are the 5 categories within which all phenomena occur: And this is the order in which he stated it: **Time, Force, Action, Space, and Matter**. In that Order. Then the world hailed him as a great scientist who discovered and articulated these categories.

But was this a new discovery? We just read it in the first line of the Bible!

Genesis 1 (NIV) In the beginning (“Time”) God (we quickly discover in the first page the “Force” is actually personal) created (“Action”) the heavens and the earth (“Space” and “Matter”).

Question: If the box is a closed system, and if the “big bang theory” is true, we really do have quite an unsolvable puzzle don’t we? We have a starting point, but no ability to explain how it started, because aren’t those questions outside of the box?

III. Is reality a CLOSED BOX or an OPEN BOX?

QUESTION: How can you have a starting point for the entire system within a closed box without a causal agent?

Science deals with the box of empiricism, where observations and experiments can be conducted. However, LOGIC demands more. Perhaps an illustration will help us understand.

DOMINOS ILLUSTRATION

From this looping video, does anyone here believe that first domino spontaneously fell? No. In a series of fallen dominos, or series of causal systems, we are always looking for that first domino to be a causal agent. Even if you came to a line of fallen dominoes that stretched off beyond the horizon, and you saw the line continue to fall beyond the other horizon, nobody would think that there was no first domino. And nobody can imagine a stationary domino falling without a causal agent. And we are not talking about dominos but very complex whole systems coming together to eventually support life on this planet as we know it. What started the whole series? WHAT ABOUT DARWINIAN EVOLUTION

Darwinian Evolution as a theory presupposes life, and all the systems necessary for life to exist, before it can even begin to work. You can’t use Darwinian evolution as a model to create those presupposing systems because evolution is not a self-existing causal agent that can produce itself. It’s merely a description of what might have happened after all the detailed systems necessary for life were already in place.

PUZZLE (while shaking the box): It is very odd indeed to think that given enough time, and force—an **inanimate, non living, unidentified material force**—within the box that everything goes from chaos to perfect order to sustain life, then

spontaneously produce life from non life. That's harder for me to believe than **the resurrection of Jesus**. There's actually a lot of evidence for that! But I'm getting ahead of myself in the story.

We stop here today at the very important opening line of the Story of Reality, but that's my story and I'm sticking with it!

TAKE STEPS: The "Talk It Over" study this week.