

Beginnings – ORIGIN *(Where did we come from?)*

- **Only Two Choices**
- **Realize the Significance**
- **Is it Faith or Science?**
 - LAB - Lookable, Accessible, Breakable
- **Guess at the Evidence**
- **Inspect the Evidence**
 - Universe = "Decay"
 - Age of the Earth = "Can't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "No Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "Lacks Genes and Tweens"
- **No Compromise**

DON'T - Death, Orders of Creation, Names in genealogies, Ten Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE *(Why are we here?)*

- **Love - GOD and MAN**
- **Increase - GROW**
- **Faithfulness - Time, Talent, Treasure**
- **Eternity – Past, Present, Future**

Authority – POWER *(Who's in charge?)* A God Who is:

- **Personal and Loving**
- **Omnipotent**
- **Wise and All-Knowing**
- **Everywhere and Eternal**
- **Righteous and Reliable**

Standards – RULES *(What are the rules?)* God's rules are:

- **Revealed supernaturally, not derived by reason**
- **Universal and apply to everyone, everywhere, all the time**
- **Loving**
- **Enforced**
- **Steadfast**

E - Eternity

Time is a creation of God. I am not capable of fully grasping the concept of God being outside of time, but I know that He is. The Bible begins with the statement "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth" so we know that God invented our concept of the time/space/matter reality from nothing. "In the beginning" is when God created time, the "heavens" are space, and "the earth" is matter.

So to understand why we're here it makes sense that we would look at why God created time and what effect our lives have on eternity. The three perspectives on time that we commonly use are:

- **Past**
- **Present**
- **Future**

Eternity is made up of all of these, so we'll look at them for answers to the question of why we are here.

Past

"In the beginning" is the start of what we call the past. But even before(!?) the beginning there was always God. This is impossible for my mind to fully comprehend, but I need to remember that God is outside of His creation and is not limited by time like I am.

I believe a major reason for studying the past is the concept of **remembering** so that we develop a spirit of **gratefulness**. We have received God's mercy and grace and have lives that are much blessed. Many times the Bible tells us that people did evil because they forgot what God had done for them. If we develop a grateful heart from studying the past we will more readily trust God with our present and future.

So what do we see in the past that helps answer the question of why God made everything?

Universal Level

Before creation God purposed to create the universe and everything in it. The Bible records the major events and many personal examples of God working out His purposes in history. When seen in light of Scripture, we learn **Who God Is** and **What God Has Done** and **What God Requires** of us.

Here are key universal events in the story so far:

- ❖ Creation
- ❖ The first sin, which introduced death into the world
- ❖ The flood where God destroyed the original world because of their wickedness
- ❖ God's use of the Jewish people to be the priests and means of blessing for people of all nations and generations, and as instructors of what sin is
- ❖ The miraculous birth of Jesus and His earthly ministry where he modeled and clarified what God expects of us
- ❖ Jesus death and resurrection as the final sacrifice needed to satisfy the penalty of death for those He saves
- ❖ The development of the Church as the body of Christ with the anticipation of Christ's return as Judge and Lord

So a possible answer to why we're here seems to be that ***God created so that He could write a story that would demonstrate His Glory and His Love and many other attributes of Himself.***

Personal Level

Before creation, God chose those people He would save from their sins and adopt as His children. Those persons who know Him and have been saved by Him are part of that group called "the elect" in the Bible. So on a personal level the most important event of the past is that God chose me to be adopted as His child (justification) and to live with Him forever. ***One simple answer to the question of why I am here is "because God planned for my life before He created anything."***

Present

The only portion of eternity that I can impact is the present. So my primary focus needs to be on NOW. Since my lifetime is such a small portion of eternity I'm going to consider the lifetime of a man as being "the present" for purposes of this overview.

From a biblical standpoint this life (the Present) seems to consist of:

- A series of tests and challenges and blessings to test and develop our faith.
- The only opportunity to be reconciled with God for eternity
- An opportunity to show love to God and others.
- An opportunity to do good works in service to the Lord (but not as a means to salvation).

Universal Level

The Present is a culmination of God's story so far and a launching point for the next chapter of the story. God calls for His people to be faithful and to trust in Him for the results. He doesn't ask us to "manipulate" results by any means possible. The Body of Christ is responsible for doing what He tells us to do in the way He tells us to do it. As we press on in obedience we are then to be patient as we wait for Him to bring results at the perfect time. I believe the concepts of being salt and light and being ambassadors for Christ are the proper perspective for us to have regarding our time here on earth. We're not here to serve ourselves – ***we're here to play our part in God's story and plan.***

Personal Level

In the Love, Increase, and Faithfulness discussions we've already covered most of the key aspects of how to live well in the present. I believe much of what God requires of us is outlined in those sections. The present is the time when God works out sanctification (making us holy) in our lives.

I am to be faithful in what God has given me to do now. He controls the results.