

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**

Future

People have always been fascinated with the prospect of knowing the future. Compared to the past and the present, most of our existence will be spent in the future. Understanding life and why we're here depends on an understanding of the future.

Universal Level

Everything we've said to this point makes this fairly easy to summarize. God will continue to develop His story until He is ready for the closing act. In the Bible we get a revelation of what that act will be like, and it is gloriously awesome and awful. Jesus Christ will return to earth to rule and to judge. God will gather His chosen people from all of history and will pour out His wrath on His enemies. God will finally satisfy His justice against evil, and it will be a terrible thing to watch and an unbearable thing to experience. God will then destroy the world in fire and recreate it for an eternal dwelling place for His people and Himself.

The timing and details of Christ's return and God's judgment and restoration are much debated. Many folks smarter than I am have studied this extensively and reached different conclusions, so I don't think God gave us enough info to be sure of the details. But we do know this:

The good guys win, the bad guys lose, and God's purpose will be accomplished exactly as He planned it before the time of creation.

Personal Level

My personal destiny is a subset of the Universal one. If I am one of God's adopted children then I will spend my eternal future in God's presence enjoying His blessings and doing His work. If I have not been reconciled to God then I will spend my eternal future in Hell suffering the just punishment for my sins.

Many people have decided to reject this idea because they don't think it is fair. As we saw in the introduction to this book, there is no logical way to arrive at a standard of "fairness" apart from God. What God does is right because God is entirely righteous. Whether we like God's plan is not the point. It is true, and it will happen.

The brief glimpse of heaven that we're given suggests that we will serve and enjoy God forever. We won't be bored or unhappy or suffering, but will live in the joy and beauty of Christ Himself. Because we will be glorified and given perfected bodies (glorification) I expect the future of God's saints will be one of incredible **fruitfulness**.

Praise God for the hope He has given us for our future!

From eternity past to eternity future we are part of God's plan and part of the Story He has written. ***Gratefulness for the past and Faithfulness for the present will lead to Fruitfulness in the future.***

Only Two Destinations

The Bible teaches that every person will spend eternity in either Heaven or Hell. There are no other options. We don't just cease to exist as some people want to believe. We don't get reincarnated so we can try again to get it right. Those who have been born again through faith in Jesus Christ will be in Heaven, everyone else will be in Hell. That seems to be the clear teaching of Scripture. Jesus said that the path to life goes through a narrow and small gate and only a few will find it, while the road that leads to destruction is broad and the gate is wide and many will go that way. I understand this to mean that the majority of people from all time will be in Hell, and the minority will be in Heaven. Or at least that appears to be the implication.

Heaven is described as a place where there will be no more tears and sorrow, a place where we will live in the light of God's presence forever with the river of life and tree of life readily available to us. God didn't give us a lot of details, but since we will live with Christ it must be a pretty special place. It will be wonderful enough to keep us content and joyful for eternity.

Hell is the place where God punishes sinners forever. It is described as a place of torment and agony and unquenchable fire. I've heard people say that Hell is eternal separation from God, but I don't think that this means the *absence* of God. God is present everywhere, yet His presence in Hell will not be as the merciful and longsuffering provider of sun and rain and blessings that unbelievers have experienced in this life. God's presence in Hell will be as the righteous, holy, wrathful, and all-powerful Bringer of Justice upon sinners. When we see glimpses of the wrath of God in Revelation we see why an eternity of God's wrath is unimaginably horrible.

LIFE Recap

To answer the question of why we are here, we use the acrostic LIFE:

Love

The greatest commandments are to love God and to love others.

- **GOD** - We love God through right perspective (His **G**lory), right actions (**O**bedience), and right thinking (**D**octrine).
- **MAN** – We love man through proper actions toward **M**yself, toward **A**ssociated people, and toward **N**eighbors

Increase

We are to purposefully seek **GROW**th in all areas of our life.

- **G**odliness
- **R**elationships
- **O**bedience
- **W**ork

Faithfulness

We are to be faithful with our Time, Talent, and Treasure since we are really just stewards of these things God has given us.

Eternity

God created time and is not limited by it.

- Past – Remembering leads to Gratefulness
- Present - In the Present we can pursue Faithfulness
- Future - In the Future we look for Fruitfulness

Review

We are all biased - Our answers to life's big questions are based 99.99% on our bias, our assumptions about the "whole ball" that we don't know first-hand.

- If there is Someone who knows the whole ball it is logical to get our answers from Him.
- If there is no one who knows it all we have to rely on our reason, which would be the result of random, purposeless accidents.

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- **I**s it Faith or Science?
 - LAB - **L**ookable, **A**ccessible, **B**reakable
- **G**uess at the Evidence
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 - Age of the Earth = "**C**an't Say"
 - Origin of Life by Chance = "**N**o Way"
 - Evolution of Species and Man = "**L**acks Genes and **T**weens"
- **N**o Compromise - DON'T
 - **D**eath after man, not before
 - **O**rders of Creation
 - **N**ames in genealogies define timeframe
 - **T**en Commandments refer to seven-day week

Intent of Life – LIFE

- **L**ove - GOD and MAN
 - **G**lory of God (right perspective)
 - **O**bedience to God (right actions)
 - **D**octrines of God (right thinking)
- **I**ncrease – GROW
 - **G**odliness
 - **R**elationships
 - **O**bedience
 - **W**ork

- **Faithfulness** - Time, Talent, Treasure
 - God owns everything
 - God gives each of us unique circumstances
 - God judges us on our faithfulness with what we have, not in comparison to others
 - If we are faithful with small things, God will reward us and entrust us with even more
- **Eternity** – Past, Present, Future
 - Past - Gratefulness
 - Present - Faithfulness
 - Future - Fruitfulness

.....*still to come*...

Authority

Standards