

# HAS GOD ETERNALLY EXISTED?

**A** QUESTION which has long puzzled those who apply logic to God's existence is: "Who made God? Where did He come from?"

The answer most often given is that He has eternally existed. No one made Him. He has always been.

Many, however, find this confusing. It seems like no answer at all, but an excuse to avoid an obvious problem. The validity of the concept that God has eternally existed is worthy of careful consideration.

## The Position of a Creator

Consider for a moment. Could God be anything but eternal? He reveals Himself as the Creator of all that there is: the material universe, angelic beings, light, life.

Now if God created all these, then He certainly existed before they did. His age exceeds all of them.

God continues to exist today. He promises to give us eternal life in the world tomorrow. Could He give us something He does not have? Could God give man eternal life if He were not eternal Himself? Would men exist forever in the future and God cease to exist?

Of course not. God will exist forever into the future — an eternal existence.

But has God always existed? He was *first* in existence. No one could be His Creator. *The One who was before all else must necessarily be eternal.*

Consider again a moment. Can something come from nothing of itself? Could an empty room suddenly become filled with furniture without a cause? Could an empty "universe" suddenly be filled with stars, planets like our earth, plant and animal life, a planned, orderly universe where a moment before there had been nothing? No. Then a Creator God was before that too.

## No Eternal Universe!

A universe that had always existed would require no Creator. That is obvious. Is it possible then, that the universe has eternally existed? Scripture and science both say "NO!" *Scripture insists that all was created* and describes the events of such a creation.

To illustrate this, uranium and other radioactive elements disintegrate at a constant rate. By estimating the ratio of disintegrated material against the original quantity of the element which existed, an approximation for its age can be assigned. After making certain assumptions, scientists estimate the age of the earth to be several thousand million years — not eternal!

Radioactivity, therefore, allows for a creation, and hence to a Creator. There must have been a time when radioactive matter *began* to disintegrate. And since there is still radioactive material in existence, the time since its creation has not been infinite.

Meteorites reaching us from outer space contain small portions of radioactive elements. The same method of dating may be applied to them. So, even the objects falling to the earth from outer space show that the date of creation is in the finite past. Meteorites are not eternal. If they were, they would not show any sign of radioactivity.

There was a beginning!

The Scripture does not set a definite date for the creation of matter either. *Adam and Eve and the world of plants and animals we are acquainted with were created approximately 6000 years ago, but the heavens and earth were brought into existence at an earlier time.* They were created originally — "In the beginning" — as stated in Genesis 1:1.

## Earth Not Created in Chaos

When first created, the world was in harmony and order, for "God is not

the author of confusion" (I Cor. 14:33). The condition described in Genesis 1:2, where the earth "was [or had become] without form [*tobu*], and void; and darkness was upon the face of the deep" refers to a later time following a disruption of that original creation. "He [God] created it *not* in vain [*tobu*]" (Isa. 45:18). The identical Hebrew word is used here in Genesis 1:2. Since God Himself says the earth was not created in vain or chaotic — *tobu*, in Hebrew — then it must have become that way afterward.

Thus creation of the original heavens and earth was at an unrevealed length of time before Adam, *while the creation Adam looked upon was fashioned only a few days before him.* (For the facts that science and the Bible reveal about the earth before Adam, write for our free booklet about dinosaurs. Also, *Did God Create a Devil?*)

The *heavens* and *earth* referred to in Genesis 1:3-28 are the *atmosphere* of this earth and the *continents*. They were brought from darkness and waste to a state of order in *six literal days* as is explained in our free reprint "How Long Were the Days of Creation?" The statement "*For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth*" (Ex. 20:11) refers to this same "earthly" heavens (atmosphere) and earth (continents).

The Hebrew word translated "made" is *asah* and means "to labor or work about." God worked upon the earth for six days bringing it out of a chaotic state into a livable condition and filling it with new life forms — including man.

The creation of the heavens containing the sun, moon, stars, and planets (which includes the earth) took place at a time prior to this *second fashioning* of the earth. No word is found in Scripture giving a definite date for that original creation.

### A Limited Universe?

David saw that "The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament [the expanse of the heavens] sheweth his handywork. Day unto day uttereth speech [each day the heavens will teach us], and night unto night sheweth knowledge [each night the starry skies tell us of our Creator]" (Psalm 19:1-2). One or two thousand stars are visible to our naked eyes on any clear night. A small telescope brings ten thousand fainter ones into view. With increase in power the telescope makes it possible to see farther into space. Distant stars invisible to the unaided eye come into view.

Uncountable billions of them lie within the reach of professional instruments like the 200-inch telescope atop Mt. Palomar in California. Estimated to be within its range are 200,000 million million. *How many times more lie beyond? No one can estimate.*

But, this is only the heavens from man's viewpoint. Suppose we were to see them through the eyes of God. Man struggles to estimate the stars in but a section of the universe. David was inspired to write that God "telleteth the number of the stars; he calleth them all by their names. Great is our Lord, and of great power: his understanding is infinite" (Psalm 147:4, 5).

God's understanding is infinite — without limit. Our understanding, our ability, cannot be compared with it. The number of stars man can detect is a *finite* or countable thing. All the nearly four thousand million people of the earth together could count but a small fraction of the stars in their entire lifetime. By contrast *He who made these stars knows both them and us by name.* Yes, even the hairs of our head He has numbered (Matt. 10:30).

The estimate given for the number of stars is not the total number in the entire creation but only the ones detectable from the earth. How far out God's creation extends no man knows. *God has set it in the human heart to search out all things*, but the height of the heavens and the depth of the earth will forever remain mysteries to the mind of man. "It is the glory of God to

*conceal a thing*: but the honour of kings is to search out a matter. The heaven for height, and the earth for depth, and the heart of kings is unsearchable" (Prov. 25:2, 3).

### The Universe Had a Beginning

There are a number of theories regarding how this universe originated. But no matter what theory is presented, there is one inescapable conclusion.

"If the universe is running down and nature's processes are proceeding in just one direction, the inescapable inference is that everything had a beginning: somehow and sometime the cosmic processes were started . . .

"Most of the clues, moreover, that have been discovered at the inner and outer frontier of scientific cognition suggest a definite time of Creation . . .

"Even if one acquiesces to the idea of an immortal pulsating universe . . . the problem of initial origin remains. It merely pushes the time of Creation into the infinite past. . .

"Every theory rests ultimately on the prior assumption that something was already in existence" (*The Universe and Dr. Einstein*, Lincoln Barnett, pp. 104-106).

The universe is running down. The principle which describes this running-down process is called *entropy*. The amount of energy in the entire universe constantly remains the same, but its availability to do work is constantly decreasing. Stars, for example, burn themselves out and their energy is forever lost in the form of light and particles expelled from the star into space.

The laws of thermodynamics are fundamental laws of physics. The first law states that energy can be transformed in various ways, but cannot be created or destroyed. But, in conjunction with this, the second law states that all things are progressing from a state of greater order toward one of disorder, randomness, and less availability. Time produces decay. Most have heard about the theoretical perpetual motion machine, but no such machine has ever been produced. And none ever will in the physical realm. This is because of the fact that as time

passes, the total amount of energy in any system becomes less and less. So, instead of having the universe get better and better, it is in a slow state of decay. It is running down like a giant clock.

This is exactly what the Bible itself reveals about the universe. The Psalmist says: "Of old hast thou laid the foundation of the earth: and the heavens are the work of thy hands. They shall perish, but thou shalt endure: yea, *all of them shall wax old like a garment*; as a vesture shalt thou change them, and they shall be changed" (Ps. 102:25-26).

### Creation Proves God Eternal

From this definite conclusions may be drawn which in no way conflict with Scripture but rather support it and add to God's glory:

*One*, science shows *the need* of a Creator.

*Two*, the creation is degenerating into a state where all energy will be in a useless condition. All the stars would naturally burn themselves out and all physical life would cease to exist.

*Thus it stands proven that the heavens are not eternal.* At a *definite date* in the past our earth, moon, sun and stars were created.

Compare this with the Inspired Record, "In the beginning [or first of all] God created the heavens and the earth." No time is stated for this creation, but it was a *definite* event and did take place at a *definite time*. The date is not revealed, but rather it is hidden for man to search out *to the glory of his Creator*.

How does all of this prove the eternity of God? It becomes very simple when we realize *that something or someone has to be eternal*. Since the universe is not eternal, a being apart from it *must* be. The universe includes everything there is *except the God who reveals Himself as the Creator of it*. He then must have been existing forever in the past. No other conclusion is possible.

### Who Created God?

We have shown beyond doubt from Scripture *and* from God's Creation that this universe of ours is not eternal. *It has not always been.* It had to have a

date of creation and a Creator. *God existed before it.*

But who created God? someone is certain to ask. This question itself hinges on one big assumption — that God had a beginning or origin! The truth is that God is eternal. In fact, one of His names in Hebrew is best translated into the English word “Eternal.” YHWH means “the Everliving One” or “the Eternal.” That is what He is. He is without father or mother, without descent, having neither beginning of days nor end of life (Heb. 7:3). He does not age (Ps. 102:25-27). He dwells in or inhabits eternity (Isa. 57:15).

“One of the fundamental tenets of biology is that ‘all life comes only from living things’” (*Biology*, Villee, 4th edition, p. 18). Does God then violate this Law of Biogenesis since He reveals Himself as having no beginning? No, not at all. The Law of Biogenesis applies to the physical realm which God made. John 1:1-3 tells us that God existed at the beginning of the physical

earth and in Him was life. He is the Creator and Life-Giver (Gen. 1:1). Once He gave life to physical life forms, they followed the Law of Biogenesis. Life does not arise from the non-living. Life originally came from the Eternal Life-Giver who alone had life to give to the nonliving realm.

God lives in a different plane of existence. He is not dependent upon the breath of life as we are. He is Spirit and spiritual things are ageless and eternal, unlike the physical realm which is temporal (II Cor. 4:18).

*Those things which have not always been require a Creator.* God is eternal. GOD HAS ALWAYS BEEN. Do you need a creator for a being that has always been, has always existed? Of course not!

The difficulty in understanding eternity lies in our human minds. We deal in *finite* things — dollars and cents, years, miles, acres, gallons, pounds. We measure, count, and estimate in units, always arriving at a *definite* quantity. Eternity is without beginning. It is

*without end.* Eternity cannot be limited to a definite number of years. Even as numbers can go on forever, so does God’s life into *both* the past and the future.

Things which are temporal, which have been brought into being, require a creator. But things which have always existed need no creator. The material universe was created, and at a definite time in the past. Both science and Scripture are firm on this point. Therefore the creation is temporal and had a creator. *Since all in existence except this Creator is temporal, HE MUST BE ETERNAL.* He could not have had a beginning of days! *He ALONE is eternal.* □

#### ADDITIONAL READING

Be sure to write for the free booklets and reprints mentioned in this article. And if you do not have our basic booklet *Does God Exist?* please request it.

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