

The BIG QUESTIONS about Christianity
How can I know that God exists? Humanity
9-19-10
Scripture Reading - Genesis 1:26-31

Last week we began to answer the question, “How can we know that God exists?”

- We can't in one sense
- But in another sense we can
- God has reveals Himself to us in four primary ways: His Word, His Son, His Church, His Creation
- Began with Creation because it is the most obvious and available for all to see
- Romans 1:20
- Primary reason why 99% all time have believed in a higher power and why 97.5% world and 98.4% U.S. continue to believe in a higher power today
- Unknown cause / random chance and time vs. a creator god or higher power
 - Note overlap
- 5 pointers toward a creator god or power / intelligent designer
- Precision (fine tuning), complexity, cohesion, diversity, beauty
- Case is stronger for a creator god or power / intelligent designer
- Who I believe is the God of the Bible

This week we'll look how humanity uniquely points to the existence of God and specifically to the Christian God of the Bible.

BIG QUESTIONS Discussions

- Opportunity for further discussion (Oct 2 / Nov 6 / Dec 4 / 10-12 p.m.)
 - I'll be glad to talk to you ANY time!
- Get your questions to me
 - Different means on half sheet

The uniqueness of humanity

It seems to me that there is an obvious gap not only between plant and animal life but between animal and human life as well.

Five ways humans are unique

- 1) Superior Intellect
- 2) Moral Reasoning
- 3) Sacrificial Love
- 4) Position of Authority
- 5) Desire to Worship

How do we account for these differences?

Two most commonly held ideas in our area...

- 1) Evolution
- 2) God
 - Note that these is much overlap

The evolutionist would argue that the differences can all be accounted for by *natural selection and survival of the fittest.*

- 1) Superior Intellect - The smartest survived and passed their intellect on to others.
- 2) Moral Reasoning - It is more advantageous to do right than wrong
 - a. Those who realized that dishonoring their parents, murdering, committing adultery, stealing, lying, and coveting were not advantageous for themselves nor society survived and passed their morality on to others.
- 3) Sacrificial Love - Helps ensure the health and survival of the species
 - a. Those who loved sacrificially were admired and followed and begot others who loved sacrificially were admired and followed.
- 4) Position of Authority - Natural offshoot of superior intelligence
 - a. It's natural that the most intelligent creatures would be the ones who would rule over the creation and pass their intelligence onto others who would then rule after them.
- 5) Desire to Worship - Helps us deal with the problems and big questions of life and makes us feel as though our lives have some deeper meaning and purpose
 - a. Those who realized the advantage of this coping mechanism survived and passed it on to others.

Though some of these arguments make intellectual sense and contain a degree of truth, they also contain what I believe to be some serious flaws.

- 1) Superior Intellect – The smartest survived and passed their intellect on to others.
 - a. Doesn't explain the enormous intellectual gap between even the most intelligent animal and the least intelligent human.
 - i. If I were starting a small business I'd take one human being with a really low IQ over 100 of the smartest monkeys in the world any day.
 - b. The evolutionist would explain the gap with already extinct half-monkey / half-man “missing links” but this is one of the biggest questions I have about the macro-evolutionary theory. Why do we see no missing link today? (Bible and science)

- 2) When it comes to survival and self preservation, doing what's right and loving sacrificially are often NOT the best ways to go.
 - a. Moral uprightness and self-sacrificial love will get you NOWHERE in the animal world, and they often won't get you very far in the human world either.
 - i. Lions, zebras, and the bottom line
 - b. That's why we're constantly tempted to “look out for number one” and “do whatever it takes” instead of “looking out for the best interests of others” and “always doing what's right no matter what” because we know that moral uprightness and self-sacrificial love often won't “get us ahead,” at least not in a worldly sense.

- 3) It's hard to believe that the desire to worship would be as prevalent as it is if it were nothing more than a naïve coping mechanism for the weak and needy.
 - a. I think the fact that more than 99% of people all time and 97.5% of people around the world today believe that some sort of god may be out there suggests strongly *that He very well may be.*

I think a better explanation for the extraordinary uniqueness of human beings is that they were created that way by the God of the Bible.

*Plead ignorance in regard to other world religions

Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV) – Pinnacle of God’s Creation / God’s Image Bearers

²⁶ Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness...²⁷ So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them.

Psalms 104:24 (ESV) – God’s image bearer’s endowed with superior intellect

²⁴ O Lord, how manifold are your works! *In wisdom have you made them all; the earth is full of your creatures.*

Genesis 2:15 (ESV)

¹⁵ The Lord God took the man and put him in the garden of Eden *to work it and keep it.*

Genesis 4:17-22 (ESV)

¹⁷ Cain knew his wife, and she conceived and bore Enoch. *When he built a city, he called the name of the city after the name of his son, Enoch.* ¹⁸ To Enoch was born Irad, and Irad fathered Mehujael, and Mehujael fathered Methushael, and Methushael fathered Lamech. ¹⁹ And Lamech took two wives. The name of the one was Adah, and the name of the other Zillah. ²⁰ Adah bore Jabal; he was the father of those *who dwell in tents and have livestock.* ²¹ His brother's name was Jubal; he was the father of all those who *play the lyre and pipe.* ²² Zillah also bore Tubal-cain; he was the *forger of all instruments (tools) of bronze and iron.* The sister of Tubal-cain was Naamah.

Genesis 11:4-6 (ESV)

⁴ Then they said, "*Come, let us build ourselves a city and a tower with its top in the heavens, and let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be dispersed over the face of the whole earth.*" ⁵ And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of man had built. ⁶ And the Lord said, "*Behold, they are one people, and they have all one language, and this is only the beginning of what they will do. And nothing that they propose to do will now be impossible for them.*"

Romans 2:12-15 (ESV) – God’s image bearer’s endowed with moral reasoning

¹²For all who have sinned without the law will also perish without the law, and all who have sinned under the law will be judged by the law. ¹³For it is not the hearers of the law who are righteous before God, but the doers of the law who will be justified. ¹⁴For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, *by nature do what the law requires*, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. ¹⁵*They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts*, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them

1 John 4:7-11 (ESV) – God’s image bearer’s endowed with sacrificial love

⁷Beloved, let us love one another, for love is from God, and whoever loves has been born of God and knows God. ⁸Anyone who does not love does not know God, because God is love. ⁹In this the love of God was made manifest among us, that God sent his only Son into the world, so that we might live through him. ¹⁰In this is love, not that we have loved God but that he loved us and sent his Son to be the propitiation for our sins. ¹¹Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another.

Genesis 1:26-28 (ESV) – God’s image bearers endowed with position of authority

²⁶Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth." ²⁷So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. ²⁸And God blessed them. And God said to them, "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth."

Acts 17:22-29 (ESV) – God’s image bearers endowed with desire to worship

²²So Paul, standing in the midst of the Areopagus, said: "Men of Athens, I perceive that in every way you are very religious. ²³For as I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, 'To the unknown god.' What therefore you worship as unknown, this I proclaim to you. ²⁴The God who made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth, does not live in temples made by man, ²⁵nor is he served by human hands, as though he needed anything, since he himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything. ²⁶And he made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth, having determined

allotted periods and the boundaries of their dwelling place, ²⁷ *that they should seek God, in the hope that they might feel their way toward him and find him.* Yet he is actually not far from each one of us, ²⁸ for " 'In him we live and move and have our being'; as even some of your own poets have said, " 'For we are indeed his offspring.' ²⁹ Being then God's offspring, we ought not to think that the divine being is like gold or silver or stone, an image formed by the art and imagination of man.

Though He is not far from us, we often look right past Him.

- Looking for my coat
- Jer 29:13 – If you seek Him you'll find Him when you seek Him with all your heart.

Implications of the two views of humanity

We are nothing more than the highest form of animal with no greater immediate nor eternal purpose than survival of the fittest and perpetuation of the species.

We are the image bearers of God, created by Him to rule over, care for, and enjoy His creation, under His loving authority, and thereby bring glory and honor to Him as we worship and enjoy Him forever.

In the first world view the only people who are special are those who are the fittest, and even they aren't that special in the long run.

In the second worldview, everyone is special because they are created in the image of God. Everyone is endowed with an equal amount of intrinsic value, worth, and purpose. People judged not according to the color of their skin, how much money they make, or how strong, beautiful, talented, or intelligent they are, but according to how humbly, how faithfully, and how well they bear the image of the God who created them.

I believe in the second worldview not because it makes me feel good (though it does ☺), but because it seems to me to make the most sense of creation, humanity, and the reality I live in.

Next Week we'll begin to look at God's special revelation the Bible and answer the question, "How can we know the Bible is God's Word?"