Chapter 2

The World Around You: Where Did Everything Come From?

“Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.
The World Around You:
Where Did Everything Come From?

Look around you. What do you see? Perhaps you can see grass, trees, houses, chairs, sofas, dogs, and cats. Do you know where all of this came from? You know there had to be somebody who made the furniture and the houses. They didn’t just appear out of nowhere. Men take trees and rocks and turn them into furniture and houses. But who made the trees and the rocks? Who made men with the brains to make the houses and cars?

People disagree about the origin of all these things. Almost everyone would agree that people make cars and houses out of material like trees and rocks. But where do trees and rocks come from? There is a lot of disagreement on this, but there are only three possible explanations:

1. Nothing made the trees and people, because they have always existed.
2. The trees and people came about by accident in a chance universe.
3. Someone made the trees and people.

Only one of these explanations really tells how everything came into existence. Most people who have been educated in universities teach the second theory. These smart people believe that trees, rocks, cats, dogs, and even people evolved by accident in a chance universe. Of course, nobody has ever seen this happen.
They don’t know HOW it could happen. But there are people who believe that is the way everything came into existence. What would happen if you put a firecracker in a bowl of sand and watched it blow up? Do you think that the sand would turn into a sand castle? Or would the sand turn into a jumping frog? This would be very hard to imagine. There would be no scientific explanation for something like that happening. But many smart people believe that is how trees and people came to be. These people say that everything came into existence by “chance.”

How did these trees, rocks, and people come into this world? Christians answer this very big question with two words — “creation” and “providence.”

*Westminster Shorter Catechism*
*Questions 9 & 11*

**Question 9: What is the work of creation?**  
The work of creation is, God’s making all things of nothing, by the word of His power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

**Question 11: What are God’s works of providence?**  
God’s works of providence are, His most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all His creatures, and all their actions.
Creation

Many worldly philosophers and scientists sit and wonder about basic questions. They ask, “Where did I come from? Am I real?” They cannot answer the most basic questions of life. They don’t know where they came from, and they don’t know who they are! Isn’t that sad? They wonder about these things because they do not want to believe in God or in God’s revelation (the Bible). Thankfully, the Bible does not leave us wondering about how all of this came about. The very first verse of the Bible gives us the most basic clue concerning where we came from.

In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.

Genesis 1:1

All of the material things that you see in the universe were created by God in the beginning. Of course, there is a re-shaping and re-forming of things going on all the time. Suppose that your father gave you one pound of clay, and you made many fine little creations out of the clay. You make little houses, birds, cows, and hats out of the clay. But you still have the same clay. In many ways this is what God provides in the universe. At the beginning He provided the materials for the heavens and the earth. Then, He created the first plants and animals and the first human beings. This all happened during the six days of creation. Out of these first plants and animals came other plants and animals. From the first human beings (Adam and Eve) came many other human beings.

For in six days the LORD made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested the seventh day.

Exodus 20:11
For after seven more days I will cause it to rain on the earth forty days and forty nights, and I will destroy from the face of the earth all living things that I have made.

Genesis 7:4
From Genesis 7:4 we learn that God meant to kill the plants, the animals, and the people on the earth. God brought this flood to our world because He wanted to do it. He brought it because men had become very wicked. Many people died in that flood, and they died because God brought that flood to destroy them. Many people today find this very upsetting. But we need to remember that God cares about His earth, and He is watching the men who persist in doing evil things. He is involved, and He brings a judgment on them when He chooses.

Although you cannot see God, you must know that He is involved in His world. He purposes everything that happens, and nothing happens outside of His control. Look around the room right now. Look at the people, the chairs, the furniture, and the little dust particles falling through the air. God has put this moment together. It was God who appointed every one of your family members to be born and to be here right now. It was God who provided this little house where your family could live together. It was God who made sure that this would be a cold day or a hot day. Every part of your reality is put together by God Himself!

What Is Real?

Some things are real, but some things are merely pretend and imaginary. For example, a writer named J.R.R. Tolkien came up with a funny little hairy-toed creature called a “hobbit.” These hobbit creatures are supposed to be something like little men with hairy toes who eat three breakfasts, two lunches, and several dinners each day. Of course, these hobbits don’t really exist. They are only pretend creatures.
But how do you know that hobbits are pretend? Have you ever seen a hobbit? How do you know that dogs are real? Have you ever seen a dog? This is one way we confirm that something is real. If we can see it, then it may be real.

There are people who do not believe that God is real. They tell us that God is not real because they have not seen God. Have you ever seen God? Of course, you have seen trees and dogs and human beings, but have you ever seen God?

There are some things that we believe are real that we have never seen. We speak of “love.” But have you ever seen “love”? Perhaps you have seen your father act lovingly towards your mother. But have you ever seen “love”? Have you ever bumped into “love” like you might bump into a tree? Of course not! So just because you cannot see God does not mean He doesn’t exist. The Bible tells us that God is a Spirit (John 4:24). So of course you cannot see God.

Should You Always Believe Your Eyes?

Have you ever seen a mirage in the desert? It looks like a pool of water, but when you come closer to it, you find nothing but more desert sand. Sometimes your eyes fool you. But if you cannot believe your eyes, what can you believe? You should remember from the last chapter what the most reliable source of truth is. What is the book that never lies? Of course, it is the Holy Bible. This book never lies because it is the Word of God. So to find out what is real, you must go to the Bible where you can learn about God’s world and God’s reality. From the first chapter in the Bible, we find out right away some things that are real: God, Light, Man, Plants, Birds.
From the very first chapter in the Bible, we learn about the things that are real. We learn that God is real. Light is real. So are plants, birds, animals, and man. If God says these things are real, then we believe that they are real. Even if you are blind and you never get to see a bird, you can believe that birds are real because God’s Word tells you that they are real! We also believe that God is real because the Bible tells us that He is real.

**The Most Difficult Question in the World**

There are some things in our world that are very hard to understand. Many proud smart guys who teach in colleges do not like to admit this. Proud men want to think that they know everything. That’s what makes them so proud!

But Christians admit right away that they don’t understand everything. In fact, they don’t even understand the most basic things about reality. Actually, the smartest men in the world cannot answer the most basic questions about the world, either. Here, are some of the questions they cannot answer:

- How did this world come about?
- How did something appear out of nothing?
- How does God create the world out of nothing?
- How did God create one piece of dirt out of nothing?
- What are the most basic building blocks of matter?
- What are the protons and neutrons in an atom made out of?
- What is light?
These are very basic questions, but the smartest men cannot answer them! Now there is one more question that is the most difficult question of all. The smartest men in the world have never answered it. Here is the question:

Is the world made out of one thing, or is it made out of many things?

Let me try to explain the problem. If reality is one, then there cannot be change and we cannot say that one thing is separate or different from something else. If everything is one big blob, then I am not a different person from you, for example. On the other hand, if reality is many things, then there can be no order in the world. We would never be able to organize things. We could never organize our ideas. We could never organize our socks in one drawer, our shirts in another drawer, and our pants in another drawer. We would live in a very disorganized world! If we could not organize our ideas, we would never be able to develop language. We would not be able to think, or speak to each other! If you cannot understand this very well, that’s alright. Don’t worry about it! It is a very difficult question, and even the great philosophers, the smartest men in the world have never figured this one out.

The Bible Answers the Most Difficult Question in the World

But now we need to ask the question: “What does the Bible say about that? As it turns out, the Bible has the answer to the most difficult question in the world. Smart men in big colleges that don’t believe the Bible cannot answer this question. Smart philosophers have never answered the question. But here is how the Bible answers the question:

God is One, and God is Three Persons
Of all the things that are real, God is the ultimate reality, the highest reality. You cannot find anything more ultimate than God. **And, God is One, and God is Three Persons.**

I told you that you would not be able to understand it completely. Think about it this way. Scientists have studied the human body and counselors have studied the human soul for thousands of years. They have written many books on the human body. They still don’t understand human beings entirely. If we cannot fully understand human beings, does it make sense that we cannot understand God either? God is more complicated than you and I. God is beyond our comprehension! Even if we were to write 10,000 books about God, we would never fully understand Him. We can know a little bit about Him, because He tells us about Himself. But we can never know everything about Him.

What we do know from the Bible is that there is only One God. “Hear, O Israel, the Lord our God is one Lord” (Deut. 6:4).

We also know that Jesus is God (John 1:1). He made the universe (John 1:3), and He saves His people from their sins (Matt. 1:21). Only God can provide salvation (Job 40:14). We also know that the Father is God (Eph. 1:3, 1 Pet. 1:3, Col. 1:3). We also know that the Spirit is God (Eph. 4:30).

Finally, we know that the Father, the Son, and the Spirit talk to each other and love each other. We call this persons in relationship with each other.
Now, how can all three distinct persons each be fully God and there still be One God? This question will blow your mind! We cannot fully understand this. But this idea that God is One and Three is still very important. It is important for every part of your life. Think about these questions for a moment:

Should your house be completely organized and clean all the time? Or should you allow for a little disorder while you’re getting things done?

Should human beings be rounded up into big government programs that maintain total control and total unity? Or should there be no government at all and should people be allowed to do whatever they want to do?

Should you learn about many things in your education? Or should you learn about one thing?

Should our art be boring by focusing on unity? Or should our art be chaotic, disorganized, and disconnected?

**The Problem with No Unity**
If there is no unity in the world, then everything is disorganized and chaotic. In civil society, people would run around stealing each other’s money and killing each other. There would be no relationships, no family, and no churches. It would be anarchy.

**The Problem with Absolute Unity**
If there was absolute unity in the world, then everything would be boring. Big governments turn into frightening tyrannies. There would not be any freedom for the individuals and families in the society.

When countries turn away from the Bible and the God of the Bible, they will become more chaotic OR more tyrannical. They will fail to achieve the balance of Unity and Diversity. It is only when we believe in the God of the Bible, and follow His words (or laws) in the Bible, that we will get a good balance in our countries.
God Is Sovereign

When we say that God is sovereign, we mean that He is in control over everything that happens. Have you ever seen a little bird lying on the ground, wounded or dead? Do you think that God knows about that little bird? Of course He does. There may be 253,000 birds that are falling to the ground around the world right now. God knows about every single one of them. They get hurt and die, according to His plan and purpose. And, of course, He makes sure that more mama birds are having babies to replace the ones that have died.

Find a pair of dice. Before you throw the dice, decide on what numbers you would like to roll. Will you roll double 1s or double 6s? Throw the dice and see if you can get what you planned to roll. God knew what you would roll before you rolled the dice. He knew it because He determined it. Of course, you did not have the power to make sure that you rolled what you planned to roll. But God has determined what everyone who is playing with dice will roll today, tomorrow, and every other day. He has determined everything that happens and will happen.

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Proverbs 16:33
Humanism is the idea that man should be sovereign and in control of everything.
King Nebuchadnezzar

Not only is God in control of dice and birds, but He is also in control of the most powerful men on earth. About 450 years before Christ, the most powerful man on earth was King Nebuchadnezzar in Babylon. Most powerful men are very proud, and this king was one of the most proud kings ever. So to humble this proud king, God made him look and act like a beast. He put him out to pasture to eat grass like the animals.

In Daniel 4, we read of King Nebuchadnezzar’s pride:

**Daniel 4:30**

The king spoke, saying, “Is not this great Babylon, that I have built for a royal dwelling by my mighty power and for the honor of my majesty?”

But God humbled him:

**Daniel 4:31-32**

While the word was still in the king’s mouth, a voice fell from heaven: “King Nebuchadnezzar, to you it is spoken: the kingdom has departed from you! And they shall drive you from men, and your dwelling shall be with the beasts of the field. They shall make you eat grass like oxen; and seven times shall pass over you, until you know that the Most High rules in the kingdom of men, and gives it to whomever He chooses.”
So you see that old King Nebuchadnezzar learned a lesson. God always rules over the kingdoms of men, and He gives over the power of the kingdom to the people he chooses. Today, the people who vote think that they rule. They think that they are in control over who gets elected, because they get to vote on election day.

But God is in control over everything, including the media and the thoughts that come into every person’s mind. If a man named George Bush gets elected, that’s because God wanted him elected. If a man named Barack Obama gets elected, that’s because God wanted him elected. So you see, God controls the little birds and the powerful presidents. God controls everything.
Chapter 2 Review

Proverbs 16:33

The lot is cast into the lap, but its every decision is from the LORD.

Psalm 146

Praise the LORD!
Praise the LORD, O my soul! While I live I will praise the LORD; I will sing praises to my God while I have my being. Do not put your trust in princes, nor in a son of man, in whom there is no help. His spirit departs, he returns to his earth; in that very day his plans perish. Happy is he who has the God of Jacob for his help, whose hope is in the LORD his God, Who made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them; Who keeps truth forever, Who executes justice for the oppressed,
Who gives food to the hungry. The LORD gives freedom to the prisoners. The LORD opens the eyes of the blind; the LORD raises those who are bowed down; the LORD loves the righteous. The LORD watches over the strangers; He relieves the fatherless and widow; but the way of the wicked He turns upside down. The LORD shall reign forever—Your God, O Zion, to all generations. Praise the LORD!
1. Where do cars and houses come from?

2. Who made the materials used to make cars and houses?

3. What would happen if you lit a firecracker in a bowl of sand?

4. When did God create the very first plants and animals? (Hint: See Genesis 1.)

5. When did God create the first man? (Hint: See Genesis 1.)

6. Do volcanoes erupt by chance or by God’s direction?

7. What big volcano created some very deep canyons in 1980?

8. What major event formed the continents and the ocean floors?
9. What did God intend to do by bringing the worldwide flood (according to Genesis 7:4)?

10. Give some examples of things that are real but cannot be seen.

11. What is God (according to John 4:24)?

12. How do we know that God is real?

13. What else is real (according to the Bible)?
14. What do we mean when we say that God is sovereign?

15. When you throw dice in a game, does God know what you will roll even before you roll them? How does He know what you will roll?

16. What happened to old King Nebuchadnezzar when he became too proud?

17. What is humanism?

18. Why do men make their civil governments so big and powerful?
## Vocabulary

Match the word with the correct definition on the right-hand side of the page.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Universities</th>
<th>The making known of a secret or the unknown</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Evolved</td>
<td>Develop gradually, especially from a simple to a more complex form</td>
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<tr>
<td>Accident</td>
<td>Maintain (something) in its original or existing state</td>
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<tr>
<td>Creation</td>
<td>Possessing supreme or ultimate power</td>
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<tr>
<td>Providence</td>
<td>The world or the state of things as they actually exist</td>
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<tr>
<td>Preserving</td>
<td>The action or process of bringing something into existence</td>
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<tr>
<td>Governing</td>
<td>An incident that happens by chance (nothing causes it)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Philosopher</td>
<td>The work of God caring for his creation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revelation</td>
<td>Ruling</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reality</td>
<td>The quality of being reliably true</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sovereign</td>
<td>A person engaged or learned in philosophy, esp. as an academic discipline</td>
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<tr>
<td>Vote</td>
<td>Choosing somebody to rule over you</td>
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<tr>
<td>Election</td>
<td>Schools offering advanced teaching (after you graduate from high school)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Certainty</td>
<td>The process of electing people to rule over you</td>
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Crossword Puzzle

Across
2. The study of moral principles, right and wrong
3. A value or principle that is always true or right
5. God created the heavens and the______.  
9. The Study of Truth
10. Something that no one meant to happen
11. God made him on the 6th day.
12. The part of us that is sensitive to right and wrong
14. To firmly decide

Down
1. The Study of Reality
4. God making everything of nothing
6. Killing a child in its mother’s womb
7. Not fake or imaginary
8. God gave ten of these
13. Dried up or withered

Note: Use vocabulary from Chapters 1, 2, and 3 for this exercise.