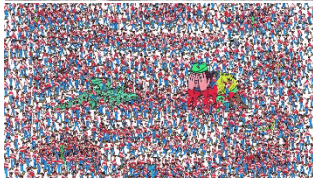
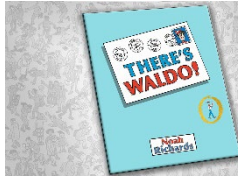
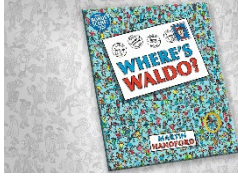
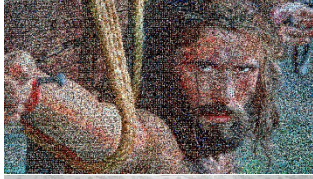


The Big Picture

Part I: Sensibly Seeing Our Origin

April 16, 2023



Today we're stepping back to look at life so we can find our fit in the big picture! But considering humans have put in millions of manhours over multiple millennia to find *that* fit – we're gonna give ourselves *four* whole weeks to figure it out here at His Place! So buckle up and let's get going by answering *this*: **Who do you think you are?!** And furthermore, *why* are you the way you *are*? Cuz I'm *sure* you've got your *reasons*; but I'm asking, **how many you got, and how good are they?**

Well, whatever you have, don't worry because that's a *huge* question and the *right* answers are hard to come by! And that's because it's tough to recognize the real truth mixed into the layers of non-stop chaos and confusion in this life! In fact, **finding the truth is a lot like reading Where's Waldo.** It's page after page of wall-to-wall mayhem where we slowly sift through each scene to try and see past what's going on – to find the real deal in a world *packed* with *similar* stripes, hats, and glasses!

And don't you wish there was a way to just cut *through* the chaos to find the truth we're looking for without all of the effort, stress, and frustration of having to slowly scan all the places Waldo *isn't*! I mean, just imagine how quickly you could collect each answer and finish the book if it were called: There's Waldo. You'd have your answers as fast as you can flip a page! Well, *sorry*, for now we gotta *work* for our Waldos! **Just like we gotta search for life's answers.**

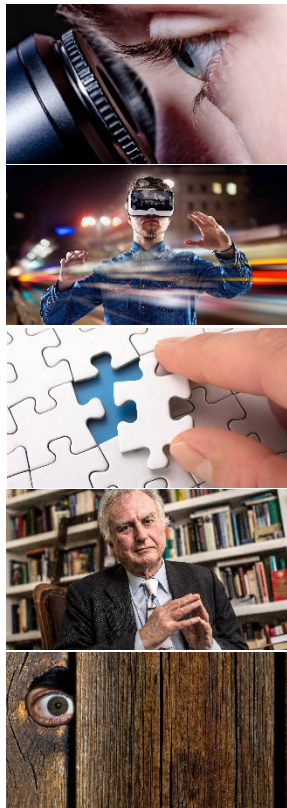
[And don't think being a Christian lets you off the hook, cuz the *Bible* says:] It is the glory of God to conceal a matter; to search out a matter is the glory of kings. – Proverbs 25:2 NIV

But whether you're a secular scientist, devout Taoist, *or* committed Christian, every one of us was born into the same puzzling *story* and we're *all* fighting to find the *same* four *truths* that would make the mystery of life finally make sense: our **Origin, Meaning, Morality, and Destiny.**

Because if we *actually* knew *exactly* **where we came from, why we're here, what to do, and where we're going** – there wouldn't be *one* question we couldn't clear up. And whether we know it or not – we're *always*, *all* working on *those* answers and **whatever you have as of now, is called your worldview.** And *that* collection of all *your* best explanations is the most *important* part of your life, because the *current* beliefs in your worldview determine everything you *ever* do, *always*. And **crummy worldviews produce crummy behaviors** – as is proven by *teenagers* who are experts at trying to live with a worldview of wishful thinking! And personally having been one of the worst offenders, I want to share the steps in my struggle that changed my mind and give you the reasons why *I* think the view from *here* is the best there is for anyone trying to find those elusive answers.

So today, I wanna talk about how the *Christian* answer for our origin finally felt like a fit for me. Cuz logically, I always knew *origin* was critically important to making sense of our story; I mean, if you are a 5'6" 27-year-old from Burlington, your *true* story *can't* be about the tallest Brazilian basketball player of the 1970s! **It has to fit who you are.** So, where do we look to find that fit?

Well, like many, I turned to science! Because in this country we're mostly told that we got the origin answer locked in so we can stop looking: big bang, a bunch of monkey business, and ultimately, Wal-Mart! **It seemed science had stepped up to finally offer what we were looking for.**



Science says what we're made of. Science says what keeps us alive. Science says what we know about nature. But *outside* nature...? **Science didn't say!** Because *that's* beyond the human experience of our senses. And we call *that* stuff SUPER-natural. And science isn't really concerned with it because most secular worldviews only use what 'science says' because they think nature is enough to explain everything. And since humans *are* part of nature, that can seem pretty reasonable.

Besides, the proof is in the pudding! We don't need perfect reasons for belief, we just need them to be reasonable. And to test *that*, we plug and play! Plug in an explanation for where we came from, and watch how it plays out in real life to see if it fits. Because **in a reasonable worldview, all the beliefs are consistent and coherent.** So they should fit with *your* story *and* each *other* if true! And the 'science says' worldviews largely say they play well together without anything supernatural like God.

But as I really started to plug and play, I began to see real-world cracks in the consistency and coherency. Take **Richard Dawkins**. He is essentially the king of the 'science says' worldview and a lot of people think the way he uses science essentially *proves* that a supernatural God is foolish. But when I heard his reasoning try to make sense of the story, I was let down.

He says we can ignore God because there is no convincing evidence that *couldn't* be explained another way; like aliens or hallucinations. He says there's no such thing as evidence that can *prove* anything. And he admits, **"I've always paid lip service to the view that a scientist should change his mind when evidence is forthcoming. The trouble is I can't think what that evidence would look like."** Which makes me think, **"Wait, how can you believe anything if you don't believe in evidence?"** And you know who agrees with me? *Dawkins*. Because he, himself also said, **"A delusion is something that people believe despite a total lack of evidence."**

Dawkins says that based on his worldview, all evidence can't be trusted – which means he *has* to admit – *neither can his!* And furthermore, any argument against *God* is *equally* as unprovable because Christians, too, could always come up with their own explanations like *divine intervention* or *miracles*. So, at the very *best*, the 'science says' worldview can only weaken the Christian by the same amount it cripples itself. And in that moment, I realized, the reasons to deny God as our Creator - *force* 'science says' atheists to believe that we simply can't know truth – making all worldviews just a coinflip based on whatever sounds best. And I found that very depressing. So thank God for famous mathematician, physicist, and Christian, Blaise Pascal!

Because he points out, **even if it was a coinflip, the smart money is still on God!** Take a look. Because according to Dawkins, if Christians are wrong, they lose *nothing*; while if *Dawkins* is wrong he loses *everything*. So, a bet on God means we have *everything* to win, and *nothing* to lose. And even if we haven't heard it out loud, that logical truth is hiding deep in each of us. And it gives us all an instinct for *something* supernatural. And C.S. Lewis picks up on that instinct as well, observing:



PASCAL'S WAGER

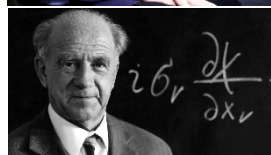
	God exists	God does not exist
Believe in God	Joy (infinite)	Nothing (0)
Don't believe in God	Pain (infinite)	Nothing (0)

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water ...[So] If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world." – Mere Christianity

And even the most *ardent* 'science says' atheists like Stephen Hawking have to admit it is an instinctual thought:



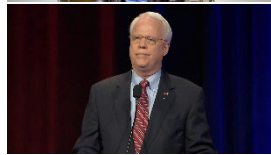
"It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us." – A Brief History of Time



So as I'm looking for a reasonable origin story, I'm wondering, "Why aren't we spending more time considering that supernatural instinct?!" It seems like you have to be determined to constantly ignore it! And if you're after *real* truth, doesn't that mean following what makes the most sense, even if you don't want it to be true? Yes! And this time it's the Nobel-winning founder of quantum mechanics Werner Heisenberg who agrees, by saying, **"the first gulp from the glass of natural sciences will turn you into an atheist, But at the bottom of the glass God is waiting for you."**

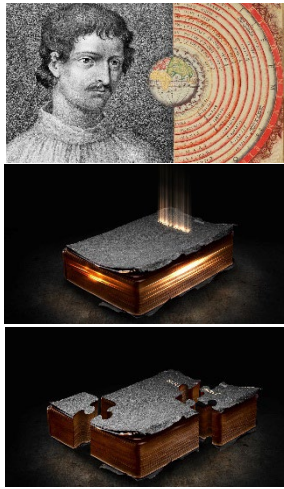


Listen, we don't *get* to be called *reasonable* if we don't have the humility to consider *whatever it is* that makes things make sense, even if it comes from an unwanted supernatural explanation. Be bold enough to tell the truth like Arno Penzias, who won *his* Nobel prize for his work explaining the Big Bang and said, **"The best data we have are exactly what I would have predicted had I nothing to go on but the five books of Moses, the Psalms, and the Bible as a whole."**



And at this point, I'm glad to see we're warming up to the idea that – *get this* – **we don't know everything!** And specifically, there's room in the 'science says' camp for new, even *godly* places! Like Ivo Labbe just said a month and a half ago after publishing some crazy new findings from the James Webb telescope, **"let go of your expectations and be ready to be surprised."**

However. Before I abandoned 'science says' for 'God says' – these *Christians* had some explaining to do in their *own* worldview. Cuz *a lot of them* – like congressman Paul Broun said things like **"Evolution and the big bang theory are lies straight from the pit of Hell."** And *that* feels a lot like the same unreasonable overstating of *Dawkins*. Because anger is the hallmark of a weak worldview held by people who are afraid that they might *actually* be *wrong*. And Christians should know by now, **automatic animosity never leads to constructive conclusions.** Cuz their history of that behavior is what kept *me* and *millions* of others away from the Christian camp.



Take Giordano Bruno. He was 16th century *monk* who challenged some core church beliefs by saying other planets were like earth and the stars were other suns. And because they couldn't fit *that science* into *their interpretation* of a Christian worldview, they just imprisoned him as a heretic. And at his trial, Bruno defended himself by saying his science didn't *disprove* God, quite the opposite, it's just that, "**Your God is too small.**" So they burned him. But ten years later Galileo proved him right.

So the 'science says' crew wasn't leaving room for *God* – in spite of our instincts; but the 'God says' gang wasn't leaving room for *science* in spite of the logic. No matter who I talked to, poor old Noah was stuck. Was there *anybody* to turn to for answers on *origin* where truth was a higher priority than protecting wishful thinking?

And then I realized, **if an answer was outside nature, isn't that where I ought to look?** What was I doing, talking to everyone inside the same book to try and understand *if we* had an *Author*?! That's foolish! Because Romeo and Juliet can know nothing about *Shakespeare* unless *Shakespeare* writes it into their story. So that's who I should be wrestling with!

And since Christians claimed that the Author of our *universe* did reveal *Himself* through the Bible and Jesus – I connected directly to the supernatural source to see if what He wrote about me *worked* if I were to plug it into my worldview and let it play out. And long story short, I'm a pastor. Cuz **His Word and His Son are the only things I've encountered that account for both sides of the book** in a *reasonable* way that explains this chaos in a *coherent* and *consistent* way. They *praise* scientific methods for extracting truth from God's creation; in what we call **natural revelation**:

Since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—His eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse. – Romans 1:20 NIV

But, they *also* acknowledge the *limitations* of nature and the need for Scripture's *supernatural* supplement to our *natural* knowledge, and that **special revelation** gives us the rest of the picture:

For *now* we see only a reflection as in a mirror – 1 Corinthians 13:12 NIV

And as for my origin, God knew how quick we'd reach the part of the question where "science didn't say", so on page one, *He* made it abundantly clear that our story *was* supernatural, saying:

"Let Us make mankind in Our image, in Our likeness" – Genesis 1:26 NIV

So it only makes sense that while we're living down *here*, we have an instinctual itch for up *there*; because we're told that we're His *supernatural* kids meant to live in an out-of-this-world home.

[But don't take my word, ask Him and you'll] See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that *is* what we are. – 1 John 3:1 NIV

And how do we *know that*? Well, that's next week when we tackle the *meaning* of life!