



TRUTH

“... thy word is truth” (John 17:17)

March 2022

TELL ME ABOUT THE ORIGIN OF THE UNIVERSE

If you are a lover of science, the search, discovery, and understanding of what is happening in the world around us is exhilarating!

Our immediate focus is often on what we see and experience every day. At times, though, we expand our view and look to the stars. Who hasn't spent time gazing into the heavens and marveling at the smallness of our planet, our solar system, and our galaxy, as we have developed the means of seeing further into space?

Being inquisitive and introspective, we may begin with questions of self-existence: What is my origination? Why am I here? What is my purpose? Will there be any of me remaining when I seem to have passed from this plane of existence? It doesn't take much for this line of questioning to turn outward to our world and the universe of which it is such a miniscule piece. What is the origination of such majesty? Who or what could have brought all that we have seen, and, no doubt, much of which has never been discovered by man, into existence?

There have been attempts to provide answers as long as mankind has been pondering these questions. Who will be able to give insight into the origins of all that we see, both near and far?

We have read much through the years of man-made ideas such as the “Big Bang Theory,” the “Steady State Theory,” and the “Plasma Universe.” Without any information from someone who was present when the universe began, there is no true scientific way to explain it. True science is based on observation and experimentation, i.e., the “Scientific Method.” Therefore, any attempt to explain the origin of the universe scientifically is going to involve guessing. Some scientists are honest about this and make statements such as, “Our best guess . . .”

There are some scientific laws which completely invalidate any concept of a materially-originated universe. The first two laws of Thermodynamics state that (1) energy can neither be created nor destroyed, only transferred, or changed from one form to another; and (2) the entropy of any isolated system always

increases, i.e., once energy is used, the amount of usable energy in the system is being depleted. To state it simply, there is nothing new being created in the universe, and what is here is running down, not winding up.

The law of Biogenesis states that, in nature, life comes only from life of its own kind. There are no exceptions.

The materialistic ideas that something comes from nothing, that things have been improving over great numbers of years, or that life can spontaneously erupt from non-living matter, are proven untrue by science.

Logic demands that things make sense. Science and its understanding of natural laws cannot explain the universe without a supernatural Creator. The Law of Causality, a law of nature, has never been violated: for every material effect, there must be an adequate cause. Logic, therefore, demands that every effect must follow a path of causes that will lead back to the ultimate Cause, a spiritual Being Who is not regulated by material law.

Since there is no human being who could have passed on the information of the origination of the universe, we are bound to hear One Who was present and involved in the creation of all material things, including mankind.

In the Genesis account of the creation, all credit is given to God in creating every material thing in six days. “*In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*” (Genesis 1:1). Again, in the giving of the Ten Commandments through Moses to Israel, God is acknowledged as the Creator of all physical places and things: “*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. Therefore the LORD blessed the Sabbath day and hallowed it*” (Exodus 20:11).

“Tell me about the origin of the universe.” There is no possible way for anyone to do that without God and His word. Science, logic, and the Bible agree in the creation of all things at the hand of our God!

-- Dave Leonard

A HUSBAND'S ROLE AND RESPONSIBILITIES

Marriage is the oldest human institution on earth, being nearly as old as mankind. The Bible gives humans “*all things that pertain to life and godliness*” (2 Peter 1:3), so (as with any subject pertaining to life and godliness) those seeking to understand their roles and responsibilities in marriage must go to God’s word. Marriages all over the world fail at an alarming rate and, while the reasons are many, it truly is the case that many fail due to a breakdown on the part of husbands relative to the Creator’s instructions about their role and responsibilities. What does God’s word teach concerning the role and responsibilities of husbands? This article answers the question with four key words: **leave, love, lead, and learn.**

Leave. God’s instruction to both husbands and wives at the beginning of marriage is to leave all others for one another (detailed in Genesis 2:21-24). God says, “*Therefore a man shall leave his father and mother and be joined to his wife, and they shall become one flesh*” (Genesis 2:24), and Jesus reiterates the command in Matthew 19:4-5. No human being is to come before or have priority over one’s spouse. This includes self! Paul’s command, “*Let nothing be done through selfish ambition or conceit, but in lowliness of mind let each esteem others better than himself*” (Philippians 2:3) is applicable in marriage also. In getting married, both husband and wife are committing to forsake all others—including self—for one another. When a couple is united in marriage, the concepts of “I,” “me,” and “mine” are replaced with “we,” “us,” and “ours.” The husband and wife are a team, or “*one flesh*” (Matthew 19:5; Ephesians 5:31).

Love. How are husbands to love their wives? First, husbands should love their wives emotionally. In Ephesians 5:25-33, Paul teaches the emotional, sacrificial love a husband is to have for his wife. Paul says husbands are to love their wives “*just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her*” (Ephesians 5:25). He says a husband ought to love his wife “*as himself*” (Ephesians 5:33). The emotional aspect of love leads a husband to cherish his wife. A man who sacrificially loves his wife as Christ loves the church is a man imitating Jesus. Husbands should also love their wives physically. Paul deals with husbands’ and wives’ responsibility pertaining to physical intimacy in 1 Corinthians 7:3-5. Physical love goes beyond sexual activity, however, and may include holding hands, hugs, a hello/goodbye kiss, etc. There is something powerful about human touch; humans need it, and husbands owe it to their wives. Good, godly husbands love their wives, both emotionally and physically.

Lead. The Bible plainly teaches “*the husband is the head of the wife*” (Ephesians 5:23), but many men either do not know or do not care what it means to be the head (or leader) of his home. While God grants the title “head” to the husband, he must earn the respect of that title. Leadership begins with example. Godly husbands lead by example, and they see the big picture—getting to heaven. They understand that getting to heaven and helping their wives to do so as well is a truly successful life. From 1 Peter 3:7, the husband is to “ *dwell with*” his wife, “*giving honor*” to her “*as to the weaker vessel.*” He leads with permanence and presence, letting her know he is committed to her and their marriage, that he will not leave or forsake her, and that he will be present and involved. He leads by honoring his bride, praising her often, both privately and publicly. He leads his wife by protecting her and providing for her, “*as to the weaker vessel.*” From Ephesians 6:4, a godly husband leads by taking responsibility for bringing up his children “*in the training and admonition of the Lord.*” Mothers should be involved in the spiritual upbringing of children also, but the husband is to take the lead in that effort. Looking at our ultimate example, Jesus (1 Peter 2:21), true leadership is servant leadership. Faithful Christian husbands who are servant leaders in their homes are bound to be good husbands.

Learn. Peter tells husbands to dwell with their wives “*with understanding*” (1 Peter 3:7), meaning a husband needs to know and understand his wife. Understanding his wife means the husband must spend time with her, listen to her, observe her, and pay attention to what she likes/does not like. Likewise, he must open up to his wife and share his own thoughts, hopes, dreams, fears—his entire world—with her. This requires communication (especially since women are designed with a greater need for communication). A husband who fails to work at knowing his wife simply is not fulfilling his role as a husband.

Most, if not all, of the role and responsibilities of husbands can be summed up in these four words: **leave, love, lead, and learn.** These instructions are easy to understand, but not always easy to apply. Yet, these are commandments from God, not suggestions or requests. Godly husbands leave all others and put no other human before their wives, love their wives as Christ loves the church, lead their wives with servant leadership, and work tirelessly to know and understand their wives. Husbands who truly want a blessed marriage and a little taste of heaven here on earth will put forth the effort to apply these concepts.

-- Chad Dollahite

We Need to Imitate Jesus' Humility

The apostle Paul appealed to the saints of God in Philippi to reflect on the comfort of love, fellowship of the Spirit, and mercy. Such reflection could cause them to have lowliness of mind and be concerned about the interests/needs of others (Philippians 2:1-4).

Having laid that foundation, what was Paul's next statement? "*Let this mind be in you which was also in Christ Jesus*" (Philippians 2:5). Christians need to have the mindset/mentality/heart of our Lord. In order to know His heart, we need to investigate what the Bible reveals about how He thought and interacted with others. We will find the great majority of such information in the gospel accounts.

Staying in the context of Philippians 2, Paul reminded the brethren that Jesus "*made Himself of no reputation, taking the form of a bondservant, and coming in the likeness of men*" (2:7). Before the Word became flesh and dwelt among humans, He was in heaven, sharing in the Father's glory. He temporarily gave that up, becoming "poor" when He took on human form. What benefit is that to us? Through His lowering Himself, His "poverty" allows us to be rich (2 Corinthians 8:9). Jesus did not think He was "too good" to sacrifice or do things that benefit others.

Jesus invites all who labour and are heavy laden to come to Him, saying of Himself, ". . . *I am gentle and lowly in heart*" (Matthew 11:29). His lowly spirit was on full display throughout His life on earth. Do you recall the manner in which He entered Jerusalem during the last week of His life? The Bible says of that occasion, "*Behold, your King is coming to you, lowly, and sitting on a donkey, a colt, the foal of a donkey*" (Matthew 21:5). A donkey was an animal used to carry burdens or provide transport for commoners, but not royalty. Jesus came into Jerusalem in humility.

The task of foot washing was assigned to the lowest servants. On the evening before His death, the Master washed the feet of His apostles, showing them humility in action. He appealed to them to take His example to heart and imitate His spirit (John 13:3-17).

There is another aspect of the Christ's humility which we must not overlook. It is noted in Philippians 2:8: "*And being found in appearance as a man, He humbled Himself and became obedient to the point of death, even the death of the cross.*" His humility led to obedience. To whom? To His Father, Who highly exalted Him (2:9). One may be kind to everyone, but in order to show real humility in a biblical sense, one also must submit to the God of heaven. How much do you and I act like the humble Son of God?

-- Roger D. Campbell

Galatians 2:4; 5:1,13 – Our Liberty in the Christ

When Paul wrote the book of Galatians, it seems that the spiritual freedom of the Christians in that area was being threatened. Some (known as Judaizers) were trying to force Jesus' disciples to keep the old law, circumcision in particular.

Paul noted that Titus, a Gentile brother in the Lord, had not succumbed to the pressure to be circumcised: "*And this occurred because of false brethren secretly brought in (who came in by stealth to spy out our liberty which we have in Christ Jesus, that they might bring us unto bondage)*" (Galatians 2:4).

Did you notice the contrast set forth in that verse? It was "liberty" versus "bondage." What liberty did he reference? "*Liberty which we have in Christ Jesus.*" What do we know about that liberty/freedom? First of all, true liberty is in the Christ (2:4).

Second, who is the one who makes us free? In Galatians 5:1, it is written, "*Stand fast therefore in the liberty by which Christ has made us free . . .*" Who makes us free? The Messiah.

How? How did we and the Galatian saints obtain this great freedom? On the one hand, it was the truth that made us free (John 8:32). In addition, we were redeemed from slavery by the blood of the Lamb (1 Peter 1:18,19). What about humans, what part do they play in receiving freedom? They do not formulate the plan, but if they desire to have the freedom which Jesus offers, they must comply with His conditions of freedom. In our pre-Christian days, we were slaves of sin, but when we "*obeyed from the heart that form of doctrine*" to which we were delivered, we were "*set free from sin*" (Romans 6:17,18). We recall that freedom is in the Christ, and the only way to get into Him is by obeying the gospel, which is culminated in being baptized in water (Romans 6:3,4).

How does one maintain his freedom in the Christ? By continuing to obey the truth (Galatians 5:7), which the Bible also calls "*walking in the light*" (1 John 1:7).

Paul further stated this about Christian liberty: "*For you, brethren, have been called to liberty; only do not use liberty as an opportunity for the flesh, but through love serve one another*" (Galatians 5:13). When we were set free from sin, we were released from the chains of superstition, false teaching, and all else that is "*not according to Christ*" (Colossians 2:8).

Our freedom in Jesus does *not* give us the right to "do as we please." Further down in Galatians 5, we learn that engaging in the works of the flesh will prevent one from pleasing God (Galatians 5:19-21).

-- Roger D. Campbell

LESSONS FROM THE CHURCH IN EPHESUS

In the Bible, the city of Ephesus is first mentioned in Acts 18, where we read that Paul, Aquila, Priscilla, and Apollos spent some time there. The church in Ephesus played a significant role among God's people in the first century.

Paul labored to proclaim the gospel in Ephesus for a few years. He later wrote a letter to the brethren there (we call it "Ephesians"), and, perhaps about three decades later, the congregation there received a letter from Jesus through the apostle John (Revelation 2:1-7). What lessons can we learn from the history and activities of the church in Ephesus?

✓ The Bible does not record the details of who was involved in establishing God's church in Ephesus. However, *who* taught the saving message of the gospel to lost people there is not what matters most. The focus should be on the seed which causes people to be born again. That seed, of course, is God's word (1 Peter 1:22,23). "How did you become a Christian?" All saved people have this path in common: "We heard the gospel, we believed it, and we obeyed it."

✓ When Paul wrote the book of Ephesians, he mentions no immorality, division, or false teaching plaguing the church there. If you are a part of a congregation which currently is not facing any of those three troubles, rejoice and thank the Lord (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18). Let us never take for granted the blessings of being surrounded by sound teaching, godly living, and peace among the brethren.

✓ The church in Ephesus was blessed to have Paul work with it. The apostle said he labored there for three years (Acts 20:31), and apparently there was a good working relationship between him and the Ephesian saints (Acts 20:36-38). Again, if a local church today works extensively and harmoniously with an evangelist to build up God's Kingdom, the parties involved should not take that scenario for granted. Beautiful are the feet and role of a gospel preacher (Romans 10:15), but beautiful also is unity and peace among brethren (Psalm 133:1).

✓ The church in Ephesus was connected with a monumental accomplishment. What was that? As Paul labored daily in the school of Tyrannus, here is what occurred: "*And this continued for two years, so that all who dwelt in Asia heard the word of the Lord Jesus, both Jews and Greeks*" (Acts 19:10). Exactly how every person in the province of Asia heard the word is not stated, but how awesome it would have been to be a Christian living in Ephesus at that time and feed off of the energy of such an evangelistic outreach! Evangelistic *zeal* is contagious . . . on the other hand, so is *apathy* toward reaching the lost.

✓ The church in Ephesus was blessed to have pastors who were willing to receive spiritual guidance. Paul called them to come join him briefly in Miletus. They did so, and they got an earful of spiritual instruction and reminders (Acts 20:17-35). Yes, elders have family and work responsibilities, but it is a blessing to them and the church which they oversee when the elders put in the time and put forth the effort to be taught and trained in the Lord's way. Near the end of Paul's third-recorded preaching trip, there were brothers in Ephesus who (1) were spiritually mature enough to serve as overseers and (2) were willing to take on that role. It is God's will that there be elders serving in each local church (Acts 14:23). We need more brothers who will take on that responsibility.

✓ Wolves did great damage to the church there. Paul told the flock's shepherds, "*For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock*" (Acts 20:29). Even from among the overseers there would be those who would speak perverse things and draw away disciples after them (20:30). Be not deceived: spiritual wolves will not go away on their own! For the good of a local church, false teachers and divisive members must be confronted and have their mouths stopped, lest they influence the sheep to leave the truth (Titus 1:10,11).

✓ The brethren there put religious teachers to the test and discovered that some who claimed to be apostles were liars (Revelation 2:2). How wonderful that the brethren stood up for what was right. You and I also need to test the spirits by comparing their message to God's truth (1 John 4:1).

✓ The Ephesian saints also showed perseverance and patience. They did not become weary in serving their Lord (Revelation 2:3). At the same time, some of them left their first love. Jesus said so (Revelation 2:4). What was the remedy? Our Lord told them to remember from where they had fallen (yes, they had fallen), repent, and return to their first works (Revelation 2:5). The Lord's way will work!

When Paul wrote the book of Ephesians, things in the church there seemed to be in good order. Years later when John wrote the Revelation, the situation had taken a drastic turn for the worse. Are we listening? Let us take heed lest that same thing happen with us.

-- Roger D. Campbell

[Unless stated otherwise, all quotes in all articles of *TRUTH* come from the New King James Version; ©1982 by Thomas Nelson, Inc. Used by permission. All rights reserved.]

TRUTH is published monthly by the Green's Lake Road church of Christ in order to help educate, edify, encourage, and equip the saints of God