

The Ultimate, Original Hero

Heroes Part 2

Hebrews 11:3

I have read – and have found it to be true – that every world view, in fact, every human heart intuitively longs for some kind of answer to 6 deep questions:

1. Is there really a God?
2. Where'd I come from?
3. What determines right or wrong?
4. Why do I sometimes feel badly about my actions?
5. Where do I fit in the flow of history?
6. What will happen to me after I die?ⁱ

Turn on the Discovery Channel or the Animal Channel or read an issue of the National Geographic or just about any science book or any anthropological material and you discover that the answers to those 6 questions are basically –

1. there is no creator God;
2. you are the result of millions of years of evolution;
3. you determine what's right or wrong for yourself;
4. the bad feelings you have are culturally conditioned and you need to get over them;

As one evolutionist wrote, and I would add, entirely consistently with his beliefs, that “there is no reason to assume that existing moral codes reflect some higher truth apprehended via divine inspiration.” “Instead,” he writes, “morality is merely an idea that evolved in the human mind as a tool for increasing reproductive success; whatever gets our genes into the next generation is morally right.” He goes on to conclude, “both men and women are biologically

programmed to be unfaithful to their spouses . . . lifelong monogamous devotion just isn't natural.”ⁱⁱ

There's a guy you want your daughter to marry, right?

Frankly, if you take your cues from the majority example of the animal kingdom, he's right.

The evolutionist answers the fourth question – where do I fit in the flow of history, basically that, well. Well how about the 5th question – where do we fit in the flow of history? They answer:

5. you don't fit into the flow of history other than as an invader of the planet – and by the way, the human race happens to be interfering with the peace and harmony of nature – as the highest evolved animal, we're really interrupting what oughtta be happening; you are disturbing the peace.
6. and finally, after you die, that's all there is.

You need to understand that all of those answers flow down from the first question – is there really a God who then created me – because if He did, He would have a purpose for me, a standard of morality for me, a place in history for me and a future after death for me.

The truth is, your view of origins determines your view of destiny.

Many don't realize that Charles Darwin, early in his life often referred to a Creator as the one responsible for the formation of a limited number of original

forms of life. But by 1871, the presence of God had virtually disappeared. He wrote, “We could conceive in some warm little pond, with all sorts of ammonia and phosphoric salts, light, heat and electricity, that a protein compound was chemically formed ready to undergo still more complex changes.”ⁱⁱⁱ

Never mind where the pond came from and the ammonia and electricity and light and heat.

And never mind that all the evidence we have from so many scientific disciplines shows us that complexity does not develop from simplicity; things do not become more complex, they do not evolve upward, they devolve downward.

One Nobel laureate and Harvard professor admitted the challenge to the western belief in evolution and the origin of life when he responded to the obvious challenge of believing that so many factors had to have spontaneously taken form all at once in order for inanimate matter to evolve into even the most primitive single-cell life-form. He wrote, “One has only to contemplate the magnitude of this to [admit] that the spontaneous generation of a living organism is impossible.” But then he adds – get this, “Yet, here we are – the result of spontaneous generation.”^{iv}

No wonder, Erwin Lutzer wrote on one occasion, “I just don’t have enough faith to be an evolutionist.”

The design and complexity of even the simplest life-forms are staggering. Even evolutionists are now using phrases like “directed chance” and “life force” and “biochemical predestination” – that’s for reformed evolutionists, I suppose.

By the way, Darwin wrote this personal admission later in life, in a letter – which, by the way, won’t make it into the public arena; he wrote, “I grieve to say that I cannot honestly go as far as you do about Design. I am conscious that I am in an utterly hopeless muddle. I cannot think that the world, as we see it, is the result of chance, and yet I cannot look at each separate thing as the result of Design . . . again I say I am, and shall ever remain, in a hopeless muddle.”^v

Ladies and Gentlemen, Darwin frankly needed a hero to help him out of the muddle. Unfortunately he chose “chance” as the hero of history.

In fact, he lived in London during the greatest days of spiritual development and preaching; several pastors were packing out their churches with Bible exposition, including Joseph Parker and Charles Spurgeon. D. L. Moody had come to England and vast revivals occurred, while Darwin was publishing and defending his theory.

And the majority of people would reject the Biblical explanation of a Creator in favor of his.

This really isn’t a new problem. Listen, throughout history, theories of origins have existed in an attempt to deny God and still answer life’s most basic questions: who are we and where did we come from and do we have a purpose and where do we fit in history and what happens after we die?

Oh, but we’re so much smarter now than before . . . we can even stand in for Creator God!

Reminds me of two scientists who had an audience with God in a garden and said, “Look, we’ve developed so many processes that we believe we can challenge you in creating a human being just like you did.” God said, “Okay, that’ll be fine.” The scientists reached down and grabbed a handful of dirt to begin and God said, “No, no, go get your own dirt . . . I created that too.”

Now maybe you’re thinking, “What’s this got to do with Hebrews . . . I thought we were studying Hebrews 11?”

We are. You just need to know that the first hero listed in Hebrews 11 is none other than God.

He is the ultimate hero of the story. Not chance, plus time – and more time – and billions of years of more time . . . no, God, the Creator of all things.

He is the answer to who we are and where we came from and why we exist and where our future lies after death.

And here's the good news: we all can become demonstrations of faith in life, based upon the fact that God is the creator of life.

So it's no surprise that the first person we encounter in this chapter of heroes our Creator God.

Notice verse 3 of chapter 11; by faith (you ought to circle that phrase – it will appear 17 more times in this chapter) . . . **by faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.**

I love the combination of these opening words, **“By faith, we understand.”**

Our faith makes sense of our world. Our faith in a creator clarifies the issue of origin and purpose and place.

In other words, here's your way out of the muddle.

You'll notice he didn't write, by faith we understand everything . . . no, he wrote, by faith we understand, basically, that God did everything.

The word translated “understand”, is from the original word which refers to perception. One Greek scholar said that this word means to perceive with reflective intelligence.^{vi}

In other words, you look at nature and the world around you and perceive that there must have been a creator; much like you would look at a watch and the mechanisms that make it work and you intelligently perceive it had a watch maker.

One author created a parable of piano mice that built a nest and lived inside the bottom of a piano. The music of the instrument came to them in their piano world, filling all the dark spaces with sound and harmony. At first the mice were impressed by the music. They drew comfort and wonder from the thought that there was someone out there making the music – though invisible to them – someone above, yet close to them was playing. They loved to talk about and think about the Great Player whom they could not see. Then one day a daring mouse climbed up part of the piano and returned to tell them he had discovered how the music was made. Wires were the secret – tightly stretched wires of

graduated lengths that trembled and vibrated made the music. So they must revise all their old beliefs. None but the most conservative among them could any longer believe in the Unseen Player. Later another explorer returned and carried the explanation further. Hammers were now the secret origin of the music; great numbers of hammers dancing and leaping on the wires. Harmony was a matter of mathematics and the music was all the result of mechanics. The Unseen Player came to be thought of as a myth, though the pianist continued to play.^{vii}

By faith we believe in a Player because we hear the harmony of music; we believe in a designer because of the design we see around us; just like we believe in the existence of wind although we can't see it . . . we can only see its effects.

And by its effects we perceive with intelligence its existence.

We're also told here in this verse that it is **by faith that we understand that the worlds were prepared.** The word for prepared is a word that means “to outfit”.^{viii}

It means to equip. You go on vacation and you pack the car. Every summer our family of 6 packed the car for that 24 hour trip from Norfolk Virginia to Minneapolis, Minnesota – I used to think we drove 24 straight hours because we liked to suffer . . .

Everything we needed was packed into that car.

And according to the Genesis account, agreed upon by the writer of Hebrews, the earth of was equipped for life from the very beginning.

Which means God created the earth and the animal kingdom with the appearance of age in order for it to function.

In fact, if you traveled back in time to those first 6 days of creation and you arrived just moments after Adam's creation. You'd notice that you weren't introduced to a baby boy, but to a fully grown man. You would be able to talk to him since he was created with the ability to communicate and function. If you concluded that Adam was more than 1 hour old, you'd be wrong. He was created fully mature.^{ix}

And that's the way God created the world and its inhabitants. Hebrews tells us that God created it fully equipped for life.

In fact, God had to have done it that way, otherwise Adam would have had nothing to eat.

So we're told in *verse 11 of Genesis chapter 1* that God created trees already mature and bearing fruit. Again, you would assume that the tree was several years old.

But it was just created and fully equipped to sustain the lives of animals and mankind who would eat its fruit without having to wait a year or more for it to grow up and bear fruit while they starved to death.

Genesis 1:21 informs us that a fully functional animal kingdom was created – including a fully functioning universe.

Which means that the sun, moon and stars were created with their light and properties already benefiting earth.

An oak tree was already 30 feet high for shade and protection – which means if you cut it down you'd count an appropriate number of growth rings representing age – because we now know that growth rings of xylem are not only signs of age, but also serve as a part of the tree's vascular system, essential to the strength of the tree.^x

So, take a look at the trees, the stars and the sun, the animal kingdom and Adam and Eve and you find a planet outfitted – equipped – for life at the moment of creation!

And how did God do it? Over billions of years?

Notice again what Hebrews explains – ***By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by – by the word of God.***

He spoke it into existence. ***In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.***

Fully equipped within a week of days to sustain life – and the more we learn about our planet, the more

we recognize how many things needed to exist immediately, in order to sustain life.

What evolution would consider nothing less than amazing coincidences that make the universe fit for life – we believe came from the omniscient, omnipotent mind of God. From the molecular properties of water to the balance of electrical charges in the proton and the electron, the entire structure of the physical universe was intricately balanced and designed to support life on Earth.^{xi}

Does the Bible say in this text that God spoke things into existence that then evolved over billions of years?

No – look further in this verse; ***so that what is seen (presently) was not made out of things which are visible.***

In other words, God didn't use visible things to create the world and the animal kingdom and the universe. The only beings he used existing materials in creation and design was Adam and Eve. Adam, crafted out of dirt to remind man that his body isn't going to last forever – it's going to return to the dust; and Eve was created secondly out of Adam's rib to reveal submission to him and dependence upon him while at the same time partnership *with* him as one who belongs at his side.

All that to say, the Bible doesn't leave room for God creating some original ammonia swimming in a little warm pond somewhere and then program it to evolve over billions of years.

Genesis 1:1 – In the beginning, God created . . .

By the way, that Hebrew verb “to create” – bara – is a verb that contains both the idea of *creatio ex nihilo* – creation out of nothing, but the Hebrew verb also conveys – I love this – the concept of effortlessness.^{xii}

Ease.

God created all there is – and creation is stupendous and complex and vast and incredible – but get this – to Him, it was easy.

Easy!

He's my hero . . . is He yours?

David bragged as he wrote, "By the word of the Lord the heavens were made and all the host of them by the breath of His mouth . . . Let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of Him.

In other words, shouldn't that be the result? Shouldn't that be the result of our intelligent perception?

David goes on to write,

*'For He spoke and it was done;
He commanded and it stood fast . . .
The counsel of the Lord stands forever
The plans of His heart from generation to generation.
Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord.
(Psalm 33:6-12)*

How tragic to know that we live in a nation whose God is not the Lord – whose creative handiwork is politically incorrect to even speak of – much less to believe in.

As I've said before, we are watching our world erase the signature of the Painter from the mural of His handiwork.

One university educator openly advocated that any professor should have the right to fail any student in his class, no matter what the grade record indicates if that professor discovers the student is a creationist.^{»xiii}

Another educator wrote in the Journal of the National Center for Science Education, "No advocate of such propaganda (creationism) should be trusted to teach science classes or administer science programs anywhere or under any circumstances; moreover, if any are now doing so, they should be dismissed."^{»xiv}

Which by the way, goes against the original argument where Clarence Darrow, the ACLU lawyer, argued in the 1925 Scopes Trial that creation shouldn't be the only theory taught in public

schools; he argued, and I quote, "it is bigotry for public schools to teach only one theory of origins."^{»xv}

Would the ACLU argue today that for school systems to teach only evolution without allowing any mention of creationism is nothing less than bigotry? I doubt it.

What hypocrisy and what a mess is any nation who refuses even the possibility of a creator God.

Darwin summarized it well, "I am in a muddle."

Yes, what a mess and what a muddle it all becomes.

Here's the way out of the mess and here's the way up out of the muddle . . . let God be your ultimate, original hero.

And when you do, you discover the answers to those 6 questions . . . and let me give you three more 3 reassuring principles that follow:

1. If God's word was sufficient to equip the universe to sustain life, His word is sufficient to sustain your life.

In other words, if you can trust Him by faith for what happened thousands of years ago, you can trust Him by faith for what happened yesterday; what happened today . . . and what might happen tomorrow.

You can trust Him – He's packed your car for the journey He's prepared just for you.

2. Secondly, if God knew all the details necessary in creating you; He knows all the details necessary in redeeming you.

Carl Sagan was a popular evolutionist who ran his program on television for years – including books where he denied the existence of a Creator and instead gave almost divine attributes to creation, nature, the universe, etc. His television program would begin with him saying, "The cosmos is all that is, or ever was or ever will be."

In a book published near the end of his life, Sagan wrote, "Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark. In our obscurity, in all this

vastness, there is no hint that help will come from elsewhere to save us from ourselves.^{xxvi}

His faith in the absence of God consistently led him to the despair of utter loss and hopelessness.

In the beginning was the word and the word was with God and the word was God – and the word became flesh and dwelt among us . . . (John 1:1 &14)

Help did come – and it came from the only place it could come from – from the One who knew all the details in creating us . . . and the One who already knew and had planned all the details in redeeming us.

And to as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God. (John 1:12)

Listen, your view of origins determines your destiny.

You exist by means of His creative plan; you are equipped with a moral compass; you are freed from the guilt of the sin you know you've committed when you come to Him; you have a purpose in serving Him and you have a future prepared by Him.

And keep in mind – there is more here than simply an issue of disagreement. There is a coming day of judgment where the entire world will stand before Creator God.

Whether they deny Him or accept Him, they will all one day encounter Him face to face.

In William Steig's book for children, he portrayed the concepts of creation and also hinted at the coming encounter of mankind with their Creator.

His book is entitled Yellow and Pink.

Two wooden figures wake up to find themselves lying on an old newspaper in the hot sun. One figure is painted yellow, the other pink.

Suddenly, Yellow sits up and asks, "Do you know what we're doing here?"

So begins a debate between the two marionettes over the origin of their existence.

Pink surveys their well-formed features and concludes, "Someone must have made us."

Yellow disagrees. "I say we're an accident," and he outlines a hypothetical scenario of how it might have happened. A branch might have broken off a tree and fallen on a sharp rock, splitting one end of the branch into two legs. Then the wind might have sent it tumbling down a hill until it was chipped and shaped. Perhaps a flash of lightning struck in such a way as to splinter the wood into arms and fingers. Eyes might have been formed by woodpeckers boring in the wood. With enough time. A thousand, a million, maybe two and a half million years, lots of unusual things could happen," says Yellow. "Why not us?"

The two figures argue back and forth.

In the end, the discussion is cut off by the appearance of a man coming out of a nearby house. He strolls over to the marionettes, picks them up, and checks their paint. "Hmmm . . . nice and dry," he comments, and tucking them under his arm, he heads back toward the house.

Peering out from under the man's arm, Yellow whispers in Pink's ear, "Who is this guy?"

Which is precisely the question we must all answer?

And it's no story book fantasy . . . it is deadly serious.^{xvii}

The human heart has it first on the list of 6 serious questions. Is there a God . . . followed by, where did I come from . . . ending with, what happens after I die.

I can't help but shudder that tucked into all of Carl Sagan's blistering and clever quotes against God, there is that one quote which stands out where he admits, "I may be wrong."

But we haven't been left like Yellow and Pink – to muse without special revelation from God. The Bible, or access to it, circles the globe.

It's no coincidence that the Apostle Peter preached the first sermon of the New Testament era and

proclaimed in his sermon the truth of creation and ended with a call to repent and surrender to this Living Lord.

When Paul preached his first message to the scholarly philosophers of Athens, he proclaimed the world as the creation of his God and then he announced the coming judgment of the world before God.

Francis Schaeffer once remarked that if he had only one hour to spend with an unbeliever, he would spend the first 55 minutes talking about creation and the last 5 minutes explaining the way of salvation.^{xviii}

- If God's word was sufficient to equip the universe to sustain life, His word is sufficient to sustain your life.
- If God knew all the details necessary in creating you; He knows all the details necessary in redeeming you.

3. Thirdly, if God created the heavens and the earth, He is capable of creating a new heaven and a new earth.

Whenever the New Testament referred to creation, it always referred to a past and completed event – an immediate work of God without billions of years needed to get the earth to function as it does today.

Whenever the Bible talks about the new creation, it also speaks of a completed city with golden streets and gates of pearl – each gate made of a single gigantic pearl 100 times larger than this auditorium.

I thought Jesus said in John 14 that He was going to prepare a place for us . . . “go before us . . . go ahead of us . . .” there are no overalls on our Lord – there is

no scaffolding in heaven – John the Apostle was given a tour 2,000 years ago and it was finished.

But just imagine . . . if an evolutionist was granted a quick trip to heaven he'd look at the streets of gold and imagine how many years and how many gold mines it must have taken to get all that gold and then how long it would have taken to refine it all and then fashion it into sidewalks and streets.

He'd look at the gates of pearl – each gate a single pearl and marvel . . . how long would it have taken that poor oyster . . .

No . . . it was all created by the word of God.

Is it any wonder that creation is bound up in the gospel?

The first Book of the Bible gives us the description of this world and the last Book of the Bible gives us a description of the next world.

And that one will last forever.

We believe that by faith – faith substantiated by special revelation from God – faith bolstered by every discovery in the world of nature as our knowledge continues to expand regarding nature's incredible complexity and magnificent design.

Hebrews chapter 11 put it as simply as it could be delivered to mankind: *By faith, we understand that the worlds were prepared (both this one and the next one); they were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.*

And with that, the list of heroes has begun – and the first Hero on the list is appropriately, is the ultimate, original Hero . . . who is none other than our Creator God.

ⁱ Adapted from Darrell W. Johnson, *The Glory of Preaching* (InterVarsity, 2009), p. 67

ⁱⁱ Quoted in *World Magazine*, April 22, 2000, p. 21

ⁱⁱⁱ Erwin Lutzer, *Twelve Myths Americans Believe* (Moody, 1993), p. 32

^{iv} John MacArthur, *The Battle for the Beginning* (W Publishing Group, 2001), p. 40

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- Vi Kenneth S. Wuest, Hebrews in the Greek New Testament (Eerdmans, 1969), p. 195
- Vii R. Kent Hughes, Hebrews: Volume 2 (Crossway, 1993), p. 64
- Viii Fritz Rienecker/Cleon Rogers, Linguistic Key to the Greek New Testament (Regency, 1976), p. 706
- ix MacArthur, p. 55
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- Xi Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, How Now Shall We Live? (Tyndale House, 1999), p. 98
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- Xiv John Patterson, "Do Scientists and Educators Discriminate Unfairly Against Creationists?" Journal of the National Center for Science Education, Fall 1984, p. 19
- XV Lutzer, p. 41
- Xvi MacArthur, p. 14
- Xvii Charles Colson and Nancy Pearcey, How Now Shall We Live? (Tyndale House, 1999), p.)
- Xviii MacArthur, p. 43

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