

Who Am I?

Psalms 8:1-9, Genesis 1:1-2, Genesis 2:7, Genesis 1:30

Slide 1

There's a question that's continues to be hotly debated and pretty much dominates the news today. It even threatens to tear our country apart.

The debate is scary and uncomfortable but maybe it's a good thing because we're wrestling with an important question; perhaps the most important question of all: What is life?

Psalm 8, a celebration of the Creator and Giver of Life, begins "*O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!*"

This Psalm describes the works of God's fingers: the moon and stars. It praises God for His creation: the sheep and oxen, the beasts of the field, the birds of the air, the fish and all the creatures that live in the sea.

Then it praises God for making us. It tells us that He crowned us with glory and honor, giving us dominion over His creation and the responsibility to take care of it.

Yet, David raises the question in verse 4: "*What is mankind that you are mindful of them, human beings that you care for them?*"

In the last two messages, I emphasized how important it was for you to paint a picture of God because that picture determines how we relate to Him.

What we believe about what God sees, when He looks at us, deeply affect how we see ourselves, the world, and those around us with whom we share dominion over God's creation.

In other words, are we just an accident? A random lump of cells? Or are we fearfully and wonderfully made by a Divine, Loving Creator?

Let's start with the premise that we're just random accidents.

Slide 2

There's a theory that all life rose out of some primordial ooze made up of a slurry of chemicals. That we're just a lucky combination of the right chemicals.

Now understand, for this to happen it would have to be random and an accident because chemicals are just substances. They don't have thoughts or feelings.

It's not like some carbon and nitrogen and some oxygen and hydrogen were just swimming around in this primordial soup and decided to hook up and form something as sophisticated and complex as a human being.

While these chemicals could possibly exist in large amounts, the odds of them getting together in just the right combination to form simple sugars and proteins, though not impossible, would be mathematically astronomical.

But let's give these theorists the benefit of the doubt. These chemical chains formed, then they combined with other chains and become more involved, more and more complex.

So, at what point did these chains form thought? At what point did they acquire the desire and the drive to re-create themselves and survive?

At what point did these chemicals cross the line from being inert to "living" entities? And again, this raises the question of what does it mean to be "alive"?

If we're the result of a random combination of chemicals that somehow evolved into more and more complex combinations that eventually became beasts of the field, birds of the air, and all the creatures that live in the seas, what would be the purpose of life?

Seriously. What is the point of life? To struggle and survive? To grab as much pleasure for as long as possible only to succumb to the inevitable?

Why do we have this drive to re-create ourselves over and over again? Just so our off-spring can struggle to survive, to grab as much pleasure as possible for as long as possible.

Just so they can produce off-spring who'll struggle to survive and produce more off-spring who'll have to struggle to survive, but to what end? For what purpose?

We produce off-spring because, deep in the heart of this so-called random collection of chemicals, imbedded in the very core of our DNA is the hope and the firm belief that there's a purpose to life.

From where did that thought come? That deep sense that we, that life, has a purpose. A random collection of chemicals?

Is our only goal to survive? Is our struggle to survive solely based on our fear of death, of oblivion? Is that what life's all about?

That we're just a scared, random accident that'll ultimately lose the battle with death and be re-absorbed back into the primordial ooze from whence we came?

Was William Shakespeare right when he wrote in Macbeth, *"Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage, and then is heard no more. It is a tale told by an idiot, full of sound and fury, signifying nothing."*

Is that what life's all about? Random. Pointless. Coming from nowhere. Going nowhere.

What's the point of all our struggles, hope, and dreams if they all come to nothing? What a sad, pathetic, lonely, pointless way to live.

What makes this view of life so sad and pointless is what's missing and what's missing is what Psalm 8 celebrates.

Slide 3

Psalm 8:1a, *"O Lord, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth!"*

Who made the heavens and filled it with stars and planets and moons? Who created the beasts of the field, the sheep and the oxen, and gave them life?

Who created the birds of the air, the fish of the sea, and all the creatures that live on the land? Who gave them life? Who created us and gave us life?

Let's say you hold to the Big Bang Theory. That's a theory that says all the material, all the molecules and atoms, all the energy of the universe was squeezed down to the size of a BB or a golf ball.

Or, as one theory suggests, the whole universe was condensed or contained in a single atom called the *"primal atom."*

Just for fun, let's say it started that way. From where did all the material in the primal atom come? Did it just pop into existence? From where did the energy come that caused the initial explosion?

Genesis 1:1-2, *"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the*

surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.”

What did the psalmist say... *“The earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep.”*

This sounds like the universe was some kind of cosmic primordial soup until we get to the part where it says, *“the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters”* and then began creating all the life on this planet.

A number of researchers and scientists, the most famous being Miller and Urey in the early 1950s, tried to re-create the conditions that existed when the earth first began.

The atmosphere on the earth at that time was believed to contain high levels of H₂O, methane, ammonia, and hydrogen.

They combined these elements in a beaker and blasted it with huge amounts of electricity which created a few amino acid chains, the building blocks of DNA.

This process of creating organic life from inorganic materials is called *“abiogenesis.”*

A number of these “abiogenesis” theories and experiments have been performed and studied, but they always come back to the same situation.

They’re able to make a few organic compounds from inorganic chemicals in the lab, which makes sense since all life is made up of inorganic material, so what?

We have a beaker with some amino acid residue in them. If we leave them in the beaker for a billion years, would they ever organize into complex organisms capable of reproducing themselves independently?

Would they evolve into a single living cell let alone a complex, multi-cell organism capable of thought? I doubt it.

However, I want you to notice something. In order to form these amino acids, it took an outside force.

They didn't just randomly come together. Scientists had to interject something into the system, like electricity.

Yet, we still can't get past the argument that Someone or something had to make the atoms that formed the molecules that formed the amino acids and so on.

Someone or something had to form the electrons that zapped the primordial soup. Something or something had to deliver the spark that started it all.

Scientists claim that the needed spark came from erupting volcanoes, others say from naturally occurring atmospheric conditions. You know, from "heaven," which is the work of Whom?

Slide 4

I don't know why science works so hard to take God out of the equation. If the Big Bang Theory is true, it still speaks to the work of God's fingers to me.

It's impossible to examine the universe, the earth, and not see the creative and precise work of a Divine Engineer.

A Divine Engineer whose thoughts are not our thoughts, whose thoughts are vast and beyond all our collective imagination.

Everything that science has come up with to explain the universe, the possible origin of life, and the complexities of the human body are all proof of the existence of a highly intelligent and highly imaginative Creator.

How many of you have read Mary Shelley's, "*Frankenstein?*" Even if you haven't, you're probably familiar with the basic theory or story line.

Dr. Frankenstein assembles a human body from different body parts taken from corpses. He's convinced that he can re-animate dead flesh. In other words, create life.

He assembles all the parts, but he still can't do it without help, without out that spark from heaven. Like Prometheus, he has to capture fire from heaven to bring his creation to life.

You see, that's the problem. We can analyze "life." We can break it down to its most basic bits and pieces, but we can't put it all together and make it work without outside help, without that spark of life from heaven.

When someone dies, something clearly leaves them. Something leaves the body. There's a spark of life one minute and then... nothing. The spark's gone. Life's gone.

All the parts could be there. You might be able to "shock" someone back to life or fix the damage, but eventually the "spark" of life leaves for good.

There's something about life that's clearly more than just a collection of parts or chemicals.

The chemicals that make up our bodies don't produce the thoughts, the hopes, the dreams, the ambitions, the desire to survive that that spark, that breath of life does.

Again, the Bible beautifully describes the source of that spark: Genesis 2:7, *“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”*

God took the raw materials that He used to create the earth, breathed the breath of life into our nostrils, and then we became a living being.

Genesis 1:30, *“And to every beast of the earth, and to every bird of the air, and to everything that creeps on the earth - everything that has the breath of life in it.”*

Everything that’s alive contains the breath of God, the *“breath of life.”* Take away that breath of life and we return to the dust and dirt from which we came.

We decompose and return to the elements from which we were made. We go back to the earth to be used again and again and again.

But the spark, that divine spark that made us uniquely us, that’s a different story.

The fact that we’re driven, obsessed to explore the universe and to find out from where we came is proof, as far as I’m concerned, that the spark within us is divine.

Why do most of the people ever born and most of the people today believe in an “afterlife?”

Why have so many religions, and so much of literature, hope and dream and speculate that there’s more to this life than just this life?

Is it just a furtive hope based on our fear of death and oblivion? Are we just chasing after shadows and empty hope? No!

Slide 5

Jesus was fully human, but He was also fully God. He said, as we discussed last week, that God is in Him and He is in God.

The physical part of Him died but the part that was and is divine, that breath of God that dwells in us, that breath of God that gives us life, that's eternal.

The spark of life that lives within us yearns to return to its source, the Father with a capital "F." Listen to the beautiful way that Paul explained the yearning of our souls to return to its source.

II Corinthians 4:16 – 5:8, "Therefore we do not lose heart. Though outwardly we are wasting away [that is these bags of chemicals that make up our physical bodies of flesh and blood], yet inwardly [that of the soul or spirit] we are being renewed day by day. For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all. [This is the same honor and glory that David described in Psalm 8] So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.

For we know that if the earthly tent [these temporary houses for our eternal souls made out of flesh and blood] we live in is destroyed, we have a building from God, an eternal house in heaven, not built by human hands.

Meanwhile we groan, longing to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, because when we are clothed, we will not be found naked. For while we are in this tent, we groan and are burdened, because we do not wish to be unclothed [to pass from this world into oblivion], "but to be clothed instead with our heavenly dwelling, so that what is mortal may be swallowed up by life.

Now the one who has fashioned us for this very purpose is God, who has given us the Spirit as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. Therefore we are always confident and know that as long as we are at home in the body we are away from the Lord. For we live by faith, not by sight. We are confident, I say, and would prefer to be away from the body and at home with the Lord.”

So, if you believe that we're just random accidents who have no other purpose in this life or in this universe than to survive and pro-create other random accidents, then you're going to have a view of the universe that doesn't include God.

That's a sad, pathetic, lonely, pointless way to live. Just imagine being an atheist evangelist?

“So what do you have to offer the world, Sir? What is your view of life?” “Oh, we're just an accident that climbed out of the primordial ooze struggling to survive in a world that has no rhyme or reason to it, just random chance, and then, well, you die.”

What is it about the promises of the Bible that touches so many people? Is it because it speaks to the human condition? True. Is it because it speaks to the heart? Also, true.

But it also speaks to the soul. Its Words strike a deep note within us that's more than Pollyanna, pie-in-the-sky wishful thinking.

Think about it. Someone took a great deal of time to carefully and lovingly form us.

He knit us together in the mother's womb and wove into us a yearning to get to know this Someone who made the heavens.

This Someone who breathed the spark of life in us, and the creatures He gave us to care for, and whose creation, this earth, should cause us to wonder about the One who made it.

This begs the question: Who Am I?

Slide 6

Conclusion

Remember the song we sang before my message. Did you pay attention to the words.

Who am I? Yes, I'm made out of flesh and blood. I'm made out of carbon and water, nitrogen, and oxygen and a whole bunch of other chemicals, but I'm so, so much more.

I'm a child of God, you're a child of God. We exist because God breathed His very breath into us.

When His breath, His Divine Spark leaves us, it'll join with Him and be with Him, the Source of our life, the Source of all life, forever and ever.

It's important to remember that we don't create life. We're the means that God uses to create life.

We provide the DNA, the chemical blocks that God provided to begin knitting a new life in the womb, but it's God who provides the breath, the spark of life.

That life, which only God can create, is a life that was created by careful and intentional design. It's a life of which God is mindful.

It's a life that God has crowned with glory and honor. It's a life that makes my heart want to sing: *"O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is Your name in all the earth."*