



Chapter Two

Why Is There Something Rather than Nothing?

“Either all individual things are the product of evolution, including man, or else they are not... Of course, the question remains open whether being ... has a meaning and it cannot be decided within the theory of evolution itself; for that theory this is a methodologically foreign question, although of course for a live human being it is the fundamental question on which the whole thing depends.”²

- Joseph Ratzinger,
Credo for Today: What Christians Believe



THE GRACE: *Wonder and Awe*



And God made the two great lights, the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also.³

Genesis 1:16



THEMES

The Biblical Story

- There is one God.
- He is good.
- He creates out of love (and not need).
- He creates effortlessly.
- The human person is the highlight of everything that he creates.
- We are made in his image and likeness.
- We are made for friendship, love, and communion with God and with each other.



RESOURCES

Catechism of the Catholic Church 295-301: “The Mystery of Creation”

295 We believe that God created the world according to his wisdom. It is not the product of any necessity whatever, nor of blind fate or chance. We believe that it proceeds from God’s free will; he wanted to make his creatures share in his being, wisdom and goodness: “For you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.” Therefore, the Psalmist exclaims: “O LORD, how manifold are your works! In wisdom you have made them all”; and “The LORD is good to all, and his compassion is over all that he has made.”

God creates “out of nothing”

296 We believe that God needs no pre-existent thing or any help in order to create, nor is creation any sort of necessary emanation from the divine substance. God creates freely “out of nothing”:

If God had drawn the world from pre-existent matter, what would be so extraordinary in that?

A human artisan makes from a given material whatever he wants, while God shows his power by starting from nothing to make all he wants.

297 Scripture bears witness to faith in creation “out of nothing” as a truth full of promise and hope. Thus, the mother of seven sons encourages them for martyrdom:

I do not know how you came into being in my womb. It was not I who gave you life and breath, nor I who set in order the elements within each of you. Therefore, the Creator of the world, who shaped the beginning of man and devised the origin of all things, will in his mercy give life and breath back to you again, since you now forget yourselves for the sake of his laws... Look at the heaven and the earth and see everything that is in them, and recognize that God did not make them out of things that existed. Thus, also mankind comes into being.

298 Since God could create everything out of nothing, he can also, through the Holy Spirit, give spiritual life to sinners by creating a pure heart in them, and bodily life to the dead through the Resurrection. God “gives life to the dead and calls into existence the things that do not exist” and since God was able to make light shine in darkness by his Word, he can also give the light of faith to those who do not yet know him.

God creates an ordered and good world

299 Because God creates through wisdom, his creation is ordered: “You have arranged all things by measure and number and weight.” The universe, created in and by the eternal Word, the “image of the invisible God,” is destined for and addressed to man, himself created in the “image of God” and called to a personal relationship

with God. Our human understanding, which shares in the light of the divine intellect, can understand what God tells us by means of his creation, though not without great effort and only in a spirit of humility and respect before the Creator and his work. Because creation comes forth from God's goodness, it shares in that goodness— "and God saw that it was good... very good"— for God willed creation as a gift addressed to man, an inheritance destined for and entrusted to him. On many occasions the Church has had to defend the goodness of creation, including that of the physical world.

God transcends creation and is present to it

300 God is infinitely greater than all his works: "You have set your glory above the heavens." Indeed, God's "greatness is unsearchable." But because he is the free and sovereign Creator, the first cause of all that exists, God is present to his creatures' inmost being: "In him we live and move and have our being." In the words of St. Augustine, God is "higher than my highest and more inward than my innermost self."

God upholds and sustains creation

301 With creation, God does not abandon his creatures to themselves. He not only gives them being and existence, but also, and at every moment, upholds and sustains them in being, enables them to act and brings them to their final end. Recognizing this utter dependence with respect to the Creator is a source of wisdom and freedom, of joy and confidence:

For you love all things that exist, and detest none of the things that you have made; for you would not have made anything if you had hated it. How would anything have endured, if you had not willed it? Or how would anything not called forth by you have been preserved? You spare all things, for they are yours, O Lord, you who love the living.⁴



SUGGESTED READING

Johnston, George. “How to Read the First Chapters of Genesis.” *Lay Witness*, 1998.

Kreeft, Peter. *You Can Understand the Bible*, 2005.

Documents of Vatican II. “Dogmatic Constitution on Divine Revelation.” *Dei Verbum*, 1965.

Pope Benedict XVI. “*In the Beginning...*”: *A Catholic Understanding of the Story of Creation and the Fall*, 2013.

2. Ratzinger, *Credo for Today: What Christians Believe*, 37.

3. Gen. 1:16 RSV.

4. *Catechism of the Catholic Church*, 295-301: “The Mystery of Creation”.