

Day 1, Genesis 1:1 _____

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

We have two options when it comes to origins: the universe has always been here, or it had a beginning, and what we believe about this has profound implications for our lives. If we believe the universe is eternal, and that no transcendent power was necessary for its origin, we have little reason to believe there is any ultimate, unifying purpose for it. However, if we believe the universe had a beginning, we have every reason to believe it is the product of an intelligent, intentional Creator, and that He has a purpose for all He created—including our individual lives.

What then should we conclude? Is there any evidence in the universe itself that points to a satisfactory answer?

A good place for us to begin is with our two most basic natural laws. The first is commonly known as The Conservation of Energy. This law states that energy is a constant in our universe. In other words, the sum total of all energy never increases or decreases. It is only distributed or rearranged in various ways. To give an example, as our sun burns, it loses energy, but the energy itself is not lost. It is only released into the universe through the heat and light that go out from the sun.¹

The second law is the law of decay or entropy.² It states that all systems, left to themselves, tend toward decay—or the displacement of their energy. To carry forward the previous

¹ This law is also called The Conservation of Mass because all mass (a quantity of matter) possesses energy, and the sum of all mass and energy is also a constant. For example, the sun loses mass as it releases energy, but the sum of the two (the mass and energy released) remains constant.

² These two laws are technically known as the First and Second Laws of Thermodynamics, which speaks of the relationship between heat (thermo) and energy (dynamics).

example, given enough time, our sun will completely burn up. It will lose all the energy it possesses.

These laws apply not just to the universe as a whole, but every isolated system in the universe. A burning stack of logs burns out, a spinning top stops spinning, etc. All systems disperse their energy—unless they are sustained by an outside source of energy.

These two laws hold true, without exception, in the natural world, and they present us with a very significant question: If the universe has always been here, why hasn't it reached a state of complete decay by now? Why hasn't our sun (and every star in our universe) completely burned up? After all, forever is an extremely long time, long enough for every system in the universe—and the universe as a whole—to reach a state of complete decay.

The first law presents us with the only options we have: the universe has always been here, or it had a beginning. The second reveals the only option that must be true. If the universe has always been here, it would have reached a state of complete decay by now. Therefore, the universe had a beginning. And again, this is why we have every reason to believe it is the product of a Creator who has a purpose for everything He created, including us.

In the verses that follow, we will learn much about our Creator's purpose for us (see comments on Gen. 1:27). For now, the important thing for us to understand is that our lives consist of more than a meaningless existence, as we spin around on a meaningless planet, until we go to a meaningless grave.

There was a beginning.

And when we embrace this one truth, it will mark an entirely new beginning for us.

*Open our eyes, dear LORD, to the glory of Your creation,
and reveal to us Your purpose for it all, not just so we may*

*know your purpose, but so we may know You, our Creator
and our God.*