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Biblical “First Cause”

By Mike Walko

“I am the Way, the Truth; and the Life” (John 14:6); these attributes alone identify Him, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as the Biblical “First Cause.”

A “cause” is “someone or something that brings about an effect or result” and all effects must have a “cause.” The question of the universe’s origin and how mankind first materialized is a question of who or what was the “first cause.” Since the “first cause” could not itself have been “caused,” this leaves us with four basic possibilities. An “agnostic” is one who is without knowledge. The Latin equivalent to “agnostic” is “ignoramus,” and an honest truth seeker should not desire remaining ignorant on this important matter.

The four possibilities men consider are: “We and everything around us are products of an Intelligent Designer”; “We all came out of nothing and are going nowhere”; “We are all co-eternal with our Creator”; or “All we see around us is just an illusion, in which case we don’t exist at all.”

Since all life as we know it comes from other forms of life and not dead matter, then the idea that everything came out of nothing is absurd. All things finite have their limitations and are therefore dependent on something higher than themselves. We could not be co-eternal with our Creator since we, and all things around us, are always in flux and constantly breaking down and dying. And while some may believe that everything is an illusion and have no need for a “cause,” this raises the questions of, “What ‘caused’ the illusion?” And, “Who is having it to begin with?”

The Biblical record identifies the “first cause” as God, Who, in the beginning, created the Heavens and Earth (Gen 1:1). It was God Who “caused” the first man to come into being by forming him out of the dust of the ground and breathing into his nostrils the breath of life and “causing” him to become a living soul (Gen. 2:7). It was also God Who “caused” a deep sleep to fall upon Adam as He created the first woman formed from his side (Gen. 2:21-22). We are not told just when God created the Earth, but we are told that He was the “cause” of that creation.

This same God has revealed Himself as the central figure of the Bible in the person of the Lord Jesus Christ. Psalm 40:7 says, “. . . Lo I come: to you in the volume of the book it is written of Me.” His Life was foretold in the Old Testament (O.T.) Scriptures and the fulfillment of these prophecies are found in the New Testament (N.T.) (Acts 10:43). The Lord was prophesied to be born under the following prerequisites:

- ❖ Of a virgin (Isa. 7:14; Luke 1:27);
- ❖ At Bethlehem (Micah 5:2; Luke 2:4);
- ❖ Of the tribe of Judah (Gen 49:10; Matt. 1:2);
- ❖ At a time when the nation of Israel was being taxed by a foreign power (Dan. 11:20; Luke 2:1);
- ❖ When babies were being killed (Jer. 31:15; Matt. 2:16-18).

Other prophecies about our Lord included the following circumstances:

- ❖ He was taken to Egypt for a short time to avoid the baby killings (Hos. 11:1; Matt. 2:15);
- ❖ He was taken back to Israel after sojourning in Egypt and raised a Righteous Branch in Nazareth (Jer. 23:5; Luke 2:51);
- ❖ He would come suddenly to His temple in Jerusalem (Mal 3:1);
- ❖ He will return there in the future (Zech. 8:3).

In addition to this, prophecies showed He would:

- ❖ Go forth for the salvation of His people (Hab. 3:13);
- ❖ Enter Jerusalem on a donkey (Zech. 9:9; Matt. 21:1-5);
- ❖ Be betrayed by someone close to him (Psa. 41:9; John 13:18);
- ❖ Be pierced (Zech. 12:10);
- ❖ Suffer and die as the perfect Passover Lamb for our sins (Isa. 53:1-12);
- ❖ Remain in the state of death for three days and three nights (Jonah 1:17; Matt. 12:40);
- ❖ Be raised from the dead (Psa. 16:10);
- ❖ Ascend to Heaven and give gifts to men (Psa. 68:18; Luke 24:51; Eph. 4:8).

Only God could have “caused” all of these events to take place.

God’s character can also be seen in certain areas through His Name, like “Jehovah Jireh,” which means “God/Jehovah will provide,” or “Jehovah Shalom,” which means “God/Jehovah is peace” (Judges 6:24). There are also several archeological finds, which are in harmony with the teachings of the N.T. For example, there are inscriptions on tombs of Jewish Christians from the 1st century with the dedication “Jesus Christ, the Redeemer” and similar designations found in the area of Jerusalem. In 1945, the Jewish archeologist, Eleazar Sukenik, found several ossuaries bearing these labels and with coins minted in AD 41. Sukenik also discovered a tomb with the name of “Sapphira,” which was a very unusual female name not found in Jewish literature at the time, except for the Book of Acts. She is thought to be the “Sapphira” of Acts 5:1.

In 1961 an inscription, bearing the name of “Pontius Pilate,” was found in Caesarea by Italian archeologist Antonio Trova, attesting to his being the prefect of Judea at the time of

Christ. In 1992 the tomb of Caiaphas the high priest was discovered just south of Jerusalem. He, according to the N.T., was high priest at the time of the Lord (Luke 3:2).

These and other archeological discoveries attest to the authenticity of the New Testament. Another point, which adds to the credibility of the resurrection of the Lord, is in fact that many of His followers were people who at first rejected the idea of Christ's resurrection. When the women first came upon the Christ's empty tomb, they thought that someone had stolen the body (John 20:2); the Apostles did not believe at first and thought it was an idle tale (Luke 24:11). Thomas, the last of the Apostles to believe, did so only after the Lord appeared to him (John 20:26-27).

Even Paul, who became the greatest apostle of them all, was at first opposed to the new faith and even persecuted the early believers, consenting to the death of Stephen, the first Christian martyr (Acts 8:1-2). What had "caused" all of these people to have such a dramatic change of heart? The answer is their individual encounters with the risen Christ, Himself, Who is the Biblical "First Cause."

The central theme of the Bible is the doctrine of the Kingdom of God on Earth, which will be fulfilled once God has completed His purpose and design in His present program, called "the Dispensation of Grace" (Eph. 3:2). This kingdom was proclaimed in many O.T. prophecies, including the following:

- ❖ "All kings shall fall down before Him and all nations shall serve Him" (Psa. 72:11);
- ❖ "Thou shall judge . . . and govern the nations" (Psa. 67:4);
- ❖ "The glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it (Isa. 40:5);
- ❖ He will break the arm of the wicked (Psa. 10:15);
- ❖ "The meek shall inherit the Earth" (Psa. 37:11; Matt. 5:5);
- ❖ "They shall not hurt nor destroy in all My holy mountain: for the Earth shall be filled with knowledge of the Lord, as the waters cover the sea" (Isa. 11:9);
- ❖ "Behold, the days come, . . . that I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel, and with the house of Judah . . . for they shall all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them" (Jer. 31:31-34);
- ❖ He would cause the nations to be at peace (Isa. 2:4), and for them to prosper and be in good health (Isa. 33:24).

In the N.T., the Lord came to proclaim the Kingdom of God (Mark 1:14), and also commanded the Twelve to proclaim it (Matt. 10:7). It was also at the heart of the Apostle Paul's teaching (1 Thess. 2:12). The Kingdom of God, or His future government on Earth, was also the subject of many of the Lord's parables, including that of "the mustard seed" (Matt. 13:31-32); "the pearl of great price" (Matt. 13:45-46); and "the seed growing secretly" (Mark 4:26-29; see **Seed & Bread** No. 27, *The Kingdom of God*.)

While it is true that in Biblical times only the nation of Israel had the Law and the Prophets, the Lord's ministry was limited to the lost sheep of the house of Israel. And this is

true also of His disciples (Matt. 10:5-6). Some may conclude from this that all other peoples were nothing but a bunch of vile barbarous heathens with no concept of right from wrong, but nothing could be further from the truth.

History expounds about men of great virtue existing among the nations; Cornelius (Acts 10) was one such example. Even outside the Bible in the far Eastern world, about the Prophet Jeremiah's time, there existed people like Buddha, Confucius, and Lao Tzu (the founder of Taoism). These men were basically moral, ethical teachers. They were said to have taught "the way," but they never claimed to be "the way." They were said to have "taught truth," but they never claimed to be "the truth." They were said to have been "enlightened," but they never claimed to be "the light."

Our Lord claimed all three of these things (John 14:6): "I am the Way, the Truth; and the Life." He even claimed to be "life" itself, and cannot be separated from these attributes. He is the "Alpha and Omega, the Beginning and the End, the First and the Last" (Rev. 22:13), the One Mediator between God and men (1 Tim. 2:5). These attributes alone identify Him, our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ, as the Biblical "First Cause."

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