

Genesis and Culture Implications Part 1

Persistent philosophical human questions: Why is there something rather than nothing? Who am I and why am I here as a human being? Where does my significance and meaning come from? The book of Genesis and the Bible overall help us answer those questions.

Five possibilities of where the universe came from:

1. nothing → something
2. impersonal → everything
3. personal → everything
4. material world does not exist
5. eternal opposing principles such as good/evil or light/darkness

We believe:

Triune God existed eternally before time

Creation out of nothing by God's command – Gen 1:1; 1:21; 1:27; 5:1-2

Separation/Differentiation such as land from water

Formation from existing material

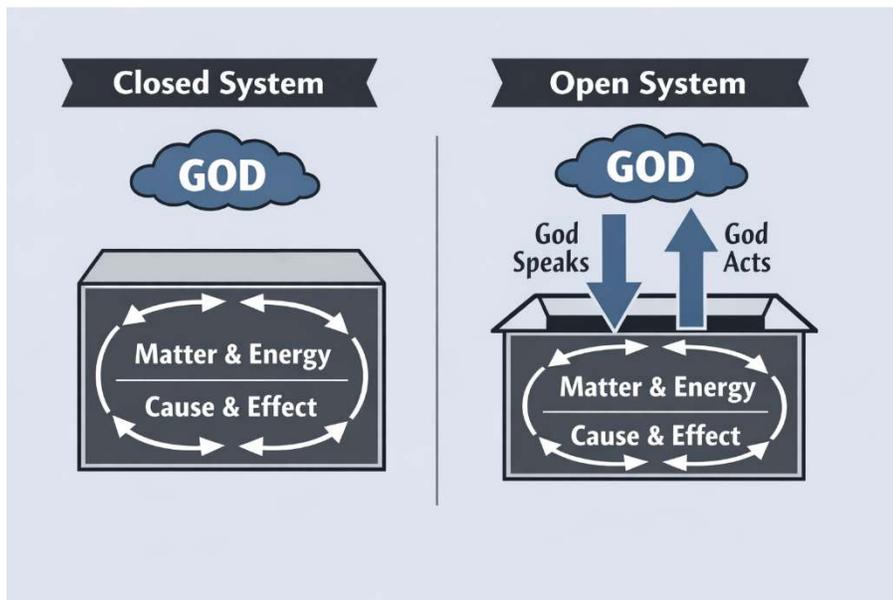
Man was created differently than everything else – “In the image of God.”

Therefore, I'm not just a random blob. There is an intellectual, emotional, and psychological basis for my nature and sense of who I am. I was meant to be able to communicate upward as well as outward.

Fallen men still retain that image. Gen 9:6; James 3:9-10

Every person I see bears the image of God.

Open vs. Closed Universe



The closed system assumes all events are explained by matter, energy, and natural causes alone. Even when spiritual language is used, nothing from outside the universe truly intervenes.

The open system, assumed by Genesis, affirms that God exists outside creation and can act within it—speaking, judging, and redeeming in real history.

Genesis vs. Its Modern Substitutes

How World Religions and Modern Media Often Share the Same Non-Biblical Assumptions

PART 1 — Core Comparison Statements

1. **A good, personal Creator (personal =speaks, listens, feels, loves, commands, etc.)**
vs. **An impersonal force, energy, or cosmic principle**
 2. **Creation of material universe by command is real, ordered, and good particularly pre-fall**
vs. **Reality as illusory, chaotic, or endlessly malleable**
 3. **Truth as objective and consistent with God’s character**
vs. **Truth as personal, internal, or self-defined**
 4. **Evil entering history through a real Fall – evil is not eternal**
vs. **Evil as eternal, inevitable, or merely psychological**
 5. **Human identity as created and embodied as male & female in image of God**
vs. **Identity as fluid, chosen, or detachable from the body**
 6. **God as holy, morally perfect, and distinct from creation**
vs. **Spiritual beings or powers that are morally mixed or limited**
 7. **Redemption through God’s initiative**
vs. **Salvation through awakening, power, or self-realization**
 8. **History as linear and meaningful – history is going somewhere**
vs. **History as cyclical, resettable, or ultimately irrelevant**
 9. **Death as an enemy entered as a result of sin, first by Satan, and then in mankind**
vs. **Death as a transition, release, or illusion**
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PART 2 — Where These Ideas Appear

1. Personal Creator vs. Impersonal Force

World religion examples

- **Hinduism (Advaita Vedanta):** Ultimate reality (Brahman) is impersonal

- **Taoism:** The Tao is an impersonal ordering principle – yin/yang
- **New Age spirituality:** Energy, vibrations, the universe as guide



Media examples

- Songs and films invoking “the universe” as decision-maker
- Fantasy, anime, and games where power exists without a personal source
- Influencer language: *manifesting, alignment, energy*

Biblical teaching

- **Genesis 1:1** — God exists before all things
- **1 Peter 1:20; 2 Tim 1:9** – God loved and communicated before time
- **Genesis 1:3** — God speaks intentionally
- **Genesis 2:16–17** — God commands relationally

Summary:

Reality flows from a **personal God**, not an impersonal force.

2. Ordered Creation vs. Illusory or Chaotic Reality

World religion examples

- **Hinduism:** Material world as *maya* (illusion)
- **Neoplatonism:** Physical realm inferior to spiritual realm, gnostic philosophy
- **Some Buddhist schools:** Phenomenal reality lacks ultimate substance

Media examples

- Multiverse stories where no reality is final
- Games where worlds can be rewritten or reset
- Anime portraying physical existence as defective by nature

Biblical teaching

- **Genesis 1:31** — Creation is “very good”
- **Genesis 2:1–3** — Creation pre-fall is complete and ordered
- **Psalms 19** — Even fallen creation gives glory to God

Summary:

The physical world is **real and good**, not something to escape.

3. Objective Truth vs. Personal Truth

World religion examples

- **Buddhism:** Truth realized through enlightenment
- **Mysticism (various traditions):** Experience over doctrine
- **Postmodern spirituality:** Inner authenticity defines truth; my truth

Media examples

- Stories where meaning is self-created or plot where no objective truth is recognized
- Music celebrating “my truth” over shared truth
- Games where morality depends entirely on player choice

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 1:26–27** — Humans receive identity from God
- **Genesis 3:9–11** — God confronts false self-interpretation
- **John 17:17** – God’s Word is truth

Summary:

Truth is **revealed**, not invented.

4. Historical Fall vs. Eternal Evil

World religion examples

- **Zoroastrian-style dualism:** Good and evil are co-eternal
- **Buddhism:** Suffering inherent to existence
- **Gnosticism:** Matter itself is corrupt

Media examples

- Dark fantasy worlds with no original goodness
- Stories where evil has always existed; no real moral guilt with consequences
- Games with endless decay and no restoration

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 1:31** — Original goodness
- **Genesis 3:1–19** — Evil enters through rebellion; Unprogrammed and significant Adam changed in his revolt. Nature under his dominion also was changed as a result
- **Isaiah 14:12–15** – Satan rebelled and was kicked out of heaven

- **Genesis 3:1; Rev 12:9; Rev 20:2** – The Serpent used a serpent to deceive in real time
- **Romans 3:19; 3:23; Eph 2:2-3** – All human beings have rebelled and have true moral guilt
- **Romans 3:26** – The God of the Bible is just and requires justice

Summary:

Evil is **intrusive**, punishable by God, and will be defeated. It had a beginning and will have an end.

5. Embodied Identity vs. Fluid or Disembodied Self

World religion examples

- **Hinduism:** True self distinct from body
- **Buddhism:** No enduring personal self (*anatta*)
- **Gnosticism:** Body as prison

Media examples

- Anime with interchangeable bodies or identities
- Games separating “true self” from physical form
- Cultural messaging: *You are not your body*

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 2:7** — Humans are formed bodies given life
- **Genesis 1:27** — Embodiment is created, not accidental

Summary:

The body is **good and part of our personhood**.

6. Holy God vs. Morally Mixed Spiritual Powers

World religion examples

- Polytheistic systems with flawed gods
- Animism: spirits with power but no holiness
- Mythological pantheons governed by fate

Media examples

- Games where gods can be killed or corrupted
- Anime spirits that are morally ambiguous
- Fantasy worlds with power detached from holiness

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 1:1** — God alone is uncreated
- **Genesis 18:25** — God is the just Judge

Summary:

Biblical spirituality centers on a **holy, sovereign God**.

7. Redemption by God vs. Self-Salvation

World religion examples

- **Buddhism:** Liberation through enlightenment
- **Hinduism:** Liberation through discipline or knowledge
- **New Age:** Awakening the divine within

Media examples

- “Chosen one” narratives without grace
- Heroes saving themselves through inner power
- Games where mastery equals salvation

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 3:15; 2 Cor 5:17** — God promises redemption and re-creation
- **Genesis 12:1-3** — God initiates salvation history
- **1 Corinthians 15:22** – Resulting in two lines of humanity – Adam & Christ

Summary:

Redemption is **God’s work**, not human self-improvement.

8. Linear History vs. Cyclical or Reset Time

World religion examples

- **Hinduism:** Endless cosmic cycles
- **Buddhism:** Repeated rebirth/reincarnation
- **Ancient paganism:** Eternal recurrence

Media examples

- Time loops and resets

- Games where death has no finality
- Stories where history endlessly repeats

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 1–11** — History moves forward
- **Genesis 9** — Covenants mark progress
- **Romans 5:6; Gal 4:4; Eph 1:10** – The Right Time

Summary:

History has **direction and meaning and is sovereignly directed.**

9. Death as Enemy vs. Death as Transition

World religion examples

- Reincarnation systems
- Pantheism: absorption into the whole
- Spiritualism: death as promotion

Media examples

- Games with constant resurrection
- Stories portraying death as release
- Spiritual narratives denying judgment

Biblical Teaching

- **Genesis 2:17** — Death enters through sin and as punishment for sin
- **Genesis 5** — Death emphasized as tragic reality
- **2 Thess 1:9** – Everlasting separation from God

Summary:

Death is **Separation**: Man is separated from God, from himself (fear, anxieties, self lies), from other men, from nature.

“Since Cain, everyone in the world stands either in the place of Cain or the place of Abel. From this time on in the flow of history there are two humanities. The one humanity says there is no God, or it makes gods in its own imagination, or it tries to come to the true God in its own way. The other humanity comes to the true God in God’s way. There is no neutral ground.” From Genesis in Space and Time by Francis A. Schaeffer, Page 114.

Modern media spirituality often echoes ancient religious ideas that pre-date Genesis.

Francis Schaeffer warned that when Genesis is no longer treated as real history, spirituality does not disappear—it simply returns in older, non-biblical forms.

Conversation Questions for Parents & Grandparents

Purpose: These questions are designed to help parents and grandparents listen carefully to the worldview assumptions present in music, movies, shows, anime, and video games. They are not meant to accuse or debate, but to understand how a story defines God, reality, identity, and hope.

Key Listening Questions

1. God: Does this story present God (or a god-like reality) as a personal being who speaks and acts, or as an impersonal force such as the universe, energy, or fate?
2. Reality: Is the physical world treated as good and meaningful, or as broken, unreal, or something the characters must escape?
3. Truth & Morality: Who decides what is right and wrong in this story—an authority outside the characters, or the characters themselves?
4. Evil: Is evil portrayed as something that entered the world, or as something that has always existed and cannot ultimately be removed?
5. Identity: Is personal identity something created and received, or something chosen, constructed, or detached from the body?
6. Spiritual Powers: Are spiritual beings portrayed as holy and morally perfect, or as powerful but flawed and morally mixed?
7. Salvation: What actually saves or fixes things in this story—grace from outside the system, or personal growth, power, knowledge, or awakening?
8. History: Does the story move toward a meaningful end, or does it repeat endlessly through cycles, resets, or reincarnation?
9. Death: Is death treated as an enemy and loss, or as a transition, release, or illusion?

How to Use These Questions Well

- Ask one or two questions, not all at once.
- Listen carefully before responding.
- Affirm insight before offering correction.
- Avoid argument; invite reflection.
- When appropriate, connect the conversation back to Genesis and the God who acts in real history.