

Journeys

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Nothing

Have you ever thought about **the beginning**? What is that, you say? You know—whatever it was that showed up first. Or whatever it was that was here first, at the earliest moment in time. Have you ever strained your brain to think about that?

Wait a minute, you say, isn't it possible that in the beginning there was nothing? Isn't it possible that kazillions of years ago, there wasn't anything at all?

That's certainly a theory to consider. So let's consider it—but first by way of analogy.

Let's say you have a large room. It's fully enclosed and is about the size of a football field. The room is locked, permanently, and has no doors or windows, and no holes in its walls.

Inside the room there is...nothing. Absolutely nothing. Not a particle of anything. No air at all. No dust at all. No light at all. It's a sealed room that's pitch black inside. Then what happens?

Well, let's say your goal is to get something—anything at all—into the room. But the rules are: you can't use anything from outside the room to do that. So what do you do?

Well, you think, what if I try to create a spark inside the room? Then the room would have light in it, even for just a moment. That would qualify as *something*. Yes, but *you* are outside the room. So that's not allowed.

But, you say, what if I could teleport something into the room, like in Star Trek? Again, that's not allowable, because you'd be using things from outside the room.

Here again is the dilemma: you have to get something inside the room using only what's in the room. And, in this case, what's in the room is nothing.

Well, you say, maybe a tiny particle of something will just show up inside the room if given enough time.

There's three problems with this theory. First, *time* by itself doesn't *do* anything. Things happen over time, but it's not time that makes them happen. For example, if you wait 15 minutes for cookies to bake,

it's not the 15 minutes that bakes them, it's the heat in the oven. If you set them on the counter for 15 minutes, they're not going to bake.

In our analogy, we've got a fully enclosed room with absolutely nothing in it. Waiting 15 minutes will not, in and of itself, change the situation. Well, you say, what if we wait eons? An eon is merely a bunch of 15-minute segments all pressed together. If you waited an eon with your cookies on the counter, would the eon bake them?

The second problem is this: *why would* anything just "show up" in the empty room? It would need a reason why it came to be. But there is nothing inside the room at all. So what's to stop that from remaining the case? There would be nothing inside the room to cause something to show up (and yet the reason must come from inside the room).

Well, you say, what about a tiny particle of something? Wouldn't that have a greater chance of materializing in the room than something larger like, for example, a football?

That brings up the third problem: size. Like time, size is an abstract. It's relative. Let's say you have three baseballs, all ranging in size. One is ten feet wide, one is five feet wide, one is normal size. Which one is more likely to materialize in the room?

The normal-size baseball? No! It would be the same likelihood for all three. The size wouldn't matter. It's not the issue. The issue is whether or not *any* baseball of *any* size could just "show up" in our sealed, empty room.

If you don't think the smallest baseball could just show up in the room, no matter how much time passed, then you must conclude the same thing even for an atom. Size is not an issue. The likelihood of a small particle materializing without cause is no different than a refrigerator materializing without cause!

Now let's stretch our analogy further, literally. Let's take our large, pitch-black room and remove its walls. And let's extend the room so that it goes on infinitely in all directions. Now there is nothing outside the room, because the room is all there is. Period.

This black infinite room has no light, no dust, no particles of any kind, no air, no elements, no molecules. It's absolute nothingness. In fact, we can call it **Absolutely Nothing**.

So here's the question: if originally—bazillions of years ago—there was Absolutely Nothing, wouldn't there be Absolutely Nothing now?

Yes. For something—no matter how small—cannot come from Absolutely Nothing. We would still have Absolutely Nothing.

What does that tell us? That Absolutely Nothing never existed. Why? Because, if Absolutely Nothing *ever* existed, there would *still be* Absolutely Nothing!

If Absolutely Nothing ever existed, there would not be anything outside it to cause the existence of anything.

Again, if Absolutely Nothing *ever* existed, there would *still be* Absolutely Nothing.

However, something exists. Actually, many things exist. You, for example, are something that exists, a very important something. Therefore, you are proof that Absolutely Nothing never existed.

Now, if Absolutely Nothing never existed, that means there was always a time when there was at least Something in existence. What was it?

Was it one thing or many things? Was it an atom? A particle? A molecule? A football? A mutant baseball? A refrigerator? Some cookies?

Something

If there ever was Absolutely Nothing, there would still be Absolutely Nothing today. Since there is something (you, for example), that means that Absolutely Nothing never existed. If it ever did, you wouldn't be here reading this right now. Absolutely Nothing would still be here.

So there was never a time when Absolutely Nothing existed. Therefore, there *has always been* something. But what? If we go back to the very beginning, what was the Something that must have existed? Was it more than one Something, or just one? And what was it like, judging by what exists today?

Let's explore the quantity issue first. Let's call into mind again our large, pitch-black, sealed-off room. Imagine that there are ten tennis balls inside the room. As far back in time as we can go, there was only this: ten tennis balls.

What happens next? Let's say we wait an entire year. What's in the room? Still just ten tennis balls, right? Because there is no other force in existence. And we know that ten ordinary tennis balls—no matter how much time passes—cannot spawn new ones. Or anything else for that matter.

Okay, what if there were six tennis balls in the room to begin with? Would that change the situation? No, not really. Alright then, what if there were a million tennis balls? Still no change. All we've got in the room is tennis balls, no matter how many there are.

What we find out is that quantity is not an issue. If we go back to the very beginning of all things, the quantity of the Something that must have existed is not what's important. Or is it?

Remove the tennis balls. Now inside the room is a chicken. Now we wait a year. What's inside the room? Just one chicken, right? But what if we started out with one hen and one rooster in the room? Now we wait a year, what do we have? A bunch more chickens!

So quantity is important, IF inside the room are at least two things that can produce a third thing. Hen + rooster = baby chick. But quantity is not important if we're talking about at least two things that *cannot* produce a third thing. Tennis ball + football = nothing.

So the issue isn't quantity so much as quality. What qualities does the Something possess? Can it bring other things into existence?

Let's go back to our chickens, but let's get very exact, because such would be the case in the very, very beginning. We have a hen and a rooster in the room. They are in different parts of the room, suspended in nothingness. Will they produce other chickens?

No. Why? Because there's no environment to work in. There's nothing in the room except the hen and the rooster. No air to breathe or fly in, no ground to walk on, no sustenance for them to live on. They can't eat, walk, fly or breathe. Their environment is complete nothingness.

So chickens are out. Chickens cannot exist or reproduce without some sort of environment. With an environment, they could spawn other chickens. And with an environment affecting them, maybe they could—though it seems absurd—change into a different kind of chicken over time. Something along the lines of an otter or a giraffe.

So we've got a room with no environment. Therefore, we need Something that can exist without an environment. Something that doesn't need air, food or water to exist. That disqualifies every current living thing on this earth.

So, then, what about non-living things? They don't need an environment, that's true. But then we're in the same predicament we were in with the tennis balls. Non-living matter doesn't produce anything. Let's say, instead of ten tennis balls, you had a trillion molecules of hydrogen. Then what happens? Over time, you still have a trillion molecules of hydrogen, nothing more.

While we're talking about non-living matter, let's also consider what it takes for that to exist. Ever heard of the Supercollider? Years ago the government embarked on an experiment to create matter. The Supercollider was miles and miles of underground tunnel through which atoms would travel at supersonic speeds and then smash into each other, in order to create a tiny particle. All that for the tiniest, most microscopic bit of matter.

What does that tell us? That our illustration of the ten tennis balls is not nearly as easy as it sounds. It would take an AMAZING amount of energy just to produce one tennis ball out of nothing. And nothing is all we have. The room has absolutely nothing in it.

So here's where we are. The Something that existed at the beginning must be able to exist without depending on anything else. It must be totally and fully self-sufficient. For It was alone at the very beginning. And It needed no environment within which to exist.

Second, the Something that existed at the very beginning must have the ability to produce something other than Itself. For, if It could not, then that Something would be all that exists today. But Something Else exists today. You, for example.

Third, to produce Something Else—out of nothing—requires an incredible amount of power. So the Something must have great power at its disposal. If it takes us miles and miles of corridor and the most energy we can harness, just to produce the tiniest particle, how much power would it take to produce the matter in the universe?

Let's go back to our room. Let's say we have a very special tennis ball inside the room. It *can* produce other tennis balls. It has that much power and energy. And It is completely self-sufficient, needing nothing else to exist, for It is all there is. It, this one tennis ball, is the Eternal Something.

Let's say the tennis ball produces another tennis ball. Which of the two will be greater, say, with respect to TIME? Ball #1. It is the Eternal Something. It has always existed. Ball #2, however, came into existence when produced by Ball #1. So one ball is finite with regard to time, the other infinite.

Which of the two will be greater with regard to POWER? Again, Ball #1. It has the ability to produce Ball #2 out of nothing—which also means it has the

ability to unproduce (destroy) Ball #2. So Ball #1 has far more power than Ball #2. In fact, at all times, Ball #2 must depend on Ball #1 for its very existence.

But, you say, what if Ball #1 shared some of its power with Ball #2—enough power to destroy Ball #1? Then Ball #2 would be greater, for Ball #1 would cease to be, right?

There's a problem with this. If Ball #1 shared some of its power with Ball #2, it would still be Ball #1's power. The question then becomes: could Ball #1 use its own power to destroy itself? No. First of all, to use its power, Ball #1 has to exist.

Second of all, Ball #1 is so powerful that anything that can possibly be done, can be done by Ball #1. But it is not possible for Ball #1 to cease to be, therefore it cannot accomplish this.

Ball #1 cannot be unproduced, for Ball #1 was never produced in the first place. Ball #1 has always existed. It is the Eternal Something. As such, it is existence. It is life, infinite life. For Ball #1 to be destroyed, there would need to be something greater. But nothing is greater than Ball #1, nor ever could be. It exists without need of anything else. It therefore cannot be changed by any external forces. It can have no end, for It has no beginning.

It is the way it is and that cannot change. It cannot cease to be, for BEING is its very nature. In that sense, it is untouchable.

What we see is this: the Something at the very beginning will always be greater than the Something Else it produces.

The Something exists on its own. Something Else, however, needs Something to exist. Therefore, Something Else has needs. It is therefore inferior to Something, and will always be so, for the Eternal Something has no need of another.

The Something might be able to produce Something Else that is *like* It in some ways, but—no matter what—Something Else will always be *unlike* It in other ways. The Eternal Something will always be greater with respect to time and power. Thus, the Eternal Something cannot produce an exact equal to Itself. It alone has always existed. It alone can exist independent of another.

Who

There is an Eternal Something. Something has always existed. Something has no beginning. If this Something has any needs, It can fulfill those needs for Itself. It needs nothing else in order to exist. And It cannot produce an exact equal or another who is greater. Anything that is produced is not eternal. Therefore, the Eternal Something cannot produce another Eternal Something. It will always be greater than anything else that exists.

Now, could this Eternal Something be plural? Possibly. Let's say that originally there were five Eternal Somethings. If that were the case, however, those five would be exactly the same with respect to time and power. All unproduced, all eternal, all able to do whatever is possible to do. This again shows us that quality, not quantity, is the real issue.

So, what do we know about the Eternal Something(s)? It is not alone. For Something Else exists. You, for example. Now you have to ask yourself, are you the Eternal Something, or one of the Eternal Somethings? If you are, then you have no beginning, no needs which you yourself cannot meet, and anything that can possibly be done can be done by you. Is that who you are? If not, then you are truly Something Else, not the Eternal Something or one of the Eternal Somethings.

Let's go back to our large, pitch-black, empty room. But now let's say that one molecule of hydrogen and one molecule of nitrogen are in the room. For argument's sake, let's say that these are the Eternal Somethings. They have always existed. Anything that can be done, can be done by Them.

So, They decide to produce Something Else, for They are the only things that exist in the room. But wait, can hydrogen or nitrogen *decide* anything? Well, for them to be the Eternal Somethings, They MUST have the ability to make a decision.

Think about it. The Eternal Something must *choose* to change things. The Eternal Something is eternal. It has always existed independent of another. More importantly, It *alone* has always existed. What does that mean? It means that no event can take place without the say-so of the Eternal Something.

The Eternal Something is all there is, period. Therefore, the only thing in existence that can change the Eternal Something's aloneless is the Eternal Something Itself. There can be no force outside the Eternal Something because the Eternal Something is all there is.

Therefore, if one molecule of hydrogen and one molecule of nitrogen are the Eternal Somethings, no

outside force can direct Them. They are all there is. They are the only *force* there is.

As the only force in existence, it is They alone who can change Their aloneness. There is nothing in existence that can arbitrarily, by chance, influence Them to produce Something Else.

Something Else could not be produced by chance. Why? Because, for that to happen, "chance" would have to overpower the hydrogen and nitrogen molecules. But They are all there is. Anything that can be done, can be done by Them. "Chance" is Something Else. Something Else cannot overpower the Eternal Something. In fact, at this stage, Chance does not even exist.

If Chance is something outside the Eternal Something, then it does not exist unless produced by the Eternal Something. But even if Chance were produced by the Eternal Something, Chance, since it is Something Else, would always be inferior to the Eternal Something.

So, if Something Else is produced, it is by the power and WILL of the Eternal Something. Something Else can be produced by Chance only if Chance is produced before that Something Else. But Chance itself cannot be produced by chance. It would have to be produced by the will of the Eternal Something.

What does that tell us about our hydrogen and nitrogen molecules? That They are not merely the Eternal Something(s), They are eternal persons. They have will. That is, They must have the ability to choose. Therefore, They are personal.

Again, why must the Eternal Something have the ability to choose? Think back to the empty room with only the hydrogen and nitrogen molecules in it. They are the Eternal Somethings. They alone exist in the room, and have done so eternally.

They exist totally independent of another. For survival, They need no other. Therefore, if They produce Something Else, it will not be out of necessity (as in instinct for survival as we see with animals). Also, if They produce Something Else, it will not be by chance—unless They first produce Chance. Chance is a force, but the Eternal Somethings (the two molecules) are the only force that exists.

Furthermore, the molecules cannot be mere machines. Machines are built and programmed by an outside force of some kind. But the molecules (the Eternal Somethings) are the only force that exists. No force exists outside Them.

Therefore, if They produce Something Else inside the room, the reason for this production must reside within Them, for no other force exists. Nothing else exists within the room except Them.

They are not forced to produce Something Else by instinct, chance, necessity, or the will of another. They are controlled by no other. Whatever They do is done for reasons within Themselves.

This reason can only be Their will. They must choose to produce Something Else, or else nothing else will exist. They will remain alone forever in the room, unless They decide to produce Something Else. They must have more than the power to produce Something Else. They must—at some moment which differentiates it from all the other moments that They've existed alone—decide to use Their power to produce Something Else.

If they have no will (like the tennis balls we spoke of in a previous study), then Their power would never be used to produce Something Else. Their power would only be used to further Their own existence. And their aloneness would remain forever.

The Eternal Something has existed alone eternally. There must be a reason, therefore, within the Eternal Something, for that to change. If Something Else exists, it exists because of the Eternal Something, because the Eternal Something has *chosen* to end its aloneness.

If the reason for the Something Else is not within the Eternal Something, then Something Else will never exist. For the Eternal Something, at some point, was all that existed.

But we know that Something Else exists. Therefore, the Eternal Something must have the ability to decide to use Its power. It must have the ability to choose to produce Something Else outside of Itself. Since it has a will¹, the Eternal Something is personal. This means that the Eternal Something is actually an Eternal Someone.

This Eternal Someone is not controlled by instinct for survival, for It has no needs and cannot cease to exist anyway. Also, the Eternal Someone does not produce by Chance, unless It first produces Chance. Chance is a force that must be produced by the Eternal Something, or it does not exist. Finally, the Eternal Someone is not a machine. There is no other, outside of Itself, to force It or program It to do anything.

¹"You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and **by your will** they were created and have their being." *The Bible, Revelation 4.11*

Who?

The primary points made thus far are as follows:

(1) Absolutely Nothing never existed. If it had, there would still be Absolutely Nothing now. But Something Else exists. You, for example.

(2) Since Absolutely Nothing never existed, there was always a time when there was something in existence. This something we can call the Eternal Something. The Eternal Something has no beginning and no end, has no needs that It Itself cannot meet, can do whatever is possible that can be done, and will always be superior to anything It produces.

(3) The Eternal Something is not a machine, controlled or programmed by any force outside Itself. And the Eternal Something will not produce out of necessity, since It has no needs. Therefore, if It produces Something Else, It must *decide* to do so. That means that the Eternal Something has a will; thus, It is personal. Therefore, the Eternal Something must actually be an Eternal Someone (or Someones).

Continuing on, what can we discern about the Eternal Someone, beyond what has been stated already? (It's necessary here to transition from using "It" to "He" or "She" because the Eternal Something is an Eternal Someone. "He" has been chosen but gender is not an issue in this discussion.)

Since the Eternal Someone has no needs that He cannot fulfill on His own, He can exist without need of any kind of environment, for He existed when there was nothing else but Him. Any environment would be outside Him, and therefore would need to be produced. But all there is, is Him.

It's likely then that the Eternal Someone is transcendent. Meaning, He can exist outside of time and space, since He is bound by neither one. He existed eternally, thus being outside of time. And He exists without need of an environment, thus being outside of space.

Being transcendent of time and space, it's possible that the Eternal Someone is what we would call invisible. Only that which takes up space is visible. If something is outside of space, how could it be seen? Just so, the Eternal Someone is likely invisible and can exist without need of any kind of body or form.

For discussion sake, let's say that the Eternal Someone decides to produce Something Else—or rather, Someone Else. The Eternal Someone chooses to produce Someone Else who is like Him in some respects. Like Him, the Someone Else will have a self-consciousness, which is a necessary aspect of having will. So the Someone Else is a self and has a will.

What can we determine about this Someone Else? Will this Someone Else be outside of time? No, the Someone Else will not have existed eternally. The Someone Else will have a beginning and thus be bound by time.

Recall that anything the Eternal Someone produces will be inferior with regard to time and space. That cannot be avoided in any way. So, even if the Someone Else were to exist forever in the future, he would still have a beginning in time. Actually, his timeline would fall within the [infinite] timeline of the Eternal Someone.

What about space? Will the Someone Else be bound by space? Yes. Only the Eternal Someone can exist without any kind of environment. The Someone Else will need an environment to exist in, but what? Think of space like time. The Someone Else exists within the Eternal Someone's timeline. In a similar way, the Someone Else will exist within the Eternal Someone's "spaceline."

The Eternal Someone transcends space. Thus, just as He is everywhere in time, He is everywhere in space. So, when the Someone Else is produced, he will exist within the Eternal Someone's time and space. The Eternal Someone is the environment within which the Someone Else will exist!

So now we've got the Someone Else, and the Eternal Someone exists all around him. But there's a problem. He cannot see the Eternal Someone, for the Eternal Someone transcends space. He does not take up a part of space because He is all of space. To see Him, one would have to be able to see all of time and space. Impossible.

So the Someone Else cannot detect the Eternal Someone. So what must the Eternal Someone do if He wants to be detected by the Someone Else? He must "untranscend." Some kind of untranscendence is essential. Is that possible? Yes.

Remember, anything that can possibly be done can be done by the Eternal Someone. It would be possible for Him to make Himself detectable by the Someone Else, that is, to "untranscend." How?

We detect the presence of another in our world through sight, smell, touch, taste, hearing. If the Eternal Someone gave the Someone Else the ability to see or hear, for example, then the Eternal Someone could (1) appear in a visible form, (2) speak to the Someone Else, or (3) do both simultaneously. These would be ways of untranscending so that the Eternal Someone could be detected by the Someone Else.

Remember, the Someone Else is produced. Thus, the Someone Else is bound by time and space. Whatever his makeup (nature) is, it will be detectable in time and space. Therefore, all the Eternal Someone has to

do is assume whatever form He gives the Someone Else. That is one way to make Himself detectable.

But here's a question: if the Eternal Someone untranscends in order to be detected, is that the whole of the Eternal Someone? No! There would be more to Him than He had not made known. Though He could divulge much about Himself, the whole of Him—that is, Himself in His transcendence—could not be fully known or understood by the Someone Else.

Interestingly, the scenario described above is exactly what we see in the Bible. We are like the Someone Else. We are bound by time and space. God, however, is the Eternal Someone. And He untranscended in the person of Jesus Christ. To find out more, see below...

1. God is the Eternal Someone. He has always existed and will continue to do so.

Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the earth and the world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God. *Psalms 90.2*

Do you not know? Have you not heard? The LORD is the everlasting God, the Creator of the ends of the earth. He will not grow tired or weary, and his understanding no one can fathom. *Isaiah 40.28*

"This is what the LORD says—Israel's King and Redeemer, the LORD Almighty: I am the first and I am the last; apart from me there is no God." *Isaiah 44.6*

But the LORD is the true God; he is the living God, the eternal King. *Jeremiah 10.10*

"I tell you the truth," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!" *John 8.58*

Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. *Hebrews 13.8*

"I am the Alpha and the Omega," says the Lord God, "who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty." *Revelation 1.8*

"I am the Alpha and the Omega, the First and the Last, the Beginning and the End." *Revelation 22.13*

2. God is invisible.

No one has ever seen God, but God the One and Only, who is at the Father's side, has made him known. *John 1.18*

God is spirit. *John 4.24*

Now to the King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only God, be honor and glory for ever and ever. *1 Timothy 1.17*

God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. *1 Timothy 6.15-16*

3. In a sense, we exist within God because God is everywhere, yet God is still distinct from us.

Where can I go from your Spirit? Where can I flee from your presence? If I go up to the heavens, you are there; if I make my bed in the depths, you are there. *Psalms 139.7*

"The God who made the world and everything in it is the Lord of heaven and earth and does not live in temples built by hands. And he is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything, because he himself gives all men life and breath and everything else. From one man he made every nation of men, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he determined the times set for them and the exact places where they should live. God did this so that men would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from each one of us. 'For in him we live and move and have our being.'" *Acts 17.24-28*

4. Anything that can possibly be done, can be done by God.

"Is anything too difficult for the LORD?" *Genesis 18.14*

Our God is in heaven; he does whatever pleases him. *Psalms 115.3*

"I am God, and there is none like me. I make known the end from the beginning, from ancient times, what is still to come. I say: My purpose will stand, and I will do all that I please." *Isaiah 46.10*

"With God all things are possible." *Matthew 19.26*

"For nothing is impossible with God." *Luke 1.37*

5. It is possible for God to "untranscend." He can reveal Himself by taking on a human form.

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God....The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. *John 1.1, 1.14*

That which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked at and our hands have touched—this we proclaim concerning the Word of life. The life appeared; we have seen it and testify to it, and we proclaim to you the eternal life, which was with the Father and has appeared to us. *1 John 1.1-2*

He [Jesus Christ] is the image of the invisible God, the firstborn over all creation. For by him all things were created: things in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or powers or rulers or authorities; all things were created by him and for him. *Colossians 1.15-16*

The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being. *Hebrews 1.3*

Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross! *Philippians 2.5*

6. When God untranscends, this is not the whole of Him, and yet it is still Him.

"The Father is greater than I." *John 14.28*

"I and the Father are one." *John 10.30*

"Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father." *John 14.9*

Would you like to know this God? If so, find out how by reading "Getting Connected" at EveryStudent.com. Look for it under the section called "Connect."