

Geeking Up The Gospel

Creation and Eternity Explored With Numbers

Creation

There is no question that God is omnipotent, and omniscient. There is no denying that His knowledge, wisdom, and power are only matched by His love for us. I do not pretend to know even a fraction of what He knows, or what His plans are for us. For a fraction of infinity, no matter how small you slice it, it is still, infinity.

In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.

Genesis 1:1 KJV

This is such a simple, succinct statement. It deserves so much more, but there it is, our Lord creating a vast universe, and a suitable home for us. And I dare say, without a significant effort on his part. For though the universe, and everything created in it, is far, far larger than our own planet, it is nothing compared to His infinite power.

The thing is, we live in the “real world”. In a manner of speaking, our world is finite. It can be measured. So let’s put it numbers. First of all, I’d like to present a little equation that is very well known, discovered by Einstein, $E = mc^2$, or energy equals mass times the speed of light squared. What does it mean, exactly? Although I do not pretend to know the least bit about quantum physics, I do know that this equation describes the energy released when you annihilate matter. It can be used to determine the destruction wrought by an atomic bomb, based on the fissile matter it contains, and the percent of that matter which will be obliterated.

Let’s do a little algebra on that equation to determine mass. If we divide both sides by the speed

of light squared (c^2), we get $\frac{E}{c^2} = m$. In English, to create matter, a lot of energy is

required. Take the energy, divide it by the speed of light squared

$(3.00 \times 10^8 \text{ m/s})^2 = 9.00 \times 10^{16} \text{ m}^2/\text{s}^2$ and you have the mass that results if you had a machine that could do such a thing.

As a practical example of how much energy is required to create matter, consider an ounce of water. Theoretically, an ounce of anything should require about the same amount of energy, but again, I am no quantum physicist. Bear with me for a bit, as it is easier to work through this with the metric system. You know, foreign numbers.

For a thousand years in thy sight are but as yesterday when it is past, and as a watch in the night.

Psalm 90:4 KJV

God said to Moses, "I am who I am. This is what you are to say to the Israelites: 'I am has sent me to you.'

Exodus 3:14 NIV

Most of us can fathom a life without end. We may have no idea what we'll do forever. It hasn't happened yet, but it will. However, try to wrap your head around this, God has always been, He had no beginning. He calls himself "I Am". He did not call himself "I have been for a long time, and I will be for millions of years", nor did he call himself "I have been for a million years, and I'll continue on forever." He is simply "I am". He has already lived forever, and will live for another forever. How then, did we come to be, at this point in "time"? How could "forever" have already passed?

It is cliché to even ask "How can righteous God allow such evil on Earth?". The question is asked often, even by believers. I don't pretend to be any better than anyone, quite the contrary. However, who are we to question God? When I hear this question, I consider the story of Job. If you're not sure what I'm talking about, read it. Pay special attention to God's answer to Job.

Now, let's put some numbers to human suffering. I'm not speaking of crime statistics. Rather, let's explore human suffering in the context of eternity. If you could somehow quantify the suffering of the most inhumanely treated person in history, it would still be a fixed quantity.

Consider the life of a hypothetical child who has been abused all of her life, and suffered greatly before dying. It is true, the child's life is a tragedy, and we should help people in distress whenever possible. We are called to be light, and salt. Nevertheless, there is evil in the world, and horrible things happen. Still, a life of horror and suffering is nevertheless mortal, in that it is over in a finite number of years.

To put our finite lives in equation form, you have a very simple formula:

$\frac{X}{\infty}$, where X is lifetime, in years

Divide any finite number by infinity, and you essentially have zero, insignificant.

Conclusion: No matter how many hardships you face in this earthly life, eternity will make those a distant memory.

Men Behaving Badly

So God is eternal, infinite, unfathomable. What then, of man? Man is finite. Our knowledge, abilities, and lifespans can be quantified. If you've lived long enough, you can ascertain why people behave the way they do, especially when they sin.

One can say there are many reasons why people do evil, but it all really has one root cause, scarcity. We are all too often tempted by the idea that we are running out of time, and opportunity. Even if we know that Heaven awaits because of our faith in Him, and his grace, we sometimes lose sight of that. We sometimes stumble.

We live in the "real world", but as Christians, we know that we are aliens to this fallen realm. We feel out of place. We know that there is a perfect kingdom, but we're stuck in this globe of injustice, suffering, pollution, and despair. Sometimes, we act like citizens of this planet, rather than the foreign, redeemed residents that we are. Sometimes, we act as if this is all there is; that our opportunity for joy, pleasure will soon come to an end. When this happens, it is called sin.

In summary, God is perfect, all powerful, and eternal. He offers eternal life to us; we just have to believe. He's bigger than we can imagine.