

Why?
Why Would God Love Me?

Star Size Comparison Video

We know so little about the universe. And yet, what we do know is absolutely astounding. One thing we know for sure is that the universe is really, really big. No one is sure exactly how big, but it's way bigger than anyone could have ever imagined just a decade ago. In fact, it seems like every time we start to get a handle on the size of the universe we find out that there's more we didn't know existed.

Not only are the stars gigantic and dwarf our planet but the universe it self is immense. It's estimated that the universe is 93 billion light years across. Of course that's just an estimate based on what we know today. Tomorrow that could all change with new discoveries.

One of the questions that Richard Dawkins and some of the more popular atheist writers have asked is "why?" If God is supposed to be purposeful why would He create all the "wasted space" in the universe when His whole focus is supposed to be on planet earth?

Here's why. God created the universe so that we'd realize that compared to God we're nothing. So that we'd realize that we're very, very small and that God is immense. He's literally, astronomical.

A quick look around the universe and we'll quickly apprehend the truth that we're not such hot stuff after all. An understanding of the vastness of the universe is humbling. Actually, we're a little dot, floating on a dot somewhere in the almost immeasurable vastness of space.

Understanding how small we are can bring us to one of two conclusions. We can either focus on the bigness of God or we can go the opposite direction and start to feel insignificant irrelevant, and inconsequential.

Maybe that's how you feel this morning. Tiny, irrelevant, nonessential. Maybe your thinking this morning, "Why would God care about me?" Why should I matter to the Almighty? Why should God be mindful of me?"

If you feel that way this morning you're in good company. If that's you this morning, someone one else asked that same question almost 3000 years ago.

That question is found in the Bible. And in fact, the guy who asked it wasn't an atheist, or even an agnostic.

He was David, king of Israel. He was a man described as a man after God's own heart. And here's what he pondered.

When I consider Your heavens, the work of Your fingers, the moon and the stars, which You have ordained, what is man that You are mindful of him, and the son of man that You visit him? (Psalm 8:3-4)

Did you catch that? This man, who was such a key figure in God's plan for the world, looked up at the stars and realized how small he was.

He didn't have the Hubble telescope to show him the immensity of space. He didn't need it. He just looked up. He didn't have all the light pollution we have here. He just looked up into the blackness of the night sky and was overwhelmed at what he saw.

What he saw was stars that couldn't be numbered. What he saw caused him to wonder in amazement, "God, why would you care about me? Why would you care about any of us seemingly insignificant creatures, on a seemingly insignificant planet, in the vastness of space?"

So the question isn't new. If you're feeling that way, your feelings aren't new. In fact the same question was asked by Job in what we believe to be the oldest book in the Bible.

What is man, that You should exalt him, that You should set Your heart on him? (Job 7:17)

Who are we to be recognized by God in any way, let alone be loved by Him?

I. God Loves Us Because He Chooses To Love Us

Turn to Deuteronomy 7 page 179 (5th book in the Bible)

When King David asks in Psalm 8 *what is man that you are mindful of Him*, he starts and ends that Psalm with the same confident declaration, *O LORD, our Lord, How excellent is Your name in all the earth!* (Psalm 8:1&9)

God's love is a whole lot different than our love usually is. The reason we wonder, "Why would you care about us?" is because we tend to think about God's love as if it was like our love. Our love is usually dependent on the object of our love.

We love our kids because they're our kids. We love our husband or our wife because they're appealing to us. In fact when the spouse loses that appeal the other partner often says, "I'm not in love any more." What they mean is, "I don't feel the attraction to that other person like I once did."

Here's the difference with God's love. Our love is dependant on the loved. God's love is dependant on the lover. That's a radical difference.

So look what He says to His people Israel. **Read verses 6-8**

God says, "Just remember people, the reason you're special to Me is because I determined it would be that way. I didn't love you because you were some big nation. You were one family, the family of Abraham. You were the least of all people. I set My love upon you because I wanted to, not because you were more lovable than anyone else."

And what's true of Israel is true of the world. God loves us for one reason. God loves us because He chooses to love us. The Bible says this: *For God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have everlasting life.* (John 3:16)

Here's how God loved the world. He gave His Son to die on a cross for our sins. The sacrifice of Jesus Christ is for everyone. That means the love of God is for everyone.

The Bible says, *For scarcely for a righteous man will one die; yet perhaps for a good man someone would even dare to die. But God demonstrates His own love toward us, in that while we were still sinners, Christ died for us.* (Romans 5:7-8)

God's already shown us His love. If you're wondering "Does God love me? How can I know?" Here's the demonstration. Here's the proof. The cross that

stood on that hillside outside of Jerusalem 2000 years ago is a monument to God's enduring love.

The Bible says, *In this is love, not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins.* (I John 4:10) Or, how about this, *We love Him because He first loved us.* (I John 4:19)

God doesn't love you and He doesn't love me because we're lovable. He loves us for the same reason He loved His people Israel. He has made a decision to love us based upon His own nature.

Twice in the Book of I John in the Bible it says this: *God is love.* (I John 4:8,16) God's character, His nature, His essence is love.

God's love is perfect. God's love is eternal. God's love is rooted in His nature, not in our performance. God's love can't be earned by what we do and it can't be lost by what we do.

God loves us because He chose to love us and He displayed that love when He punished His own Son for the sins that we committed.

I. God Loves Us Because He Chooses To Love Us

II. God's Love Doesn't Preclude Suffering

God doesn't owe us anything. I'm always amazed at Christians who get angry at God because things didn't go their way. I'm amazed at believers in Jesus Christ who begin to question God because their understanding of love doesn't seem to match up with their expectations.

Here's how our thinking often goes. "The Bible says that God is love. The pastor at church is always preaching about how much God loves me. Since God loves me so much He should always make my life enjoyable and worry free. There shouldn't be any pain or suffering for me or for the people I love."

And then what happens? The car accident, the unexpected medical diagnosis, the financial crisis, the kids reject the faith, our spouse leaves us, our church lets us down, someone we love dies.

And all of a sudden we're thinking, "Where is God? What happened to the

loving God that's supposed to care about me?"

When we're thinking that way we're really saying, "I'm the center of the universe. I'm the final arbitrator of what life should be like."

There is so much we don't understand. I think that God's kind of like the universe. We'll never get to the end of the universe and we'll never understand everything about the universe. In fact, the more we learn, the more we realize how little we know. That's the way God is.

The Bible says, *How great is God--beyond our understanding!* (Job 36:26 NIV) It says, *The Almighty is beyond our reach and exalted in power.* (Job 36:23 NIV)

The Bible says, *Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and His ways past finding out! For who has known the mind of the LORD? Or who has become His counselor. Or who has first given to Him and it shall be repaid to him?* (God doesn't owe us anything. God doesn't need our advice) *For of Him and through Him and to Him are all things, to whom be glory forever. Amen.* (Romans 11:33-36)

Life isn't all about us, it's all about God.

Turn to Acts chapter 2 page 1070

In Acts 2 we get the first sermon that anybody preaches after Jesus' crucifixion and resurrection. This was a Jewish feast day called Pentecost. It was one of 3 religious celebrations that God had declared mandatory for all Jewish men to attend.

That meant that thousands of Jewish worshippers had come into Jerusalem. It was in that context that Peter preached this sermon.

Read verses 22-24

Peter makes some interesting assertions here.

First, they knew who Jesus was. The Jewish prophets had said the Messiah

would heal the sick, open the eyes of the blind, and cause the lame to walk. Jesus did all of those things. That was God's confirmation that He was Messiah.

By the way, Jesus didn't heal everybody. That wasn't the purpose of His first coming.

Second, Peter says, the Father raised Jesus from the dead. These were the same people who were here just a month and a half before for the feast of Passover. Many of them were there at the crucifixion. They knew Jesus died. They're in the same city where Jesus was buried.

And no one says, "What do you mean He rose from the dead? His body's right over here!"

No one said it because the tomb was empty and they knew it.

But to me, the most amazing thing that Peter says is this. You guys are guilty. It was your lawless hands that crucified Jesus. You acted of your own volition and are completely responsible for your actions. But when you crucified Him you were fulfilling the determined purpose of God.

How's that for a paradox? They acted completely and totally out of their own free will. No one forced them to do anything. But when they acted of their own volition and crucified Jesus they fulfilled God's purpose down to the letter.

For truly against Your holy Servant Jesus, whom You anointed, both Herod and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles and the people of Israel, were gathered together to do whatever Your hand and Your purpose determined before to be done. (Acts 4:27, 28)

I don't profess to understand how God's sovereignty and human freedom operate side-by-side but they do.

But now think about this. God incorporated into His divine plan the reality of evil and suffering in order to accomplish His will. And He didn't do it as some detached spectator.

Jesus Christ was the very Son of God. He existed in eternity past as the second person of the trinity. The Father and the Son had a perfect love relationship. But when the Son took on flesh in the incarnation He did it for the express purpose of suffering and dying for our sins. This was all part of the divine plan.

We were on our way to hell and Jesus intervened. The Bible says that Jesus *bore our sins in His own body on the tree.* (I Peter 2:24)

We were on our way to hell and the Father intervened. The Bible says, *the LORD has laid on Him the iniquity of us all.* (Isaiah 53:6) Hebrew verbs can be based on any of 7 verb stems. Verb stems determine the voice and aspect of the verb. When the Bible says Jehovah *laid on Him the iniquity of us all* it uses the Piel stem. That's the intensive form of the verb. God struck the Son. You might translate that "He pummeled the Son with our sins."

The Father didn't gently place our sins on Jesus He struck Him violently. Isaiah 53:10 explains it this way, *it was the LORD's will to crush him and cause him to suffer.* (NIV)

The fact that Jesus suffered didn't mean that God didn't love Him. But it did mean that God was working out His purposes in the only way possible. The world stands condemned because of sin. The Bible says, *all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.* (Romans 3:23) That's why the Lord laid on Him the iniquity of us all. We all deserve to be judged by God. Instead He judged His Son in our place.

Think about it. Could God go any further in His love for us? Is there something more, something greater that He could do? Obviously not.

If God suffered in the process of redeeming us and giving us life, why would we think that we should never suffer? The God who went to such great lengths to save us can be trusted. The God who went to such great lengths to save us, loves us unconditionally and fully.

The Bible says, *By this we know love, because He laid down His life for us.* (I John 3:16)

I. God Loves Us Because He Chooses To Love Us

II. God's Love Doesn't Preclude Suffering

III. God Loves Us In Order To Bring Himself Glory

Turn to Job chapter 38 page 520

Job was a righteous man but he went through some extreme suffering. He had questions about what God was doing but instead of answering them, here's what God says...

Read verses 1-3

I think God says this to all of us at times. We question what God's doing and God has to snap us back to reality. He says, "I'll ask the questions and you answer since you seem to think you know better than me."

Read verses 4-7

"Are you the Creator? And He goes on through the next couple of chapters asking questions like, "Did you set the boundaries of the oceans? Did you command the sun and moon to give light? Do you cause the clouds to rain and the wind to blow? Did you set the animal kingdom into motion? He asks just one question after another.

Read chapter 40 verse 1-2

Here's how The Message translates those verses: *GOD then confronted Job directly: "Now what do you have to say for yourself? Are you going to haul me, the Mighty One, into court and press charges?"*

All of a sudden Job is confronted with the awesomeness of God and his own insignificance. Look how he responds...

Read verses 3-5

No more questions God!

But God's not quite finished. **Read verse 8**

And then down through the next 2 chapters God keeps pointing to the wonders

of creation and asking Job, “What do you have to do with all this?”

God wasn’t trying to beat Job up. He wasn’t asking all these questions because He was angry at him.

God was asking because He wanted Job to see the reality that He was so far beyond Job’s understanding that rather than Job questioning God he needed to trust God.

Read 42:1-6

When you really catch a vision of God. When you really begin to understand His awesomeness you’ll be blown away. When we get an accurate picture of God we’re going to repent in sackcloth and ashes of our foolish questions. We’re going to realize how totally inadequate we are, but that our sufficiency is of God.

That’s what God wanted Job to learn. That’s the lesson He has for all of us. Why? Because when we come to grips with our own weakness, we find our strength in Christ.

Isn’t it amazing? We are so sinful. We are so undone. God knows every wicked thought we’ve ever had before we even thought them. God know every wrong thing we’ve ever done before we even did them. God knows every hurtful thing we’ve ever said before the words were ever formed on our tongues. And yet He loves us so passionately and so intimately that instead of condemning us for our wrongs He made the way for our forgiveness. He paid our price.

Why? For His own honor and glory. Listen to this. This is Paul, who was an apostle writing to the church at Ephesus in Asia Minor. *I am less than the least of all God's people* (The guy’s an apostle. God used him to pen over half the New Testament. Why does he call himself the least of all God’s people? Because he’s comparing himself with God. And he’s like Isaiah in Isaiah 6 who says, “Woe is me. I an undone.) ; *yet God gave me this privilege of taking to the Gentiles the Good News about the infinite riches of Christ, and of making all people see how God's secret plan is to be put into effect. God, who is the Creator of all things, kept His secret hidden through all the past ages, in order that at the present time, by means of the church, the angelic rulers and*

powers in the heavenly world might learn of His wisdom in all its different forms. (Ephesians 3:8-10 GNT)

When the New Testament talks about “the church” it’s not talking about a building, it’s talking about the Body of Christ, all believers who have placed their faith in Jesus for the forgiveness of sin.

If you have trusted Christ for eternal life the Bible says you’re a living stone built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Jesus as the chief cornerstone.

Now notice what God is doing with His church. God’s end goal for His love for us, for the cross, for His church, isn’t centered in us. As much as He loves us His love is designed to ultimately bring Him the glory that He deserves. So through the church *the angelic rulers and powers in the heavenly world learn of His wisdom in all its different forms.*

Think about that. All the angels, all the demons, throughout all eternity will look at us and see the attributes and character of God displayed. His love, His justice, His mercy, His righteousness, His grace, His holiness, all the different aspects of God’s character is seen through us.

One of the things I love about the book of Revelation is all the worship scenes that you see. And in everyone of those glimpses into eternity who’s at the center? Who’s all the attention turned towards? Not the worshippers.

All the attention from the heavenly beings and the multitudes of redeemed people is fixed on the Lamb who sits on the throne. God’s not pointing out in the crowd and saying, “Worthy are you.” It’s the other way around.

God loves us in order to bring Himself glory and worship.

Why would God love me? Have you ever asked that question? Because it’s His nature to love, because He chooses to love, because it brings Him glory and honor.

God’s love is a fact. It’s a demonstrated fact centered in the cross. So the real question isn’t why would God love me. It’s, have I responded to that love by placing my faith in Him

Your choices are actually pretty straight forward. You can choose to ignore God's love. People do that when they're afraid of the claims of Christ on their life. You can just try to avoid the whole subject.

Then again you can chose to presume on God's love. You can reason, "Hey if God is love then I don't need Jesus. His love will just cover everything and I'll end up OK. After all, a God of love wouldn't send anybody to hell."

The problem with that line of thinking is it assumes that God isn't just and doesn't demand a payment for sin. If that were true, He wouldn't have laid on His Son the iniquity of us all.

But thankfully there's a third option. The third option is to respond in faith. The Bible makes this promise. *Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and you will be saved.* (Acts 16:31)

Which option will you choose this morning?