

Where did the world come from?

Did everything come to exist on its own?

The story of Mr. Palm Basket is one that many people in Cambodia know and use to help those who are thinking too much about the future. This lesson uses the sugar palm as its starting point. The sugar palm is a very special tree in Cambodia. You can see it throughout the countryside and even in the city of Phnom Penh. In the cool season we can see people with their strong muscles crossing the fields and climbing the trees daily. We can hear the clanking of their containers as they take the sweet juice to make it into sugar. Then they take the juice and make many kinds of food. Many of the country people actually live in structures made from the palm tree, using the fronds to make the walls and roof of their house. Even the trunk can be useful, made into a boat. Even the branches have a use. Truly the sugar palm is a great blessing to the Khmers.

But where did it come from? We know that it came from a seed which fell to the ground and sprouted. It can become a new sugar palm tree. But way before that, thousands of years ago, where did the first sugar palm come from? Did it just come to be all on its own? Or was there a God who made it? What about bananas, fish, rice and everything else, where did they come from? The traditions of Cambodia say that the world and everything in it truly must have a creator. Whenever they go anywhere or do anything Khmers pray to the owners of the water and the land.

One other thing that is very interesting is that even if people have money to make a house and hire someone to build it or do it themselves, before they go in to live they ask for permission from the spirit protector of the house. They do not think of themselves as the owner of the house. They think of someone else who is in charge and takes care of the house.

Who is that owner of the water and the land, the one who cares for all things in this world? Is it the God who, according to the Christians is the one who made the world and everything in it?

If we look at nature or our bodies, we can see many incredible things and it makes us wonder if this all came to be on its own. Did our bodies come to exist on their own? Would we ever believe that about any machine we see around us? Let's think about the human body for a moment. The eye is more amazing than any camera. It keeps everything in focus, both near and far. Your eyelids protect your eyes from dust and other disturbance. When your eyes are about to face danger, the eyelids cover them. Even when dust enters, tears clean them. Are you telling your eyes to do this? No, it all happens without you even having to think about it. Where did this pair of eyes come from? Where did your whole body come from? The answer is easy, "We came from our mother and our mother came from our grandmother and grandfather." But way back, where did the first grandparents come from?

2-Nature Points to God

According to what we have seen above, there must be a very clever person who carefully made people like this. This is why many people believe there is a God that made all things, who is bigger than everything else and existed before all. Some people do not believe this. They say everything came to exist on its own.

They say that everything came out of nature. Some say people came from the four basic elements: water, earth, fire and wind. Part of this statement makes sense, part of it does not. If you look at the body we can agree

that it is made up of the four elements. When we are alive our bodies are warm; when we die they are cold (the body has fire). When we do not drink water we are tired (the body has water). When we die, whether buried or cremated we see our body returns to dust (we were made from dirt). If we do not breathe for five minutes we die (our body is made from air). Yes we are made up of the four essential elements, water, earth, fire and wind. But let us consider whether these four elements come together on their own. That is hard to believe. Can you throw water, wind, fire and earth into the corner and make a man? Not all the scientists in the world can do that. No one is wise enough or powerful enough to do such a thing. Can people come to exist on their own? Has any house ever been made without a builder? It cannot happen. The Bible explains that there really is a great God who created all these things and the complicated and beautiful people. A verse from the Christian Bible says, "For since the creation of the world, God's invisible qualities, both his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Romans 1:20). It is like the wind that we cannot see but we know there is wind because we see the leaves moving in the breeze. We know about God through what His hand has made. Who can tell us for sure what happened? If we were not there to see the first sugar palm created, the first human formed, is there any historical record to tell us? It is because of the records that we know about Angkor Wat. The five immense peaks tower into the sky. We look at those towers and we know there must have been an intelligent designer to make it so symmetrical. There must have been many hard laborers. But how do we know if we did not see them make it? We know because we believe the evidence left by those who made Angkor Wat. We know that Angkor Wat was built in the 1113 A.D. by Suryavarman II. The evidence of this came before our eyes could see it. But still we have historical records.

We also have historical records about the creation of the world. Even though no one was there to see it, many cultures and nationalities do have a written or oral tradition about the creation of the world. They describe a time when nothing existed in our world. They tell of a God who came and made everything and created the first man and woman.

3--The Claims of the Bible About the Creation of the World

Many cultures in history have agreed that there is a true record in a book that is about 3500 years old. This book speaks about the beginning of the world as follows,

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters. And God said, 'Let there be light,' and there was light. God saw that the light was good, and he separated the light from the darkness. God called the light 'day,' and the darkness he called 'night.' And there was evening, and there was morning--the first day (Genesis 1:1-5).

This is the story of how the elements were created. The first thing made was fire, the source of light. The Bible teaches that there was a God before all other things existed. We know He was a very good God, because everything He made was good. Listen to the rest of the story as it tells how God made the world one part at a time.

And God said, "Let there be an expanse between the waters to separate water from water. So God made the expanse and separated the water under the expanse from the water above it. And it was so. God called the expanse 'sky.' And there was evening, and there was morning--the second day" (Genesis 1:6-8). Thus air and water were made, two more of the four

essential elements. On the third day, earth (dirt), the fourth essential element was created. God separated it from the water making seas and dry land. Now that the basics were all there, the story continues with Him saying, “Let the land produce vegetation: seed-bearing plants and trees on the land that bear fruit with seed in it, according to their various kinds” (Genesis 1:11). There were things like beans, sesame seeds, etc. That was the end of the third day.

On the fourth day the sun, moon and stars were created. On the fifth day he created birds and water-life. He said, “Let the water teem with living creatures, and let birds fly above the earth across the expanse of the sky” (Genesis 1:20). There were sparrows, doves, and other small birds. And other water-life like fish, lobster, crabs, etc., were created. Then on the sixth day “God made the wild animals according to their kinds, the livestock according to their kinds, and all the creatures that move along the ground according to their kinds. And God saw that it was good” (Genesis 1:25). There were cows, water buffalo, elephants, horses, rabbits, deer, etc. were created. The story goes on to say that God had created a huge and beautiful world just by the word out of His mouth. It was perfect in all its ways, with no pain or any sin.

If this story that so many people believe is true, how great God must be? God would truly be the owner of the world many people are searching for and to whom they are asking for help. Does this God of great power have concern for us? According to this story, He has already helped us by giving us everything that we need for our living in this world. God created all things according to His good plan. What is that plan? God created this world with great care, making it a perfectly beautiful and peaceful place for people. On the sixth day, after creating the animals He said, “Let us make man in our image, in our likeness, and let them rule over the fish of

the sea and the birds of the air, over the livestock, over all the earth, and over all the creatures that move along the ground” (Genesis 1:26).

The Bible says that “the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being” (Genesis 2:7). He was designed by God and given breath by God. If that is so, how incredible God must be. According to the story above, God who is great with absolute power could create the world in six days through just the power of a spoken word. Yet He is not just a force, but He is a personal God, who made man with His word. God showed that He is full of love and concerned for humans as if they were His own children. He had prepared a beautiful world with everything necessary for life. He placed the man, who was called Adam and the woman, who was called Eve, in the most beautiful part of the world, a garden called Eden. God intended for them to enjoy all that He had created. He gave them a mouth and ears and made it possible for them to speak with Him and to hear His voice. The story goes on to say, “God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning--the sixth day. Thus the heavens and the earth were completed in all their vast array. By the seventh day God had finished the work he had been doing; so on the seventh day he rested from all his work” (Genesis 1:31-2:2). God did not stop on the seventh day because God was tired, but as an example for people to rest from all their work. Thus is concluded the account of how the world came to be and how we have our week of seven days from Sunday through Saturday. And so from that day until now mothers have given birth to children, new sugar palms have come from the seeds of the first trees and seasons change each year. God keeps the world alive and growing. It is not like an abandoned house. Have you seen a house that has no one living in it? The family goes into the

city to make a living. They board up their house. Before long the house falls into disrepair. The grass and garden dry up and die. In the end it becomes deserted and unlivable. But this has not happened to our world. It is still alive and good. Perhaps there is a God who is still taking care of it. Perhaps He is alive and sees us. To find out if this is true, ask Him to help you in order to know that He is your Father. Around the world today many people believe in the Lord God and pray to him. They believe that if He truly made the world, then all people of every nationality are His children. If we are His children then He is still concerned about us today and wants to help us and take care of us.

There is much evidence in the world that there must have been a designer and creator who made all its beauty. If there is a creator we should know who He is because He would be like our Father. If He is alive, then we should try to know Him and to show Him loyalty and respect.

A war was raging across Europe. The enemy was invading one country after another. People were fleeing for their lives. A train was headed out of the country to safety and certain family tried to board it. In the confusion the son was separated from his parents. They did not know until it was too late to turn back. In their heartache and Fear, they pled with the creator God to watch over their son and protect him. They were taken by boat to America, where they began to live and work. They often thought of their son and prayed for him. Soon the war ended and they were able to write to relatives back in their home country. To their joy they discovered that their son was alive. Working hard, they raised money to pay for his boat fare to America. When their son came off the ship it was a beautiful and tear-filled reunion. How happy they were to see their son. How grateful he was to be reunited with his parents. The Father of life has been separated

from his children throughout the world. Many of them do not know He is their creator. He wants them to talk to Him, to know Him. Surely, when we know He has given us life it will make us very grateful.

Points to Remember

* If my house was made because a carpenter built it, then what about the world and all creatures--who made them? The Bible of the Christians claims that God is the one who created it.

* Angkor Wat is the achievement of the Khmer kings in the eleventh century. This world then is the achievement of the God of the universe. It's His handiwork.

Genesis 1:1 "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."

Questions

1--Write T before the statements that are true and F before the statements that are false.

_____ Everything has life from the original one of its kind.

_____ The scientist created the camera by looking at the human eye.

_____ The scientist discovered the eye lens.

2--Underline the sentence that is correct.

All things came into existence on their own.

We can take the elements of water, earth, fire and wind and put them together to make a person.

Angkor Wat shows the achievements of ancient Khmer kings
just as the world shows the achievements of God.

3--Circle the correct answer.

God created the world in how many days?

One day

Six days

Seven days

How did God create the world?

He commanded the angels to make it.

He used His own strength.

He only spoke.

How did God create the first man?

With a word.

He made him from an angel.

He made him from the dust of the earth.

4 If this statement is true of your choice today, check it:

_____ I want to learn more about the God who people say
created the world.

_____ I choose to be grateful to the God who made the world
by giving Him honor, worship and obedience.