

What is nothing?

Many scientists today believe the universe popped into existence out of nothing. The main reason is that since they do not want to believe in the biblical creation account, they are only left with two other choices: (a) the universe has always existed or (b) it came from something.

The first of these alternative options seems clearly to fly in the face of the Second Law of Thermodynamics which tells us if the universe has really been around forever, it would have “run out of gas” a long time ago. However, we know there is a lot of “gas” (i.e. energy) and order throughout the universe, so we can comfortably rule out that option (and most scientists do).



The second alternative (that the universe came from something) just begs the question of “Where did that ‘something’ come from?” This just pushes everything back one step further and doesn’t really resolve anything.

All of this leaves only one other option... that everything came into existence from truly nothing.

As crazy and nonsensical as this sounds, you have to trust the scientists on this one because they know what they are talking about, right?

If you don’t understand how everything came from nothing, maybe you’re just not smart enough. According to Phys.org, physicist Lawrence Krauss believes “nothing” is everything around us, and “everything” is “nothing”. (What is Nothing?, August 22, 2014 by Fraser Cain, Universe Today, Phys.org)

Don’t quite follow that? Try this one...

“But scientists have known for centuries that nothing is the key to understanding absolutely everything, from why particles have mass to the expansion of the universe – so without nothing we’d be precisely nowhere.” (New Scientist Promotions, 21 October 2013)

Don’t follow that either? OK. We’ll try another one...

“We started from literally nothing; from empty spacetime containing solely the energy of the quantum vacuum, and have arrived at our Universe today, with its billions of galaxies, stars, and all that ever was or will be here on Earth. (The Physics of Nothing; The Philosophy of Everything, August 16, 2011)

Notice the previous author said we started from “literally nothing” and then described that “nothing” as empty spacetime (whatever that is supposed to be) “containing solely the energy of the quantum

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vacuum". So this "nothing" is "something" (empty spacetime)... and it contains "the energy of the quantum vacuum") Hmm. Nothing is something that contains something else. Got it? (Who says there aren't any good comedians around anymore?)

I thought once you have nothing, you're pretty much done... there's nothing else you can say about it. It doesn't have properties to be described and it can't contain anything. Maybe I'm missing something. Maybe I'm just not smart enough to figure it out.

I like what Einstein said:

"Once you can accept the universe as matter expanding into nothing that is something, wearing stripes with plaid comes easy."

Here's another statement from a truly brilliant scientist (no sarcasm intended at all)... theoretical physicist Steven Hawking:

"Because there is something such as the law of gravity, the universe can and will create itself out of nothing." (Hawking, S., & Mlodinow, L, The Grand Design, p. 227, Bantam Press, London, 2010)

Many people are intimidated by statements from highly educated scientists, but let's think about this a bit further. Because there is "something" (the law of gravity) the universe will create itself out of "nothing". If you have the law of gravity, you don't have "nothing", you have something! Also, what is the "law of gravity"? It is a description of how the universe operates. However, the universe would have to already exist in order to have a description of how it operates, but if it already existed, it wouldn't have to create itself! As brilliant as Hawking is, this makes no sense at all.

We're going to see if we can get some true wisdom from the web. However, I'm not talking about the internet... I'm talking about the famous children's book, Charlotte's Web! Here's an interesting interchange between the two main characters, Charlotte and Wilbur:

"I am not interested in pigs. Pigs mean less than nothing to me."

"What do you mean, less than nothing?" asks Wilbur. "I don't think there is any such thing as less than nothing. Nothing is absolutely the limit of nothingness. It's the lowest you can go. It's the end of the line. How can something be less than nothing? If there were something less than nothing, then nothing would not be nothing, it would be something: even though it's just a very little bit of something. But if nothing is nothing, then nothing has nothing that is less than it is."

Now that makes more sense to me than what the previous scientists were saying, but again, I'm not all that smart! Here's what makes even more sense to me:

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“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.” (Genesis 1:1)

“For the wisdom of the world is foolishness in God’s sight” (! Cor 3:19)

Much more could be shared regarding this topic, but our space is always limited in these brief articles. If you have any questions related to this month’s question or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to contact us at info@TheStartingPointProject.com.