



ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

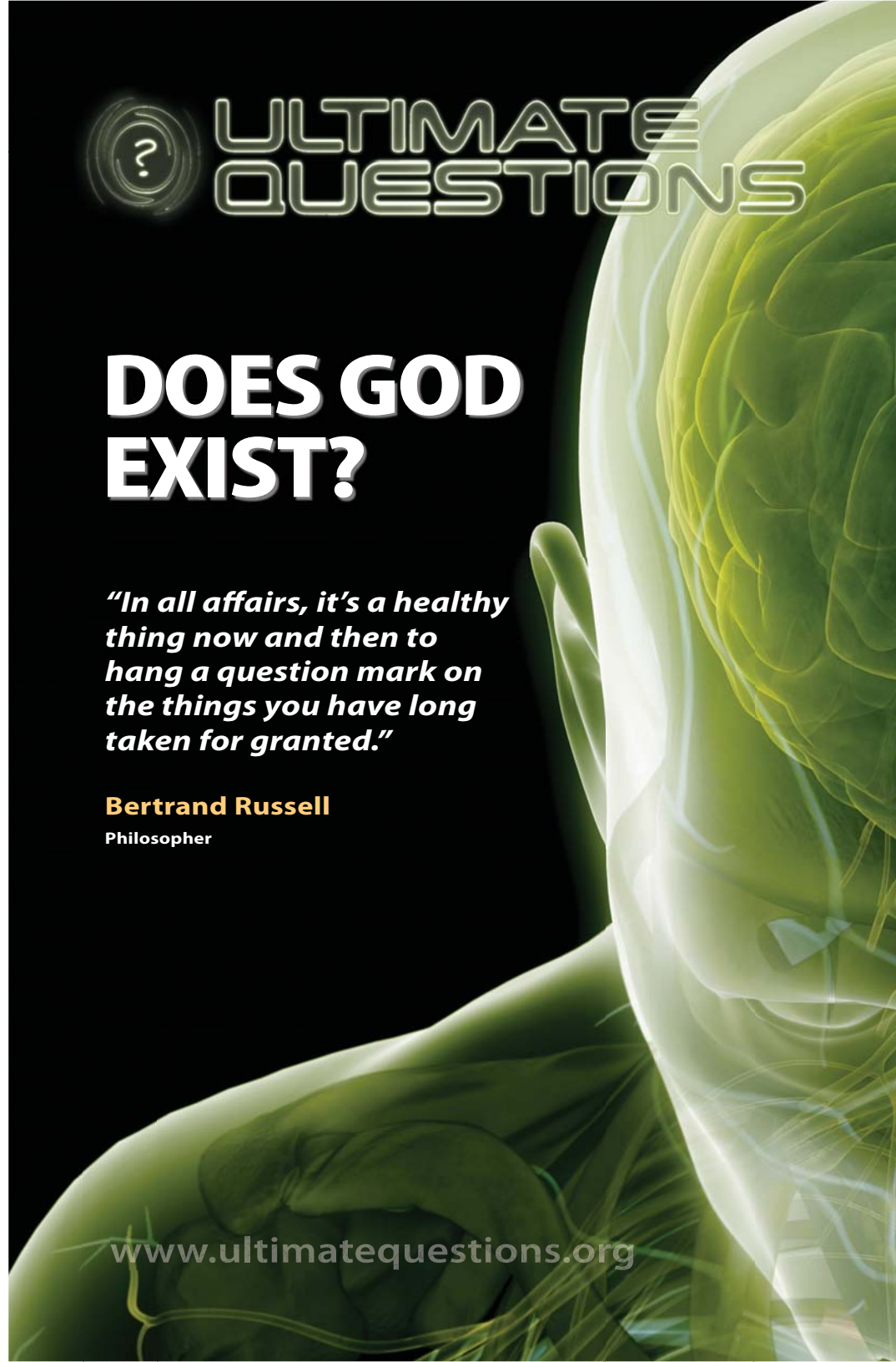
DOES GOD EXIST?

*"In all affairs, it's a healthy
thing now and then to
hang a question mark on
the things you have long
taken for granted."*

Bertrand Russell

Philosopher

www.ultimatequestions.org





Are you willing to follow the evidence... wherever it leads?

***“There is enough light
for those who want to
believe and enough
shadows to blind
those who don’t.”***

Blaise Pascal

Mathematician, Physicist and Philosopher

Exploring life's ultimate questions

Is “God” a superstitious delusion of our minds? Or does an all powerful creator of the universe exist? This very question is undeniably one of the Ultimate Questions that we all ponder in life. It is a question that has perplexed many of the greatest minds in human history. How you personally answer this question, and the personal beliefs that it entails can greatly influence your view of the world and how you conduct your life.

Over the past century, modern science has made incredible discoveries that give us new insights into the origins of our universe, and life on earth. Do these recent scientific findings point towards or away from a supernatural creator? Is faith in a creator God even rational? Is there any evidence for an intelligent mind behind the universe? Or can the universe and the life in it be explained by purely natural forces? Does it even matter what you believe?

In May 2004, during a *Does God Exist?* Debate at New York University, distinguished Professor of Philosophy and militant atheist, Antony Flew, shocked the world with his announcement that after a lifetime of committing to the Socratic principle of “follow the evidence wherever it leads,” he stated that he now believes in the existence of God; not through a supernatural experience, but by a life long pilgrimage of reason. What would cause him to change his mind?

Be a part of the Ultimate Questions discussion as some of today's finest minds unpack several of the amazing discoveries that are radically changing the face of science and faith in the 21st century.

What Does It Matter?

By William Lane Craig

Oxford scholar C. S. Lewis once remarked that God is not the sort of thing one can be moderately interested in. After all, if God does not exist, there's no reason to be interested in God at all. On the other hand, if God does exist, then this is of paramount interest, and our ultimate concern ought to be how to be properly related to this being upon whom we depend moment by moment for our very existence.

The existence of God makes a tremendous difference for man. The following are three reasons why it makes a big difference whether God exists:

1. If God does not exist, life is ultimately meaningless. If there is no God, then it makes no ultimate difference whether you ever existed or not. True, your life might have a relative significance in that you influenced others or affected the course of history. But ultimately mankind is doomed to perish in the heat death of the universe. Ultimately it makes no difference who you are or what you do. Your life is inconsequential.

Thus, the contributions of the scientist to the advance of human knowledge, the research of the doctor to alleviate pain and suffering, the efforts of the diplomat to secure peace in the world, the sacrifices of good people everywhere to better the lot of the human race—ultimately all these come to nothing.

Thus, if atheism is true, life is ultimately meaningless.

2. If God does not exist, then we must ultimately live without hope. First, there is no hope of deliverance from evil. Although many people ask how God could create a world involving so much evil, by far most of the suffering in the world is due to man's own inhumanity to man.

The horror of two world wars during the last century effectively destroyed the 19th century's naive optimism about human progress. If God does not exist, then we are locked without hope in a world filled with gratuitous and unredeemed suffering, and there is no hope for deliverance from evil.

Moreover, if there is no God, there is no hope of deliverance from aging, disease, and death. Given atheism, there is no afterlife beyond the grave. Atheism is thus a philosophy without hope.

3. On the other hand, if God does exist, then there is meaning and hope, and the possibility of coming to know God and His love personally. Think of it! That the infinite God should love you and want you to be His personal friend. This would be the highest status a human being could enjoy! Clearly, if God exists, it makes not only a tremendous difference for mankind in general, but it could make a life-changing difference for you as well.



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Why is there something rather than nothing?



“According to the Big Bang Theory, the whole universe began to exist at a particular time in the remote past. A proponent of such a theory, at least if he is an atheist, must believe that the matter of the... universe came from nothing and by nothing.”

Anthony Kenny

British Agnostic

By William Lane Craig

Have you ever asked yourself where the universe came from? Why everything exists instead of just nothing? Typically atheists have said that the universe is just eternal, and that's all. But surely this is unreasonable. Just think about it a minute. If the universe never had a beginning, that means that the number of past events in the history of the universe is infinite. But mathematicians recognize that the existence of an actually infinite number of things leads to self-contradictions.

For example, what is infinity minus infinity? Mathematically, you get self-contradictory answers. For example, if you subtract all the odd numbers $\{1, 3, 5, \dots\}$ from all the natural numbers $\{0, 1, 2, 3, \dots\}$, how many numbers do you have left? An infinite number. So infinity minus infinity is infinity. But suppose instead you subtract all the numbers greater than 2 – how many are left? Three. So infinity minus infinity is 3! It needs to be understood that in both these cases we have subtracted identical quantities from identical quantities and come up with self-contradictory answers. In fact, you can get any answer you want from zero to infinity!

This shows that infinity is just an idea in your mind, not something that exists in reality. David Hilbert, perhaps the greatest mathematician of the twentieth century, states, “The infinite is nowhere to be found in reality. It neither exists in nature nor provides a legitimate basis for rational thought. The role that remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea.”¹ Therefore, since past events are not just ideas, but are real, the number of past events must be finite. Therefore, the series of past events can't go back forever; rather the universe must have begun to exist.



Why is there something rather than nothing? *continued*

This conclusion has been confirmed by remarkable discoveries in astronomy and astrophysics. The astrophysical evidence indicates that the universe began to exist in a great explosion called the “Big Bang” around 13.7 billion years ago. Physical space and time were created in that event, as well as all the matter and energy in the universe.

As the physicist P. C. W. Davies explains, “the coming into being of the universe, as discussed in modern science . . . is not just a matter of imposing some sort of organization . . . upon a previous incoherent state, but literally the coming-into-being of all physical things from nothing.”² Thus, what the Big Bang model requires is that the universe began to exist and was created out of nothing.

Now this tends to be very awkward for the atheist. For as Anthony Kenny of Oxford University urges, “A proponent of the big bang theory, at least if he is an atheist, must believe that the . . . universe came from nothing and by nothing.”³ But surely that doesn’t make sense! Out of nothing, nothing comes. In every other context atheists recognize this fact.

The great skeptic David Hume wrote, “But allow me to tell you that I never asserted so absurd a Proposition as that anything might arise without a cause.”⁴ The contemporary atheist philosopher Kai Nielsen gives this illustration: “Suppose you suddenly hear a loud bang . . . and you ask me, ‘What made that bang?’ and I reply, ‘Nothing, it just happened.’ You would not accept that. In fact you would find my reply quite unintelligible.”⁵ But what’s true of the little bang must be true of the Big Bang as well! So why does the universe exist instead of just nothing? Where did it come from?

There must have been a cause which brought the universe into being. As the great scientist Sir Arthur Eddington said, “The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural.”⁶

We can summarize our argument thus far as follows:

- 1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.**
- 2. The universe began to exist.**
- 3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.**

Given the truth of the two premises, the conclusion necessarily follows.

Now from the very nature of the case, as the cause of space and time, this supernatural cause must be an uncaused, changeless, timeless, and immaterial being which created the universe. It must be uncaused because we’ve seen that there cannot be an infinite regress of causes. It must be timeless and therefore changeless—at least without the universe—because it created time. Because it also created space, it must transcend space as well and therefore be immaterial, not physical.

Moreover, I would argue, it must also be personal. For how else could a timeless cause give rise to a temporal effect like the universe? If the cause were a mechanically operating set of necessary and sufficient conditions, then the cause could never exist without the effect. For example, the cause of water’s freezing is the temperature’s being below 0° Centigrade. If the temperature were below 0° from eternity past, then any water that was around would be frozen from eternity. It would be impossible for the water to begin to freeze just a finite time ago. So if the cause is timelessly present, then the effect should be timelessly present as well. The only way for the cause to be timeless and the effect to begin in time is for the cause to be a personal agent who freely chooses to create an effect in time without any prior determining conditions. For example, a man sitting from eternity could freely will to stand up. Thus, we are brought, not merely to a transcendent cause of the universe, but to its personal creator.

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Did we win the cosmic lottery?



"A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a super intellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as chemistry and biology."

Fred Hoyle

Astronomer, Cambridge University

"Let There Be Light" Engineering and Science (November 1981)

By Robin Collins

Did we win the cosmic lottery? Is the universe just a result of chance? Many people seem to think so, and they think that this is what science has discovered. Yet, unknown to most people, physics now points in the opposite direction. In the last thirty years, physicists have discovered that the universe is balanced on the razor's edge for life to occur: if the initial conditions or the laws of physics were slightly different by an unimaginably small amount, no complex, self-reproducing physical systems would have existed.

As eminent Princeton physicist Freeman Dyson notes, "There are many . . . lucky accidents in physics. Without such accidents, water could not exist as liquid, chains of carbon atoms could not form complex organic molecules, and hydrogen atoms could not form breakable bridges between molecules" (Disturbing the Universe. New York: Harper and Row. 1979, p. 251).

One of the most impressive and discussed cases of fine-tuning is that of the cosmological constant, a term in Einstein's equation of general relativity that governs the rate at which the universe is expanding. If the cosmological constant were not precisely adjusted to at least one part in 10^{53} – that is, one part in one hundred million, billion, billion, billion, billion, billion – of what physicists consider its natural range of values, the universe would either expand too rapidly for stars and planets to form, or catastrophically collapse back in on itself. In either case, no life would exist.

In this way the universe is analogous to a biosphere – that is, a structure precisely configured to support life. If we found such a structure on Mars, no one would claim that it happened just by chance – say by some volcanic eruption in which the metals and elements precipitated out in just the right way. Such an occurrence would be far too unlikely. Rather, we would say that it was unequivocal evidence of intelligent, extraterrestrial life. Similarly, many claim that the fine-tuning of the universe strongly suggests some sort of transcendent intelligent design.

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Did we win the cosmic lottery? continued

Atheists have offered two major responses to the fine-tuning. Some atheists claim that we are simply extraordinarily lucky, and there is nothing further to be said. As the biosphere analogy illustrates, to many this response seems far from adequate.

A more common response, especially among physicists and cosmologists, is to claim that some physical process (a “universe generator”) produces an enormous number of universes with different laws of physics and initial conditions. Just as if enough lottery tickets are generated, one ticket is bound to have the winning number, so if enough universes are generated, one is bound to have just the right laws and initial conditions for life. And, of course, beings that have evolved in that universe will look back and marvel at how lucky they were.

Such a universe-generator, however, would have to have just the right set of laws or meta-laws governing it to produce even one life-permitting universe, something that can be clearly demonstrated in the case of the most popular version of this hypothesis -- one that combines inflationary cosmology and superstring theory. Thus, this hypothesis merely transfers the need for design up one level to the universe generator itself.

In any case, today our most fundamental sciences have shifted the burden to the atheist as to how such a precisely set universe such as ours could have come into existence without a transcendent intelligent designer.

We can summarize our argument as follows:

Premise (1): The existence of a fine-tuned universe with conscious, embodied life (and elegant laws of nature) is not surprising if God exists.

Premise (2): The existence of a fine-tuned universe with conscious embodied life (and elegant laws of nature) is very surprising if God doesn't exist.

Conclusion: From premises (1) and (2) and the surprise principle*, it follows that the fine-tuning data provides significant evidence in favor of theism over atheism.

**According to the surprise principle, if a body of data E is much more surprising under one hypothesis H1 than under another (non-ad hoc) hypothesis H2, then E counts as significant evidence in favor of hypothesis H2 over H1. As an example of this principle, consider the case of finding a defendant's fingerprints on a murder weapon. Normally, we would take such a finding as strong evidence that the defendant was guilty. Why? Because we judge that it would be very surprising for these fingerprints to be on the murder weapon if the defendant was innocent, but not surprising if the defendant was guilty.*

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“Those scientists who point to the Mind of God do not merely advance a series of arguments or a process of syllogistic reasoning. Rather, they propound a vision of reality that emerges from the conceptual heart of modern science and imposes itself on the rational mind. It is a vision that I personally find compelling and irrefutable.”

Antony Flew

Former Atheist, Author - *There Is A God* (HarperCollins, 2007)

Earth: Pale Blue Dot or Privileged Planet?



By Guillermo Gonzalez and Jay W. Richards

Scientists tend to take for granted the degree to which we can observe and measure the wider universe from our earthly home. We can observe and study those things that are observable – period. But once you ponder this for a moment, it should come as a surprise that we can know what is going on thousands of kilometers beneath our feet and billions of light-years away – without leaving Earth's surface. We don't need to know these things for our daily survival. Think of the following features of our earthly home: the transparency of the atmosphere in the visual and radio regions of the spectrum, shifting crustal plates and a large Moon. Without these assets, we would have a very hard time learning about the universe and our place in it. It is not idle speculation to ask how our view of the universe would be impaired if, for example, our home world were perpetually covered by thick clouds. After all, our Solar System contains several examples of such worlds. Just think of Venus, Jupiter, Saturn and Saturn's moon, Titan. These would be crummy places to do astronomy.

We can make similar comparisons at the galactic level. If we were closer to our galaxy's center or one of its major, and dustier, spiral arms, for instance—the extra dust and foreground stars would impede our view of the distant universe. In fact, we probably would have missed one of the greatest discoveries in the history of astronomy: the faint cosmic microwave background radiation. That discovery was the linchpin in deciding between the two main cosmological theories of the twentieth century. Underlying this debate was one of the most fundamental questions we can ask about the universe: Is it eternal, or did it have a beginning? Our special vantage point in the Milky Way Galaxy allowed us to discover that the universe did indeed have a beginning.

“We are, by astronomical standards, a pampered, cosseted, cherished group of creatures. If the universe had not been made with the most exacting precision we could never have come to existence. It is my view that these circumstances indicate that the universe was created for man to live in.”

John O’Keefe

NASA Astronomer



Earth: Pale Blue Dot or Privileged Planet? *continued*

There's more to the story. Not only is the Earth a privileged place for discovery, it is also a privileged place for life. It is the association of life with discovery that we think suggests purpose and not mere chance. In other words, if we compare our local environment with other, less hospitable environments, we find a striking coincidence: Observers find themselves in the best places overall for observing. For instance, the atmosphere that complex life needs is also an atmosphere that is transparent to the most scientifically useful light. The most habitable region of the galaxy, and the most habitable time in cosmic history, are also the best place and time, overall, for doing astronomy and cosmology. You would expect this pattern if the universe is designed for discovery but not otherwise. What does this mean? It means that the evidence of science itself suggests the universe has a purpose: that it is designed for discovery. This conclusion would not have been a surprise to the founders of modern science, such as Copernicus, Galileo, Kepler, Newton and Maxwell, all of whom were Christians and believed nature displays fingerprints of its Creator.

We can summarize our argument as follows:

- 1) Some objects or observed patterns are better explained by intelligent causes than unintelligent ones.
- 2) The tight correlation between the conditions needed for life and the conditions needed for scientific discovery is an observed pattern in nature.
- 3) Such a correlation is neither necessary nor probable.
- 4) The correlation is what one would expect if the universe is designed for the purpose of scientific discovery.
- 5) Purpose is unique to intelligent agents.
- 6) Therefore, the correlation suggests that the universe is the result of an intelligent cause.

"The combined circumstance that we live on Earth and are able to see stars - that the conditions necessary for life do not exclude those necessary for vision, and vice versa - is a remarkably improbable one. This is because the medium in which we live is, on the one hand, just thick enough to enable us to breathe and to prevent us from being burned up by cosmic rays, while, on the other hand, it is not so opaque as to absorb entirely the light of the stars and block any view of the universe. What a fragile balance between the indispensable and the sublime."

Hans Blumenberg

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Can mindless natural forces create life?



By Kirk Durston

Intelligent design can be defined as an effect produced by a mind (as opposed to mindless natural forces). A fundamental attribute of intelligence and what distinguishes intelligence from mindlessness, is the ability to produce significant amounts of meaningful, useful, or functional information. We can measure the amount of information in terms of bits and bytes or, in the case of an iPod, gigabytes. The ability of intelligence to produce significant amounts of meaningful or functional information enables us to test for intelligent design. For example, if SETI Institute scientists received a radio signal from a source outside our solar system consisting of 2 blips, a space, then 3 blips, counting out the first two prime numbers 2 and 3, that would amount to 6 bits of information, not likely enough to get scientists excited.

However, if the signal contained the first 10 prime numbers, amounting to 138 bits, scientists all over the world would likely be very excited. 138 bits would be a strong sign of an intelligent origin. The formula for measuring functional information in terms of bits and bytes computes information as a measure of probability. Assuming there are natural sources in space that can generate intermittent blips, the probability that they might generate the 6 bits of information required to count off the first 2 prime numbers is about 1 chance in 63, good odds indeed. However, the probability of generating the 138 bits required for the first 10 prime numbers is about 1 chance in 10^{42} . Roughly the same chance of marking two grains of sand, hiding them both in two different places on planet earth, and then having a blind person finding both grains on his first two picks.

“What is so frustrating for our present purpose is that it seems almost impossible to give any numerical value to the probability of what seems a rather unlikely sequence of events... An honest man, armed with all the knowledge available to us now could only state that in some sense, the origin of life appears at the moment to be almost a miracle...”

Francis Crick

Nobel prize winner, co-discoverer of DNA



Can mindless natural forces create life? *continued*

It is easy for a mind to generate 138 bits of useful information; we do it daily. But it is extremely improbable for mindless natural processes to do it. For biological life, the average gene contains more than 500 bits of functional information. Minimal genome researchers have concluded that the simplest life form would need at least 150 genes. This amounts to about 75,000 bits of functional information, more than enough to get SETI scientists very excited if they received that kind of functional information from deep space. The probability that mindless processes could produce 75,000 bits of functional information is about 1 chance in $10^{23,000}$, if the information is gained in a single step. (You would have a better chance of winning the Lotto 649 every week for 44 years straight.)

If it is gained in a series of steps, the probability becomes even smaller due to the possibility of repeating the same steps. Appealing to a selected series of steps does not help either, for then the required information must be encoded within the selective processes themselves. It would be implausible to believe that mindless natural processes could pull off a series of events coding for each one of the necessary 150 genes for the simplest life form. Yet 75,000 bits amounts to just over 9 Kbytes of functional information, a feat that is easy for even a child to perform. The average bacterium carries much more information than this in its genome, not to mention the higher life forms. This does not prove that intelligent design was required for life, but it does make it very probable.

We can summarize our argument as follows:

1. Genes contain a large amount of functional information.
2. It is extremely improbable that natural processes can produce a large amount of functional information.
3. The probability that a mind can produce a large amount of functional information is certain (our minds do it continually).
4. Therefore, it is more probable that the information encoded in genes came from a mind, than from natural processes.

Food for thought:

"The amount of DNA that would fit on a pinhead contains information equivalent to that of a stack of paper back books that would encircle the earth 5000 times!"

Werner Gitt

"dazzling designs in Miniature" Creation Ex Nihilo Dec 97-Feb 98

"DNA is like a computer program, but far more advanced than any software that we have ever created."

Bill Gates

Founder of Microsoft Corporation

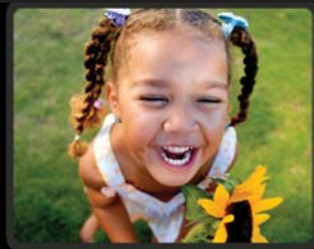
"This, too, is my conclusion. The only satisfactory explanation for the origin of such "end-directed, self-replicating" life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind."

Antony Flew

Former Atheist, Author - *There Is A God* (HarperCollins, 2007), 132

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Can objective morality exist without God?



By Michael Horner

If God does not exist then objective moral principles and obligations do not exist. Morality would only be a matter of individual or cultural opinion. But this would mean that torturing babies for fun, rape, & child abuse are not really objectively wrong, and are only a matter of opinion. How likely is it, though, that these atrocities are not really objectively wrong? Can you live with this conclusion? Our deepest intuitions inform us that these actions are horribly wrong.

This is really a summary of a moral argument for God's existence. Formally it looks like this:

1. If God does not exist, objective moral principles & obligations do not exist
2. Objective moral principles & obligations do exist
3. Therefore, God exists

Consider premise 2. By objective we mean independent of opinion, just like $2 + 2 = 4$ is objectively true even if everyone in the world disagreed. Despite people's claims to being relativists, most people live as if they do believe in objective moral principles & obligations. It's easy to say there are no objective moral principles & obligations, but it's much more difficult to live as if there are none.

The judgments we make when ourselves and others are unjustly treated, like in the above atrocities, reveal what we really believe about morality, regardless of what we say we believe. We believe that these atrocities are moral abominations, not just infringements of mere social conventions or personal dislikes. If objective moral principles & obligations do not exist where does our sense of duty and obligation come from?

"My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how did I get this idea of just or unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?"

C.S. Lewis

Oxford Scholar, Author - *The Chronicles of Narnia*



Can objective morality exist without God? continued

This leads us to premise 1. If there is no God it is difficult to see how there could be any objective foundation, any universal standard for good and evil. How do you get ethics from only different arrangements of space, time, matter and energy?

A purely materialistic universe would be morally indifferent. We would have only individual or cultural opinion, but no objectively binding moral obligations!

Some have suggested that we can provide an objective foundation for morality without appealing to God. Morality has just evolved over the centuries, they suggest, because it promotes human flourishing and survival. Whatever promotes human flourishing and survival is good. Whatever doesn't promote human flourishing and survival is bad. That is all we need for objectivity in morality, they claim. There is no need for God.

But if God does not exist, the critical assumption that human beings are objectively valuable is not available. Humans, like everything else in the universe, would be just accidental arrangements of atoms, and therefore, we could not justifiably declare that humans are objectively valuable. Furthermore why think the morality of the human species, above all other species, is objectively binding rather than just our opinion?

Moreover, if morality evolved because it produced survival benefits, we would not have objective moral principles & obligations. We would sense that objective moral obligations exist, but they really wouldn't. Once we've figured out that our feeling of morality with regard to say, rape, is just a biological adaptation inculcated into us over millions of years, then we would have no reason to regard rape as objectively wrong anymore.

Since, we know that objective moral principles & obligations do exist, and since they cannot exist without God, it follows that God exists. (modus tollens)

If the God of classical theism existed, an objective foundation for morality would exist. God's holy and good nature would be the objective standard. God's nature would be expressed through divine commands which would flow necessarily from his moral nature. Thus we would have objective moral principles & obligations.

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"The excesses and atrocities of organized religion have no bearing whatsoever on the existence of God, just as the threat of nuclear proliferation has no bearing on the question of whether $E=mc^2$."

Roy Abraham Varghese

Preface to *There Is A God* (HarperCollins, 2007), XXIV

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Did Jesus really rise from the dead?



By William Lane Craig

The historical person Jesus of Nazareth was a remarkable individual. New Testament critics have reached something of a consensus that the historical Jesus came on the scene with an unprecedented sense of divine authority, the authority to stand and speak in God's place. That's why the Jewish leadership instigated his crucifixion on the charge of blasphemy. He claimed that in himself the Kingdom of God had come, and as visible demonstrations of this fact he carried out a ministry of miracles and exorcisms.

But the supreme confirmation of his claim was his resurrection from the dead. If Jesus really did rise from the dead, then it would seem that we have a divine miracle on our hands and thus evidence for the existence of the God of the Bible.

Now most people would probably think that the resurrection of Jesus is something you just accept on faith or not. But there are actually three established facts, recognized by the majority of New Testament historians today, which I believe are best explained by the resurrection of Jesus: His empty tomb, his post-mortem appearances, and the origin of the disciples' belief in his resurrection. Let's look briefly at each one of these.

Fact #1: Jesus' tomb was found empty by a group of his women followers on the Sunday morning after his crucifixion. According to Jacob Kremer, an Austrian scholar who has specialized in the study of the resurrection, "by far most scholars hold firmly to the reliability of the biblical statements about the empty tomb." ¹. According to D. H. Van Daalen, it is extremely difficult to object to the empty tomb on historical grounds; those who deny it do so on the basis of theological or philosophical assumptions.

"As a child I received instruction both in the Bible and in the Talmud. I am a Jew but I am enthralled by the religious figure of the Nazarene... No one can read the gospels with out feeling the actual presence of Jesus. His personality pulsates with every word. No myth is filled with such life."

Albert Einstein

Physicist



Did Jesus really rise from the dead? continued

Fact #2: On separate occasions different individuals and groups saw appearances of Jesus alive after his death. According to Gerd Lüdemann, a prominent German New Testament critic, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."² These appearances were witnessed not only by believers, but also by unbelievers, skeptics, and even enemies.

Fact #3: The original disciples suddenly came to believe in the resurrection of Jesus despite having every predisposition to the contrary. Think of the situation the disciples faced following Jesus' crucifixion:

1. Their leader was dead, and Jewish Messianic expectations included no idea of a Messiah who, instead of triumphing over Israel's enemies, would be shamefully executed by them as a criminal.

2. Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead to glory and immortality before the general resurrection of the dead at the end of the world.

Nevertheless, the original disciples suddenly came to believe so strongly that God had raised Jesus from the dead that they were willing to die for the truth of that belief. Luke Johnson, a New Testament scholar at Emory University, muses, "Some sort of powerful, transformative experience is required to generate the sort of movement earliest Christianity was."³ N. T. Wright, an eminent British scholar, concludes, "That is why, as an historian, I cannot explain the rise of early Christianity unless Jesus rose again, leaving an empty tomb behind him."⁴

Attempts to explain away these three great facts—like the disciples stole the body or Jesus wasn't really dead—have been universally rejected by contemporary scholarship. The simple

fact is that there just is no plausible, naturalistic explanation of these facts. Therefore, it seems to me, the Christian is amply justified in believing that Jesus rose from the dead and was who he claimed to be. But that entails that the God revealed by Jesus, the God of the Bible, exists.

We can summarize our argument as follows:

1. There are three established facts concerning the fate of Jesus of Nazareth: the discovery of his empty tomb, his post-mortem appearances, and the origin of his disciples' belief in his resurrection.
2. The hypothesis "God raised Jesus from the dead" is the best explanation of these facts.
3. The hypothesis "God raised Jesus from the dead" entails that the God revealed by Jesus of Nazareth exists.
4. Therefore, the God revealed by Jesus of Nazareth exists.

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"I must confess as a historian that this penniless preacher from Nazareth is irrevocably the very center of history. Jesus Christ is easily the most dominant figure in all history."

H.G.Wells

British Author (1866 -1946)

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Can the creator of the universe be known?



Behind life's intricate design there is a powerful yet personal designer. In the beginning, this designer crafted the universe in all its magnificence. Then upon this remarkable planet the creator fashioned a masterpiece: you.

A masterpiece? Yes. We are all created in God's image. By design we were to experience a life of unhindered intimacy with God and each other, an intimacy without guilt, conflict or pain. In relationship with God and each other, we were to serve our Creator as caretakers of this earth.

But this isn't life as we know it. Why not? Everything changed when the first of us betrayed our Creator and rejected His design and plan. Enticed by self-centered desire, humanity turned from our Creator. Guilty of treason, our rebellious race was justly sentenced to death – that is, spiritual separation from the life-giving holy and just Creator. From that moment on, the masterpiece was marred.

Look around. Life is filled with ample evidence of this ruin. Heartbreak and death stain each of us. Alienation has replaced intimacy with God. Human relationships are plagued by selfishness, discord, and pain – characteristics of the twisted nature found in each of us. Even the environment bears the scars of a world at odds with its Creator. The Bible refers to this fallen condition as "Sin." - which means missing the mark of what God intended.

Is there room for reconciliation?

"Everything I know about a personal relationship with Jesus Christ begins and ends with surrender — with saying yes to God. That tiny, simple word initiates an exhilarating, life-altering adventure that will take you places you never thought you'd go — both literally and figuratively."

Kay Warren
Dangerous Surrender



Can the creator of the universe be known? *continued*

Even though his perfect love was betrayed, our Creator did not abandon us. God instead gave us a promise of life. He promised to send one who would remove our sentence of death and erase the shame of our betrayal. This person would set us free from the consequences of our wrongdoing and restore us to the love relationship with God.

Over time, God spoke of this promise through the words recorded in the Old and New Testaments of the Bible. The entire Bible can be summarized through one verse from the New Testament book of John:

For God loved the world so much that he gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life.

(John 3:16)

As the unique Son of God, Jesus revealed what God is truly like and what life was meant to be. He lived his brief life without fault. He spoke life-changing truth and performed acts of compassion and miraculous power that revealed his Divinity. He confronted hypocrisy, oppression, injustice, and racism. He embraced the rejected and reached out to the powerless and privileged alike. After only 3 years of public ministry he established a movement founded on love and grace that continues to impact the world today.

It was Jesus' profound teaching and own claims of divinity that caused the religious leaders to rise in anger against him. Those in power sentenced him to die a shameful, horrible death. Yet he did not resist or try to save his life, for he had come to rescue ours. In his suffering and crucifixion, God imposed upon Jesus the guilt of all mankind's sin. By dying for us, Jesus paid the penalty for our sin and removed the offense that separated us from God.

Then, after three days in the grave, Jesus rose from the dead. Hundreds of eyewitnesses saw him, spoke with him, touched him and even ate with him. Having conquered death, he proved that he truly was God.

Forgiveness and reconciliation are a free gift, received through genuinely recognizing that Jesus took the penalty that you deserve on himself, so that you can be free of the wages of sin and death. The Bible promises that those who personally trust in Jesus' sacrifice experience new life, the promise of eternal life, and the power to change.

Because of God's great love for us, He has given us the amazing capacity of free will. You can freely choose to enter into a real relationship with God through Jesus Christ or reject it.

If relationship with God is something you crave, it can start here and now. God cares far less about your words than the attitude of your heart. So tell Him what you're thinking. Here is a suggestion:

God, I want to know you. I believe that you are real, and that you designed me to know you. Jesus, thank you for dying on the cross to forgive me of everything that has offended you. Please help me become the person you created me to be.

Can you express this to God and mean it? Then why not express it now?

If you've asked Jesus to forgive you and take first place in your life, please tell the person who gave you this booklet or let us know by visiting on line.

We hope that this booklet has helped you get started on the journey of exploring more evidence for the existence of God and the truth about Jesus Christ.

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Perhaps this booklet has raised even more questions that you had before you picked it up? Visit us online as you continue to follow the evidence for the existence of God at our website: www.ultimatequestions.org

Online bonus articles include:

- How can a loving God send someone to hell?
- Does God really answer prayer?
- If God is good, why is there Evil and Suffering in the world?
- Who did Jesus think he was anyway?
- Is it intolerant for Christians to claim that Jesus is the only way to God?
- Is there any real right or wrong?
- Ultimate Questions: Does God Exist?

Email us at UltimateQue@gmail.com

"I find it as difficult to understand a scientist who does not acknowledge the presence of a superior rationality behind the existence of the universe as it is to comprehend a theologian who would deny the advances of science."

Wernher von Braun

(Pioneer rocket engineer)



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ULTIMATE QUESTIONS

"I don't know what I may seem to the world. But as to myself I seem to have been only like a boy playing on the seashore and diverting myself now and then finding a smoother pebble or a prettier shell than the ordinary, whilst the great ocean of truth lay all undiscovered before me."

Isaac Newton

Scientist, Inventor



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