

GOD'S EXISTENCE

1. Opening questions.

- a. How can some be certain God does exist while others are just as certain he doesn't?
- b. Why has the percentage of people who believe in an all-knowing, all-powerful God dropped significantly in the past 25 years?
- c. We are more than 150 years after the publication of Charles Darwin's *Origin of Species*. Why aren't there more atheists?

2. Limited Options. We have only three choices regarding God's existence.

- a. Theism:
 - (1) Polytheism: belief in multiple gods, usually assembled in a pantheon of gods and goddesses.
 - (a) Henotheism: believer worships one god without denying others may worship different gods with equal validity.
 - (b) Monolatry: recognition of the existence of many gods but with the consistent worship of only one god.
 - (c) Notable examples are the Egyptian, Greek, and Roman pantheon, Germanic and Slavic paganism, Taoism, Chinese folk religion, Shinto, Santeria, traditional African religions, some Hindu schools, and Mormonism.
 - (2) Monotheism: belief in one god.
 - (a) Notable examples are the Bahai faith, the Druze faith, Islam, Judaism, Rastafari, Sikhism, Yazidism, Zoroastrianism.
 - (b) Exclusive monotheism.
 - (c) Inclusive monotheism: belief in various distinct gods with an underlying unity.
 - (d) Deism: God exists, but he is disinterested and uninvolved in the universe.
 - (e) Trinitarian monotheism:
- b. Pantheism: belief that (1) the physical universe is equivalent to god; (2) there is no division between Creator and creation; (3) reality is identical with divinity; and (4) all things compose an all-encompassing, immanent god.
 - (1) Panentheism: belief that the physical universe is joined to a god or gods, and the divine pervades and interpenetrates every part of the universe and also extends beyond time and space (i.e., Baruch Spinoza, *Ethics*).
- c. Atheism: belief that no god exists.
 - (1) Absolute agnosticism: Whether God exists or not, he cannot be known.
 - (2) Empirical agnosticism: There is not enough information whether God exists.

3. Bias.

- a. We are not neutral, objective bystanders regarding the question of God's existence.
- b. Our ability to reason objectively about God is flawed due to the fall of humanity.
- c. We deny God's existence so we can do what we want with impunity. We don't want to be held accountable.
 - (1) **Ps 10:4** 4 In the pride of his face the wicked does not seek [God]. All his thoughts are, There is no God.
 - (2) **Ps 14:1** 1 The fool says in his heart, There is no God. They are corrupt. They do abominable deeds. There is none who does good.

- d. “Do you want God to exist?” is a better question than “Does God exist?”
 - (1) “Most of those who take refuge in atheism or agnosticism do so because it is a convenient ‘escape’ from the stern reality that man is accountable to his Creator. It is usual no so much a case of ‘I cannot believe’ as it is a case of ‘I do not want to believe.’”¹
- e. God’s existence is either a liberating or frightening reality.
- f. Belief or disbelief in God is a heart issue.

4. Scripture.

- a. The most basic and fundamental assertion of the Christian faith is that God exists. Every page of Scripture asserts God’s existence.
 - (1) **Ge 1:1** 1 In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth.
 - (2) **Re 22:18-19** 18 I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: if anyone adds to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book, 19 and if anyone takes away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God will take away his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.
- b. The number one best-selling book of all time begins, “In the beginning, God...” (Ge 1:1).
- c. Is this assertion corroborated by other sources?

5. Intuition.

- a. Intuition is “quick and ready insight...immediate apprehension or cognition... knowledge or conviction gained by intuition...the power or faculty of attaining to direct knowledge or cognition without evident rational thought and inference” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 2003).
- b. Intuition asserts God’s existence. We all have immediate apprehension or cognition that God exists.
 - (1) **Job 12:7-10** 7 ...Ask the beasts, and they will teach you, the birds of the heavens, and they will tell you, 8 or the bushes of the earth, and they will teach you, and the fish of the sea will declare to you. 9 Who among all these does not know that the hand of Yahweh has done this? 10 In his hand is the life of every living thing and the breath of all humanity.
- c. Small children and the mentally disabled persons, too, have immediate apprehension/cognition of God’s existence.
- d. God cannot be observed with our five senses, and yet I have never met a person who did not in conversation immediately grasp the idea of God.

6. Personal Experience.

- a. Personal experience asserts God’s existence.
 - (1) **Ro 1:20** 20 ...[God’s] invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse.

¹ New Zealand businessman R. A. Laidlaw.

(2) **Ps 19:1-4** 1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. 2 Day to day pours out speech, and night to night reveals knowledge. 3 There is no speech, nor are there words, whose voice is not heard. 4 Their voice goes out through all the earth, and their words to the end of the world.

- b. From personal experience, I have noticed people who believe in God are generally more _____ and less _____.
- c. “Against all that one might expect, man functions better if he acts as though God is there. God is dead, but act as if He were alive.”²
- d. Often personal experience combines with reason to assert God’s existence. This is true for most of the classic arguments of God’s existence.

7. Collective Experience (Tradition).

- a. Throughout history, the number of atheists has been, and continues to be, very small.
- b. Human civilisation has never functioned without a belief in a god or gods.
- c. Civilisations that turn from God self-destruct, especially morally.
- d. Statistics prove people’s belief or disbelief in God impacts their moral behaviour.
- e. God’s existence is the basis for good governance and basic human rights.
 - (1) The U.S. Declaration of Independence is based on belief in God’s existence.
 - (2) Theists led the fight against slavery in Great Britain and the American South.
 - (3) The moral decline of the West follows the theological decline of the West.

8. Reason.

- a. Reason: “[T]he power of comprehending, inferring, or thinking especially in orderly rational ways: intelligence...proper exercise of the mind” (*Merriam-Webster’s Collegiate Dictionary*, 2003).
- b. The very fact we are able to reason tends to prove the existence of a rational God.

9. Empirical Science.

- a. By science, we do not mean “philosophic naturalism.” We mean empirical science following the well-known scientific method.
- b. Science is unable to account for science itself.
- c. The foundation of Western science is theism. Theism makes science possible and worthwhile.
- d. The very fact we are able to engage in science proves God’s existence.
- e. Empirical science can never disprove God’s existence.

10. Circumstantial Evidence.

- a. It is completely acceptable to prove God’s existence based on circumstantial (indirect) evidence.
- b. “Circumstantial cases are built on the strength of multiple lines of evidence and the fact that all the individual pieces point to the same conclusion.”³

² Julian Huxley.

³ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 209.

- c. Scripture, intuition, personal experience, collective experience, reason, and science all point in the same direction—God exists.
- d. “The circumstantial evidence in our universe is consistent with God’s existence and involvement as the uncaused first cause, the fine-tuner, the designer, and the moral lawgiver required to account for all the evidence we observe.”⁴
- e. “God’s existence is the only reasonable inference in light of the evidence.... [W]e can get there without a single piece of direct...evidence.”⁵

11. The Faith of the Atheist.

- a. “I don’t have enough faith to be an atheist.”
- b. The problems of belief in God are greater than the problems of unbelief.

12. Belief in God.

- a. God exists whether we choose to believe in him or not.
- b. We can’t wish God away.
- c. Man’s disbelief in God’s existence doesn’t impact God in the least.
- d. Even if every human being in the world agreed God did not exist, he would still exist.

13. Practical Atheism.

- a. Beware of being a philosophical or religious theist but a practical atheist.
- b. Christians who focus on earning more money and acquiring more possessions are practical materialists. Their lives would be not much different if they did not believe in God at all.⁶

⁴ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 67.

⁵ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 68.

⁶ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 268.

Classic Arguments for God's Existence

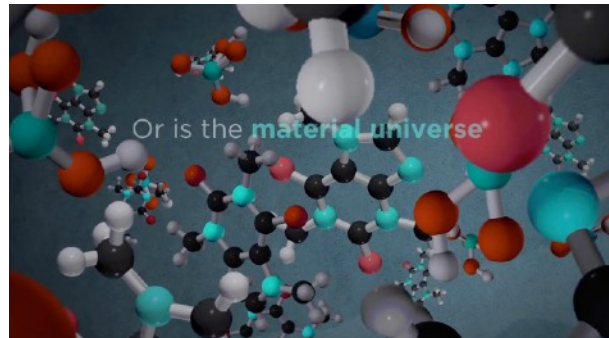
1. The Cosmological Argument: Causal Evidence.⁷

a. Argument.

- (1) Anything that begins to exist has a cause.
- (2) The universe began to exist.
 - (a) First law of thermodynamics: everything that exists is in a state of conservation. Nothing can be created or destroyed. Energy can be changed or transferred, but the total amount of mass-energy remains the same.
 - (b) Second law of thermodynamics: Every time work is done in the universe, the energy necessary to make it happen becomes used. Some portion of the quantity of energy in the universe becomes unavailable for further work. The quality of the energy deteriorates. This is called entropy, and it always increases over time. Everything goes toward a state of disorder and ultimately becomes unusable.
 - (c) The Big Bang had to have the confined energy necessary to produce the explosion and the trigger necessary to start the explosion.
- (3) Therefore, the universe must have a cause.
- (4) This cause must be eternal and uncaused.
 - (a) This avoids the problem of infinite regression.
- (5) God is the most reasonable explanation for such an uncaused first cause.

b. Sources.

- (1) <https://plato.stanford.edu/entries/cosmological-argument/>
- (2) <https://answersingenesis.org/big-bang/>
- (3) <https://answersingenesis.org/big-bang/does-the-big-bang-fit-with-the-bible/>
- (4) <https://www.khanacademy.org/science/cosmology-and-astronomy/universe-scale-topic>
- (5) Sci News: <http://www.sci-news.com>



2. The Teleological Argument: Design Evidence.⁸

a. Argument.

- (1) Structures and systems that: (1) cannot be explained by some natural law requiring their appearance; (2) exist in spite of the high improbability they could result from chance; and (3) conform to an independently existing and recognisable pattern are most reasonably explained as coming from the design efforts of an intelligent agent.

⁷ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 63.

⁸ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 65.

- (a) “Intelligence is the *only known cause* of complex functionally integrated information-processing systems.”⁹
 - (2) Biological systems possess these characteristics (*e.g.*, information contained in the DNA code).
 - (a) Non-life systems show magnificent design, order, and purpose.
 - (b) Life systems show magnificent design, order, and purpose.
 - (3) Biological systems are, therefore, most reasonably explained as coming from the design efforts of an intelligent agent.
 - (4) God is the most reasonable explanation for such an incredibly wise, all-powerful, intelligent agent.
- b. Examples.
- (1) DNA.
 - (a) It would take 100 books of 1000 pages each to write out the DNA language of our human bodies.
 - (2) Kinesin.
 - (3) Honeybee.
 - (4) Butterfly.
 - (5) Human beings.
 - (a) “I could prove God statistically. Take the human body alone—the chance that all its functions would just happen is a statistical monstrosity.”¹⁰
- c. Quotes:
- (1) “The beauty of a snowflake, the majestic power of a thunderstorm, the skill of a honeybee, the refreshing taste of cold water, the incredible abilities of the human hand—all these and thousands of other aspects of creation simply could not have come into existence apart from the activity of an all-powerful and all-wise Creator.”¹¹
 - (2) “The odds against the universe existing are so heart-stoppingly astronomical that the notion that it all ‘just happened’ defies common sense. It would be like tossing a coin and having it come up heads 10 quintillion times in a row.”¹²
 - (3) “The more we get to know about our universe, the more the hypothesis that there is a Creator...gains in credibility as the best explanation of why we are here.”¹³
 - (4) “[E]verything as well ordered and perfectly created as is our earth and universe must have a Maker, a Master Designer. Anything so orderly, so perfect, so precisely balanced, so majestic as this creation can only be the product of a Divine idea.”¹⁴

⁹ Stephen C. Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperOne, 2009), 346. See also William A. Dembski, *The Design Inference: Eliminating Chance through Small Probabilities* (Cambridge: Cambridge U. Press, 1998).

¹⁰ George Gallup.

¹¹ Wayne Grudem, *Systematic Theology*, 142-43.

¹² Eric Metaxas.

¹³ John Lennox.

¹⁴ Dr. Werner von Braun, former director of NASA research.

- (5) “The probability of life originating from accident is comparable to the probability of an Unabridged Dictionary result from an explosion in a printing shop.”¹⁵

3. The Anthropic Principle: Fine-Tuning Evidence.¹⁶

a. Argument.

- (1) The physical constraints and laws of the universe appear to be uniquely and specifically related to one another (fine-tuned), making life possible on earth.
- (2) The fine-tuned relationships of these laws and constants appear to be designed (as their existence by natural unguided means seems improbable and unlikely).
- (3) A design requires an intelligent designer. An incredibly vast and complex design requires an incredibly intelligent and powerful designer.
- (4) God is the most reasonable explanation for such a vast, universal designer (and fine-tuner).

b. The example of Anthony Flew.

- (1) Anthony Flew (d. 2010) moved from atheism to theism because of design and fine-tuning evidence. He was an English philosopher who for much of his career Flew was a strong advocate of atheism. In 2003 he was one of the signatories of the Humanist Manifesto III. However, the following year he changed his position and stated he now believed in the existence of an Intelligent Creator of the universe, shocking fellow atheists. Flew openly made an allegiance to Deism and dismissed any conversion to Christianity, Islam, or any other religion. He stated that in keeping his lifelong commitment to go where the evidence leads, he now believed in the existence of a God. His 2007 book, *There is a God: How the World's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind*, outlined his reasons for changing his position.
- (2) “I have been persuaded that it is simply out of the question that the first living matter evolved out of dead matter and then developed into an extraordinary complicated creature. ...DNA has shown, by that almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved.”¹⁷

4. The First Three Arguments Together.

a. Assuming a Big Bang beginning, the cause of the universe must be:¹⁸

- (1) Spaceless, because there was no space before the Big Bang.
- (2) Timeless, because there was no time before the Big Bang.
- (3) Immaterial, because there was no material before the Big Bang.
- (4) Supernatural, because it must transcend the natural world.
- (5) Immensely powerful, because the universe is immensely large.

¹⁵ Edward Conklin, noted biologist.

¹⁶ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 64.

¹⁷ Former atheist Anthony Flew.

¹⁸ Rodney Lake, *Thinking Matters New Zealand*.

- (6) Uncaused, because at least one cause must be uncaused to avoid infinite regression.
 - (7) Eternal, because there must be an unmoved mover or prime mover. Something must be eternal.
 - (8) Intelligent, because the laws and constants of the universe are fine-tuned to allow for life.
 - (9) Purposeful, because....
 - (a) the cause must be intelligent with a purpose in mind, because of the fine tuning and design arguments....
 - (10) Mind, because free will agency is required to initiate the first event. We need agent causation, not just event causation.
- b. The Christian doctrine of God covers all these requirements.

5. The Moral Argument: Moral Evidence.¹⁹

- a. Argument.
 - (1) There is an objective, transcendent moral law.
 - (2) Every moral law has a lawgiver.
 - (3) Therefore, there is an objective, transcendent moral lawgiver.
 - (4) God is the most reasonable explanation for such a transcendent moral lawgiver.

6. The Ontological Argument.

- a. William Lane Craig's version:
 - (1) It's possible that a Maximally Great Being exists.
 - (2) A Maximally Great Being exists in some possible world.
 - (3) If a Maximally Great Being exists in some possible world, then it exists in every possible world.
 - (4) If a Maximally Great Being exists in every possible world, then it exists in the actual world.
 - (5) A Maximally Great Being exists in the actual world.
 - (6) Therefore, a Maximally Great Being exists.
- b. Quotes.
 - (1) "Once we mentally grasp the concept of God, we can see that God's non-existence is impossible. If we believe in the necessity of God, we must believe in the existence of God."²⁰

7. The Transcendental Argument.

8. The Argument from Religious or Aesthetic Experience.

- a. "Why does humanity universally concern itself with the existence of God if God does not exist? Why do people who say they don't believe in God still ask for prayer?"²¹

¹⁹ J. Warner Wallace, *Cold-Case Christianity*, 66.

²⁰ Ron Matsen.

²¹ Ron Matsen.

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