**Is Belief In God Reasonable?**

**God, Science, & Origins (SR: Gen. 1:1-13)**

 Imagine that the present universe were annihilated and replaced with a complete vacuum. We are incapable of believing that anything could come into existence to fill the vacuum unless there existed some power adequate to produce the universe initially. In other words, out of nothing comes nothing!

This earth had a beginning, and since it had a beginning, it had a cause! This we call the Law of Universal Causation and is our beginning point in presenting philosophical evidence for the existence of God. To put it simply, it’s a basic matter of cause and effect. As Francis Bacon, father of modern science, stated: *“True knowledge is knowledge by causes.”*

**I. The Argument For God Is The Argument For A 1st Cause (Cosmological Argument)**

A. There must be at least one permanent, uncaused Cause. Can’t be infinite regress.

1. There must be some power that is eternal/uncreated, necessary (as an explanation of all others, unconditional (not dependent), immutable (unchanging), and absolutely self-existing and self-sufficing.

2. Everything that does not exist of absolute and unchangeable necessity must have a sufficient cause. This truth is self-evident and absolutely certain. The Christian believes this is Jehovah – the God of the Bible.

3. Oftentimes, this line of reasoning is referred to as the cosmological argument, or expressly as we have framed it, the Kalam Cosmological Argument. William Lane Craig, world-renowned defender of the Christian faith and recipient of five college degrees including two Master’s Degrees and two Doctorates, explains it thus: *“The kalam cosmological argument is an argument that can be simply formulated. Premise one: Whatever begins to exist has a cause. Things don’t come into being from nothing. Two: The universe began to exist. There’s good philosophical and scientific evidence that the universe is not eternal in the past, but had a beginning. And from that, it follows, three: Therefore, a cause of the universe exists. And then you do a conceptual analysis of what it is to be a cause of space and time, matter, and energy, and I think you’re able to show that a beginningless, uncaused, timeless, spaceless, immaterial, enormously powerful, personal creator of the universe exists, which is the core concept of God.”*

B. Materialists, namely atheists, say the UNIVERSE (or it’s seed) is eternal.

1. This allegedly removes the difficulty of origins, but leaves more questions and is based on an unfounded and unobserved presupposition.

2. If the universe is eternal, it must be self-explained. This is why men are so eager to prove evolution (i.e. naturalism). If this THEORY were proven, it would rule God out of the picture. However, it is yet to be proven and as such remains a theory, rather than a law. It is a theory rooted in a worldview; it is not a fact established by science.

 a. Michael Denton (molecular biologist and physician) – *“Naturalism is still, as it was in Darwin’s time, a highly speculative hypothesis entirely without direct factual support and very far from that self-evident axiom some of its more aggressive advocates would have us believe.”* (*Evolution, A Theory In Crisis* (Chevy Chase, Md.: Adler & Adler, 1986), 77.)

 b. Lee Strobel (Pro Investigative Journalist) – *“what looks at first blush like an airtight scientific case for evolution beings to unravel upon closer examination. New discoveries during the past thirty years have prompted an increasing number of scientists to contradict Darwin by concluding that there was an Intelligent Designer behind the creation and development of life.”* (*The Case For Faith*, 90.) He also said this: *“My road to atheism was paved by science....But, ironically, so was my later journey to God.”*

 c. Michael Behe (renowned biochemist) – *“The conclusion of intelligent design flows naturally from the data itself—not from sacred books or sectarian beliefs....The reluctance of science to embrace the conclusion of intelligent design...has no justifiable foundation....Many people, including many important and well- respected scientists, just don’t want there to be anything beyond nature.”* (*Darwin’s Black Box* (New York: The Free Press, 1996), 193, 251, 243.)

**II. What Science & Reason Do Show**

 A. Antony Flew, a former atheist of yesteryear, admitted: “*…the universe is something that begs an explanation.”* (*There is a God,* 145) That the universe exists declares a need for its existence. Science is pretty much agreed that the earth had a beginning. They debate the how. Even the favored theory of the big bang has fallen into disrepute in recent years because it is totally unsupported by science & is merely the result of a philosophy that dismisses the possibility of God *a priori*. Let’s illustrate what science actually shows:

B. If the earth had no beginning, all radioactive materials and isotopes would be gone. Because elements break down based on half-life, atoms of this proton, neutron, and electron magnitude, combined with their instability, would have necessarily broken down into smaller elements. Since these atoms and materials are still around, the earth cannot be tens of millions of years old as the naturalist arrogantly postures.

C. Scientists across the board agree that there are telltale signs that incredible generation took place at the creation of our universe. Without becoming overly scientific, it has to do with radiation heat signatures (called an afterglow) and ripples from those signatures. Far from proving the big bang, these ripples are “machining marks from the creation of the universe” and “the fingerprints of the maker.” (Astronomer George Smoot and project leader for the COBE satellite)

D. Naturalists believe in spontaneous generation of life from non-life (called biopoiesis) but this is a direct violation of the scientific law of biogenesis.

E. If you find a watch lying in the grass and it is still running, you know it has not lain there for all eternity. Given the naturalist’s ever fluctuating and extending timeline of the universe, the laws of thermodynamics (especially entropy) would have resulted in the dissolution of the universe. Doy Moyer explains this basic failure of naturalism: *“according to the second law of thermodynamics, processes that occur within a closed system tend toward a state of equilibrium (or decay). With no energy being fed into the system, everything would eventually “burn up” and wear out. So how does this help the believer’s cause? Well the question is simple: if, given enough time, the universe would burn out (reach “heat death”), then why hasn’t it already happened if it did not have a beginning? Assuming that the universe is infinite, it should have already burned out. Yet, here we are. Here, unbelievers must propose a model that is neither scientifically provable nor observed anywhere. The universe cannot be eternal.”*

F. Science & reason, as a matter of fact, do not support naturalism in this way or in any other way, as we will see in other lessons in the future.

 1. Although the publicity goes to atheistic scientists, much like the publicity goes to progressive liberals, there is a hugely significant movement in science towards creationism.

2. In actuality, there are 100s of statements of faith signed by 1000s of scientists. Theologian W.A. Criswell brings up a historical point worthy of consideration in this regard: *“In 1861...the French Academy of Science published a little brochure in which they stated fifty-one facts that controverted the Word of God. Today, there is not a scientist in the world who believes a single one of those fifty-one so-called scientific facts that in 1861 were published as controverting the Word of God. Not a one!”* (*The Bible for Today’s World* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 1966), p. 30.)Notice, this statement was made over 50 years ago!

3. *“For the scientist who has lived by faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”* (Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers,* 116).

**III. The Link Between Cosmology & Epistemology**

A. Man is aware of his existence. There are two possible explanations – eternal Mind or eternal matter. This represents the epistemological grounds upon which we build our worldview. Where did this knowledge and awareness originate?

1. He who denies the existence of God is affirming that matter created our present world. Atheists scoff at the idea of God, but must believe in the eternal existence of matter.

2. The atheist must believe that the order found in nature is the result of chance or fate; that consciousness arose from unconscious matter. 1000s of scientists at the top of their respective fields willingly concede that this is impossible.

B. Something happened in the past that is not happening now – the earth began. When we consider the classic go-to theory for the scientific community, the big bang, and we measure it against what we scientifically know, it falls disastrously short. Who would *reasonably* argue that the largest explosion in the history of the universe resulted in such complex arrangement and order? Everything we know about ballistics and explosives militates against this theory! Every explosion we know, on a small scale or large scale, results in disorder. In fact, the larger the explosion, the greater the disorder. So explain again how the largest explosion in the history of the universe could result in what at the very least *appears* to be emphatically orderly? Even scientists are jettisoning this view & admitting it’s nothing more than crackpot philosophy bigoted against the possibility of a Governor of lives and over the universe. There is no *rational* reason why any nation should deny God (Acts 14:17). And so knowledge really is not the issue. Epistemologically, the Christian has the upper hand. It is simply a matter of volition.

C. The classic swipe taken by atheists is the question: *“Well, where did God come from? Who created him?”* This question is framed incorrectly, which is why it is nonsensical. We argue that every dependent thing must have a cause – the Kalam Cosmological Argument. God is not dependent according to our belief system; He is necessary. And by faith, we know Him as Creator (Heb. 11:3).

**IV. The Nature Of The First Cause.**

A. The 1st Cause is transcendent. The Cause is greater than the result (Heb. 3:3f; Acts 17:24). As we have seen already, being the first cause makes the source eternal. This is one of the foundational realities of the biblical God.

B. The 1st Cause is personal and intelligent. He must possess intelligence and volition. Since God has a mind (1Cor. 2:10-13), He cannot be impersonal.

C. The 1st Cause has power beyond the comprehension of human minds. Creating from nothing is beyond us. We can only manipulate things. Think: Gen. 1.

D. The 1st Cause has some relationship to and understanding of morality. That humans have a basic sense of right and wrong suggests that our source has that sense as well although, outside of the Bible, we have no real understanding of whether the source itself is good or evil. Strict naturalism has no explanation for this. In fact, strict atheism ultimately breaks down morally and judicially. Either there is a non-material realm or there is no moral realm of responsibility.

E. There can only be ONE first cause. The universe is so well-tuned that a single cause is necessary (cf. 1Cor. 14:33). We will consider this at a later point.

 *“Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind.”* (Albert Einstein) God is the Author of those faculties of reason that lead all honest persons to believe in Him. There is no excuse for being an atheist (Ps. 14:1; Gen. 1:1). Knowledge of God’s power is self-evident in nature (Rom. 1:20); but we cannot learn about God and His love without the final revelation of His Son (Heb. 1:1f).

God’s will for you is in His Son. And this falls into the category of history which complements the inescapable conclusion of legitimate scientific inquiry – *God exists and He is the rewarder of those who diligently seek Him (*Heb. 11:6).