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Did God really create?

The evidence that we are not alone



WHY CHRISTIANS BELIEVE CHRISTIANITY TO BE TRUE

BOOKLET 1

Did God really create?

The evidence that we are not alone

Why Christians believe Christianity to be true

A simple and authentic explanation of things you might not otherwise hear

A Shining Lights Trust (NZ) resource

By Dave Mann ©2023

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Thanks to Heather whose husband I am privileged to be.

You make all these things possible.

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www.WhyChristiansBelieve.nz

DAVE MANN, AUTHOR



From the author

Kia ora. Welcome.

I hail from a rural town called Hāwera in Taranaki, New Zealand – where both my own and my wife’s parents have lived. I’m married to Heather, and we have four boys who keep our family life fun and active. I do a wide range of things in my work life – nearly all of which are in the charity sector, but ‘creative communication’ is the common element that sits at the core of them. I live in Tauranga (New Zealand), and my favourite recreational activities involve almost anything that gets me outdoors – though I play a few musical instruments in private at home.

Regarding this series, I’ve created it because I wanted to. That is to say, no one asked me to write it, or commissioned it. As a person of Christian faith since my teen years, I feel like I keep watching people choose their beliefs about God and religion on the basis of soundbites in public media and popular education – without access to wider information. Once beliefs are chosen, open conversations on the various possible explanations of this reality we live within are rare. This is human nature. It has also been my feeling that a wide range of information and scholarship is being excluded from the view of most people. So, this is about giving people a chance to hear things they might not otherwise hear – without needing to read a pile of really thick books.

The topic is arguably quite important also.

This series isn’t therefore to convince readers as much as it is to take us beyond the soundbites, to give access to wider information, so we each can make a more informed choice.

As a whole, the series is one overarching message in seven parts. The videos are the simplest format, while the booklets give more information – while still being a very short summary of wider research. However, these hopefully retain enough substance to give a glimpse of the kinds of thought (philosophy), information and research that exist beyond current popular soundbites.

I hope you gain something useful from this series, as I seek to summarise some reasons **Why Christians believe Christianity to be true.**

An introduction to the series

This booklet series is about why Christians believe Christianity to be true.

In this first booklet we will look at why Christians believe a God does exist, with the starting question:

DID GOD REALLY CREATE?

For a context to this series, some claim that science rules out the existence of God.

However, the existence of the world, our universe full of stars, and life itself still requires an explanation. The vast majority of people believe the best explanation is found in the idea of a 'god' or divine beings – who made all that we see. If we count only the Christian and Islamic faiths – more than half our planet believes in a god, while the majority of the rest believe in spiritual beings or a 'higher power'. It is of note that this includes many very intelligent people.

What this first booklet cannot tell you

While this booklet will demonstrate why many consider belief in a god of some kind to be a fair conclusion, it cannot tell us the character of that Creator God or being(s) – who I will call 'God' for simplicity at this point.

- Is this 'God' good? (If we are honest, it doesn't look like it from a quick look at this world.)
- Is this 'God' a he, a she, or an it?

None of these things can be known at this point.

What hangs in the balance?

Our lives can be basically meaningless – or full of meaning. We might be accidents of chance – or created with purpose. There might be a basis for believing that good will eventually triumph over evil – or no hope of this. What we believe affects the whole way we interpret our lives. This includes how we got here, why we are here, whether or not moral truths (right and wrong) exist, and whether there is any real hope (or justice) beyond the experiences of this life.

The discussion has life-changing implications.

To be clear, the seven booklets all have the same focus. They summarise some of the reasons why Christians believe Christianity to be true.

While I'll try to present a fair perspective, it rests with each reader to work out what they believe and why.

Let's begin.

Does a Creator God exist?

In recent decades the scientific landscape has changed immensely. New discoveries have resurrected a question that some had begun to think was dead: Might a God actually exist?

1. EVIDENCES IN THE BIG STUFF

The size of the universe is mind-blowing. At the speed of light you travel around the earth about eight times in a second – which is further than some people travel in a lifetime!

You could be at the moon in under two seconds and the sun in eight minutes. However, to get to the next nearest star (Proxima Centauri) you would have to travel at that speed for about four years. It's unimaginably far – and that's just the beginning of what could be said about distances.

There are said to be at least 200 billion stars in the Milky Way (which is the galaxy we are a part of), and at least 100 billion galaxies in the universe. It's beyond our comprehension!

Then if we wanted to see the spiral shape of our own galaxy – we would have to travel at the speed of light for about 100,000 years!

There is a lot of space and matter out there – but this small planet and the life on it is also truly amazing! How did Earth, with its green grass and blue sky, get to be this amazing?

The fine-tuning of the universe

One of the astounding discoveries of past decades has been the way this large universe has been so ‘finely tuned’ to enable carbon-based life (like us) to exist on our small planet.

By the year 2000, scientists had already discovered well over 100 specific ‘controls’ which each needed to be exactly tuned for the universe to exist

as it does – so that we could exist. Effort was initially given to explain away these controls

– as by Richard Dawkins, a current popular atheist in England (atheism being the belief that there is no God). His book, *The God Delusion*¹, included efforts to debunk six of these controls at a time when 30 were identified.² However,

the problem didn’t go away, and today nearly everyone acknowledges that this extraordinary fine-tuning exists. The question is, how do we explain it?



While explaining some of these controls can get a bit complicated, here are a couple of examples.

■ The Big Bang

If the initial explosion of the Big Bang had differed in strength by as little as one part in 10^{60} , the universe would have either quickly collapsed back on itself or expanded too rapidly for stars to form. In either case, there would be no stars or galaxies – or life.

■ Gravity

If gravity were stronger or weaker by one part in 10^{40} , then life-sustaining stars like the sun could not exist.

■ The earth revolving around the sun

The earth revolves around the sun in an almost perfect circle. This is important, because if we revolved in more of an oval, by going a bit closer to the sun for part of the year, our temperature might quickly become too hot for us to survive – while in the other half of the year we might freeze. But our orbit around the sun is close to circular – and at the right distance for temperatures that allow liquid water and carbon-based life to exist on our planet.

The strength of the evidence

Some have tried to argue that, were the controls different to what they are, different forms of life might have evolved instead of us. Philosopher William Lane Craig points out that, not only did the laws of nature (like the gravity ‘level’ or ‘decay’³ level in the universe) need fine-tuning before things started, the very conditions in which these laws of nature exist needed fine-tuning. In other words, without the fine-tuning as it is, ‘...not even atomic matter or chemistry would exist...!’

What’s the probability?

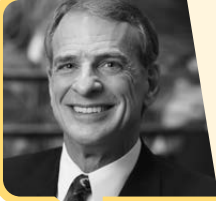
Considering the probability of just one factor – the ‘decay’ rate – Roger Penrose of Oxford University calculates the odds of this existing by chance as one out of $10^{10^{123}}$.

It is not possible to comprehend how big that number is. (The little 10 has 123 zeros, which is already a number much larger than the number of atoms in the known universe. The big 10 is therefore given not just 123 zeros, it is given 10^{123} [countless millions of] zeros.)

Penrose comments, ‘I cannot even recall seeing anything else in physics whose accuracy is known to approach, even remotely, a figure like one part in $10^{10^{123}}$.’⁴

If this is what it takes for one control to be as it is, what about over 100 of them – plus all the other controls that haven’t yet been thought of or discovered? William Lane Craig explains,





"...their ratios to each other must also be finely-tuned. So improbability is multiplied by improbability by improbability until our minds are reeling in incomprehensible numbers."⁵

A clear conclusion?

However, many scientists have resisted the urge to see any idea of 'God' in this. They have instead stuck to their prior beliefs, even though there is clear evidence here of design. Why?

British physicist Paul Davies (an atheist) writes,

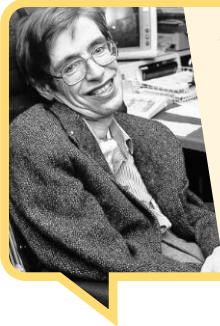
"Scientists are slowly waking up to an inconvenient truth – the universe looks suspiciously like a fix. The issue concerns the very laws of nature themselves. For 40 years, physicists and cosmologists have been quietly collecting examples of all too convenient "coincidences" and special features in the underlying laws of the universe that seem to be necessary in order for life, and hence conscious beings, to exist. Change any one of them and the consequences would be lethal."



Davies then cites Sir Fred Hoyle, the distinguished cosmologist, who once said it was as if *"a super-intellect has monkeyed with physics."*

Davies says elsewhere, *"There is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all ...it seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe ...The impression of design is overwhelming."*⁶

Atheistic cosmologist Stephen Hawking notes,



*"The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and the electron. ... The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life."*⁷

Which explanation makes the best sense?

What is of note is that both Davies⁸ and Hawking remain atheists. However, Sir Fred Hoyle (referred to above) – an English astronomer and Professor of Astronomy at Cambridge University – concluded differently. While always looking to science for answers, he admitted our existence still seemed to be some kind of divine conspiracy.

What quickly becomes clear is that people are capable of holding to beliefs in both directions – irrespective of the evidence. This is no different for the atheist who loves science than the Christian who loves science, or the Hindu who loves science. All believe things that cannot be explained by science alone. Those beliefs then become a part of the framework (or lens) through which they interpret the rest of the physical world.

However, if we could put all personal prejudices and preferences aside for a moment, what does the evidence most clearly suggest? Accident or design?

2. CONSIDERING THE REALLY SMALL STUFF



Another evidence of a Creator is found by looking very closely at your own hand.

Recent discoveries have shown that cells are staggeringly complex. One hundred and fifty years ago, a cell was considered to be a simple sort of thing. Back then, the idea that life had evolved by itself from some sort of ‘primordial soup’ did not seem too far-fetched.

In history...

In an experiment in 1953, Stanley Miller claimed to have ‘created’ some amino acids in a controlled experiment – these being the building blocks of life. This revived the idea that, just maybe, life could have ‘created’ itself. However, various conditions in the experiments were found to be different to those in the early earth (like the make-up of gases in the atmosphere as revealed by geologists).⁹

Miller conceded in the 1990s, saying, ‘The problem of the origin of life has turned out to be much more difficult than I, and most other people, envisioned.’¹⁰

Then things were discovered that could not have been imagined...

Example 1:

Miniature machines inside each human cell

Some of the most remarkable recent discoveries came about as a result of the development of high-powered microscopes. A whole new world was discovered inside the cell and, to everyone’s surprise, it revealed an astounding array of miniature machines!

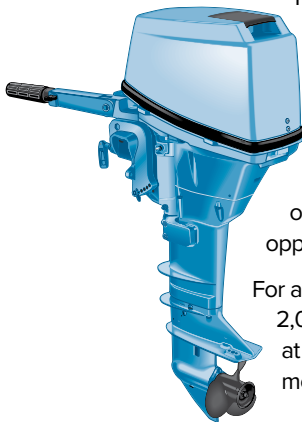
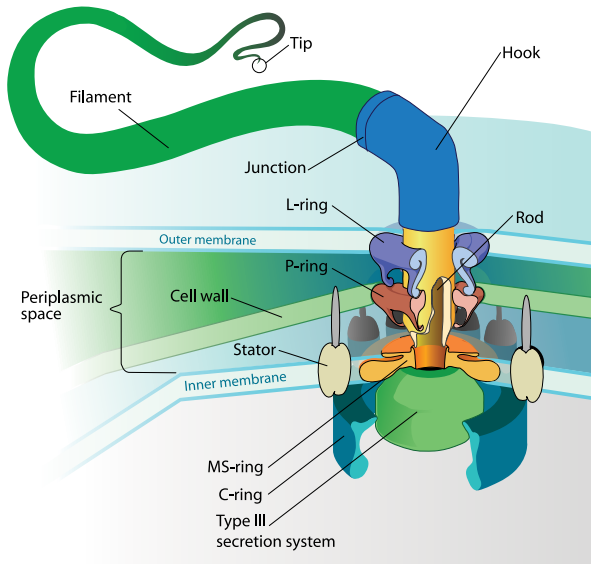
The question is where these machines came from – because they are literally organic machines. They are also highly complex, number in the thousands, and are moving around within each cell of your body right now – as if each cell were the size of a small city.

■ A tail motor – just like an outboard motor

A well-known example is the bacterial flagellum, which is a tail motor that enables a bacteria to move around inside a cell, doing its various jobs.¹¹

To see this machine, portions of a cell are magnified 50,000 times. What is revealed is a marvel of engineering on a miniature scale. How did this level of complexity come about?

This tail motor is literally like an outboard motor from a boat. It has a large number of parts. There are two gears for forwards and two for reverse. It is water-cooled. It has a drive shaft and a propeller. It is engineered!



However, in terms of what it can do, it's better than anything humans have yet made. Howard Berg, Professor of Molecular and Cellular Biology at Harvard, labelled it the most efficient machine in the universe. For example, some of the 'tail motors' are running at 100,000 revolutions per minute (rpm), yet they can stop in one quarter of a turn to start spinning at the same speed in the opposite direction.

For a comparison, my diesel vehicle travels best at about 2,000 to 5,000rpm – and would need five seconds at the very least to screech to a stop before I could move it into reverse gear.

Molecular biologist Scott Minnich, who has studied this bacterial motor, for more than 20 years says regarding these parts, *“It’s not convenient that we give [the parts of the motor] these names. That’s truly their function.”*

The motors have about 40 different specific components – each built from proteins. The existence of each of the various ‘engine’ components then adds a whole new layer of complexity because the parts need putting together in an exact order and way for the machine to work. However, before being put together, the parts need to be made.

Other machines, therefore, exist to create these parts – while yet other machines put them together. This, of course, requires the building of these other machines first, so they can make the machines that make the parts... and there are thousands of these kinds of machines inside the cell!

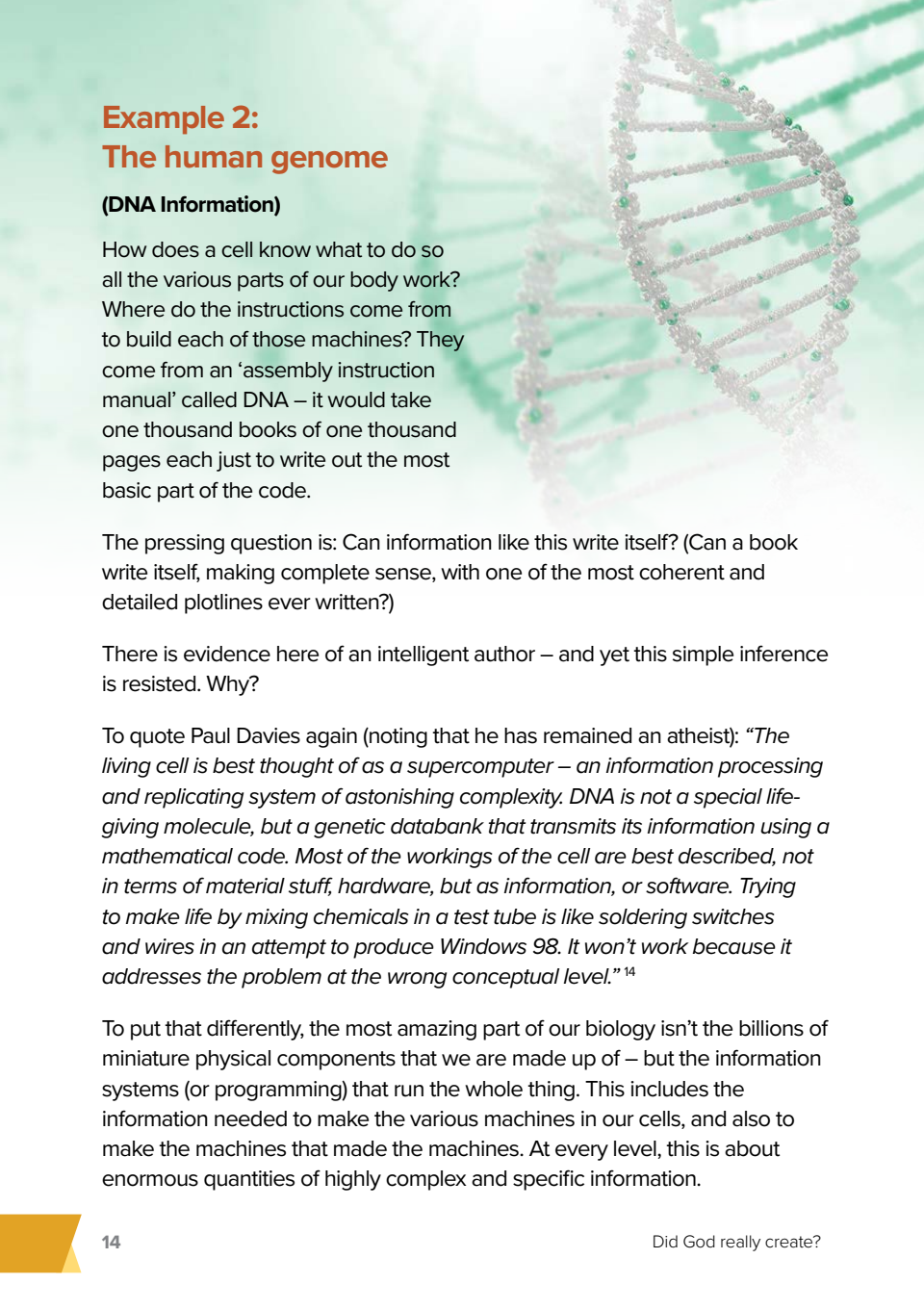
Your complexity explained...

To give an idea of the complexity being described, a former Yale professor, Harold Morowitz pointed out, *“...if you broke open the simplest living cell known to exist today, and broke every chemical bond within it so that you were left with its individual ingredients, the odds in favour of that cell putting itself back together again [chemically] would be only one chance in $10^{100,000,000,000}$. To put that figure in perspective, there haven’t even been that many nano-seconds on the clock since the most popular estimate for the dawn of time nearly 14 billion years ago.”*¹²

To explain that number differently, if we were to write it out on paper (1,000,000,000,000 etc.), we would need several hundred thousand blank books just to write the number down!¹³

This number only relates to putting the cell back together chemically too. If we wanted to make the cell ‘alive’ again, there is no probability. There is no theory. There can be no calculation. This is why so many consider it a miracle that most logically points to a god or being beyond us.

Life is incredibly complex!



Example 2: The human genome

(DNA Information)

How does a cell know what to do so all the various parts of our body work? Where do the instructions come from to build each of those machines? They come from an ‘assembly instruction manual’ called DNA – it would take one thousand books of one thousand pages each just to write out the most basic part of the code.

The pressing question is: Can information like this write itself? (Can a book write itself, making complete sense, with one of the most coherent and detailed plotlines ever written?)

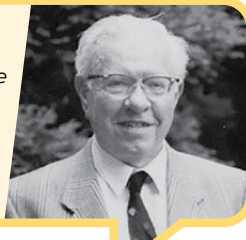
There is evidence here of an intelligent author – and yet this simple inference is resisted. Why?

To quote Paul Davies again (noting that he has remained an atheist): *“The living cell is best thought of as a supercomputer – an information processing and replicating system of astonishing complexity. DNA is not a special life-giving molecule, but a genetic databank that transmits its information using a mathematical code. Most of the workings of the cell are best described, not in terms of material stuff, hardware, but as information, or software. Trying to make life by mixing chemicals in a test tube is like soldering switches and wires in an attempt to produce Windows 98. It won’t work because it addresses the problem at the wrong conceptual level.”*¹⁴

To put that differently, the most amazing part of our biology isn’t the billions of miniature physical components that we are made up of – but the information systems (or programming) that run the whole thing. This includes the information needed to make the various machines in our cells, and also to make the machines that made the machines. At every level, this is about enormous quantities of highly complex and specific information.

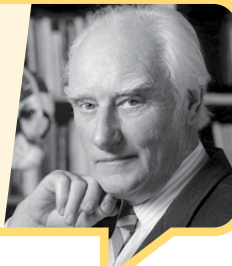
To quote Sir Fred Hoyle again, with awareness of the complexities of biological life, he said:

*"The change that higher life forms might have emerged in this way is comparable to the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein."*¹⁵



Francis Crick, a Nobel Prize winner and atheistic scientist, also states:

*"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, so many are the conditions which would have had to have been satisfied to get it going."*¹⁶



Crick is famed for significant discoveries made with James Watson that led to the identification of the structure of DNA.

Of note, Crick did believe an intelligent source for the information in life was needed. However, instead of giving a 'God' credit for the information within our design, he suggested it came from aliens from another planet!

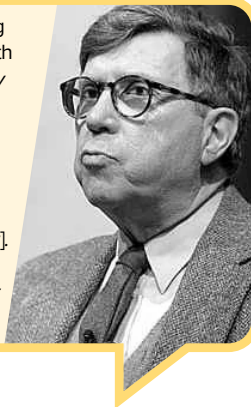
This, of course, only delays the question of 'God', because who made the aliens? A creator for the information and coding is still needed – and also for the universe and our planet.



What becomes clear is this: Our bias and prejudices shape our beliefs – and some are honest enough to admit this!

As an example, Richard Lewontin, an atheistic evolutionist, wrote:

*"We Darwinists take the side of science [meaning matter to microbes to man by random chance with no intelligent help] in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs, in spite of its failure to fulfil many of its extravagant promises of health and life, and in spite of the tolerance of the scientific community for unsubstantiated just-so stories, because we have a prior commitment, a commitment to materialism [physical causes only]. It is not that the methods and institutions of science somehow compel us...we are forced...for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door."*¹⁷



Arthur Keith, similarly a 'no-God evolutionist', wrote, *"Evolution is unproved and unprovable. We believe it only because the only alternative is special creation which is unthinkable."*¹⁸

Evolution – The uncomfortable conversation

None of this is to deny evolution – if we think the word to refer to adaptation, natural selection, and survival of the fittest. I'm not personally aware of any Christians, Muslims or Jews who question any of this. Many from the Eastern religions likewise agree. However, if 'evolution' instead refers to the belief that life can come from non-life by itself, and that it can then 'create' countless thousands of entirely new species types all by random accidental chance – and with ever-increasing complexity and specialised design features, inclusive of all the information needed to enable that – this is regarded as a dubious science by many, though it's rarely discussed out loud.

However, there are some Christians (and others) who do accept evolutionary ideas related to the 'creation' of entirely new species types by random chance, along with their various amazing specialised features. They would recognise that, if evolution had occurred, it would still require an external guiding agent to create first life, and also to create the highly complex processes by which the increasingly complex information involved would write itself.

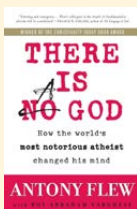
Other people point out that we don't have in front of us any observable process by which highly complex intelligent information could write itself – noting that mutations (even where they might be occasionally positive) do not explain the writing of the new and highly complex coded information needed to explain the 'creation' of thousands of distinct plant and animal species (inclusive of many thousands of amazingly specialised features).

What does the evidence say?

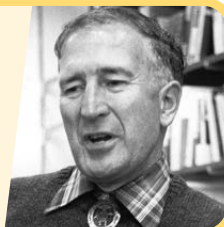
One of the most significant atheists to change his views in the light of this kind of evidence is Professor Antony Flew. Professor Flew was a highly respected philosopher and vocal atheist, with many accolades and an outstanding number of books to his name. He argued that one should assume atheism to be true until empirical evidence of a God surfaces.

Then, in 2004, he unexpectedly stated that, in keeping with his lifelong commitment to go where the evidence leads, he now believed in a God.¹⁹ To quote from the Telegraph,²⁰ *“after months of soul-searching, Flew concluded that research into DNA had ‘shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved.’”*

He said,



“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 extraordinarily complicated creature.”



Another well-known current example would be the Dr Francis Collins, known for his work in genetics, including as leader of the Human Genome Project. He speaks openly about his journey from atheism to acceptance of a God, whose existence increasingly becomes for him — as a scientist — the inconvenient but unavoidable reality.²¹

In summary

These kinds of observations and discoveries explain why so many — despite the mockery they sometimes receive — believe that a God exists.

3. CONSIDERING THE REALLY OLD STUFF

You will have heard of the Big Bang. It is the idea that the entire universe started from a single explosion. In recent decades new information has been discovered that has raised a tough question.

To summarise, in 1964, two physicists accidentally discovered background radiation left over from the Big Bang (this being an even heat observed right throughout the universe for which no observable cause could be imagined except a much earlier explosion).²²

In 1990 and 1992, NASA scientists conducted further research on this background radiation, resulting in their significant conclusion that the background temperature of the universe matched the theory of a Big Bang. It was an unexpected conclusion for them, pointing decisively at what many didn't want to see – there seems to have been a single beginning!

So if there was a single beginning, what caused it?

(We note that current Big Bang theories are still being debated. Details go beyond what can be covered in a short booklet. The point here is to show how people have responded to new information they did not expect.)



A wider implication

The impact of the discovery was most significant because of what it ruled out. Many will have heard of an earlier theory of an expanding and contracting (oscillating) universe, as still found in some school textbooks. Noted atheist, Stephen Hawking, clarified that this discovery of a single beginning²³ had *“led to the abandonment of attempts to argue that there was a previous contracting phase and a non-singular bounce into expansion. Instead almost everyone now believes that the universe, and time itself, had a beginning at the big bang.”*²⁴

In other words, he is saying there was no expanding and contracting universe involving an infinite number of Big Bangs. There was just one Bang. This was the literal beginning – full stop!

As far as scientific discoveries go, this was (and is) huge.

The responses of scientists at the time said something

Stephen Hawking tried to communicate his sentiment at the time of the discovery, stating that *“...it is the discovery of the century, if not of all time.”*²⁵

The research team leader, Nobel Prize winning astrophysicist and cosmologist George Smoot, summed it up well, saying, *“If you’re religious, this is like looking at God.”*²⁶

Physicist Paul Davies clarified what was being explained, saying it was *“literally the coming-into-being of all physical things from nothing.”*²⁷

On the topic of a limited past, Sir Arthur Eddington (an English astronomer, physicist and philosopher of science) had earlier admitted his bias, saying:



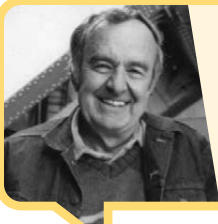
*“Philosophically, the notion of a beginning to the present order is repugnant to me. I should like to find a genuine loophole.”*²⁸

Yet while some held to their atheism, other scientists didn't. It was quickly apparent to them that they were looking at a discovery that matches the claims of the Bible. While the Bible does not explain how God did it, it simply states, In the beginning [time] God created the heavens [space] and the earth [matter]. "Genesis 1:1"

Robert Wilson, co-discoverer of the background radiation in 1964, told an interviewer, "*Certainly there was something that set it all off. Certainly, if you are religious, I can't think of a better theory of the origin of the universe to match with Genesis*" (referring to the Bible's account of Creation).

Henry Schaeffer III, recognised as one of the world's leading computational quantum chemists, says, "*A Creator must exist.*" This discovery, "*and subsequent scientific findings are clearly pointing to an ex nihilo [out of nothing] creation consistent with the first few verses of Genesis.*"²⁹

Allan Sandage, an award-winning cosmologist, says,



"We can't understand the universe in any clear way without the supernatural."³⁰

How then is atheism actually maintained?

For those choosing not to believe in a God, the key problem with this discovery of a single beginning is that it left insufficient time for natural chance processes to create life and then all the various distinct species. There was no longer an infinity of time for the miraculous 'accident' to happen.

The problem was then increased by the complexity discovered in life – again noting that adaptations don't explain the writing of the highly complex information found within the DNA of all life. The alternative, which is mutations, doesn't explain this either, because even the rare beneficial mutations represent a loss of information or duplication of some existing information.

To quote biophysicist Dr Lee Spetner, who taught information and communication theory at John Hopkins University:

"...in all the reading I've done in the life sciences literature, I have never found a mutation that added information. All point mutations that have been studied on the molecular level turn out to reduce the genetic information and not to increase it.

...Information cannot be built up by mutations that lose it. A business can't make money by losing it a little at a time."³¹



So, while the various species of cats (tigers, lions, leopards, etc.) can be explained due to adaption and natural selection from a first cat, the existence of that first cat is the problem. It's the same for the first dog – and the first of tens of thousands of other distinct plant and animal species.

When there was the possibility of many repeating Big Bangs the problem of complex things 'making themselves' seemed less daunting. So, what now? What does the evidence say?

A multiverse!

This is where the idea of the multiverse (multiple universes) came from. This suggestion made both the improbabilities of the fine-tuning (section one of this booklet), and also of the complexities that exist within life (section two of this booklet) seem less daunting.

However, this theory has significant obstacles, not least of which are a number of currently accepted evidences of science related to time,³² combined with a complete lack of evidence for the theory. We aren't yet capable of exploring the outer reaches of our own solar system, let alone our own galaxy or universe. The ability to apply scientific method – to observe multiple universes – is clearly beyond us!

Yet despite these kinds of problems, the theory still has strong advocates – like Richard Dawkins.



The point is that this debate isn't really about science. It's about what people have chosen to believe before looking at the evidence – and sometimes irrespective of the evidence. To repeat Richard Lewontin's words that might more accurately be the issue – we have *“a prior commitment to materialism...for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door.”*³³

In contrast, philosopher W.L. Craig, an academic of considerable note, suggests that ‘all things being equal’, the idea that there is ‘a God is the better explanation’ for the fine-tuning of our universe, and ‘entirely probable when other evidences are taken into account.’³⁴

What the reader needs to work out for themselves is what the most reasonable conclusion of the evidence really is.

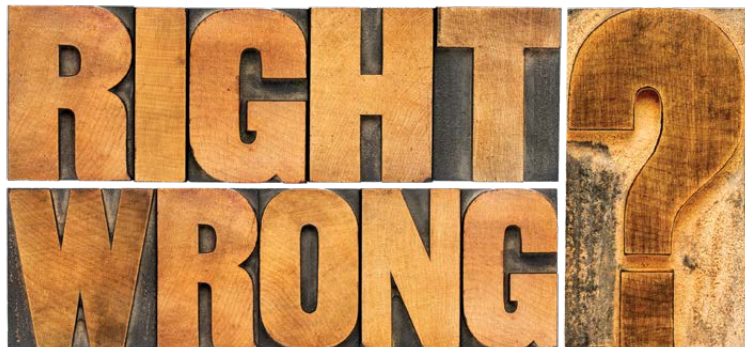
We will now look very briefly at three more areas of evidence, each of which have caused numerous people to believe there is a God.

4. OTHER EVIDENCES A GOD MIGHT EXIST

- a. The existence of moral truths (right and wrong)
- b. The reality of spiritual experiences
- c. The existence of human consciousness and free will (volition)

4a. The existence of moral truths

(Do right and wrong exist?)



Another indicator of the existence of a God is the existence of moral values and duties.

If there is no God, then there is no universal basis from which to say ‘for a fact’ that something is wrong. Without a God, beliefs that certain things are right (or wrong) are just opinions.

Sometimes individuals and communities will together choose their list of what they consider morally right and wrong. They will create laws that say that a given thing is ‘right’ or ‘wrong’ for them. In that sense, our communities would say some things ‘really are wrong’ for them.

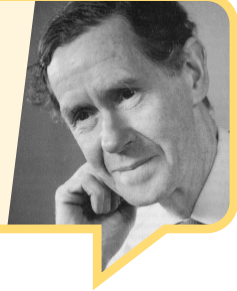
However, the problem remains. If there is no God, these lists of right and wrong come from us. We could define what we believe to be right and wrong – but another group could then make the exact opposite list and there would be no actual basis for either to say the other was wrong!

This point is widely understood

Many people willingly admit that their atheistic beliefs imply that there are no fixed moral values and duties at all.

Australian atheistic philosopher J. L. Mackie³⁵ described moral truths as strange in a naturalistic universe. He openly admits the implications also, saying,

*"If...there are...objective [real/fixed] values, they make the existence of a god more probable than it would have been without them. Thus we have...a defensible argument from morality to the existence of a god."*³⁶



Dawkins explains that, at the end of the day, if there is no God there is “no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pointless indifference.” and “We are machines for propagating DNA ...It is every living object’s sole reason for being.”³⁷

However, some atheists try to argue objective (real) morality exists without there being a God. Philosopher Michael Ruse, for example, wrote, “The man who says that it is morally acceptable to rape little children is just as mistaken as the man who says, $2+2=5$.”³⁸

However, the argument against his claim that universal moral laws can exist without a God, doesn’t require a book like the one he wrote. It is as simple as the words, ‘No they don’t!’³⁹

So is abusing children actually wrong? We hopefully all think it is – but we think that as people living in a society that has been highly influenced by Christian thinking. The point and the problem remains!



Child prostitution has been found across our planet throughout history, and was not viewed as a crime. Slavery has been common to nearly all cultures, which meant that children were owned property. There is nothing unusual about what followed from that in history. History waited for Christianity to stop this, and give us a new value system regarding all human life. For example, the first age of consent in England was established as age 12 in 1275. In 1875, this was raised to age 13, and again in view of the continuing abuse of young girls to age 16 as a result of the activism of Bramwell Booth (son of William Booth of the Salvation Army). The Women's Christian Temperance Union in New Zealand campaigned for the same, with a minimum age set at 16 in 1896.



If there is no God, what basis is there for saying a human is of any more value than an ant?

As philosopher Paul Copan pointed out, *"if morality is just the product of naturalistic evolution or cultural development or personal choice, then rights do not truly exist."*⁴⁰ This is to say, our whole cultural view of human rights comes from the Christian faith, from its belief in the worth of the individual person. If there is no God then the guiding principle of life is the survival of the fittest, and power is what counts – not love. Without 'God', the idea of human rights falls over, replaced by the more logical 'truth' that 'the end justifies the means'!

The implications

The problem is not only that people could therefore define right and wrong differently. They do!

The horrors and suffering that have come about in history from the belief that there is no God are beyond explanation.

As the 19th century Russian novelist and philosopher, Fyodor Dostoevsky, put it, *"If God is dead, everything is permissible."*⁴¹

The logic is simple, and we will come back to this topic in booklet 6, because it also relates to our assessment of Jesus.

C. S. Lewis' story

C. S. Lewis is famed for his writing of the children's story series, 'The Chronicles of Narnia', the most famous story being The Lion, the Witch and the Wardrobe.

Lewis explained the implications of belief or no belief in a God upon morality this way:

*"If individuals live only seventy years, then a state...which may last for a thousand years, is more important than an individual. But if Christianity is true, then the individual is not only more important but incomparably more important, for he is everlasting and the life of the state or civilisation, compared with his, is only a moment."*⁴²



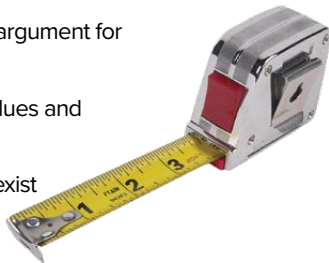
C. S. Lewis was an atheist until he thought through its implications on morality. He felt convinced that moral truths did in fact exist – which meant that a moral law-giver needed to exist.

*"My argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and 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?"*⁴³

Summary

Philosopher William Lane Craig summarises the argument for God from morality as follows:

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
2. However, if moral values and duties do exist
3. God must exist.⁴⁴



So, do moral truths (actual right and wrong) exist?

4b. The reality of people's spiritual experiences

There is a saying, 'A person with an experience is never at the mercy of a person with an argument'. Indeed, even before science could prove that being punched on the nose hurt, we already knew it!

Across the globe there is a recognition of a higher spiritual reality. Even though this reality is described in different ways, most conclude that a spiritual realm of some kind exists.

The continuing spirituality of our secularised Western nations tells a story too. It turns out that many who no longer affiliate with a specific religion or Christian denomination in the West still believe in spiritual realities.

For example, a study in the UK showed that more than 76% of the population admitted to having had a spiritual or religious experience⁴⁵ – while only 48% described themselves as Christian⁴⁶, with 28% believing in a 'God or higher power', and church attendance as low as 5%.⁴⁷

So, even in the midst of a public culture of scepticism toward religion, many are still having spiritual experiences. Things that are rationally true should also be experientially true.

Because spiritual experiences are therefore relevant to our series, we will come back to this in booklet 7.



4c. The existence of human consciousness and free will

(The miracle in the mirror)

As if our biological make up wasn't enough to blow our minds already, our psychology (who we are as people and how we think) multiplies the miracle.

Imagine if you or I were to somehow put all the raw chemicals of our bodies into a large container, shake them for an eternity, and somehow 'chance-create' our bodies again. Here is the striking fact: You (or I) still wouldn't exist. Why? Because the 'real you' is made up of 'software', not just 'hardware'.

Your sense of self, your mind, your will and your emotions make the real you far more than a mere biological (physical) entity. Cut your arms off – and you would still be you. Cut your legs off – and you'd still be you (although shorter). Age your body to 90 years old, with weak knees, stuck in a bed – and you'd discover that you are still you.

So, what is 'you'?

Somehow you are aware that you exist. Unlike animals, you seem to have a strongly moral inclination, with thoughts, feelings and emotions – and also dreams and desires, beliefs, hopes, ambitions and even disappointments.

Your psychological existence is every bit as complex as your physical body is! Like the complex software programmes of a computer – your consciousness, as a self-aware living being, is a miracle! You are somehow alive and real within your physical body.

How did this reality of our experience as living beings come about, and what does it mean?

For example, if there is no God, do you even have free will – and what is 'consciousness'?



Introducing ‘Determinism’

After Darwin had proposed his theory, his cousin Sir Francis Galton noted that, if we have evolved, then mental faculties like intelligence must be hereditary (in our DNA). Our ability to choose our fate is not therefore entirely free – as it depends on this biological inheritance.⁴⁸

Today there is significant agreement in the scientific community, as the result of recent studies on brain activity, that the firing of neurons in the brain determines, not just some or most, but all of our thoughts, hopes, memories and dreams.⁴⁹

To follow the logic, if you are a purely biological being that exists purely as an accident of chance, the existence of free will is logically an illusion and an imagination. It’s a type of ‘trick’ that somehow evolved and sprang into existence amongst the chemical reactions of your brain.



- This denial that free will exists is called **Determinism**. This is an explanation of reality given by atheists.

Very simply, if God doesn't exist, your every thought and decision is determined by your DNA and/or prior experiences – just like a learning robot. Therefore, free will (volition) doesn't actually exist!

The problem is that we can't live by this belief – because it denies free will, which makes no sense. For example...

What is love without free will?

What is rationality without free will?

What is our perception that something is beautiful,
or our creativity, without free will?

How are we responsible for our actions (or crimes)
if 'our genes made us do it'?

Are you really not thinking the rational thoughts
you think you are thinking right now?

Is there really no such thing as love?

Those who do not believe in God live as if they do have free will every moment of every day. How does that make sense?

We will come back to this topic in booklet 6 when we consider what the core problem with our planet might be, but it is also mentioned here because it is relevant to the existence of a God.

In summary, what does the evidence suggest?

'The inference to the best explanation' is an important idea here.

This is the suggestion that it is good and fair to draw the most logical conclusion – even if you can't prove it in a physical science experiment. Good conclusions can be drawn from weighing evidence and studying patterns. The significance of this simple point is as follows...

Many atheists rule out all possibilities except those that physical science can prove. They only accept the material world. There are, however, many things that can't be measured or detected by their physical size or weight.

For example, consider the truth of the above sentence, 'We rule out all possibilities except those that physical science can prove'. That sentence is logically self-defeating, because that statement can't be proven scientifically.

As a claim, it therefore makes no actual sense!

As we have seen, science also cannot prove the existence of your consciousness, or morality, or rationality, or beauty, or love, or depression, or anxiety,

or fear, or dreams, or compassion, or hope – or of God. Yet, while none of these things are material (physical) that doesn't mean they aren't real.

Science can, however, detect evidence of some of these things. When anxiety kicks in, the heart rate goes up and the skin goes cold. No scientist would say anxiety doesn't exist. A doctor would observe the physical symptoms related to anxiety, and follow where the logic leads – concluding you're suffering anxiety.

THE INFERENCE TO THE BEST EXPLANATION

The argument for God is the same as this. This is the 'inference to the best explanation', following the logic. Even at the simplest level...

Design needs a **designer**
Information needs an **author**
Beauty needs an **artist**
Creation needs a **creator...**



and our consciousness, within our amazing physical bodies, needs someone or something to give it life!

...And this is why so many people believe in a God!

If all prejudice and bias is put aside, what does the evidence most logically suggest? Accident or design?

"The evidence of design, of moral responsibility, of beauty, of consciousness, of the human hankering for the Transcendent, of religious experience, of patterns in history, and so forth..." combine to create a momentum of evidence pointing to, and more fully describing, '...the Creator of the Universe.'"⁵⁰

— Philosophy professor R. Douglas Geivett



In our next booklet...

If a God exists, how are we to know if this God is good?

The 'problem' of evil and suffering is a big one.

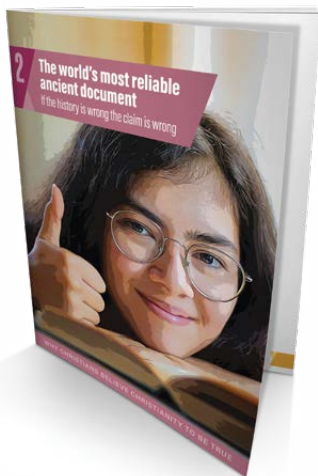
In considering whether God could be good, the evidence of the natural world most logically suggests this Creator is a mixture of good and bad. Most of the Eastern religions, and many ancient religions, have therefore concluded that gods are a mix of both the good and the bad. Sacrifices or prayers are sometimes made to these gods to please them and gain favour – or to pacify them to avoid their anger – because the gods aren't entirely good!

In contrast, Christians believe God is good. It's a bold and 'one-sided' claim – because why can't God be responsible for evil and suffering? In fact, it's such a big claim you could say God should come to earth to personally explain this one to us!

As it happens, that is exactly what Christians believe has happened. Christians believe God has revealed himself to us through history and ultimately in Jesus – as recorded in the Bible – so we could know what he is like.

For this reason, the reliability of the Bible as a record of history is a very important topic. So we'll look at this next.

Thanks for engaging with this brief investigation into why Christians believe Christianity to be true.



For the scientist, who has lived by his 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. ⁵¹

Robert Jastrow — American Astronomer, NASA scientist.

IMAGE CREDITS

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Endnotes

- 1 ...where Dawkins quotes atheist physicist Martin Rees.
- 2 Ian Wishart, *The Divinity Code*, (Howling at the Moon Pub Ltd, 2007), p35.
- 3 Correctly, entropy, which is the degree of disorder or randomness in a system, or a term used to describe a gradual decline into disorder. The second law of thermodynamics says that entropy always increases with time.
- 4 Roger Penrose, 'Time-Asymmetry and Quantum Gravity' in *Quantum Gravity 2* (ed. C. J. Isham, R. Penrose, and D.W. Sciama; Oxford: Clarendon, 2981), p249 as cited in section 4 of William Lane Craig, 'The New Atheism and Five Arguments for God', <http://www.reasonablefaith.org>
- 5 Section 4 of William Lane Craig, 'The New Atheism and Five Arguments for God', www.reasonablefaith.org
- 6 Paul Davies as quoted in *The Divinity Code*, (Howling at the Moon Pub Ltd, 2007), p37.
- 7 Stephen Hawking, *A Brief History of Time*, (Bantam Books,1988), p125.
- 8 Article: 'Yes the universe looks like a fix – but that doesn't mean that a god fixed it,' Paul Davies. *The Guardian*, 2007. www.guardian.co.uk
- 9 'New Evidence on Evolution of Early Atmosphere and Life,' from *Bulletin of the American Meteorological Society*, Nov 1982, p1329.
- 10 J. Horgan, *In the Beginning...*, *Scientific American*, Feb 1991.
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- 12 Ian Wishart, p52.
- 13 *Ibid*, p53.
- 14 Paul Davies, 'How we could create life', *The Guardian* (December 11th, 2002).
- 15 Hoyle, Fred, *Intelligent Universe*. (London: Michael Joseph, 1983), p18,19.
- 16 Sir Francis Crick, *Life Itself: Its Origin and Nature* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981), p88
- 17 Richard Lewontin, 'Billions and billions of demons', (*The New York Review*, January 9, 1997), p31.
- 18 Arthur Keith (pro-evolutionist) as quoted in 'Origins?' by B.G. Ranganathan. (Carlisle, PA: The Banner of Truth Trust, 1988), p22.
- 19 An interview with Antony Flew titled 'My Pilgrimage from Atheism to Theism', as at <http://www.biola.edu/antonyflew/index.cfm>
- 20 Flew passed away in April 2010. He still accepted the evolution of species, but not the evolution of first life. His view of God was 'Deistic' – concluding there is a God who created, but who has since remained largely distant and uninvolved. Flew's book about this drew controversy. Some atheists even suggested he couldn't have written it as he was too old – to which he replied emphatically that these were his views, amongst other rebuttals of criticisms – including from the famed Richard Dawkins.
- 21 Collins talked openly about this. For an interesting example: <https://youtu.be/HaEQyNeaFZs>
- 22 Arnos Penzias and Robert Wilson at AT&T Bell Laboratories in New Jersey, with thanks to Dr David Geisler for this information supplied from his research, to the author.
- 23 Referring to the Hawking-Penrose singularity theorems.
- 24 Stephen Hawking and Roger Penrose, *The Nature of Space and Time* (The Isaac Newton Institute Series of Lectures; Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), p20.
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- 26 Ian Wishart, p54.
- 27 "In the Beginning: In Conversation with Paul Davies and Philip Adams", (January 17, 2002) as cited in Section 2.5, William Lane Craig, 'The New Atheism and Five Arguments for God', www.reasonablefaith.org
- 28 Arthur S. Eddington, "On the Instability of Einstein's Spherical World", from monthly 'Notices of the Royal Astronomical Society 90' (1930), p.672. The idea of an infinitely old universe is a physical impossibility according to the Borde Guth Vilenkin Theorem (by Arvind Borde, Alan Guth, and Alexander Vilenkin), which demonstrates that no model that does not have a finite past for the universe is possible.
- 29 John Lennox, *God's Undertaker: Has Science Buried God?* (2007), p29.
- 30 Ian Wishart, p57.
- 31 L. Spetner, *Not by Chance?* (Brooklyn, NY: The Judaica Press, Inc) Pgs 131-132, 138, 143.
- 32 Research: Borde, Guth and Vilenkin's proof that any universe in a state of overall cosmic expansion cannot be infinite in the past. The Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem establishes that any universe which has on average over its past history been in a state of cosmic expansion cannot be eternal in the past but must have a space-time boundary. See the write-up titled 'Inflation (cosmology)' at Wikipedia, and also Alex Vilenkin,

- Many Worlds in One: The Search for Other Universes (New York: Hill and Wang, 2006). This being the case, the principle applies to the multiverse also. To summarise a range of points from an article by philosopher W.L. Craig – Evidence from observational astronomy has also been consistently against the idea that our universe will someday re-contract. Attempts to find enough mass to generate gravity to stop the expansion have come up short. Some recent studies of distant supernovae even seem to indicate the expansion is actually accelerating – according to the NASA website of the Wilkinson Microwave Anisotropy Probe, ‘For the theory that fits our data, the Universe will expand forever.’ Craig continues, explaining that entropy (the loss of energy and naturally increasing disorder) suggests that, even if the universe could ‘bounce’, there would be less energy with each bounce, thus still taking us back to an original bounce and starting point. Furthermore, even if this were possible, astronomer Joseph Silk estimates, on the basis of current entropy levels, that the universe cannot have gone through more than 100 previous ‘bounces’ [Joseph Silk, *The Big Bang* (2nd Ed.; San Francisco: Freeman, 1989), p311-312] – whereas an all but infinite number of ‘bounces’ is needed to ‘explain-away’ the fine-tuning of the universe. Even if the universe had somehow ‘bounced’ for eternity, the theory ends up with a philosophical and logistical problem, because the fine-tuning still exists, so would alternatively have needed setting before the first bounce (which implies we still need a creative force outside of time and matter). Philosopher Craig’s conclusion: Science already tells us there cannot be an infinite number of universes, and, all things being equal, the suggestion of a ‘God’ is the better explanation – and entirely probable when other evidences are taken into account.
- 33 Richard Lewontin, ‘Billions and billions of demons,’ (*The New York Review*, January 9, 1997), p31.
- 34 William Lane Craig, ‘The New Atheism and Five Arguments for God’, www.reasonablefaith.org
- 35 https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/J._L._Mackie
- 36 As cited in “A Moral Argument” by Paul Copan, Chapter 7, *To Everyone an Answer*, Editors F.J. Beckwith, W.L. Craig, J.P. Moreland (InterVarsity Press, 2004), p115.
- 37 A ‘patching together’ of Dawkins’ view cited by Lewis Wolpert, *Six Impossible Things before Breakfast: The Evolutionary Origins of Belief* (New York: Norton, 2006), p15 – further compiled in section 3.2 William Lane Craig, ‘The New Atheism and Five Arguments for God’.
- 38 Michael Ruse, *Darwinism Defended* (London: Addison-Wesley, 1982), p275, as quoted by William Lane Craig ‘The Ontological Argument’, Chapter 8, *To Everyone an Answer*, Editors F.J. Beckwith, W.L. Craig, J.P. Moreland (InterVarsity Press, 2004), p134.
- 39 While some atheists argue that ‘fixed’ morality does exist, they struggle to provide a basis for it. A key gap in the reasoning always remains, namely that any ‘proven’ morality would still not be connected to the intrinsic value of a person (the idea would merely be culturally made up) – because if there is no God there is no basis for saying a person has real value. The two ideas of morality and the value of human life are therefore directly connected. As a separate point, morality only has any real meaning if there is also culpability/accountability/consequences for ‘wrong’ actions, and therefore justice. However, ultimate accountability and justice only exist through a belief in God.
- 40 “A Moral Argument” by Paul Copan, Chapter 7, *To Everyone an Answer*, Editors F.J. Beckwith, W.L. Craig, J.P. Moreland (InterVarsity Press, 2004), p113.
- 41 Fyodor Dostoyevsky(1821-1881), *The Brothers Karamazov*, trans. C. Garnett (New York: Signet Classics, 1957), bk. II, chap. 6; bk. V, chap. 4; bk. XI, chap. 8.
- 42 C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (HarperSanFrancisco,1980), p74.
- 43 *Ibid*, p38.
- 44 In noting ethicists who have defended this argument, William Lane Craig refers his readers to Robert Adams, William Alston, Mark Linville, Paul Copan, John Hare and Stephen Evans, amongst others.
- 45 ‘The Spirituality of the Unchurched’ A paper by David Hay, as at <http://www.davidomalley.org.uk/Reflectionmaterial.html>
- 46 ‘Nearly half of UK adults believe in the resurrection – study’, *Christianity Today* (29 April, 2022). https://www.christiantoday.com/article/nearly_half_of_uk_adults_believe_in_the_resurrection_study/138534.htm
- 47 <https://faithsurvey.co.uk/uk-christianity.html>
- 48 ‘There’s no such thing as free will – But we’re better off believing in it anyway’ by Stephen Cave at www.theatlantic.com
- 49 Neuroscientist Sam Harris’ book, *Free Will*, 2012 (New York: Simon & Schuster, 2012) is purported to ‘bring down the fantasy of conscious choice’. As one example of many atheists who have reflected on the idea of free will, the famed philosopher F Nietzsche called free will ‘a theologians’ artifice’ that permits us to ‘judge and punish’.
- 50 “The Kalam Cosmological Argument” by R. Douglas Geivett, Chapter 4, *To Everyone an Answer*, Editors F.J. Beckwith, W.L. Craig, J.P. Moreland (InterVarsity Press, 2004), p75-76.
- 51 Robert Jastrow, ‘God and the Astronomers’ (1978), p116.

...by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved... 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 extraordinarily complicated creature...

— Professor Antony Flew, British philosopher

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