

# **A Case for the Existence of God**

by

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## **I. INTRODUCTION**

This is a case for the existence of God. It is not an attempt to show that God exists beyond a reasonable doubt. Reasonable doubts persist. However, this essay is an attempt to demonstrate that it is more likely than not that God exists. The purpose of this essay is to persuade the reader that God exists and attempt to show what we can know about this God from what has been created. We can rationally approach the subject of the existence of God and find adequate evidence outside of the Scripture, merely from what has been made. Apostle Paul pointed out: “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities--his eternal power and divine nature--have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”<sup>1</sup> All three major arguments for the existence of God--cosmological (causation), teleological (design), and moral--are essentially evidence from what God has made.

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<sup>1</sup> Romans 1:21 (NIV)

## II. ARGUMENT

### A. God Exists Because the Universe Could Not Exist Without an Infinite Cause.

#### 1. *Cosmological (causation) Argument*<sup>2</sup>

We know that all finite things have a cause. We can name nothing that is finite, within the universe as we know it, which does not require a cause. There could be a finite regress of these causes, but somewhere along the line, there has to be an original cause that does not require a cause. This original cause must be outside of the caused universe because if it were a part of the universe as we know it, it would also need a cause. Therefore, this original cause must be infinite and outside of the finite universe.

#### 2. *Response to Critics of Cosmological Arguments.*

Immanuel Kant<sup>3</sup> pointed out that if everything needs a cause, even God would need a cause.<sup>4</sup> He argued that cosmological arguments were, therefore, circular. However, we do not assert that *everything* needs a cause, but only that all *finite* things need a cause.<sup>5</sup> We assert only that there must be something outside of finite things which caused finite things to come into being. We do not necessarily prove that God, in the sense of Judeo-Christian and Islamic traditions, exists, but only that there must be an infinite cause which is outside of the caused things, that is, the universe. Additionally, infinite things or beings do not

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<sup>2</sup> Gerald Bray, *The Doctrine of God* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press, 1993), p. 69. Bray refers to this argument as an aetiological argument, a subset of cosmological proof. In my opinion, this is the strongest argument for the existence of an infinite God. Design arguments have been significantly weakened by Darwinism, and moral arguments have been weakened by moral relativism and a lack of clear agreement on objective moralities.

<sup>3</sup> Immanuel Kant, while he was a theist, really propelled agnosticism to prominence with his arguments against the cosmological and teleological proofs. Hugh Ross, *Astronomical Evidences for a Personal Transcendent God, The Creation Hypothesis* (J.P. Moreland, ed., Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press 1994), p. 142.

<sup>4</sup> Louis Berkhof, *Systematic Theology* (Grand Rapids: Eerdmans Pub. Co. 1954), p. 26.

<sup>5</sup> Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask* (Grand Rapids: Banker Books, 1990), p. 18-19. Bray, like Kant, misconstrues this argument as an assertion that everything needs a cause, instead of saying that all finite things need a cause. As demonstrated below, there is a significant difference between the

require a cause because there could be an infinite regress of causes (whereas finite things can only have a finite regress of causes). By definition, infinite means forever both in the past and future. If they existed forever, there could not be a cause.

Kant also argued that there could be an infinite regress of causes, and therefore, there is no need for an uncaused cause. In fact, he argued that the world is infinite.<sup>6</sup> As we have shown above, there cannot be an infinite regress of causes for finite things (because there was a beginning), whereas there could be an infinite regress of causes for infinite things (because there was no beginning). So, Kant's argument would be undermined if we can show that the universe is finite--that it had a beginning.

There are two major arguments to show that the universe had a beginning. First, the philosophical argument. To say that the universe has been in existence for infinity means that the past is infinite as well as the future. However, an infinite past is impossible because "it is impossible to pass through an infinite series of moments"<sup>7</sup> to get to the present. In other words, one cannot count to infinity because there is always one more number to count in sequence. "If the past is infinite (which is another way of saying, "If the universe had always existed without a beginning"), then we could never have passed through time to get to today. If the past is an infinite series of moments, and right now is where that series stops, then we would have passed through an infinite series and that is impossible. If the world never had a beginning, then we could not have reached today. But

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two positions.

<sup>6</sup> Ross, *supra*, at 142. Kant argued that the world is infinite in his book, Universal Natural History and Theory of the Heavens. He stated: "It is evident that in order to think of it [the universe] as in proportion to the power of the Infinite Being, it must have no limits at all . . . It would be absurd to represent the Deity as passing into action with an infinitely small part of His potency." So, he argues that the universe is infinite because God would not be so small to create anything less. This to me appears to be assuming the existence of God, ironically, in his argument to demonstrate that cosmological proofs are inadequate to prove existence of God.

we have reached today: so time must have begun at a particular point in the past, and today has come at a definite time since then. Therefore, the world is a finite event after all and it needs a cause.”<sup>8</sup>

Second, the scientific arguments. There are two scientific confirmations that the universe had a beginning and is therefore finite. First is the Big Bang theory, which is now the consensus of scientists studying the origin of the universe.<sup>9</sup> The theory is that about 15 billion years ago, the universe came into being by an explosion when time, space and energy all came together at a certain point. This theory arose from Edwin Hubble’s discovery in 1929 of a phenomenon called “red shift,” which postulates that space is expanding and the bodies are moving further away from each other.<sup>10</sup> If the world was created by a Big Bang, there must be a beginning, and as such, the universe must be finite in time.

The second scientific confirmation is the Second Law of Thermodynamics, which maintains that the universe is running out of usable energy. In other words, it is burning up. It will eventually die a cold death. The main implication of this is, as one physicist put it, “The universe cannot have existed forever. Otherwise it would have already reached its equilibrium end state an infinite time ago. Conclusion: The universe did not always exist.”<sup>11</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Geisler and Brooks, *supra*, at 17

<sup>8</sup> Geisler and Brooks, *supra*, at 17

<sup>9</sup> Geisler and Brooks, *supra*, at 17

<sup>10</sup> J.P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen, *Does God Exist?* (Amherst: Prometheus Books 1993), p. 38.

<sup>11</sup> J.P. Moreland and Kai Nielsen, *Does God Exist?* (Amherst: Prometheus Books 1993), p. 38.

Kant also argued that the cosmological arguments do not necessarily prove that there is a single cause.<sup>12</sup> As presented above, the Big Bang theory supports the position that the universe was created by a single explosion. Furthermore, the cosmological arguments demonstrate that the cause must be infinite--not a part of the finite universe, lest he or it needs a cause. If the cause is infinite, does it matter whether it or he is they or vice a versa?

Others have argued that the cosmological arguments do not prove that the infinite cause is personal--they argue that the cause can just be an "it." If the universe is finite in time, the infinite cause must have *had a choice* to cause the creation of the universe, and if the infinite cause made such a choice and decided to cause the creation, the cause must be personal, more than merely a being. "Suppose the cause of the universe has existed eternally. Suppose further that this cause is not personal: that it has given rise to the universe not through any choice, but simply through its being. In that case it is hard to see how the universe could be anything but infinitely old, since all the conditions needed for the being of the universe would exist from all eternity."<sup>13</sup> Since we have already shown that the universe cannot be infinitely old, the cause must have chosen to cause the creation of the universe. Therefore, the cause must be personal.

### 3. *What We Can Conclude About the Cause?*

As shown above, we can conclude that the cause is infinite (always was and is and to be, in that he has no beginning and cannot cease to exist); outside of the finite universe (meaning outside of the spatio-temporal arena); powerful (since he caused the creation of

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<sup>12</sup> Berkhof, *supra*, at 26.

<sup>13</sup> Peter Kreeft & Ronald K. Tacelli, *Handbook of Christian Apologetics* (Downers Grove: InterVarsity Press

the universe); personal (because he chose to create the universe); BUT impossible for finite things to know or understand more than from what he has created, unless he revealed or reveals himself to us in a special way that we can understand.

**B. God Exists Because the Universe and Life Could Not Come into Being Without an Intelligent Designer**

*1. Design Argument*<sup>14</sup>

The design argument can be summarized as follows: “The world everywhere reveals intelligence, order, harmony, and purpose, and thus implies the existence of an intelligent and purposeful being adequate to the production of such a world.”<sup>15</sup> Put another way, “[t]here is a design in the universe, aspects of which can be studied at every level from the subatomic to the human. Such complexity cannot be accidental; a design implies a designer just as surely as a watch implies a watchmaker.”<sup>16</sup> In biology, scientists have discovered that DNA molecules, the genetic code, contain what looks like a language similar to this term paper, as opposed to a sequence of letters stated over and over. “[DNA] works just the way alphabetical letter sequences do in this article to give information about origins. The genetic code functions exactly like a language code--indeed it *is* a code. It is a molecular communications system: a sequence of chemical ‘letters’ stores and transmits the communication in each living cell.”<sup>17</sup> When we receive a written message we assume

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1994), p. 60.

<sup>14</sup> “[The design argument] is twinned with the aetiological argument under the wider cosmological umbrella. It is different though, in that it focuses on the end of the universe rather than on its beginning.” Bray, *supra*, at 70. William Paley, who insisted that if someone found a watch in a forest, he should logically conclude that there is a watchmaker, is the most known proponent of this argument. Geisler and Brooks, *supra*, at 20.

<sup>15</sup> Berkhof, *supra*, at 26

<sup>16</sup> Bray, *supra*, at 70

<sup>17</sup> Walter L. Bradley & Charles B. Thaxton, *Information and Origin of Life, Creation Hypothesis*, *supra*, at 205-06.

that there is an intelligent source. In the same way, DNA is a written message. Therefore, there must be an intelligent source.

In a similar vein, the late Carl Sagan, in his search for extraterrestrial intelligence (SETI), indicated that “all we need to do is find one message with information in it from outer space, and we will be able to recognize the presence of intelligence. We don’t even need to be able to translate it; it is the presence of information instead of order that will tip us off to the presence of intelligence.”<sup>18</sup> If a message with information could be evidence of an intelligent source, then DNA, which is a message with information, should also be evidence of an intelligent source.

Furthermore, our world is an interconnected, interrelated, and ordered system of many components and parts. For example, as is the case with all basic elements, every hydrogen atom combines with every oxygen atom in the proportion of 2:1. The complexity of interdependence and relationship between matters in the universe is astounding. Further human research will definitely find more intricacies and complexities. “Contemporary science reveals to us that our world-system is not merely an aggregate of many separate, unrelated laws, but rather a tightly interlocking whole, where relationship to the whole structures and determines the parts. The parts can no longer be understood apart from the whole; its influence permeates them all.”<sup>19</sup> Therefore, such complexity of design and function requires an intelligent designer, and a unifying efficient cause outside of this interrelated system.

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<sup>18</sup> Moreland, Does God Exist, *supra*, at 36.

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<sup>19</sup> Kreeft and Tacelli, supra, at 63.

## 2. *Response to Darwinism*

Many assume that Darwin has done away with the need for an intelligent designer by showing that species evolved by the process of random mutation and natural selection--the survival of the fittest. However, Darwinism is not necessarily counter to an intelligent designer. It could be the designer that led the process of natural selection during the creation process. With respect to the systemic order and complexity of the *non-biological* world, Darwinism does not shed any light or attempt to explain how it came about. In addition, Darwinism does not explain how matter came into existence. In order for the fittest to survive, there has to exist something, and something else before that something. Even if we accept the theory that life arose out of a pre-biotic soup of chemicals, something has to create that chemical. So, Darwinism presupposes the existence of a reasonably orderly and systemic universe. It is concerned more with the evolution of life, not the original impetus for the universe. Nonetheless, “[i]f Darwinians wish to extrapolate from their purely biological theory and maintain that all the vast order around us is the result of random changes, then they are saying something which no empirical evidence could ever confirm.”<sup>20</sup>

## 3. *What We Can Conclude About God’s Character*

We can conclude that the designer is intelligent, creative, and artistic. Furthermore, the designer appears to have a plan, purpose, and goal for his creations.

**C. God Exists Because We Could Not Have Objective Moral Law Without a Supreme Moral Lawgiver.**

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<sup>20</sup> Kreeft and Tacelli, supra, at 57.

### 1. *Moral Argument*

The general moral argument can be stated as follows: All people are conscious of objective moral law; objective moral law implies a moral lawgiver who is outside of ourselves, society, and nature; therefore, there must be a supreme lawgiver.<sup>21</sup>

Admittedly, this argument assumes that there are objective moralities. Moral relativists argue that what appears to be objective morals are nothing more than social conventions or human instincts.<sup>22</sup> However, no one consistently believes that there are no objective moralities.<sup>23</sup> When they experience a certain moral wrong, they invariably stand up and say that there are certain things that no one ought to do. If there are no objective moralities, then there can be no absolute right and wrong. We cannot even say that what Adolf Hitler did was absolutely wrong.

Furthermore, the fact that societies have similar moralities does not make them mere social conventions. Social convention is in fact evidence of the existence of commonly agreed upon moralities. How is that all societies appear to believe that it is wrong to torture children, to murder, or to lie, and that it is good to love, show compassion, and be selfless? There must be something innate in humans that teaches us what is objectively right and wrong.

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<sup>21</sup> Geisler and Brooks, *supra*, at 22. This argument gained prominence during the nineteenth century when Kant, while criticizing and rejecting other arguments for existence of God, affirmed the moral argument, not really as a proof for God's existence, but to show that God is necessary for moral living. Geisler and Brooks, *supra*, at 23.

<sup>22</sup> Bray even argues that the "natural law" really does not exist in all human beings. Bray, *supra*, at 72.

<sup>23</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.).

Moreover, it is not merely an instinct. Sometimes two or more conflicting instincts arise at the same time--for example, the instinct for self-preservation and the herd instinct to save others. But there is something that says that it is right to follow one instinct over another. That something that tells us to follow one instinct over another could not in itself be an instinct. It must be something in us that tells us what is right and wrong--our conscience which informs us of objective moralities.<sup>24</sup> Instincts are like a keyboard, but our conscience is like a score that tells us which key to play.<sup>25</sup>

Even if we were moral relativists and rejected objective morality altogether, we would still believe that it is right to follow our conscience, even if the moralities that make up our conscience might presumably differ from person to person.<sup>26</sup> This belief appears to be universal. No one reasonably denies that people should not obey their conscience. The existence of this objective moral--that we should follow our conscience--is enough to establish our presumption that all people have a certain objective moral or morals.

Having established the existence of objective morals, we come to the argument that the existence of objective morals implies a lawgiver. If all humans are subject to objective morals, the morals must be from something that transcends humanity. They cannot be from humankind or society since they are universal and objective. If they were created by human beings or society, they could be neither objective nor universal.

Furthermore, this lawgiver must be outside of ourselves, nature, and society. This only leaves God. In fact, if God wanted us to know him, would not giving us a conscience

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<sup>24</sup> C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.).

<sup>25</sup> C.S. Lewis, Mere Christianity (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.).

of moral laws be one of the best ways to teach us about him? <sup>27</sup>

2. *What Can We Know About the Lawgiver?*

We can construe that the lawgiver is good, since our conscience seeks goodness and has at least a desire to avoid evil.

### III. CONCLUSION

For the foregoing reasons, it is more likely than not that God exists. But what kind of God exists? We can observe and know that he is infinite, powerful, outside of the created and finite universe, personal, intelligent, creative, artistic, purposeful in his creation, and good. However, we know that our knowledge of God is limited because we are finite and he is infinite, we are the created and he is the creator, and we are in the created spatial-temporal universe, while he is not limited by the same. Ultimately, we cannot know God, except generally from what has been made, *unless* he reveals himself to us.

Christians believe that God has revealed himself to us in the person of Jesus Christ. They believe that the infinite Creator has decided to intervene in the history of mankind to reveal himself to us. The issue, therefore, is whether the accounts of Jesus Christ in the New Testaments are reliable historical documents. If they are reliable, we can, through the teachings of Jesus Christ and his apostles, know God the Creator beyond just from what has been made. It would be like reading the owners' manual for humans for the first time.

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<sup>26</sup> Kreeft and Tacelli, *supra*, at 74.

<sup>27</sup> C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co.).