

— PART 2 —

God Is: The Classical Arguments

Searching Outside the Book.

- The case for a Creator based on **general revelation (natural theology)**.
- The Bible presupposes the existence of God: Psalm 53:1.
 - Therefore, an argument based on the Bible is self-referential and circular.

Pascal’s Wager.

- Blaise Pascal (1623-62) and the *Pensees*.
- The Wager:
 - Neither science nor reason can prove or disprove the existence of God.
 - Since the issue is so vital, we must assume that God exists and live accordingly.
 - If you bet on God and it turns out that God is an illusion, you lose nothing.
 - However, if you bet against God and are wrong, you lose everything.
 - Pascal: “If you win, you win everything; if you lose, you lose nothing.”
- Conclusion: It is both pragmatic and sensible to believe in God and serve him faithfully.
- Pascal’s Wager does not prove the existence of God, but it serves 2 purposes:
 - (1) It demonstrates that belief *can be* rational; and
 - (2) It might motivate the skeptic to keep searching until more conclusive reasons emerge.

[NOTE: Simple belief in God is *essential* – but *insufficient*. The eternal salvation of our soul depends upon our belief in, and commitment to, Jesus Christ as our Savior and Lord.]

Cosmological Arguments

The Sole Option.

- All traditional arguments for God ultimately rest on the principle of causality based on the mystery of creation.
- Three cosmological options:
 - (1) Eastern mysticism:
 - The physical/material world is an illusion.
 - (2) Naturalism:
 - The universe is uncaused and infinite.
 - Matter has always existed.
 - Life developed from spontaneous generation.
 - (3) Theism:
 - An eternal, infinite and omnipotent Supreme Being (as revealed in the Bible) created the finite universe *ex nihilo* – including all its life forms.

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- Eastern monistic pantheism defies all common sense and empirical evidence.
- The Naturalistic option is supported neither by reason nor science.
 - Logic dictates that nothing can come from nothing.
 - Other problematical aspects of Naturalism include...
 - (1) Why is there something rather than nothing?
 - (2) What is the source of the natural physical laws that govern the universe?
 - (3) How did non-living chemical processes produce life?
 - (4) How did the earliest life-forms gain the ability to reproduce themselves?
 - (5) How did impersonal chemical/material forces produce cognate beings imbued with self-consciousness, self-determination, and personality?
 - (6) How can impersonal matter and energy account for moral consciousness?
 - (7) How did a random, purposeless, and impersonal universe manage to produce creatures such as human beings who are endowed with a sense of purpose?
- Theism constitutes the only viable option.
 - It is supported by formidable arguments and considerable circumstantial evidence.
 - Logically, the existence of a single molecule is ample evidence that God exists based on the principle of self-evidential truth.
- Thomas Aquinas, “Five Proofs for the Existence of God.”

1. The Law of Causality.

- Basic principle: God is the one and only necessary Being (the principle of aseity).
- The causality syllogism:
 - (1) Everything that has a beginning (i.e., anything that is finite or limited) must be caused by something other than itself.
 - (2) The universe had a beginning.
 - (3) Therefore, there has to be a First Cause of everything in the universe that is itself eternal and outside the universe – and this we call “God.”



Thomas Aquinas

[NOTE: Plato and Aristotle developed the first arguments for God based on causation.

In Romans 1:19-20, the apostle Paul wrote that all people know of God because “God has made it evident to them.” Christian theologians and philosophers including Augustine and Thomas Aquinas emphasized this point, as did the Jewish philosopher Moses Maimonides.

Similarly, Muslim philosophers such as al-Ghazali (1058-1111) and Avicenna (980-1037) developed a case for a creator God based on the *Kalam* principle.]

- The first point seems indisputable:
 - Philosopher Edward Feser: “[E]mpirical science as practiced today is only possible given certain philosophical assumptions, especially about the nature of causation. As I argue at length in *The Last Superstition*, these assumptions entail, when worked out consistently, the existence of a divine First Cause. The classical tradition in natural theology... holds that the existence of the God of traditional theism is necessary and rationally unavoidable, given the existence of any causation at all in the world.”

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- ▶ Norman Geisler and Frank Turek: “To deny the Law of Causality is to deny rationality. The very process of rational thinking requires us to put together thoughts (the causes) that result in conclusions (the effects). If anyone ever tells you he doesn’t believe in the Law of Causality, simply ask that person, ‘What caused you to come to that conclusion?’”
- ▶ Furthermore, all contingent beings (such as us) are dependent on an uncaused non-contingent Being – a “First Cause” – for our existence.
- The second point can be argued philosophically and scientifically.
 - ▶ Philosophically, it is impossible that the universe has existed forever.
 - ▶ Scientifically, both the **Big Bang Theory** and the **Laws of Thermodynamics** demonstrate that the universe had a beginning.
 - ▶ Evidence for the Big Bang theory seems overwhelming.
 - ▶ First Law of Thermodynamics: The law of energy conservation.
 - Energy cannot be created or destroyed – it can only change forms.
 - The total amount of energy in the universe is constant.
 - ▶ Second Law of Thermodynamics: The law of entropy.
 - In an isolated system, the natural course of things is to degenerate.
 - Although the total amount of energy in the universe is constant, less energy is available for usable work with the passage of time.
 - Ron Rhodes: “In fact, all we have to do is nothing, and everything deteriorates, collapses, breaks down, wears out, all by itself....”
 - ▶ The laws for thermodynamics contradict evolutionary theory.
 - The universe cannot be eternal – it must have had a beginning.
- [NOTE: Even Darwin acknowledged that the universe had a “First Cause,” the result of an “intelligent mind.”]
- We cannot understand everything about God and his complex creation, but we can rationally conclude that he is the Intelligent Designer of it all.
- Gregory Koukl: The process for believing in God is the same as for believing in atoms.
 - ▶ We simply follow the evidence of what we *can* see to conclude the existence of something we *cannot* see. An effect needs a cause adequate to explain it.
 - ▶ GK: “There is nothing irrational or unreasonable about the idea of a personal God creating the material universe. A Big Bang needs a “Big Banger”.... A complex set of instructions (as in DNA) needs an author. A blueprint requires an engineer. A moral law needs a moral lawgiver.”
- The skeptical response:
 - ▶ Bertrand Russell: “The universe is just there, and that’s all.”
 - ▶ Victor Stenger. The universe may be “uncaused” and may have “emerged from nothing.”
 - ▶ John Post: There cannot be a cause of the origin of the universe, since “by definition the universe contains everything there is or ever was or will be.”
 - ▶ The infamous “monkey theorem.”
 - ▶ George Wald: “Given enough time... the impossible becomes probable.”

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2. The Law of Motion.

- (1) Everything in motion has been set in motion by something other than itself.
- (2) There cannot be an infinite regress of these causes.
- (3) Everything in this universe is moving – all is charged with energy that vibrates at its own frequency.
- (4) Therefore, there has to be an original Prime Mover who set everything in motion – and this we call “God.”

3. The Reality of Existence.

- (1) Finite, changing beings exist.
 - EX: I exist.
- (2) Every finite, changing being must be caused by another being.
 - No finite, changing being can be its own cause.
- (3) There cannot be an infinite regress of causes of being because...
 - An infinite regress of finite beings would not *cause* the existence of anything.
 - No infinite regress of finite beings can explain *why* we exist right now.
- (4) Therefore, there must be a first uncaused Cause of every finite, changing thing that exists.
 - Ultimately, something has to create finite things and set the process in motion.
- (5) This first Cause must be eternal, infinite, necessary, and one.
- (6) This uncaused Cause is identical to the God of the Bible.
 - The God that philosophy requires is the same God that Aristotle discovered by reason:
 - Aristotle described this uncaused Cause as immutable, immaterial, omnipotent, omniscient, individual oneness, perfect goodness, and necessary existence.
 - Gen. 1:1.
 - Col. 1:16-17.

[NOTE: Regarding human evolution: Aquinas distinguished between primary and secondary causation. In *Summa Theologia*, he argued that humanity was created not by secondary but by primary causation. In other words: God didn't act through natural physical forces but intervened supernaturally to make nature do something it otherwise couldn't do.]

- Skeptics deny this reality:
 - Quentin Smith: “The most reasonable belief is that we came from nothing, by nothing, and for nothing.”
 - Daniel Dennett: The universe “creates itself *ex nihilo*....”

4. The Principle of Sufficient Reason.

- G. W. F. Leibniz (1646-1716): “Why is there something rather than nothing?”
 - Why does anything exist at all?
 - There is no reason to think that the universe is logically necessary.
 - There must be an answer because “nothing happens without a sufficient reason.”
- What accounts for the laws of physics?
 - These laws exist independently of science's discovery of them.

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- The reason for the existence of the universe must be found outside of itself.
 - John Foster: If we accept the fact that there are [natural physical] laws, then something must impose that regularity on the universe.
 - What agent can bring this about?
 - The “theistic option” is the only serious option.
- This “Sufficient Reason” for the existence of the universe is what we call “God.”
- The ultimate quest:
 - Einstein: “I want to know how God created this world.... I want to know his thoughts; the rest are details.”
 - Stephen Hawking: “If we discover a complete theory” [that explains the origin of the universe]... then we would know “the mind of God.”

Teleological Arguments

Design and Purpose.

- Teleology: The purpose for which phenomena exist rather than the cause by which they exist.
- All living matter has a goal or purpose that transcends its component matter.
 - Thomas Aquinas: The “nature” of any particular thing is “a purpose, implanted by the Divine Art, that it be moved to a determinate end.”
 - I.e., God is the Intelligent Force who directs “all natural things to their end.”
- Teleological skeptics:
 - Bernard Cohen in *Revolution in Science* (1985): “The Darwinian revolution sounded the death knell of any argument about design in the universe or in nature.”
 - George Gaylord Simpson in *The Meaning of Evolution* (1967): “Man is the result of a purposeless and natural process that did not have him in mind.”
 - Richard Dawkins: Biological life has the appearance of design, but it is only the product of random and impersonal evolutionary coincidences.
 - Stephen Jay Gould: “No intervening spirit watches lovingly over the affairs of nature.... Whatever we think of God, his existence is not manifest in the products of nature.”

Four Teleological Phenomena.

- Naturalism cannot account for 4 fundamental teleological phenomena.
- (1) **How can naturalistic processes account for the existence of the first living matter from non-living matter?**

[NOTE: Stanley Miller’s 1953 laboratory experiment generating amino acids.]

- Richard Dawkins on the origin of life: “The origin of life was the chemical event, or series of events, whereby the vital conditions for natural selection first came about... Once the vital ingredient – *some kind of genetic molecule* – is in place, true Darwinian natural selection can follow.”

But how can this possibly happen? “Scientists invoke the magic of large numbers.... A chemical model need only predict that life will arise on one planet in a billion billion to give us a good and entirely satisfying explanation for the presence of life here.”

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- ▶ Roy Abraham Varghese: “Think for a minute of a marble table in front of you. Do you think that, given a trillion years or infinite time, this table could suddenly or gradually become conscious, aware of its surroundings, aware of its identity the way you are?... Once you understand the nature of matter, of mass-energy, you realize that, by its very nature, it could never become ‘aware,’ never ‘think,’ never say ‘I’. But the atheist position is that, at some point in the history of the universe, the impossible and the inconceivable took place. Undifferentiated matter... at some point became ‘alive,’ then conscious, then conceptually proficient, then an ‘I’.”
- ▶ Antonio Lazcano, president of the International Society for the Study of the Origin of Life: “Life could not have evolved without a genetic mechanism – one able to store, replicate, and transmit to its progeny information that can change with time... Precisely how the first genetic machinery evolved also persists as an unresolved issue.”
- ▶ Franklin Harold: The origin of life remains “one of the unsolved mysteries of science.”

(2) How can naturalistic processes account for the emergence, from the very earliest life-forms which were incapable of reproducing themselves, of life-forms with a capacity for reproducing themselves?

- ▶ Without the capacity to reproduce, it was impossible for different species to emerge gradually, over eons of time, through random mutation and natural selection.
- ▶ John Maddox, editor emeritus of *Nature*: “The overriding question is when (and how) sexual reproduction itself evolved. Despite decades of speculation, we do not know.”
- ▶ Antony Flew: The bottom line is, “There is no law of nature that instructs matter to produce end-directed, self-replicating entities.”

(3) How can random naturalistic processes account for the complex coding and information processing that is endemic to all life-forms?

- ▶ The simplest single-cell amoeba contains information equivalent of 1,000 encyclopedias.
- ▶ David Berlinski: Why should we think that “the origins of a system of coded chemistry” can develop naturalistically unlike all other codes and languages and systems of communication that require intelligent design?
- ▶ Paul Davies: “Life is more than just complex chemical reactions. The cell is also an information storing, processing and replicating system. We need to explain the origin of this information, and the way in which the information processing machinery came to exist.... The problem of how meaningful or semantic information can emerge spontaneously from a collection of mindless molecules subject to blind and purposeless forces presents a deep conceptual challenge.”
- ▶ Carl Woese: There is no naturalistic explanation for the whole complex system of coded chemistry.

(4) How can naturalistic processes account for the phenomena of consciousness and the self?

- ▶ Human beings are conscious, and conscious that they are conscious. To deny this reality, they would have to be conscious.
- ▶ Naturalism cannot explain why unconscious life transformed itself into conscious life.

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- ▶ Naturalism cannot explain why the matter that composes our bodies changes constantly, yet we remain the same person.
- ▶ Steven Pinker: There is no naturalistic explanation for consciousness and self-awareness.
- ▶ Roy Abraham Varghese: “The problem becomes insoluble when you realize the nature of neurons. First of all, neurons show no resemblance to our conscious life. Second and more important, their physical properties do not in any way give reason to believe that they can or will produce consciousness. Consciousness is correlated with certain regions of the brain, but when the same systems of neurons are present in the brain stem there is no ‘production’ of consciousness. As a matter of fact... there is no essential difference in the ultimate physical constituents of a heap of sand and the brain of an Einstein...

“Beyond consciousness there is the phenomenon of thought, of understanding, seeing meaning.... At the foundation of all our thinking, communicating, and use of language is a miraculous power. It is the power of [making distinctions and formulating concepts, etc.].... And you even ponder things that have no physical characteristics, such as the idea of liberty or the activity of angels. This power of thinking in concepts is by its very nature something that transcends matter.

“If there are those who dispute any of this, consistency demands that they stop talking and thinking.... The ability to intellectualize has no physical explanation because “there is no organ that performs understanding.”

- ▶ Roy Abraham Varghese on the erroneous comparisons between the human mind and a supercomputer: Supercomputers, unlike human beings, are not organically unified. Computers are merely “a bundle of parts” that “perform functions implanted and directed by the creators” of the machine.

Computers do not know what “it” is doing when “it” performs a function. Instead, their computations are “purely and simply a matter of electrical pulses, circuitry, and transistors.”

Of course, human beings can perform the same kind of calculations and transactions using the machinery of the brain, “but they are performed by a center of consciousness who is conscious of what is going on, understands what is being done, and intentionally performs them.”

Conversely, “There is no awareness, understanding, meaning, intention, or person involved when the computer performs the same actions, even when the computer has multiple processors operating at superhuman speeds.... To suggest that the computer ‘understands’ what it is doing is like saying that a power line can meditate on the questions of free will and determinism, or that the chemicals in a test tube can apply the principle of non-contradiction in solving problem, or that a DVD player understands and enjoys the music it plays.”

- ▶ The phenomenon is our sense of self-awareness.
 - ▶ The self cannot be described, let alone explained, in terms of physics or chemistry: science does not discover the self; the self discovers science.”

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- A logical deduction: The mystery of “supraphysicality.”
 - The realities of consciousness, thought, and the self lead to the greatest mystery of all – “supraphysicality.”
 - The Cambrian Explosion demonstrates that conscious life-forms appeared suddenly with no evolutionary forerunner.
 - Atheist evolutionists lack any answer to the mysteries of life, consciousness, thought, and the self.
 - Varghese: The question of the origin of the supraphysical seems obvious: the supraphysical can only originate in a supraphysical source. Life, consciousness, mind, and the self can only come from a Source that is living, conscious, and thinking. If we are centers of consciousness and thought who are able to know and love and intend and execute, I cannot see how such centers could come to be from something that is itself incapable of all these activities.... It is simply inconceivable that any material matrix... can generate agents who think and act. Matter cannot produce conceptions and perceptions. A force field does not plan or think. So at the level of reason and everyday experience, we become immediately aware that the world of living, conscious, thinking beings has to originate in a living Source, a Mind.”

The Argument from Design. (Aquinas’ fifth proof; *telos* means purpose.)

- Cosmologist Carl Sagan: We don’t need to believe in a God.
 - Sagan: “As science advances, there seems to be less and less for God to do.... Whatever it is we can not explain lately is attributed to God.... And then after a while, we explain it, and so [there’s no longer any reason to believe in God].”
 - Richard Dawkins: There is no evidence of intelligent design:
 - “The universe we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is no design, no purpose, no evil and no good; nothing but blind pitiless indifference.”
 - In fact, both reason and modern science demonstrate the absurdity of the Godless hypothesis.
 - Brian Miller: “The most obvious conclusion about our universe is that it was created by a transcendent mind who designed it for the purpose of supporting life.”
 - The argument from design is the philosophical basis for **Intelligent Design** theory.
 - William Dembski: “Intelligent design (ID) is the study of patterns in nature that are best explained as the product of intelligence.”
 - This argument is based on the principle of **abduction** – inference to the best explanation.
- (1) There is intelligent design in the universe.**
- EX: The laws of mathematics and physics.
 - EX: The laws of biology and the intricate chemical composition of the universe.
 - EX: In humans, the DNA of a single cell equals 1,000 encyclopedia volumes.
 - The human genome includes 6 billion bits of DNA.



Carl Sagan

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- ▶ John Stuart Mill and the complexity of the human eye.
- ▶ Alfred Edward Taylor: Nature reveals an “anticipatory design” that random evolutionary processes cannot account for.
- ▶ Michael Behe and the theory of “**irreducible complexity**.”
 - EX: A common mechanical mousetrap.
 - EX: Bodily organs are irreducibly complex and could not have evolved by random genetic mutations over time.
- ▶ William Dembski: Molecular systems resemble high-tech machines with “information storage and transfer; functioning codes; sorting and delivery systems; self-regulation and feedback loops; signal transduction circuitry; and everywhere complex arrangements of mutually-interdependent and well-fitted parts that work in concert to perform a function.”

(2) All designs imply a designer.

- ▶ Nothing that lacks consciousness tends toward a goal unless directed by someone with consciousness and intelligence.
- ▶ The more complex the design, the greater the intelligence required to produce it.
- ▶ Norman Geisler: “The design we see in the universe is complex. The universe is a very intricate system of forces... Life is a very complex development.”
- ▶ Antony Flew: “The important point is not merely that there are [laws] of nature, but that these regularities are mathematically precise and universal.”
- ▶ Carl Sagan: “The information content of the human brain expressed in bits is probably comparable to the total number of connections among neurons – about a hundred trillion bits. If written in English, that information would fill some 20 million volumes, as many as in the world’s largest libraries. The equivalent of 20 million books is inside the heads of every one of us.”
- ▶ Norman Geisler: “A single DNA molecule, the building block of all life, carries the same amount of information as one volume of an encyclopedia. No one seeing an encyclopedia lying in the forest would hesitate to think that it had an intelligent cause; so when we find a creature composed of millions of DNA-based cells, we ought to assume that it likewise has an intelligent cause.”
- ▶ Based on probabilities, the odds of a complex human being emerging purely by chance are too high to calculate.
- ▶ If human beings are nothing more than products of mindless, impersonal, amoral, and purposeless processes, then it makes no sense why we are conscious persons who have an innate sense of morality and purpose in life.
- ▶ Dinesh D’Souza: “Evolution has no explanation for the origin of the universe or its laws.... Evolution itself requires a finely tuned designer universe.... Who made a universe with the laws that could produce mankind? What is the ultimate explanation for why reality is structured in this way?

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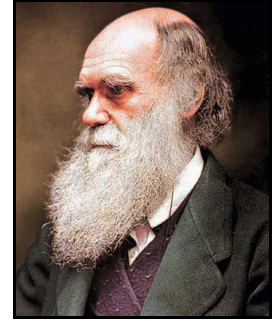
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- ▶ J. Budziszewski: “For a hundred and fifty years, it was the boast of the Darwinists that living things only *seem* to be designed – that ‘man is the result of a meaningless and purposeless process that did not have us in mind’.... Today, we have overwhelming evidence that this is not so.... Natural selection is supposed to proceed by undirected small modifications... but the living cell has turned out to be a maze of molecular machines, in many of which the parts interact in such a way that unless all of them are present *at once*, the machine either doesn’t work at all....



“Darwin wrote that ‘If it could be demonstrated that any complex organ existed which could not possibly have been formed by numerous, successive, slight modifications, my theory would absolutely break down.’ By his own criterion, then, his theory has absolutely broken down.

“Even if human beings could have come about by natural selection, the Darwinian mechanism does not explain where life came from in the first place. Even if it could explain where life came from in the first place, it doesn’t explain where the universe came from. And even if it could explain where the universe came from, it doesn’t explain why the universe is exquisitely fine-tuned for the possibility of life like us. These things are so plain that even an atheist like the Nobel Prize-winning astrophysicist Fred Hoyle was forced to recognize them:

A common sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature.

(3) The “superintellect” who is the Intelligent Designer of the universe is God.

- ▶ The Theistic position is the best explanation – and infinitely more sensible – than the belief that everything is the result of random naturalistic processes.
- ▶ In his book, *There Is a God*, Antony Flew writes how the argument from design was a major factor in his renunciation of atheism.
 - In a May 2004 symposium, “when asked if recent work on the origin of life pointed to the activity of a creative Intelligence, I said: ‘Yes, I now think it does... almost entirely because of the DNA investigations. What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce [life], that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together....’
 - “This statement represented a major change of course for me, but it was nevertheless consistent with the principle I have embraced since the beginning of my philosophical life – of following the argument no matter where it leads....
 - “Although I was once sharply critical of the argument to design, I have since come to see that, when correctly formulated, this argument constitutes a persuasive case for the existence of God.”

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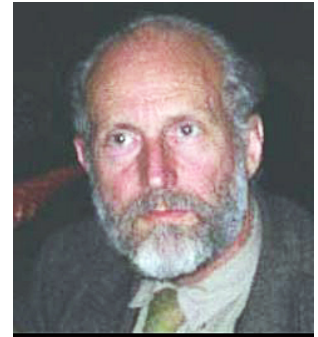
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The “Watchmaker” Argument.

- William Paley’s *Natural Theology* (1804): The “watch-maker” analogy.
- Just as we know that the products of modern manufacturing are the result of intelligence, so can we reasonably conclude that there is an Intelligent Designer of the whole universe – and this we call “God.”
- The skeptical response:
 - David Hume: The apparent “design” in the universe may be nothing more than a “happy accident.”
 - Given enough time, it is possible that random chance could produce all the phenomena of nature – including every aspect of human anatomy.[!]

3. The Anthropic Principle.

- Are human beings a fluke – an insignificant accident of nature?
 - Carl Sagan: “Our planet is a lonely speck in the great enveloping cosmic dark.”
 - Implication: Not only is our planet insignificant, but so are we.
 - Physicist Steven Weinberg: “As far as we have been able to discover the laws of nature, they are impersonal, with no hint of a divine plan or any special status for human beings....” We just don’t count for much in the grand scheme of things.”
 - Physicist Victor Stenger: “It is hard to conclude that the universe was created with a special, cosmic purpose for humanity.”
- Conversely, many scientists marvel at the extent to which the universe is fine-tuned for human existence.
- Astrophysicist Brandon Carter and the Anthropic Principle (1973).
 - Life was “pre-planned” from the very first nanosecond in order for human life to appear in the universe billions of years later.
- The fine-tuning of the universe.
 - Gravity, the strong and weak nuclear forces, electromagnetism, and the cosmological constant.
 - Robin Collins: “Almost everything about the basic structure of the universe... is balanced on a razor’s edge for life to occur.”
 - Patrick Glynn in *God: The Evidence*: “The slightest tinkering with a single one of scores of basic values and relationships in nature [e.g., the value of gravity; the strength of electro-magnetic force; the difference in mass between protons and neutrons; the chemical composition of water, etc.] would have resulted in a universe vastly different from the one we inhabit.... Far from being accidental, life appeared to be the goal toward which the entire universe from the very first moment of its existence had been orchestrated, fine-tuned.”
 - Dinesh D’Souza: “It turns out that the vast size and great age of our universe are not coincidental. They are the indispensable conditions for the existence of life on earth.... If the basic values and relationships of nature were even slightly different, our universe would not exist and neither would we.”



Brandon Carter

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- ▶ Stephen Hawking: “If the rate of expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have recollapsed before it even reached its present size....

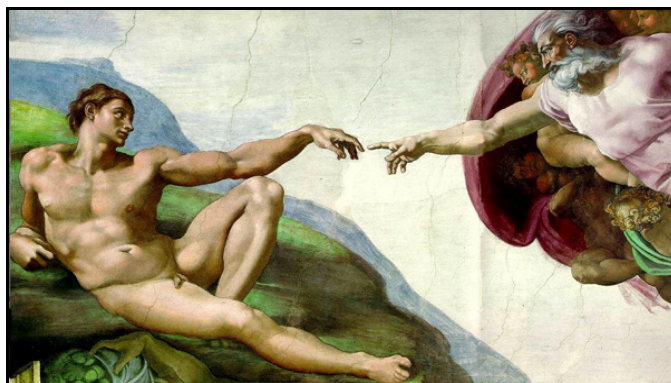
“It would be very difficult to explain why the universe should have begun in just this way, except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us.”

- ▶ William Lane Craig: “The scientific community has been stunned by its discovery of how complex and sensitive a balance of initial conditions must be given in the Big Bang in order for the universe to permit the origin and evolution of intelligent life on Earth. The universe appears, in fact, to have been incredibly fine-tuned from the moment of its inception for the production of intelligent life on Earth.”
- ▶ Louis Markos: “Modern science has taught us that our universe, and our life within that universe, is almost unfathomably unlikely; the odds against it are truly astronomical. If we run the odds against just one of the five constants being tuned the way it is, we get a number in the trillions; but when we calculate the likelihood of all five being in alignment, we get a number that exceeds the number of atoms in the known universe.”
- ▶ Robert Jastrow: The anthropic principle is “the most theistic result ever to come out of science.”



Stephen Hawking

- A further implication: Is the God who created human life personal or impersonal?
 - ▶ The creation cannot be greater (or more complex) than the creator.
 - ▶ Therefore, personhood cannot come from an impersonal force.
- The mystery of consciousness.
 - ▶ Matter and consciousness are distinct, and personhood is more complex than any other manifestation of creation.
 - ▶ How could consciousness emerge from purely material processes?
 - ▶ Lee Strobel: “The laws of chemistry and physics cannot explain... consciousness.”
- Skeptics remain unconvinced.
 - ▶ Any causal explanation is preferable to the obvious one: creation *ex nihilo* by an eternal and omnipotent God.
 - ▶ No amount of empirical and mathematical evidence can loose the hold that philosophical naturalism has over their minds and hearts.
 - ▶ The “multiverse theory.”



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Ontological (Metaphysical) Arguments

The Transcendence Issue.

- Two broad fields of philosophy: **ontology** and **epistemology**.
 - Ontology (or **metaphysics**) focuses on the nature of being – the reality of what *is*.
 - Epistemology focuses on the nature of knowing (or understanding) what *is*.
- Aristotle: Ontology is the “first philosophy.”
 - Logically, ontology precedes epistemology because if nothing exists, then there is nothing to be known.
- The essence of ontology is **Prime Reality** – i.e., the **Ultimate Being: God**.
- A strong argument for the existence of God can be deduced based on humanity’s longing for **transcendence** – accessing and reflecting upon the non-physical mysteries of life.
- This is as much a “**spiritual**” or **aesthetic** quest as an intellectual pursuit.
 - Therefore, it resonates with some people and not at all with others.
- Nothing in this world satisfies the deepest longing in our hearts.
- Why does nothing in this world suffice?
 - Because, ultimately, we were not made for *this* world.
 - Eccles. 3:11 – God has “set eternity in our hearts,” so that we are satisfied with nothing less than God himself.
 - Augustine: “O Lord, we were made for you. Our hearts are restless ‘til they rest in you.”
 - Pascal: Inside every human being is a “God-shaped vacuum” that only God can fill.
- Nothing in this life is an end in itself.
 - Everything good points beyond itself to something transcendent.
 - C. S. Lewis: “The books or the music in which we thought the beauty was located will betray us if we trust in them; it was not in them, it only came through them, and what came through them was longing. These things – the beauty, the memory of our own past – are good images of what we really desire; but if they are mistaken for the thing itself they turn into dumb idols, breaking the hearts of their worshipers.”
- Even romantic love hints at a transcendent reality:
 - Patrick Glynn: “The first step, the rejection of nihilism, prepared me for the second – an encounter with love sufficiently deep to bring an intimation of the divine. It was shortly after my decision [to reject nihilism] that I encountered Gabrielle. Someone once said that it is hard to fall in love without thinking of God. Such was my experience. Ours was a wonderful romance that would culminate in marriage.... But these romantic feelings pointed me toward something deeper. I read much later Martin Buber’s notion that every true encounter with the ‘thou’ points to the Thou of God: ‘Extended, the lines of relationships intersect in the eternal You.’”

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“The God Who Is”

The Nature and Character of God.

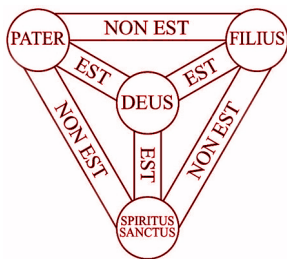
- Thomas Aquinas (1225-74): Finite human beings can only conceive of the infinite God **analogically**.
 - Although an know something about God through his creation (**general revelation**) and his revealed Word (**special revelation**), some aspects of God’s character and nature are beyond our capacity to comprehend.
 - Scripture employs figurative (and even **anthropomorphic**) language to describe God.
- God is the **Ultimate Being** and the sole **Self-existent Reality**.
 - The principle of **aseity**.
- God is the great **Uncaused Cause**.
 - The **Creator** and the **Sustainer** of all matter, space, time, and energy, which he brought into existence *ex nihilo* (“out of nothing”).
 - Gen. 1:1; Ex. 3:14, Ps. 90:2; John 1:3; 5:26; Acts 17:25, 28; Rom. 11:36; Col. 1:16; I Tim. 1:17; 6:15-16; Heb. 2:10; Rev. 1:8; 4:11.
- God is **Eternal and Infinite**.
 - Ex. 3:14 – “I AM Who I AM.”
- God is absolute **Perfection**.
 - The Ultimate Standard for all that is True, Good, and Beautiful.
- God is the one and only true God (**monotheism**).
 - Deut. 6:4.
- God is **Personal**.
 - Jer. 29:1; Rom. 8:28-30; Eph. 1:3-5, 11; II Tim. 2:19. II Pet. 3:9.



[NOTE: Logically, it is impossible that God is impersonal. Matter and consciousness are distinct, and personhood is more complex than any other manifestation of creation. How could consciousness entities emerge from purely unconscious and material processes?

Just as an effect cannot be greater than its cause, the creation cannot be greater (or more complex) than its creator. Therefore, personhood cannot come from an impersonal force.]

- God is **Triune**.



- One in *essence* and three in *personhood* – the doctrine of the **Trinity**.
- The doctrine of the Trinity is implied in the Hebrew Scriptures.
 - Gen. 1:26; 3:22; 11:7.
- The **Nicene Creed** (325 A.D.) and the doctrine of **homoousius**.
- Matt. 3:13-17; 28:19-20; Mark 1:9-11; Luke 3:21-22; John 1:1-14; 29-34; 6:27; 8:58; 10:30-33; 14:8-17; 16:5-16; 20:28; Acts 1:7-8; 5:3-4; Rom. 9:8; 10:9-13; II Cor. 3:17; Phil. 2:5-11; Col. 1:15-20; 2:9; Titus 2:13; Heb. 1:3; II Peter 1:1-2; I John 5:20.

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- God is **Spirit** (immaterial and non-corporeal).
 - John 4:24; Luke 24:39.
 - God is **Transcendent** and **Holy**.
 - God is **Immanent**.
 - Only Christian theism holds that God is both transcendent *and* immanent.
 - God is **Omniscient** (all-knowing).
 - Ps. 139; Ps. 147:5; Heb. 4:13; Is. 46:10.
 - God is **Omnipresent**.
 - Although God transcends his creation, his presence is everywhere in the universe.
 - God is **Omnipotent** and **Sovereign**.
 - God is all-powerful, and nothing is beyond God's control and authority.
 - Rev. 19:6; Eph. 1:19-21; Is. 46:10.
 - God is **Immutable** (unchanging).
 - To change, God would either have to progress or regress, improve or deteriorate, expand or contract – an impossibility for an absolute and perfect Being.
 - Ex. 3:14 – “I AM Who I AM.”
 - Mal. 3:6 – “I the Lord do not change.”
 - Jesus: “Before Abraham was born, I AM” – John 8:58.
 - God is **Inscrutable**.
 - God is beyond our capacity to fully understand.
 - Job 42:1-6 – “Surely I spoke of things I did not understand, things too wonderful for me to know.”
 - Is. 55:8-9 – “‘For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways,’ says the Lord. ‘As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts.’”
 - God is **Goodness**.
 - James Sire: “This is the prime statement about God's character.”
 - C. S. Lewis: “God is not merely good, but goodness.”
 - John 1:5 declares: “God is light; in him is no darkness at all.”
 - God's character is the source and the standard for all morality and ethics.
 - Houston Smith: “The supreme achievement of Jewish thought was in the character it ascribed to God. Unlike the gods of other cultures, YHWH was neither amoral nor indifferent toward humanity, but a God of justice, righteousness and lovingkindness.”
 - God is **Love**:
 - God is not indifferent toward his creation.
 - I John 4:16 – “God is love.”
 - John 3:16 – “For God so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son....”
 - Rom. 5:8 – “God demonstrates his love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.”
 - II Pet. 3:9 – “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.”
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