

Proving the Existence of God

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Introduction

There are only two possible positions relative to the existence of God: Either He does or He does not exist. The absolutely fundamental issue to Christians is belief in God. In the very nature of the case, Christians **must** believe in God:

And without faith it is impossible to be well-pleasing unto him; for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that seek after him (Heb. 11:6).

Some style themselves “Christian Agnostics.” That is as close as they come to being such. One may as well speak of a “Nazi Communist” or a “believing infidel.” Christians believe in God! If one does not believe in God, he is not a “Christian” in any sense (even if he teaches in a theological seminary or is an Episcopal bishop).

God has revealed Himself in His created universe (i.e., general revelation, Psa. 19:1–4; Rom. 1:19–20) and in His Word (i.e., special revelation, John. 20:30–31). The Bible begins with the majestic words, “In the beginning, God...” (Gen. 1:1). Our first impulse as Christians is simply to turn to the Bible and its innumerable declarations of the existence of God for proof. Even the atheist cannot deny that the Bible throughout declares God.

However, Biblical declarations are not sufficient for atheists and agnostics (they can hardly believe the Bible to be the Word of God while denying the existence of God). One employs circular reasoning (which is no reasoning at all) in saying that he believes in God because he believes what the Bible says about Him, and then argues that the Bible is the Word of God because God says it is. (Of course, powerful arguments can be made based on the Bible’s transcendent contents and characteristics [e.g., its harmony, prophetic fulfillment, miracles, ethics, et al.].)

When we discuss the existence of God with an atheist, we must appeal to some sort of evidence besides what the Bible says. He claims that the existence of God cannot be “proved.” If by *proved* he means by running tests in a laboratory or measuring the square footage of a building, he is correct—we cannot empirically “prove” by such means that God exists. As weighty as empirical evidence is for establishing a proposition, there are other ways of proving a matter, however. Several such powerful proofs of God’s existence are available, which are

convincing to those who will consider them without irrational bias. Among the most telling of these proofs is the Cosmological Argument.

Definition and Background

Cosmology derives from two Greek nouns (*cosmos* and *logos*) and refers to the study of the origin and general structure of the universe, including its cause. Of special relevance to the Cosmological Argument is the word *cause*. This argument is often called “The First Cause Argument,” for it seeks to answer the question concerning who or what caused the cosmos – the universe.

Because the Cosmological Argument has to do with cause, it is necessary to consider an antecedent underlying argument, one which philosophers and scientists have pondered and recognized for centuries. In his letter to the Hebrews, the inspired “philosopher” (who I believe to be the apostle Paul) set forth this simple, sweeping Cause-effect Argument (also known as the Law of Causality) upon which the cosmological argument rests: “For every house is builded by some one...” (Heb. 3:4a).

The Cause-Effect Argument

The Hebrews writer stated an axiomatic principle that stands on its own without need of proof; what he says is true about every house. But this principle reaches far beyond house building. The “house” is a figure representing all other created things. Just as every house has a builder, so every other effect that is finite, material, or contingent has a cause behind it. This broad axiom implies at least the following innate corollaries, all as self-evident and axiomatic as the principle itself:

1. The cause is **more honorable** than the effect (Heb. 3:3). The mind, skill, and effort one expends in producing an automobile is worthy of far more honor than the car itself, even if we admire it greatly and it costs \$250,000.
2. The cause must be **greater** than the effect. An automobile cannot build a man.
3. The cause must be **antecedent** to the effect. It is a physical and logical impossibility for a house or anything else to be built twenty years before its builder is born.
4. The cause must be **adequate** and **sufficient** to produce the effect. If I said a two-year old boy built the house I live in, I would suggest a cause, but hardly an adequate or sufficient one.
5. The terms *cause* and *effect* are “**Siamese twin**” concepts – inseparable in thought and expression. It is nonsensical to speak of a **cause** with no corresponding **effect**, nor does any **effect** exist apart from its **cause**.

As earlier indicated, the Cosmological Argument flows from the Law of Causality. The ultimate cause-effect question relates to the origin of the universe itself. One would have to be a “mad scientist” and live in “another world” to deny that this world/universe exists. As surely as it exists, its origin must have some explanation. Only two possibilities can be postulated for the way its existence:

- 1 The universe is eternal – it did not have a beginning or
- 2 the universe in some way and at some time had a beginning point.

Amazingly, some atheists have tried to avoid the uncomfortable implications with which they must deal concerning both the origin and end of the universe by arguing that it had no beginning and will have no end – it is eternal. Essentially, this is another way of saying that the universe is cause rather than effect. This position also implicitly denies that the universe is material, for, by definition, all material things are ultimately effects that have been caused.

Further, this theory implies that the universe is somehow a “spiritual” entity. There are only two possible natures of which all things consist – material (matter) and spiritual (mind). If the universe is eternal, it must be “spiritual.” If it is not spiritual, it cannot be eternal, for only spiritual entities can partake of eternity and immortality. All material things are temporary. Thus the “eternal-universe” concept denies the essential respective definitions of *material* and *spiritual*. “Spiritual universe” is another oxymoron. One may as well confer a “spiritual” nature on a Chevrolet pickup as to do so on the universe. Such claims demonstrate idiocy gone to seed, to which desperate men are driven in their denials of God.

The suggestion that anything material – which the universe is – has always been and will always be contradicts one of the bedrock axioms of science, variously called the “Second Law of Thermodynamics” or the “Law of Energy Decay.” As *thermodynamics* implies, this law concerns the relationship between heat and energy and the conversion of one into another. *The Law of Energy Decay* defines itself, namely, that with the employment of energy there is a corresponding depletion of available usable energy – a process scientists call “entropy.”

Simply put, our universe is wearing out, running down. This could not be so if the universe were eternal/spiritual in its nature. Can one live a day and not see the evidence of entropy? Natural resources are being depleted (though we reject the extremist environmentalists’ claims), all things wear out, and death and decay are everywhere visible. Entropy is not compatible with a spiritual entity or an eternal universe.

No scientist would ever have even thought of such a thing as an “eternal universe,” much less professed it seriously, had he not begun with blind bias for evolution and against God and creation. When men begin with *a priori* assumptions that rule out creation by a transcendent Cause (i.e., God), we should not be surprised at their flights of fancy and imagination. Where else can they go? What else can they do? Paul describes just such men who we suppose have been present in every age:

For the invisible things of him since the creation of the world are clearly seen, being perceived through the things that are made, even his everlasting power and divinity; that they may be without excuse: because that, knowing God, they glorified him not as God, neither gave thanks; but became vain in their reasonings, and their senseless heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools (Rom. 1:20-22).

The famous astrophysicist, Robert Jastrow (certainly no “creationist”), indicates that scientists have been driven by the evidence to give up on the “eternal universe” postulation:

Only as a result of the most recent discoveries can we say with a fair degree of confidence that the world has not existed forever; that it began abruptly, without apparent cause, in a blinding event that defies scientific explanation.... Modern science denies an eternal existence to the Universe, either in the past or in the future.¹

He could have known this much earlier had he simply read Genesis 1.

Not only does the Second Law of Thermodynamics deny the possibility of an eternal universe, but this law also clashes head-on with a fundamental dogma of evolutionary theory. A basic tenet of evolutionary “gospel” alleges that the universe is constantly improving, moving from disorder to order, and increasing in complexity. Contrariwise, the entropy principle declares a decline of every sort in the cosmos (i.e., order, complexity, size, organization, etc.). Entropy and evolution cannot both be true. Atheistic scientists must make a choice, all the while knowing that the Second Law of Thermodynamics is a settled scientific fact. In their desperate effort to cling to the evolutionary scheme, such men have abandoned true science at this point to enter the realm of sheer philosophical speculation and assumption.

The Cosmological Argument

Both evidence and reason demonstrate the fact that the universe is material rather than eternal and that it therefore implicitly had a point of origin or beginning. The ground is now prepared for us to narrow the broader Cause-effect Argument to the Cosmological or First-cause Argument. William Lane Craig provides an excellent statement of it:

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause of its existence.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence.²

As seen from Jastrow's statement, even infidel scientists have generally conceded the first and second premises of the foregoing syllogism, demanding the conclusion of causality (which, of course, believers in God and the Bible have known all along – Gen. 1:1; John 1:1–4; et al.).

Since the universe is not an eternal cause, but a material effect, what or who caused it? Only three possibilities exist:

1. The universe is the result of accident or chance,
2. the universe created itself, or
3. the universe has a Creator transcendent to and apart from itself.

The “accident/chance” claim: Could the universe have originated from some accident or mere hap? To ask is to answer. Not even a lowly paperclip “just happens.” The universe is an effect that demands an adequate cause, as do all effects. If “accident” and “chance” do not qualify as adequate causes for the least effect, how much less for the universe? Yet unbelievers have little better to offer in their denial of God and creation. How can rational men gullibly believe, much less advocate, such irrational ideas?

The “self-created” claim: Could the universe have created itself? Julie Andrews, as Maria in the musical, “The Sound of Music,” sang a song in that included the following lyrics: “Nothing comes from nothing; nothing ever could.” The songwriter was apparently not an evolutionist. Incredibly, those who advocate the self-creation of the universe implicitly attribute the creative power of Godhood to mindless matter. Granting that somehow the universe had the ability (power and mind) to create itself, then it had to exist before it existed, create before it was created, and act before it acted – all of which are nonsensical.

Just as the Second Law of Thermodynamics falsifies the idea of an **eternal** universe, the First Law of Thermodynamics falsifies the theory of a **self-created** universe. This law has to do with the conservation of energy and matter, affirming that neither can be created or destroyed. Their forms may change, but their levels remain constant. Dr. Jastrow (no creationist, remember) has explained why self-creation and this axiomatic and universally accepted law are incompatible:

But the creation of matter out of nothing would violate a cherished concept in science – the principle of the conservation of matter and energy – which states that matter and energy can be neither created nor destroyed. Matter can be converted into energy, and vice versa, but the total amount of all matter and energy in the Universe must remain unchanged forever. It is difficult to accept a theory that violates such a firmly established scientific fact.³

Then why do you and your fellows accept it, Dr. Jastrow, except for blind prejudice?

The creation claim: Was the universe created by an objective, transcendent Cause? This explanation is the only one left. The universe is not eternal; thus it had a beginning. It could not have begun by some incredible astrophysical “accident” or by self-creation. Therefore, some Cause adequate to explain its beginning and characteristics must have created it. What are the implications of this conclusion concerning the attributes of this Creator/Cause?

1. He must have existed before the universe in order to be able to create it
2. He must be eternal – the one uncaused Cause
3. He must be pure spirit/mind – no material creature is self-existent or eternal
4. He must be transcendent to and apart from the effect of His creation
5. He must be omniscient and omni-wise to produce the effect of the vast universe
6. He must be omnipotent to be able to create the universe out of nothing

The Bible reveals to us Jehovah God Who is possessed of all of these attributes:

1. The opening words of the Bible, “In the beginning, God...” (Gen. 1:1a), tell us that Jehovah God was there before/when He began creating the universe
2. The Bible constantly attributes eternal nature to God (Deu. 33:27; Psa. 41:13; 93:2; Isa. 40:28; John. 5:26; 1 Tim. 1:17; Rev. 10:6; et al.)
3. God is pure spirit and self-existent (John. 4:23–24; Acts 17:24, 29; 2 Cor. 3:17)
4. God is transcendent – apart from that which He created (2 Sam. 7:18–19; 1 Kin. 8:27; Isa. 55:8–9)
5. God is omniscient (1 Kin. 8:39; Job 12:13; 28:10; Psa. 104:24; 139:1–16; Pro. 3:19; Isa. 40:13–14; Rom. 11:33–34; Heb. 4:13)
6. God is omnipotent and is not restrained by anyone or anything except His own will (Gen. 1:3; 1 Sam. 14:6; Psa. 65:6; 135:6; Isa. 50:2; Jer. 10:6, 12; Dan. 4:35; Mat. 3:9; Rom. 1:20; Eph. 3:20)

The Bible thus makes known to us the only Being capable of satisfying the demands of the First Cause of our universe.

Conclusion

The Cosmological Argument is but one of several strong arguments that complement each other so as to constitute an insurmountable case for the existence of God. Little wonder that David wrote: “The fool hath said in his heart, There is no God” (Psa. 14:1a).

Endnotes

1. Robert Jastrow, *Until the Sun Dies* (New York, NY: W. W. Norton, 1977), pp. 19, 30.
2. William Lane Craig, "The Existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe," from Leadership U. Website: www.leaderu.com/truth/3truth11.html.
3. Jastrow, p. 32.

[Note: This MS was originally written for and published as an "Editorial Perspective" in *THE GOSPEL JOURNAL*, June 2004, of which I editor at the time.]

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