

# The theistic God exists

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**Abstract:** This article argues that among the various arguments in favor of the existence of God, they all show that there is only one God, not many. It also argues that this God must be infinite, for He is beyond the finite world that He created. Furthermore, this God must be personal because He is intelligent and moral, being the Intelligent Designer and Lawgiver of the Moral Law. The present article concludes that this God is a spiritual and supernatural Being, as He is beyond the physical and natural world. He, too, can work miracles because He has already performed the greatest miracle of all – He created the world. Thus, we realize that the evidence points to the existence of a God, according to the theistic worldview – an infinite, intelligent, perfect, personal, and supernatural Being.

**Keywords:** God; Existence; Evidence; Theism.

## O Deus teísta existe

**Resumo:** O presente artigo irá trabalhar o conceito de que entre os vários argumentos a favor de Deus, todos eles mostram que há apenas um Deus, não muitos. E que esse Deus deve ser infinito, pois está além do mundo finito que criou. Esse Deus deve ser pessoal, porque Ele é inteligente e moral, sendo o Projetista Inteligente e o Legislador da Lei Moral. Além disso, o presente artigo conclui que esse Deus é espiritual e sobrenatural, pois está além do mundo físico e natural. Ele também pode fazer milagres porque já fez o maior milagre de todos – Ele criou o mundo. Assim, percebemos que a evidência aponta para a existência de um Deus, conforme a cosmovisão teísta – um Ser infinito, inteligente, perfeito, pessoal e sobrenatural.

**Palavras-chave:** Deus; existência; Evidências; teísmo.

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<sup>1</sup> *In memoriam*. To learn more about the life and work of Norman Geisler, visit the bookstore's website (bastionbooks.com), for materials in Portuguese (<http://normangeisler.com/translations-portuguese/>) and watch the film about his life ([www.normgeislerthemovie.com](http://www.normgeislerthemovie.com)). Special thanks are due to his son David Geisler, president and co-founder, Norm Geisler International Ministries and adjunct professor (*Southern Evangelical Seminary* and *Veritas International University*).



## Introduction

Either a theistic God exists, or He does not exist. If He does not, then atheism (non-theism) is true.<sup>2</sup> And if He does, then theism is true. If theism is true, then Christianity can be true. If it is not, then Christianity cannot be true since it is a theistic religion. Since there are many views of God, we need to specify when we speak of God. Otherwise, we will not know which God we are talking about when we ask whether or not He exists. Christianity is one of the big three theistic religions: Judaism, Christianity, and Islam. This theistic view of God stands in contrast to all other views of God.

### **Theism: one infinite personal God who created the universe**

God is a personal “He,” not an impersonal “It.” Likewise, either the universe existed forever alongside God, or only God existed forever. Theism affirms God is eternal, but the universe had a beginning; He created it. This is what we mean by “God,” namely, a theistic God.

A theistic God is as different from the world as a painter is from a painting. God made the universe, but He is not identical to it. The painting came out of the painter’s head. It is like the painter, but it is different from him. Likewise, God is the Maker, and the universe is what He made.

Many great thinkers were theists. This includes St. Augustine, St. Anselm, and St. Thomas Aquinas. In the modern world Leibniz was a theist, and a widely known theist of recent times is C. S. Lewis. Of course, all the great orthodox thinkers of the great monotheistic religions were all theists.

### **Deism: one infinite impersonal God exists, but miracles do not**

There are two major differences between theism and deism. First, deism is like theism minus miracles. For a deist God does not do miracles. The world God made runs by purely natural laws. Second, unlike a theist, for a deist, God does not uphold the world. He brought it into existence, but He does not hold it into existence. The universe of the deism is self-sustaining.

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Like a ball that is thrown through the air, the deist's world keeps on going on its own after it is brought into existence. For the theist, by contrast, God not only brought the world into existence, He also holds it in existence. The Bible says God "upholds all things by the word of His power" (Hb 1:3). And by Him "all things are held together" (Cl 1:17).

Some of the great deists include Voltaire, Thomas Payne, Thomas Jefferson, and Benjamin Franklin. Today, however, most thinkers in this tradition have become Finite Godists.

### **Finite godism: one finite personal God exists beyond the world**

In the ancient world Plato is the most famous finite godist. Unlike some modern examples, Plato believed that the universe was eternal and that God was not its Creator but only its Former. Modern examples of finite godists include John Stuart Mill and William James. A contemporary example is Rabbi Harold Kushner (b. 1935).

According to finite godists, God is not infinite (unlimited). In fact, God is limited in power and/or perfection. This they believe follows from the fact that the world is not perfect, as it should be if an all-powerful and all-perfect God made it.

### **Atheism: no God exists at all**

Atheists believe there is no God, personal or impersonal, infinite or finite. There is a universe, and that is all there is. Famous atheists of the past included Friedrich Nietzsche and Sigmund Freud. Two more widely known atheists of today are Richard Dawkins and Christopher Hitchens.

There are several associated views that need to be distinguished. Skeptics *doubt* that God exist. Agnostics *do not know* if God exists, and atheist *deny* that God exists. But all do not *believe* that God exists. Thus, in the broad sense of the word all of these are atheist (i.e., non-theists).

The physical universe exists, and that is all. As Carl Sagan (1980, p. 4) put it, "The Cosmos is all there is, ever was, or ever will be." There has been matter in motion from the beginning. Everything else, including "mind," is either material or reducible to it.



### **Pantheism: God is all and all is God**

While atheism claims that all is matter, pantheism asserts that All is Mind (or Spirit). God is all that exists, and all that exists is God. In the ancient world Plotinus was a pantheist. Benedict Spinoza was a modern pantheist. And contemporary pantheists include Christian Scientists and many New Agers like Deepak Chopra. Many Hindus are pantheists, as are Zen Buddhists.

There are many forms of pantheism. In the more strict forms, like Shankara Hinduism or Christian Science, evil is an illusion. So, atheism affirms evil is real, and God is not; and strict pantheism affirms God exists, and evil does not.

### **Panentheism: all is in God and God is in all**

Panentheism sounds like pantheism but is not. Pantheism says God *is* All, whereas panentheism claim God is *in* All. For panentheists God has two poles, one beyond the world (a potential pole) and one in the world (an actual pole). The actual pole is finite and constantly changing. Hence, the view is also called Process Theology.

The English philosopher Alfred North Whitehead is the father of modern panentheism. His student Charles Hartshorne carried on the tradition in the United States, followed by Shubert Ogden, John Cobb, and Lewis Ford. More recently Greg Boyd and Clark Pinnock are heavily influenced by Process Theology in a view they call Open Theism (PINNOCK, 2019).

### **Polytheism: many finite gods exist in the world**

Polytheists, in contrast to theists, believe there are many gods, and they are all finite. Likewise, these gods did not create the world. They are in the world, not beyond it. In the ancient world, Egyptians, Greeks, and Romans were polytheists. In more recent times Wicca, many New Agers, and Mormons have kept the view alive.

### **Does a theistic God exist?**

With the exception of Hinduism, which in one standard form has both one ultimate pantheist God (Brahman) and many finite personal manifestations of God, all of



the above views of God are incompatible. That is, if one is true, then the others are false. For God cannot be both infinite and finite. Nor can there be only one God and yet many gods. Neither can God be both personal and impersonal. Likewise, if God exists (theism), then atheism cannot be true.

Since Christianity is a theistic religion, the question before us here is whether a theistic God exists. That is, is there one personal, moral, and infinite Being beyond the universe who created the universe? Let's look at the evidence for a theistic God.

### **The cosmological arguments for God's existence**

The word "cosmological" comes from "cosmos" (universe) and "logos" (reason for). It means to give a reason for the existence of the universe. There are two forms of the cosmological argument: one deals with the beginning of the universe (the horizontal argument) and the other deals with the existence of the universe right now (the vertical argument).

### **The forms of the horizontal (Kalam)<sup>3</sup> argument for God**

The outline of the horizontal argument for God's existence is very simple:

- (1) Whatever had a beginning, had a Beginner (cause).
- (2) The Universe had a beginning.
- (3) Therefore, the universe had a Beginner (Cause).

The first premise is based on the fundamental principle of causality: "Everything that comes to be had a cause." For nothing comes from nothing; nothing ever could. Even the skeptic David Hume (1932, p. 187) asserted, "I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause: I only maintained that our certainty of the falsehood of that proposition proceeded neither from intuition nor demonstration, but from another source."

The second premise is supported by both scientific and rational evidence. Scientifically, the Second Law of Thermodynamics states that in a closed isolated system

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<sup>3</sup> "Kalam" is the Arabic word for eternal. Several Medieval Arabian philosophers (like Al-Ghazali and Al-Kindi) defended this argument, as did the Medieval Christian philosopher, Bonaventure. A strong contemporary evangelical defense of it is found in William Lane Craig's book, *The Kalam Cosmological Argument* (CRAIG, 2000).



(such as the whole universe is) the amount of useable energy is decreasing. In short, the universe is running out of useable energy. As agnostic astrophysicists Robert Jastrow (1992, p. 15-16) said: “Once hydrogen has been burned with that star and converted to heavier elements, it can never be restored to its original state. Minute by minute and year by year, as hydrogen is used up in stars, the supply of this element in the universe grows smaller.”

So, the universe is running out of useable energy. But like an hour glass where the sand is pouring from the top to the bottom, we know that if all the sand is not in the bottom, then it has not been there forever. Likewise, since the universe has not yet run out of useable energy, it follows that the universe is not eternal. It had a beginning. But everything that had a beginning, had a cause. Therefore, the universe had a Cause (God).<sup>4</sup> Since the Cause of the universe is beyond the finite universe, it must be not-finite (i.e., infinite). And since it is beyond the whole natural universe, then it must be supernatural. As Jastrow (1983, p. 15)) put it: “That there are what I or anyone would call supernatural forces at work is now, I think, a scientifically proven fact.” He adds elsewhere: “The scientist’s pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: ‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth’ (JASTROW, 1992, p. 16).

There is also a philosophical argument for the beginning of the universe. It goes like this:

- (1) Everything that began had a cause.
- (2) The temporal universe had a beginning.
- (3) Therefore, the temporal universe had a Cause (God).

Time as a series of one moment after another cannot be eternal. Why? Because an infinite series by definition never ends. But the present moment is the end of all the moments before it. Therefore, the moments before today could not have been eternal.

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<sup>4</sup> Many scientists offer other evidence that the universe had a beginning such as the expanding universe, the micro-wave radiation, Einstein’s general theory of relativity, and the great mass of energy discovered by the Hubble telescope. This “Big Bang” evidence has convinced most astrophysicists. But even some of this evidence is disputed, the whole argument rests on the indisputable evidence of the Second Law for which there are no exceptions.



Time must have had a beginning. But if the temporal world had a beginning, then it must have had a Cause (God).

So, both the scientific evidence and sound reason lead to an infinite supernatural Cause of the origin of the space–time universe. This is what Theism means by “God”.

### **The vertical form of the cosmological argument for God**

This argument answers the age–old question: Why is there something rather than nothing—right now? In other words, what is causing the universe to exist currently? The argument can be stated in different ways. The classical way is this (AQUINAS, 1981):

- (1) Every contingent (dependent) being has a cause right now.
- (2) The whole physical universe is contingent right now.
- (3) Therefore, the whole physical universe has a Cause right now.

The first premise is another form of the principle of causality. For whatever is contingent (dependent) does not account for its own existence. Why? Because it is dependent in its being, and whatever is dependent in its being is dependent on something else for its being. To put it another way, whatever is contingent in its being could possibly not exist. That is, it has the potentiality for non–existence. But whatever does exist, but could possibly not exist, does not explain why it exists rather than not exists. But the whole universe could possibly not exist. Its non–existence is possible.<sup>5</sup> Hence, the whole universe needs a cause for its existence—right now. But the cause of a contingent being cannot itself be a contingent being or else it too would need a cause. Hence, the Cause of the whole contingent world must be a non–contingent being, that is, a Necessary Being (God).

Another way to put this argument is in terms of the parts and the whole.

- (1) Every part of the universe needs a cause.
- (2) The whole is the sum of all the parts.
- (3) Therefore, the whole universe needs a Cause (God).

No part of the universe is self–sustaining. Each part is dependent on something else for its existence. There are no uncaused parts, no matter what “part” is taken to mean

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<sup>5</sup> That is, there is nothing contradictory about the non–existence of everything. A total state of nothingness is a possible state of affairs.



(molecules, atoms, physical energy, or whatever). Every part of the universe is depended on something beyond it for its existence. In more scientific terms, there is no part composed of unlimited energy, energy that is not running down. According to the Second Law of Thermodynamics (above), all matter in the universe is running out of useable energy. So, every part of the universe is dependent or caused. But the whole is equal to the sum of all the parts. Hence, if every part is caused then the whole universe is caused as well.

Opponents sometimes object to this as the fallacy of composition, which argues that the whole does not always have the same characteristics as the parts. For example, a square can be made of two triangles. But each part is a triangle, and the whole is a square.

In response, theists point out that if both parts are geometric figures, then by its very nature the whole is a geometric figure. And if each tile on the floor is brown, then the whole floor is brown. It is not essential, but accidental, to triangles that adding them together does not always make a triangle. But it is essential to the very nature of a contingent part that adding up the whole pile of them does not equal a Necessary Being. No matter how many contingent parts there are in the whole, the whole sum of them is still contingent.

One way to understand this is to ask a simple question: if all the parts of the universe are taken away, would there be anything left? If not, then the whole universe is equal to the sum of all its parts and, therefore, it is caused. If they say, yes something is left when all the parts are gone, then it must be something more than the contingent, temporal, or caused universe. It must be a transcendent, necessary, eternal, and uncaused Being on which every part of the universe is dependent for its existence! But this is what theists mean by a theistic "God." So, either way (whether the parts are equal to the whole or not), every part in the universe needs a cause (God) and so does the whole universe.

Some theists have offered another brief argument for God. It goes like this:

- (1) Something exists (e.g., I do).
- (2) But nothing cannot cause something.
- (3) Therefore, an eternal and necessary Being exists (God).

It must be eternal since if ever there were nothing, then there would always be nothing since nothing cannot cause something. It must be necessary since all beings cannot be contingent (dependent). There must be a necessary Being on which they





depend for their existence. Hence, since I undeniably exists, it follows that there must be an eternal necessary Being that exist as a ground for my existence (and anything else that may exist).<sup>6</sup> This same syllogism may be expanded into the following 17-point argument (GEISLER, 2003; 2015):

- 1) Being is. That is, something exists.
- 2) Being is being. A thing is identical to itself.
- 3) Being is not non-being.
- 4) Either being or non-being. Something cannot both exist and not exist at the same time.
- 5) Non-being cannot cause being. Nothing cannot cause something.
- 6) A caused being is similar to its Cause.
- 7) A being is either necessary or contingent but not both.
- 8) A necessary being cannot cause another necessary being to come to be.
- 9) A contingent being cannot be the efficient cause of another contingent being.
- 10) A necessary being is a being of Pure Actuality with no potentiality.
- 11) A Being of Pure Actuality cannot cause another being with Pure Actuality to exist.
- 12) A being that is caused by a Being of Pure Actuality must have both actuality and potentiality.
- 13) Every being that is caused by a being of Pure Actuality must be both like and dislike its Cause.
- 14) I am a contingent being.
- 15) But only a necessary being can cause a contingent being to exist.
- 16) Therefore, a Necessary Being (of Pure Actuality) exists who caused me (and every other contingent being there may be) to exist.
- 17) This Necessary Being of Pure Actuality (with no potentiality) has certain necessary attributes:
  - A) It cannot change (= is *immutable*)

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<sup>6</sup> Some have posed a problem, claiming that this argument does not disprove pantheism. In short, it only proves that I exist and an eternal necessary Being exists. Maybe I am God. This “hole” can be plugged quickly by pointing out that (1) I change, (2) God does not change, and (3) hence, I am not God. The pantheist acknowledges that he changes because he did not always think I was God. But God did. Hence, the pantheist is not God.



- B) It cannot be temporal (= is *eternal*)
- C) It cannot be material (= *immaterial*)
- D) It cannot be finite (= *infinite*)
- E) It cannot be divided or divisible (= *simple*)
- F) It must be an *uncaused* being since it is a necessary being
- G) It must be only *One* being
- H) It must be infinitely knowing (= *omniscient*) Being
- I) It must be all-powerful (*omnipotent*) Being
- J) It must be an absolutely *morally perfect* Being
- K) It must be a *personal* Being

Therefore, one infinite, uncaused, personal, morally perfect, all-knowing, all-powerful Being who caused all finite being(s) to exist is what is meant by a theistic God. Hence, a theistic God exists.

### **The teleological arguments for God's existence**

The Greek word “*telos*” means end, purpose, or design. Reasoning from design is called the Teleological Argument for God. It has many forms, but the most recent scientific evidence for it comes from two main sources.

### **The anthropic principle**

One of the most important scientific discoveries in modern time is the Anthropic Principle (from the Greek word *anthropos*, meaning human being). According to this principle from the very inception of the universe it was fine-tuned or tweaked for the eventual emergence of human life (BARROW, 1988). There are well over one hundred factors<sup>7</sup> that must be in perfect balance in order for human life as we know it to exist. A sampling of those factors are:

- 21% of oxygen in the air is just right for life (more and we would burn up, and less we would suffocate);

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<sup>7</sup> This evidence has been put together beautifully in the book (and DVD) titled *The Privileged Planet* by Guillermo Gonzalez. Also see Hugh Ross, *The Creator and the Cosmos*, 111–121. The number of design features in our planet, solar system, galaxy, and universe are too numerous to catalog. An attempt was made in 2009 to catalog over a thousand of them at <http://reasons.org/fine-tuning>.



- the sun is just the right distance from the earth (closer and we would burn up, and farther we would freeze);
- the tilt of the earth is just right for life (otherwise it would get too cold at night and too hot in the day);
- the gravitational force is just right to make movement possible but to keep us from flying off into space);
- the position of Jupiter is just right to protect the earth from cosmic bodies destroying us;
- the nuclear force is just right to hold the atoms together

Astronomer Robert Jastrow (1982) summed up the situation well when he wrote, “The anthropic principle is the most interesting next to the proof of the creation, and it is even more interesting because it seems to say that science itself has proven, as a hard fact, that this universe was made, was designed, for man to live in. *It is a very theistic result.*”

Why is it a theistic result? Because it points to a theistic God beyond the whole universe who planned the emergence of human life before the universe and tweaked it just right from the very beginning to make it possible. The form of the argument can be put like this:

- (1) Advanced planning is a sign of an intelligent cause.
- (2) The whole universe shows evidence of advanced planning.
- (3) Hence, the whole universe was planned by an Intelligent Cause (God).<sup>8</sup>

When contemplating the nature of the physical laws of the universe alone, the great Albert Einstein said: “The harmony of natural law [...] reveals an intelligence of such superiority that, compared with it, all the systematic thinking and acting of human beings is an utterly insignificant reflection” (HEEREN, 1995, p. 66). Likewise, former atheist and astronomer Alan Sandage (1985, p. 54) said:

As I said before, the world is too complicated in all of its parts to be due to chance alone. I am convinced that the existence of life with all its order in each of its organisms is simply too well put together. [...] The more one learns of biochemistry the more unbelievable it becomes unless there is some kind of organizing principle – an architect for believers.

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<sup>8</sup> Atheists sometimes respond to the anthropic principle by arguing that the fact that the universe is here is proof that it just happened that way, otherwise it would not be here. But this is like arguing that a painting does not need a painter because it would not look like a painting if all the colors and pigments were not the way they just happen to be.



Scientist Michael Behe summarized the evidence well. What we have is

a planet in the right regions of a solar system, in the right region of a galaxy, in a universe with the right kind of laws to produce chemicals with the right kind of properties – This is all necessary for life, but still very far from sufficient. The planet itself has to be not too big and not too small, with enough but not too much water, the right kind of minerals in the right place. [...] All are critical. If any one of them were missing, intelligent life would be precluded (BEHE, 2007, p. 212).

But the critical prearrangement of so many parts all conspiring together for the same end is always a sign of intelligent design. We never observe natural laws doing that kind of thing.

### **The teleological argument from microbiology**

In Darwin's day a living cell was considered a "black box" since they did not have microscopes capable of seeing into the cell's secrets. In a book titled *Darwin's Black Box*, microbiologist Michael Behe started a design revolution. After narrating the incredible evidence for the incredible complexity of a living cell, Behe concluded: "The conclusion of intelligent design flows naturally from the data itself—not from sacred books or sectarian beliefs. Inferring that biochemical systems were designed by an intelligent agent is a humdrum process that requires no new principles of logic or science." So, "life on earth at its most fundamental level, in its most critical components, is the product of intelligent activity" (BEHE, 2006, p. 193). In a more recent book, Behe updates his argument, showing that life is even more complex than first thought (BEHE, 2007).

Even atheist Nobel Laureate Francis Crick (1981, p. 88) admitted: "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 to have been satisfied to get it going."

Indeed, former atheist Sir Fred Hoyle (1982, p. 3, 143) stated the matter this way: "Biochemical systems are exceedingly complex, so much so that the chance of their being formed through random shuffling of simple organic molecules is exceedingly minute, to a



point indeed where it is insensibly different from zero". So, there must be "an intelligence, which designed the biochemicals and gave rise to the origin of carbonaceous life."

Even the atheistic, evolutionary biologist Richard Dawkins (1987, p. 17-18, 116) admitted that life appears to have been designed and that an origin one-celled animal has a thousand sets of Encyclopedias full of genetic information in it! But where could all this complex information have come from, except from an intelligent designer of first life.

### **The biological argument from specified complexity**

Life is unique. It has what scientists call "specified complexity". Crystals are specified but not complex, having only a simple message repeated over and over. Random polymers are complex but not specified, carrying no real message at all. Only life is both specified and complex. Claude Shannon developed an information theory for Bell Labs, which shows that the information carrying letters have a certain letter frequency. Herbert Yockey applied this to the DNA in living cells and discovered that there is a mathematical identity between the letter sequence in a DNA and that of a human language. He wrote: "The sequence hypothesis applies directly to the protein and the genetic text as well as to written languages and therefore the treatment is mathematically identical" (YOCKEY, 1981). This leads to the following argument:

- (1) Wherever we observe specified complexity in the present (such as in human language), it is caused by an intelligent cause.<sup>9</sup>
- (2) The specified complexity in a living cell is mathematically identical to that in a human language.
- (3) Therefore, first life must have had an intelligent cause.

It is important to notice that it is not the *absence* of a natural cause that leads to this conclusion. It is the *presence* of evidence for an intelligent cause that does it. So, positing an intelligent cause of first life is not the "God-of-the-gap" fallacy. For example, it is not the lack of known natural causes that leads us to posit an intelligent cause of the faces on Mt. Rushmore or a sand castle on the beach. Rather, it is known evidence for an

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<sup>9</sup> If the atheist rejects this premise, then he has rejected the very principle of uniformity by which we know the past, namely, that the kind of causes we see repeatedly producing a certain kind of effect in the present is the same kind of cause we should posit for producing that kind of thing in the past. Without this principle of uniformity there is no science of the past. So, the theist's reasoning to an intelligent cause of first life is scientific, but the opposing view is not.



intelligent cause from previous experience that lead to the conclusion of an intelligent cause first life. In the 1997 film *Contact*, which Carl Sagan conceived the idea of, Carl Sagan and the SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) program depict scientists who were elated when they received one message (all prime numbers from 1 to 100) through their radio telescope. As Sagan (1986, p. 275) put it: “The receipt of a single message from outer space would show that it is possible to live through such technological adolescence” because it would have proven there was an intelligent civilization out there. Ironically, the same Sagan said elsewhere that the human brain is so complex that it has 20 million volumes full of genetic information in it. Sagan (1980, p. 278) wrote: “The neuro-chemistry of the brain is astonishingly busy, the circuitry of a machine more wonderful than any devised by humans.” If so, and if it takes an intelligent being to form one simple message, how much greater Mind did it take to create the human brain with the equivalent of the Library of Congress in it!

After reviewing the scientific evidence for God, the most notorious former atheists of modern times, Antony Flew (2008, p. 112), concluded: “Those scientists who point to the Mind of God do not merely advance a series of arguments or a process of syllogistic reasoning. Rather, they propound a vision of reality that emerges from the conceptual heart of modern science and imposes itself on the rational mind. It is a vision that I personally find compelling and irrefutable.”

### **The moral argument**

In addition to the cosmological arguments that points to an infinite supernatural cause of the universe and the teleological argument which shows that this Cause is also a super-intelligent being, the moral argument reveals a God who is morally perfect. It takes the following form:

- (1) Every moral law has a moral law Giver.
- (2) There is an objective moral law.
- (3) Therefore, there must be an objective Moral Law Giver.

The most famous form of this argument was stated by C. S. Lewis (LEWIS, 2001). The first premise is self-evident. Laws have law-givers, and prescriptions have prescribers. The burden of proof rests on the second premise. What is the evidence that



there is an objective moral law, not just something subjective or human. Strangely enough, atheists themselves have provided the evidence for a moral law—evidence so strong that it has converted many of them to belief that there is a Moral Law Giver (God).

As a former atheist, C. S. Lewis believed that the evil and injustices in the world eliminated God. But then he asked himself:

Just 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. [...] Of course I could have given up my idea of justice by saying it was nothing but a private idea of my own. But if I did that, then my argument against God collapsed too – for the argument depended on saying that the world was really unjust, not simply that it did not happen to please my private fancies. Thus in the very act of trying to prove that God did not exist – in other words, that the whole of reality was senseless – I found I was forced to assume that one part of reality – namely my idea of justice – was full of sense (LEWIS, 2001, p. 45-46).

Lewis is not the only atheist who came this route. Former atheist Jay Budziszewski of the University of Texas came to God the same way. He reasoned: “What actually led me back was a growing intuition that my condition was objectively evil. [...] Evil is deficiency in good; there is no such thing as an evil ‘substance,’ an evil-in-itself. So if my condition really was evil, there had to be some good of which my condition was the ruination”. In short, we cannot know evil except on the backdrop of good. If evil is real, then there must be an objective standard by which we know that (BUDZISZEWSKI, 2006).

Even former atheist and now famous scientist and head of the human genome project, Dr. Francis Collins, was impressed with the moral argument on his way back to God. He later wrote: “After twenty-eight years as a believer, the Moral Law still stands out for me as the strongest signpost to God. More than that, it points to a God who cares about human beings, and a God who is infinitely good and holy” (COLLINS, 2007, p. 218).

There are many reasons there must be an objective moral law:

1. We would not know there was injustice unless there were an objective standard of Justice.
2. True progress is not possible unless we know an objective standard by which we measure that.
3. Things are getting better or worse.



4. Real moral disagreements are not possible without an objective moral standard.
5. The same basic moral codes are found in most cultures (LEWIS, 2015).
6. Guilt from breaking a moral law would not be universal if there were no objective moral law.
7. Even those who deny moral absolutes have moral principles they believe are universal such as tolerance, freedom of expression, and the wrongness of bigotry and genocide.
8. We did not invent the moral law any more than we invented mathematical or physical laws. They are discovered, not created.
9. We sometimes chose duty to save a drowning person over instinct not to risk our own life.
10. The basic moral law is discovered, not by how we behave, but by how we desire others to behave toward us.
11. Acts of altruism cannot be adequately explained naturalistically.

I know of a student who turned in a well-documented, well-researched term paper in which he claimed he was a moral relativist. The professor graded his paper with a failing grade, and marked the paper with these words: "F! I DON'T LIKE BLUE FOLDERS!" The student sharply complained to the professor that it was unjust, unfair, and simply not right to give him an "F" (indicating a failing grade) simply because of the color of the folder. And the student was right in his protest. But he was right only because he was wrong in his paper. For every student knows that there is an objective moral principle that says it is wrong to give a student an "F" because of the color of the folder and not based on the content of the paper.

### **The argument from religious need**

Another reason for God is worth mentioning here. It goes like this:

- (1) All persons need God.
- (2) What we really need, really exists.
- (3) Therefore, God really exists.





Most people acknowledge their need for God. But what is not widely known is that so do most atheists feel a need for God. They simply do not believe it is based in reality. Sigmund Freud (1989) said it was an illusion and Ludwig Feuerbach (1989) claimed it was just a projection of human imagination. But both of these miss the point, namely, that the need for God is a *real need*, not a *mere wish*. Look at the evidence. As former atheist scientist Francis Collins (2007, p. 38) put it: “Why would such a universal and uniquely human hunger exists, if it were not connected to some opportunity for fulfillment?” He added, “Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. A duckling wants to swim: well, there is such a thing as water. Men feel sexual desire: well, there is such a thing as sex” (COLLINS, 2007, p. 38). Why do we have a God-shaped vacuum in our hearts unless it is mean to be filled with God?

An illusion is a mere wish – like the belief that there is a pot of gold at the end of the rainbow! But the need for God is not a mere wish, any more than a person’s need for water is. True, not everyone will get the water or food he needs. But this does not mean there is no food or water anywhere. Likewise, not everyone will find God, but this does not mean there is not God anywhere. Listen to the hunger for God, even among those who do not believe in God:

- Bertand Russell (1911): “Even when one feels nearest to other people, something in one seems obstinately to belong to God [...] —at least that is how I should express it if I thought there was a God. It is odd, isn’t it? I care passionately for this world and many things and people in it, and yet [...] what is it all? There must be something more important one feels, though I don’t believe there is.”
- Eric Fromm (1959, p. 22): “The need for [...] an object of devotion is deeply rooted in the conditions of human existence.”
- Ludwig Feuerbach (1989, p. 36): “God is a need of the intelligence, a necessary thought—the highest degree of the thinking power.”
- Jean Paul Sartre (1981, p. 102, 97): “I needed God [...] I reached out for religion, I longed for it, it was the remedy. Had it been denied me, I would have invented it myself.”



- Friedrich Nietzsche (1999, p. 42): “What wilt thou, unknown-god? [...] To the last of all that are lonely, Oh, come back! [...] And my heart’s final flame—Flares up for thee! Oh, come back, My unknown god!”
- Albert Camus (1992, p. 147): “Nothing can discourage the appetite for divinity in the heart of man.”
- Saint Augustine (2009, 1.1): This former skeptic confessed: “Thou hast formed us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless till they find rest in Thee.” If all humans need God, including atheists, then it is unreasonable to conclude there is no God anywhere simply because some people do not find Him.

### **You can lead a horse to the water, but...**

If there are good reasons to believe God exists, then why do atheists reject God? One former atheist put it this way: “Because the presence of God made me more and more uncomfortable, I began looking for reasons to believe that He didn’t exist. It’s a funny thing about us human beings: not many of us doubt God’s existence and then start sinning. Most of us sin and then start doubting God’s existence” (BUDZISZEWSKI, 2010, p. xii). Nietzsche (2018, p. 627) revealed that his problem was not a matter of the mind but of the will when he wrote, “If one could prove this God of the Christians to us, we should be even less able to believe in him.”

As for scientists who see the scientific evidence for God and still reject Him, Robert Jastrow (1992, p. 113-114) put his finger on their pulse when he wrote, “There is a kind of religion in Science. It is a religion of a person who believes [...] there is no first cause. [...] This religious faith of the scientists is violated by the discovery that the world had a beginning. [...] When that happens, the scientists has lost control.” Harvard atheist Richard Lewontin (1996) was honest when he said: “We take the side of [naturalistic] science in spite of the patent absurdity of some of its constructs [...] because we have a prior commitment to materialism.” He adds, “Moreover that materialism is absolute for we cannot allow a divine foot in the door” (LEWONTIN, 1996).



## Answering some important objections

This is not to say that atheists do not give objections to belief in God, but only to say that they offer no rationally valid ones. In truth, many of their objections are worn-out and retreaded.

Objection one: If everything needs a cause, then so does God. If God does not need a cause, then neither does the universe. Response: This is a misstatement of the principle of causality. The theist does not argue that “*everything* needs a cause.” Only *effects* need causes. Only finite, contingent, things that have a beginning need a cause since they do not explain why they exist when they need not exist. Hence, the universe of finite; contingent things need a cause. But God does not have a beginning, nor is He finite. So, He does not need a cause. But the universe is finite, contingent, and had a beginning. Therefore, the universe needs a cause, but God does not.

Objection two: An endless series of causes is possible. Hence, there is no First Cause (God).

Response: An endless series of causes before today is not possible for two reasons. First, there cannot be an endless series of any finite things before today because an infinite (endless) series has no end. But today is the end of all days leading up to today. Hence, there cannot be an infinite number of causes before today. Of course, there can be an infinite number of *abstract points* between A and B. But abstract points are not *concrete things*. Thus, there are an infinite number of abstract points between the two ends of a book shelf. But one cannot get an infinite number of actual books there, no matter how thin they are. So, an infinite number of real causes is impossible.

Second, in every series of essential causes, every cause is being caused. Otherwise, there would be an uncaused cause (God) which the series is trying to avoid. Further, in every such series of causes of being at least one cause is causing. Otherwise there would be no causality in the series. But in this case, this one cause would be causing itself (since it is both causing and being caused), which is impossible. A cause is prior in being to its effect, but no cause can be prior in being to itself actually of logically.

Objection three: Assuming God is like intelligent causes in the present does not lead to a theistic God, but to a human like cause or causes, which are the only kind of causes we see producing these kinds of things in the present.



Response: The principle of uniformity (which is based on knowing the kind of cause that produces something in the present) does not demand an *identical* cause in the past but only a *similar* one to what we observe in the present. The SETI (Search for Extraterrestrial Intelligence) program did not demand the extraterrestrials were the same as humans but only that their intelligence was similar to ours. Further, the cause does not have to be similar in any bodily way but only in that it has intelligence like human intelligence. Finally, a Creator cannot be the same as a creature. The Creator is infinite (unlimited) and the creature is finite (limited). Hence, attributing a body or bodily parts (all of which are limited) to the Creator is unjustified.

Objection four: The arguments given for God do not prove that there is only one God, as theists claim there is.

Response: There can only be one God according to these arguments for many reasons. First, the God of the Cosmological argument is infinite<sup>10</sup> since every finite thing needs a cause. And there cannot be two infinite Beings. For in order for there to be two beings of the same kind, they would have to differ. But two infinite Beings do not differ; they are the same kind of Being, namely, infinite. Second, the theistic God (of the Moral Argument) is absolutely perfect. But there cannot be two absolutely perfect beings. For to be different one would have to have a perfection the other did not have. And the one that lacked that perfection would not be absolutely perfect. Hence, there can be only one absolutely perfect being. Third, the teleological argument (according to the Anthropic Principle) shows there was one Mind behind the whole universe doing the preplanning of the whole thing. Finally, there is only one set of physical laws in the whole universe which reflects one Mind behind it all. It is a universe (one world from one Mind) not a multiverse (many worlds from many minds).

### **Some final thoughts**

The various arguments for God show that there is only one God, not many. This God must be infinite since He is beyond the finite world He made. Further, He must be personal because He is both intelligent and moral, being the Intelligent Designer and the

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<sup>10</sup> God has to be infinite since every finite being needs a cause. Hence, the Cause of all finite beings must be not finite (i.e., infinite). For if He were finite, then He would need a cause and not be the Cause of every finite being (which does need a cause).



Moral Law Giver. Further, this God is spiritual and supernatural since He is beyond the physical and natural world. He can do miracles because He has already done the greatest miracle of all – He has created the world. Thus, the evidence points to the existence of a theistic God – one that is infinite, intelligent, perfect, personal, and supernatural. As even agnostic astronomer Robert Jastrow (1992, p. 115) put it: “The scientist’s pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation. This is an exceedingly strange development, unexpected by all but theologians. They have always accepted the word of the Bible: ‘In the beginning God created the heaven and the earth.’”

In short, science ends where the Bible begins.

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