

Does God Exist?

CHAPTER 1



Helen Keller

In the year 1880, Helen Keller was born in Tuscumbia, Alabama. When Helen was only nineteen months old, a serious illness left her blind and deaf. Because no one could communicate with her, Helen Keller did not have the opportunity to learn about God. Later, with the help of her teacher, Anne Sullivan, Helen learned how to communicate by having someone write words on her hand with their finger and to “listen” by feeling a speaker’s face. When she was nine years old, a minister told her about God. When he did, she smiled and communicated back to him these words:

“I always knew he was there, I just didn’t know his name.”

This little girl knew God existed even though she was blind, deaf and could not talk. Something inside her told her that God exists.

In the next four chapters, we are going to look at reasons to believe that God exists.

There have traditionally been three basic arguments used for reasons to believe in the existence of God:

- 1) Whatever begins to exist has a cause. The universe began to exist. Therefore, the universe must have a cause.
- 2) Every complex design that serves a purpose has a designer. The universe, earth and its inhabitants display mind-boggling complexity in design. Thus, there must be an Intelligent Designer.
- 3) A universal moral law can exist only if God exists. A universal moral law does exist. Therefore, God must exist.

In this chapter we will look at Reason #1.

REASON # 1 – EVERYTHING THAT HAS A BEGINNING HAS A CAUSE

When we find water on the floor, we look for a cause.ⁱ



When a window is broken, we look for a cause.



When we get sick, we look for a cause.

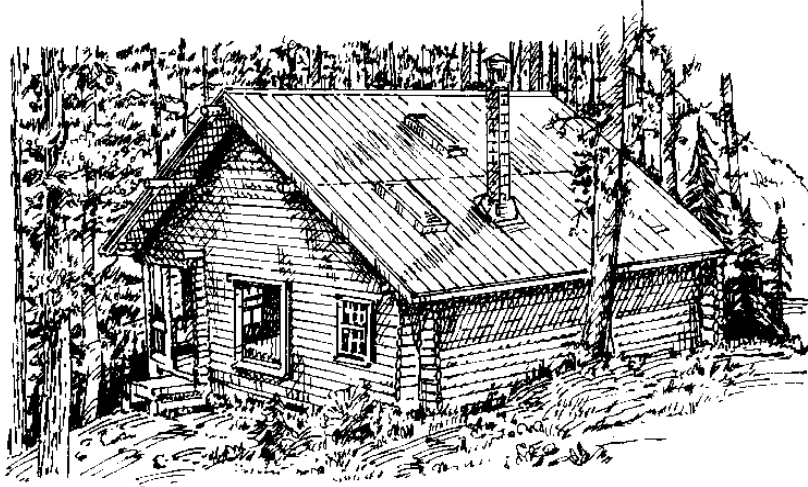
"Maybe I ate some bad food."



Can you think of anything in this world that does not have a cause?

Imagine that you are a world traveler and an explorer. You are traveling in a boat and you sail up to an island that you believe no other person has ever been to before.

As you are walking around the island you discover this ...



Would you say ...

A. Wow, what luck! This is a perfect place to live. This place is perfectly suited for my needs. I guess over billions of years wind, dirt and water created this. I am going to make myself at home!

OR...

B. I am not the first person on this island.

Obviously, you would assume that someone built the house.

What about our universe?

It is a perfect place to live. It is perfectly suited for our basic needs.

Did the universe have a cause?

Where did our universe come from?

There are only three options:

1. **The universe is eternal.**
2. **The universe created itself.**
3. **The universe was created.**

Let's look at these options:

1. The universe is eternal.

It is now clear, because of a growing mountain of scientific data that the universe did have a beginning. This view has not always been held by scientists.

“By far the most important piece of evidence supporting the existence of a Divine Creator is the relatively recent scientific discovery of a definite beginning to the universe.”ⁱⁱ

Evidence that the universe is not eternal.

- A) The Expanding Universe - Our expanding universe suggests a beginning and a central point of origin. A beginning suggests a Beginner or a Creator.
- B) The Second Law of Thermodynamics - The universe is running out of usable energy. In other words, the universe is winding down like a clock which implies that it must have been “wound up” at some point in the distant past. This would not be true if the universe were eternal. To illustrate, *“every car has a limited amount of energy (gas). If we had an unlimited (i.e., infinitely) large gas tank, we would never have to stop for gas again. The fact that we have to refill shows that it was filled up to begin with.”ⁱⁱⁱ*
- C) Radiation Echo - In 1965, two Bell laboratory employees were testing an ultra-sensitive microwave radiation detector and accidentally discovered that low level radiation static readings were coming from everywhere. No matter where they pointed the detector they picked up a low-grade “hum.” It was discovered that there was a faint amount of radiation coming from every rock. This “Radiation Echo” was first thought to be a malfunction or static on instruments. Many scientists soon deduced that the universe has low-level radiation from some past catastrophe or explosion.

Imagine the following scenario:

You hear a small explosion in your house. Concerned, you shout to your child, “What was that?” Your child yells, “Nothing! It just happened!”

Would you...

A. ...say to yourself, “*Hmm? That’s strange. Oh well, if my child says ‘it just happened’ then I guess I’ll accept that and assume that the small explosion did not have a cause.*”

B. ... run upstairs, look for (and punish) the cause?

There is abundant scientific evidence that the universe came into being in a sudden, explosive and cataclysmic way. Yet, when you ask some very intelligent people, “*What was that?*” they will claim, “*Nothing! It just happened.*”

“If there is obviously a cause for a little bang, doesn’t it also make sense that there would be a Cause for a Big Bang?”^{iv}

2. The universe created itself.

This would mean that in the beginning of time something came from nothing. Since something can’t just come out of nothing this option does not logically make sense. Nor, is there any scientific evidence that this has ever happened or could possibly happen.

Ravi Zacharias writes, “*Some years ago, I was having dinner with a few scholars, most of whom were scientists. They were a fine group of people, and I was honored to be in their company. At one point, our discussion veered into the conflict between naturalism’s starting point (nature and nature alone) - and supernaturalism’s starting point (which is that God is the only sufficient explanation for our origin). I asked them a couple of questions. ‘If the Big Bang were indeed where it all began, may I ask what preceded the Big Bang?’ Their answer, which I had anticipated, was that the universe was shrunk down to a singularity.*

I pursued, ‘But isn’t it correct that a singularity as defined by science is a point at which all the laws of physics break down?’

‘That is correct,’ was the answer.

‘Then, technically, your starting point is not scientific either.’

There was silence, and their expressions betrayed the scurrying mental searches for an escape hatch.”^v

Robert Jastrow, the founder-director of NASA's Goddard Institute of Space Studies, put it this way:

"A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our universe; but if it does, a scientist's pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation...The scientist's quest for answers for the origin of the universe ends like a bad dream. In it he has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries."^{vi}

3. The universe has a creator.

The first sentence in the Bible says:

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."^{vii}
(Genesis 1:1)

"In arguing for the existence of God, thirteenth-century Christian philosopher Thomas Aquinas always presupposed Aristotle's view that the universe is eternal. On the basis of that difficult assumption, he then sought to prove that God exists. Why did he take this approach? Because, Aquinas said, if he were to start with the premise that the universe had a beginning, then his task would be too easy! Obviously, if there was a beginning, something had to bring the universe into existence. But now, modern astrophysics and astronomy have dropped into the lap of Christians precisely the premise that, according to Aquinas, makes God's existence virtually undeniable. Given that whatever begins to exist has a cause and that the universe began to exist, there must be some sort of transcendent cause for the origin of the universe."^{viii}

If everything in our world came from something, why should we believe that the universe came from nothing?

The Bible says:

"...Every house is built by someone, but God is the builder of everything!"
(Hebrews 3:4)

"By faith we understand that the universe was formed at God's command, so that what is seen was not made out of what was visible." (Hebrews 11:3)

"If everything has a cause then what caused God?"



This is a good question because the answers can tell us a lot about God!

Consider the following descriptions of God in the Bible:

“God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and truth.”
(John 4:24)

“ ‘Am I only a God nearby,’ declares the Lord, ‘and not a God far away? Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?’ declares the Lord. ‘Do not I fill heaven and earth?’ declares the Lord.” (Jeremiah 23:23-24)

“...who is able to build a temple for him (God), since the heavens, even the highest heavens, cannot contain him.” (2 Chronicles 2:6)

“But you remain the same, and your years will never end.”
(Psalm 102:27)

“But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.”
(2 Peter 3:8)

“ ‘I am the Alpha and the Omega,’ says the Lord God, ‘who is, and who was, and who is to come, the Almighty.’” (Revelation 1:8)

These verses tell us that God is eternal, unchanging and powerful. God is everywhere at the same time. He is Spirit. He is timeless. He is always near. He has no beginning and no end. **He is uncaused!**

“Only things that had a beginning – like our universe – need a beginner. God had no beginning, so God did not need to be made.”^x

NOTES

CHAPTER 1:

Does God Exist? Everything that has a beginning has a cause.

ⁱ Much of the artwork in this book was done by Alex Vasilyev.

ⁱⁱ Michael A. Corey, *The God Hypothesis* (Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, Inc., 2000), 25.

ⁱⁱⁱ Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, *Who Made God?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2003), 25.

^{iv} Lee Strobel, (quoting William Lane Craig), *The Case for Faith* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Publishing House, 1998), 76.

^v Ravi Zacharias, *Jesus Among Other Gods* (Nashville: Word Publishing, 2000), 64.

^{vi} Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomer* (New York: Warner, 1978).

^{vii} All Scripture quotations, unless otherwise indicated are taken from the Holy Bible: New International Version. NIV. Copyright 1973, 1978, 1984 by International Bible Society.

^{viii} Lee Strobel, *The Case for a Creator* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan, 2004), 108.

^{ix} Ravi Zacharias and Norman Geisler, *Who Made God?* (Grand Rapids: Zondervan Press, 2003), 23.

