

## Study Guide #2: Does God Exist?

### Introduction

We know that nothing can create itself because it would have to exist 1<sup>st</sup> in order to then create itself. Therefore, there are only 3 choices to explain the existence of the universe. *First*, the universe is eternal, so that it has always been here. *Second*, the universe—or at least its component parts of time, space, and matter-energy—simply popped into existence without any cause at all. *Third*, God exists as the One who created the universe and everything in it.

### Question #1: Is the universe eternal?

*Answer:* Beginning with the Greek philosopher Aristotle (d. 322 B.C.), the secular view was that the universe is eternal. That position changed in the 20<sup>th</sup> century with the advent of the Big Bang theory, which was gradually accepted—implicitly meaning that the universe had its beginning at the Big Bang. The problem associated with an eternal universe is that it consists of matter-energy. We say matter-energy because we now know that matter is another form of energy, and energy is another form of matter. And the problem is that matter-energy exists within time and space. We know this because we observe and test that because we can measure its movement or change of various kinds in terms of time. By definition, anything that exists in time is limited by both time and space. And if something is limited by time and space, then it cannot be eternal. Since the universe is a material universe, it cannot be eternal.

### Question #2: Is it possible that the universe popped into existence without a cause?

*Answer:* It's self-evident that everything that had a beginning had a cause to effect it into existence. Humans have never observed an exception to this truth. Babies come from parents, plants come from seeds, and so on. The idea that the universe—or its building blocks of space, time, and matter-energy—simply popped into existence without a cause represents the idea of spontaneous generation. In the 19<sup>th</sup> century, someone noticed a sealed jar with meat in it later proved to also have maggots crawling around in it. Since the maggots were not there at the beginning, it was believed they must have spontaneously generated in the interim. However, the French biologist Louis Pasteur (d. 1895) proved with an improved microscope that the eggs of the maggots had already been in the meat before the latter was placed in the sealed jar.



Louis Pasteur

Yet most secular cosmologists today tell us that the universe or its building blocks simply popped into existence without a cause in what is today the discredited idea of spontaneous generation! More specifically, the prevailing view among atheists

today is that nothing and nothing somehow cancelled each other out, resulting in the creation of the universe, or at least of the singularity (of extremely dense matter) that exploded in the Big Bang. Of course, if nothing and nothing cancelled each other out, neither of those nothings was actually nothing; they had to have been *something*. Thus, the theory is self-contradictory.

### **Question #3: But haven't physicists discovered that certain subatomic particles come into existence without a cause?**

**Answer:** *First*, scientists aren't certain that these particles are real; they call them *virtual* particles. *Second*,



Random Quantum Fluctuations (NOVA, PBS)

physicists “create” them under strict laboratory conditions in which energy is placed in a vacuum, and then electric current is applied from the outside as well. Therefore, a vacuum filled with energy is not *nothing*; it is *something*, as is the external energy source. Moreover, these subatomic particles, assuming they are real, go out of existence as quickly as they appear. This entire process is called a quantum fluctuation. But it is hardly evidence for the entire universe, or its elements of time, space, and matter-energy, coming into existence out of nothing and without a cause and remaining in existence. Therefore, the truth remains that nothing can come from nothing without a cause.

### **Question #4: How does the evidence already provided in this Study Guide prove that God must exist?**

**Answer:** If the universe cannot be eternal, and it could not have come into existence from nothing without a cause, then it must have had a real cause that effected it into existence. This First Cause would have to be the Uncaused Cause, that is, a Cause which itself is eternal and did not have a cause of its own. This Uncaused Cause would have to be an immaterial entity because if it were of a material nature, it could not be eternal. Furthermore, if an Uncaused Cause exists, it must have created the universe or its building blocks of time, space, and matter-energy, without any influence by anyone or anything since, by definition, that Uncaused Cause must have existed when nothing else did. So, there was no one or nothing to influence it. Therefore, this Uncaused Cause must have a free will, which means it must be a personal intelligent Being rather than an impersonal force or principle. By definition, a personal, intelligent, immaterial, eternal Being is what humans call God. The answer to this question represents the kalam (kǔ-lǎo'm) cosmological argument for God's existence.

### **Question #5: Isn't it a contradiction to say that everything that exists must have a cause to effect it into existence? Therefore, what caused God to exist?**

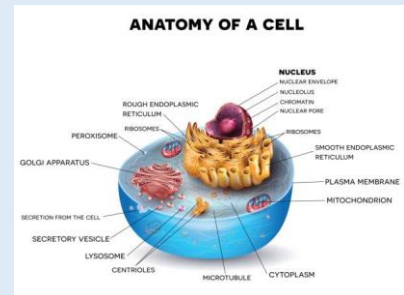
**Answer:** No, we didn't say that everything that exists must have a cause. Instead, we said that everything that had a *beginning* must have a cause for its existence. That's a big difference. Since the First Cause is an eternal entity, then it (God) had nothing to cause His existence. He has always existed.

## Question #6: Isn't it illogical to believe that an eternal God could exist?

**Answer:** It certainly is beyond anyone's complete comprehension that an eternal Being could exist. But that in itself doesn't make it illogical. Many things are beyond our comprehension, but we still believe in them. Granted, everything we believe outside of God we believe because we trust certain historical sources or science-based conclusions. For God, His existence is a logical imperative. That is, He *must* exist in order to explain everything else that exists—a factual necessity we have explained in this Study Guide thus far. Someone once said that if you eliminate all the possibilities for something other than the “impossible,” then the “impossible” must be true. It's true that in these cases, faith is required. But those who choose not to believe in God's existence are exercising faith also, for neither side of the “God” question can scientifically prove their position to be correct. A degree of faith means there is always a degree of doubt. But as we said in Explorer I, Study Guide #1, the real issue is to determine whether one's doubt is reasonable or unreasonable.

## Question #7: What does the complexity of the universe and life in it say about its origin?

**Answer:** In Charles Darwin's day (the 19<sup>th</sup> century), it was thought that a cell consisted of a nucleus and not much more than that. Today we know that a single cell carries out a minimum of 7 complicated functions and contains more than 20 rooms separated by membrane walls. Within each cell are the instructions for making various proteins. These instructions take the form of a four-letter code—A, G, C, and T—each representing a different chemical (adenine, guanine, cytosine, and thymine). The DNA tells the cell what sequences those chemical codes should take in order to create a functioning protein. In addition to producing proteins, each cell has a precise network of roads on which microscopic vehicles travel. Each vehicle carries different materials to specific different rooms in the cell, which requires a sophisticated communications system to deliver the right materials to the correct rooms. So much for the simple cell!



The evolutionary astronomer Carl Sagan once admitted that it would take 100 million pages to explain everything in one functioning living cell. Each human adult consists of at least 30 trillion cells. Scientists who have calculated the odds of one cell forming by chance to be 1 in  $10^{250}$ , which is the number 1 followed by 250 zeros. Mathematicians generally consider anything with a probability of 1 in  $10^{150}$  (or larger) being true, the number 1 followed by 150 zeros, to be virtually (although not theoretically) impossible.

Since 1985, S.E.T.I. (Search for Extra Terrestrial Life) has been searching for intelligent life in the far reaches of outer space. Its own estimate of what would constitute intelligent life is that it would exist if we could hear just 3 to 5 “notes” in a row. Yet evolutionary scientists tell us that something as complex as a human being evolved by chance over millions of years. If mankind ever discovered a machine or piece of electronic equipment that had meaningful information decoded in it, we would conclude that it must have been designed by one or more intelligent minds. The late author and journalist George Sim Johnston sums up our point of view in this way:

Human DNA contains more organized information than the Encyclopedia Britannica. If the full text of the encyclopedia were to arrive in computer code from outer space, most people would regard this as proof of the existence of extraterrestrial intelligence. But when seen in nature, it is explained as the workings of random forces. [George Sim Johnston, “Did Darwin Get It Right?” *The Wall Street Journal* (October 15, 1999)]

This reasoning is called the teleological argument for God’s existence. It’s much more rational to us that God exists and created the universe and everything in it than it is to believe that spontaneous generation and random forces produced them. For us, it requires far less faith to believe in God than it does to believe in the spontaneous generation and evolution of the universe and of life.

### **Question #8: Besides the cosmological and teleological arguments for God, is there anything else you find persuasive for His existence?**

**Answer:** Yes. We believe in a particular moral argument for God’s existence, although not every specific argument within any category of arguments is equally persuasive to us (or to most people). In nearly all



Ten Commandments

cultures, almost all mentally normal people instinctively have had the same concept of right and wrong. It’s true that there are differences in what is considered moral. But there is near universal consensus on the *basics* of moral living. Virtually every society condemns murder, rape, stealing, and so on—at least within their own communities. If humans evolved according to the Darwinian principle of “survival of the fittest,” we would expect that human understanding of morality would be non-existent—that anything a person did would be considered natural in his or her attempt to survive at all costs.

Furthermore, there are numerous examples of people in many different cultures who occasionally intervene in very dangerous emergency situations in order to save other people’s lives—even of people they didn’t know. In these cases, there was no reason to think that any of those people helped would do anything positive for the rescuers. They are simply acts of selfless love. If we are merely molecules in motion, then every emotion, belief, word, and deed has been determined by natural, materialistic, and random forces. Moreover, if evolution were true, then the “survival of the fittest” instinct would definitely not be expected to produce acts of selfless heroism.

These facts strongly imply that the very basics of morality must transcend mankind and be objective in nature. A transcendent, objective morality can only originate from a supernatural, personal Mind who transcends space and time, because such a morality must have been instilled in each human mind from birth. Such a Mind is what humans call God.

[NOTE: This doesn’t mean that atheists cannot be moral people. Most of them behave according to all the same morally accepted standards of morality as those who believe in God do. However, atheists do not have an objective basis for that morality. If we are all simply molecules in motion, then there could never be a commonly accepted morality that is inherent (unlearned) in people. Yet we all believe in the same basic concepts of morality, which is a fact that atheism cannot explain.]

## Question #9: You keep referring to God in the singular. Why can't there be more than one God?

**Answer:** *First*, it seems like common sense to follow Occam's (or Ockham's) razor. William of Ockham was a 14<sup>th</sup>-century English philosopher and theologian. Occam's razor is a principle usually followed by scientists and philosophers today. Although there are different versions, in our context, it means that one should not add any more causes unless necessary to sufficiently explain an observation. The very definition of God as Ultimate Reality means that one God is a Being sufficient to explain the origin of the universe.

*Second*, by defining Ultimate Reality as God, He must be an *infinite* Being. He must therefore possess infinite power (omnipotence), infinite knowledge (omniscience), and so on. But if there were more than 1 God, in order to distinguish them from each other, there must be some differences between or among them. Any differences would imply that each one would have to lack a certain characteristic that the other(s) have—to *not* have something that the other God or Gods have. But a Being who lacks something is not, by definition, an infinite Being. Therefore, there can only be 1 God.



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God of Heaven as Light

*Finally*, if there were more than 1 God, a rational conundrum would be nonsensical. Here is the conundrum: What would happen if an irresistible force met an immovable object? Of course, if the irresistible force moved the immovable object, then the object was not actually immovable. Or if the irresistible force failed to move the immovable object, then the force was not actually irresistible. In other words, this is a scenario that could not logically occur. Since we have already established by logic that God is all-powerful (omnipotent), there could not be more than 1 God, or else the possibility of a conflict occurring between them could lead to the impossible scenario.

## Question #10: You refer to God with the masculine gender (He, Him). Is this simply tradition, an example of male bias, or is there another reason for this?

**Answer:** It's not because of tradition or an example of male bias. We use the masculine pronouns because *first*, the neuter pronoun *It* would only be appropriate if God were an impersonal force or principle. But we have deduced that He is a personal Being instead (see Question #4). *Second*, since God must also exist outside of time and space (in order to be eternal; see Question #1), He must project Himself into time and space in order to interact with any part of His creation. This is analogous to the fact that a man who interacts intimately with his wife must enter her from the outside into a sexual union. God must have created time and space; they were not part of His nature in that He gave birth to those things, as a feminine pronoun might imply. Therefore, the closest thing we have in the English language to an appropriate pronoun for God, who is neither masculine nor feminine (God has no sexuality) is the masculine pronoun.