



Evidence for God by Brian Watson

We envision a congregation whose love for Jesus and one another leaves a clear and compelling witness for Christ.

And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ...

Ephesians 4:11-12

Did you ever try driving a nail into a piece of lumber with your bare hands? No, probably not. If you tried, you probably didn't get far. We need tools to perform certain tasks and we would never think to build a deck or a house without a hammer, not to mention many other tools.

The same is true for sharing and defending the gospel. We need certain tools to get the job done. Our greatest tool is the Bible, the "sword of the Spirit" (Ephesians 6:17). But there are many other tools that we need to defend the truth of Christianity and give people a reason for why we believe.

On Sunday nights, I have been teaching apologetics, a defense of the faith. My goal is to equip the saints for ministry (Ephesians 4:11-12) so they can share the gospel with neighbors, friends, family members, coworkers, and anyone else they may meet. In sharing the gospel, we are often going to have to answer difficult questions about creation, the Bible, other religions, and many other topics.

If you've been sharing your faith out in the world, you understand the need for apologetics. You realize you can't advance the gospel without the right tools, just like you can't build much without that hammer. It's only when you're *not* sharing your faith that you might think tools such as apologetics are unnecessary. If that describes you, it's time to get equipped and get to work.

Those of us who have shared the gospel realize that our society is becoming increasingly hostile toward Christianity. This is particularly true among the power brokers of our culture in

the media and in academia. We need to prepare ourselves to defend the faith, and we need to prepare our children and grandchildren to live in a culture that marginalizes Christian faith.

I have recently been providing some arguments that give evidence for the existence of God. For some people we talk to, we will need to persuade them that God exists before we can talk to them about the content of the Bible. (An argument is simply a logical statement. Sharing an argument does not mean arguing. Rather, it means speaking persuasively by using reason.)

The Cosmological Argument

The first argument is the cosmological argument. The basic thrust of this argument is that something or someone had to cause the universe (the cosmos) to come into existence, and that someone is God. This argument rests on the common sense notion that something does not emerge out of nothing.

The following is the structure of the argument:

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.
4. The cause of the universe is God.

Note that the first premise is, "Whatever *begins* to exist has a cause", not "Whatever *exists* has a cause." Some people will twist this premise and then ask, "Who made God?" The answer is, "No one!" By definition, God is unmade. He

is eternal and uncaused. We are talking about whatever has come into existence that did not previously exist.

The second premise, that the universe began to exist, might seem obvious to the Christian, but to the atheist, this is an uncomfortable fact. In the beginning of the twentieth century, atheistic scientists believed that the universe was eternal. It was just a brute fact of nature, in their view. But a few lines of scientific evidence emerged in the last century to show that the universe is not eternal. Astronomers noticed that the universe is actually expanding, and that distant galaxies are moving away from us at increasing speeds. Albert Einstein produced his theory of general relativity, which, when solved correctly, predicts an expanding universe. An expanding universe suggests that the universe had a start from a single point of creation. After all, if we could reverse this expansion back through time, at some point, there would be a single point at which all matter, space, and time did not even exist.

This model of the beginning and expansion of the universe was verified by the discovery of background radiation in the far reaches of the universe. Scientists had predicted that if a "cosmic explosion" occurred at the start of the universe (yes, if there was a Big Bang), then it would have produced microwave radiation. This is precisely what other scientists later found.

Therefore, the universe had a beginning. This is an idea that makes atheists squirm, because it suggests God's existence.

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Evidence for God (*continued*)

Atheistic scientists, such as Stephen Hawking, like to come up with absurd speculations about the existence of an infinite number of universes (the “multiverse” theory) in order to avoid the truth that the universe began, but these ideas go beyond science and veer off into science fiction.

The only being capable of producing the universe out of nothing is God. He is immaterial, not constrained by space and time. He is almighty, able to call into existence the things that are not. And God himself is uncreated, which is important because something or someone has to be the first cause of everything else.

Robert Jastrow, an agnostic astronomer, made the following observation on the scientific discoveries of the twentieth century that led to the conclusion that the universe had a beginning: “For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. 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.”

The Design Argument

The point of this argument is to show that the universe is so complex, it must have been designed, and the one capable of designing the universe is God. Here is the argument:

1. Every design had a designer.
2. The universe has highly complex design.
3. Therefore, the universe had a Designer.
4. And that Designer is God.

The first premise is obvious, kind of like saying, “Every invention had an inventor.” The second premise is the one that requires proof.

The Intelligent Design movement is dedicated to showing that the universe has highly complex design. ID proponents do this by defining design as something that has specified

complexity. That is, it is complex, not simple, and it is specified, not capable of being produced by chance. We see specified complexity in the “fine tuning” of the universe as well in our own bodies.

The various physical forces in the universe, such as gravity and the force that holds atoms together, seem to be “tuned” just right in order to allow life. If any or a few of these forces were adjusted by the smallest amount, then life would not exist. It is beyond improbable that these physical forces could simply exist, as though they were necessary realities. Things could be otherwise, but then we wouldn’t be here to talk about it.

Specified complexity is perhaps best understood by examining the fine details of our own bodies. The complexity of cells and DNA has only been known in the last sixty years or so, thanks to the development of the electron microscope, which is able to see with far greater detail the minute structures of our bodies. Scientists used to think that the cell was simple, but greater inspection reveals an amazing complexity. For example, take the cilium, the hair-like structure that beats like a whip. The cells of the respiratory tract are lined with hundred of cilia, which move liquids or dust-containing mucus out of our lungs. One cilium consists of over two hundred different proteins. Like any device that swims, it requires a paddle, a motor, and connection between the two. If one of these three things is not in place, the mechanical system won’t work. That means it could not have evolved, since the theory of evolution is based on the idea that functioning systems—ones fitted for survival—evolve from simpler to more complex organisms. A non-functioning cilium wouldn’t help an organism survive; therefore, we are led to believe it was designed. Other examples of these types of complex mechanical systems are bacterial flagellum (the little structure on the bacterial cell that looks like a tail and spins like a propeller to make the cell swim) and blood clotting, among many others.

DNA is even greater proof of design. DNA is the genetic information of a living being, found in each cell. Essentially, it is a code that regulates the organism’s structure, traits, and functions. In other words, it is information written on the medium of chemicals, used to produce materials such as new cells and proteins. This code resembles a computer code, but is even more sophisticated. Like any other code, it must be the product of an intelligent agent.

If the universe has highly complex design, then it must be the product of a designer. And who else could design the universe but God? He is intelligent (unimaginably so) and capable of making his design a reality.

The Moral Argument

The last of these three arguments for the existence of God concerns the origins of morality. Everyone has a sense of morals, even if we all do not agree what those morals should be. Whenever you hear someone say “must,” “ought,” or “should” (or their negations), they are appealing to a sense of morality.

Some people are moral relativists, believing that all morals are situational or perhaps are simply the product of cultures. But we all have a sense of *oughtness*, a sense of moral obligation. Where does this come from?

The moral argument can be spelled out in different ways, but here is one example:

1. Every law has a law giver.
2. There is a Moral Law.
3. Therefore, there is a Moral Law Giver.
4. And that Moral Law Giver is God.

To find out more details about this argument, as well the others, you can download all my writings on the church website. Or, better yet, come on Sunday nights to learn and discuss these issues and many others. We’re handing out tools. Let’s get to work.