

Does God Exist?



The following notes contain some of the material presented in the series, "Is God for Real?"

If you're a human being, then you've probably wrestled with this question at some point in your life. We might also have asked, if God does exist, what difference does that make to me and those around me? Does it really matter? What are the implications of a universe with or without God? I grew up as an atheist and didn't think it mattered whether people believed in God or not. However, I have since come to reconsider my position. The following are some of the areas of evidence in favour of the existence of God.

Origins

Most people have asked the question, 'Where did I come from?' In biology we learn that life begets life. In other words, life comes from things that are already living. So where did it begin? If life has always come from life, then you need an infinite supply of life. Could it be that God is in fact the author of all life? Observation also teaches us that like begets like. Cats produce cats, and dogs produce dogs. This sounds very obvious, but it is also profound. Each generation may have variations in colour and size etcetera, but they are still the same kind. Dogs still only ever produce dogs. This then leads to the question of where these original kinds came from, and one logical explanation is that an intelligent mind designed the original kinds.

Design

Our planet lies in what is sometimes called, 'The Goldilocks Zone.' This means it is not too far from the sun to be too cold, nor is it too close to be too hot, but it's just in the right region to support life. In addition, the earth has a nitrogen/oxygen atmosphere, and an abundance of liquid water. All these are necessary to sustain life. Are all these things just coincidences? Or are they perhaps by design?

Another thing to think about is if life evolved on earth without any intelligent involvement, why not on the moon? It too is in the right 'location,' yet there is no life on the moon. Perhaps the moon was designed for a different purpose, such as regulating the tides of the seas on earth. Design powerfully suggests a designer. We can easily recognize design when we see it. For example, when we look at Mount Rushmore in the United States we recognise that the Presidents' heads carved there didn't appear by accident. The wind and the rain did not produce this result. We recognise that there must have been a designer. If a statue carved out of rock requires a designer, how much more a complex organism like a real living, breathing, thinking human being?

One prominent atheist, Antony Flew, actually changed his mind about God after considering the incredible design and complexity of DNA. He said, "What I think the DNA material has done is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce (life), that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together. The only satisfactory explanation of such 'end directed, self-replicating' life as we see on earth is an infinitely intelligent Mind. It has become inordinately difficult even to begin to think about constructing a naturalistic theory of evolution of that first reproducing organism. I had to go where the evidence leads." *Antony Flew, British Philosopher, "There is a God: How the world's Most Notorious Atheist Changed His Mind."* Because of the implications of the complex design of life, one theoretical physicist wrote, "The more I examine the universe, and the details of its architecture, the more evidence I find that the Universe in some sense must have

known we were coming." *Freeman Dyson, Theoretical Physicist, Mathematician, Disturbing the Universe. New York: Harper and Row, 1979.* This quote reminds us of a verse from the ancient Hebrew scriptures, "For thus says the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else." Isaiah 45:18. It seems our world was designed for us.

Meaning

In a world without God, what do our individual lives really mean? In a universe of matter and energy and chance, random chemical processes, how much is a person worth? God adds depth and meaning and purpose to our lives. We realise we were made for a purpose and our lives and the lives of others do matter. Every human being needs some basic things such as air to breathe, water, food, shelter. But we all also have this great need to love and to be loved. In a worldview of survival of the fittest these vital truths can be forgotten.

Morality

How do we decide what is right and wrong? Do we simply take an opinion poll to find out? Or is there an over-arching morality that all should recognise? Those that advocate atheism often ignore the fact that morality in our culture has come from a belief in God - a belief that there is a higher standard to which we are all accountable. John Haught writes, "The new soft-core atheists assume that, by dint of Darwinism, we can just drop God like Santa Claus without having to witness the complete collapse of Western culture –including our sense of what is rational and moral. At least the hardcore atheists understood that if we are truly sincere in our atheism the whole web of meanings and values that had clustered around the idea of God in Western culture has to go down the drain along with its organizing centre." *John F Haught, "God and the New Atheism," p.28.* As the influence of atheism has grown in western culture, have we not also seen a decline in values and morality?

Testimony

One area of evidence for the existence of God is very personal. It is the evidence of individuals whose lives have been changed by a relationship with God. I myself would have described myself as an atheist in my mid-twenties until I had an encounter with God and began to explore the implications of a universe which included Him. The many other arguments in support of God have been useful to me, but none have been so powerful as the interactions between God and humans.

Alastair McGrath, a professor at Oxford University, wrote, "Although I was passionately and totally persuaded of the truth of atheism as a young man, I subsequently found myself persuaded that Christianity was a much more interesting and intellectually exciting worldview than atheism."

Alistair McGrath, (Theologian, Intellectual Historian), The Dawkins Delusion, p.9

If we have a choice – and we do - about what to believe between a godless universe of time, chance and a meaningless existence, and a universe of purpose, care and creativity, which one should we lean toward? Obviously, we should want to go where the evidence leads. But when we also consider that the theistic view may also offer us the chance of a life beyond the few decades we are typically accustomed to, then it makes sense to explore that possibility. We have nothing to lose and everything to gain. Let's continue that journey of exploration together.

If you would like to know more about this subject, or others in the series, 'Is God for Real?' then please contact one of our staff and they will be happy to help you.