

# DISCOVERY

BIBLE STUDY COURSE

## ***Special Study: The Case for God's Existence***

*According to the principle of logic called the "Law of the Excluded Middle," a thing either exists or does not exist—there is no middle ground. While we may doubt, be unsure, or be unaware of a thing's existence, such does not change the fact of its existence—it either exists or it does not exist. This principle applies to the case for God's existence. He either is, or is not. There is no middle ground, no other possibility.*

In this study, we will consider some of the evidence supporting the case for the existence of God. This study is not exhaustive. Many books have been written on the subject, and students are encouraged to consult such works for further study. Our goal is to set forth some of the leading evidence in a clear, straightforward manner in hopes of stimulating faith in the hearts of those who doubt, and increasing the faith of those who believe.

*"Since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead" (Romans 1:20).*



## ➤ **The Existence of Matter (Cosmological Argument)**

Can something come from nothing? In a vacuum, void of all organic and non-organic elements, can something burst into existence? No. Even the most ardent atheists and evolutionists agree that something cannot come from nothing. Matter can be broken down, mixed together, or combined in different ways to form new elements and compounds. But matter does not burst into existence from nothing.

Yet, matter does exist. You exist. The booklet you are holding in your hands exists. The earth exists. Since something cannot come from nothing (matter cannot create itself or burst into existence spontaneously), it logically follows that something has always existed. There are only two possible explanations for this fact: (1) matter is eternal, or (2) matter was created by someone (or something) else. In either case, one concludes that someone or something is eternal in nature. The following syllogism emphasizes the logic:

- Something cannot come from nothing  
(i.e., matter cannot create itself).
- Something exists.
- Therefore, something has always existed.

Therefore, the conclusion is that something eternal exists, and that “something” must be either matter or someone (or something) who can create matter. Is matter (the universe) eternal in nature? Scientists’ own laws regarding the nature of the universe contradict such a theory. Consider the first two laws of thermodynamics.

**First Law of Thermodynamics** (the law of conservation of energy and mass). The first law of thermodynamics states that in a closed system, in any transformation of energy from one form to another, the total amount of energy in the system remains unchanged. Similarly, the law of mass conservation states that although matter may change in state, density, or form, the total amount of matter remains unchanged. In other words, this basic law teaches that neither matter nor energy can be created or destroyed.

**Second Law of Thermodynamics** (the law of entropy, or the law of mass and energy deterioration). The second law of thermodynamics states that, in any energy conversion, although the total amount of energy remains unchanged, the usefulness and availability of that energy decreases. Thus, in any closed system, the energy of the system is conserved in quantity, but is continually being degraded in quality as long as energy changes are taking place within the system. Similar deterioration occurs with the conversion of matter from one form to another.

This law states that in any closed system (a position atheists maintain in respect to our universe), the availability and usefulness of energy and matter is constantly deteriorating. In other words, the universe is winding down—the stars are burning themselves out, the earth is spinning slower and slower, readily usable fuel sources are decreasing, biological life is in a constant state of decay.

A good question to ask is, If the universe is winding down, how did it ever get “wound up,” and who did the winding? The first and second laws of thermodynamics suggest that we, in fact, do not live in a closed system—there is another force in the universe lying outside the laws of nature as we understand them. That force is what we call God. The logical syllogism would go like this.

- Matter and energy constantly grow less useful.
- There is no known natural force that can increase the usefulness of matter and energy.
- Therefore some unknown force must have created useful matter and energy.

This is a cause and effect argument (for every effect there must be a sufficient and corresponding cause). We see matter and energy around us (the effect) and conclude that something must have created it (the cause). The “Cause” is God. David said, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands” (Psalm 19:1). Paul affirmed that God’s invisible qualities can be seen and understood clearly from the creation (Romans 1:20).

## ➤ **The Existence of Life and Intelligence**

Evolutionists theorize that life began as a result of unusual, unique cosmic forces acting upon a murky soup (goo) of inorganic molecules existing on the face of the earth. From this spark of life, they further theorize, came more life, developing and evolving into a myriad of life organisms (plant and animal), eventually resulting in life as we know it today. Such a theory would be laughable if so many atheistic scientists were not sold on the theory. Why would reasonable, knowledgeable humans arrive at such a theory? The answer is because they have taken God out of the picture. Once scientists dismiss the possibility of God's existence, they are left with the challenge of dreaming up some other explanation for how life came to exist on the earth.

There are many problems with the evolutionary theory. For example: (1) From where did the matter and energy that make up the universe originate? (matter and energy do not create themselves) (2) How did life begin? (3) How did life evolve? (4) Why do we not see creatures in the midst of evolving from one species to another today? (5) How did intelligence and self-awareness originate? Evolutionists have no reasonable answers to these or a host of other questions that serve to shoot holes in their theory.

Life is an intangible spark that cannot be created by humans; therefore, life had to be created by something greater than humans. Just as a pot cannot create itself but must look to a superior and intelligent force to account for its existence, so life cannot create itself. Further, in order to create intelligence, life's creative force had to possess intelligence far beyond what was created. An intelligent creation suggests an intelligent Creator, for every effect requires a corresponding sufficient cause.

Therefore, either (1) life sparked into existence from inorganic matter by itself and mysteriously managed to evolve into its present form, or (2) life came about by special design of a Creator. These are the only two possibilities. Since all available evidence indicates that life cannot emerge by accident from inorganic substances, there exists only one other plausible answer.

The law of entropy (second law of thermodynamics) also enters the picture here. Biologists argue that the human genetic structure is slowly unraveling, becoming less and less stable. But if the gene pool is becoming more and more tainted; if time and reproduction produce deterioration in genetic structure, how did it ever start out pure and stable?

### ➤ **Existence of Purposeful Design (Teleological Argument)**

What if upon viewing the Hoover Dam and inquiring about the design and construction process, a tour guide told you, "There was no designer—it just appeared one day. We heard a noise, walked out of our homes, and here was the Dam, complete with generators"? What would you think of someone who tried to convince you the Empire State Building, Statue of Liberty, or the Air Force One 747 that flies the president from place to place (more than 6 million parts) had no designer or builder? You would scoff! Why? Because an intelligent design demands an intelligent designer. Without an intelligent designer, chaos and disorganization prevail.

Yet, when the atheist looks at our universe, life, and society, he maintains that it all just happened to turn out this way—random chance, an accident, a freak of nature, no plan, no designer. How odd that many have embraced this ludicrous assertion! Consider the folly. When an atheist considers a house (relatively simple in size, structure, and organization), the atheist admits, "Yes, there had to be a designer and builder." However, when he considers the highly complex intricacies of the human body, the solar system, or the universe, he responds, "It happened by chance; one day there was a loud noise and Poof, there it was!" Or even more to the point, when an atheist sees a computer, he admits there must have been a designer; however, when he sees the one who designed and built the computer, he asserts that he (the designer) is an accident! Is it reasonable to think that a computer necessitates a sophisticated mind, but that the mind that builds the computer came into existence by chance?

Our solar system operates on precise astronomical laws. This allows us to precisely predict the location of every planet and moon at any given moment. The earth sits

about ninety-three million miles from the sun, the perfect distance for sustaining the wide variety of life forms inhabiting the earth. The earth moves in an elliptical orbit around the sun while it spins on its axis at a rate of about one thousand miles per hour at the equator, again perfect for sustaining life as we know it.

The human body contains trillions of cells, each one alive and serving a function for sustaining the body. How do some cells know how to provide taste food, while others know how to digest food, and still others know how to process waste? Each cell of the body is supplied with nutrients (food, moisture, oxygen) by the bloodstream, and each cell produces wastes from the nutrients it digests. These wastes are then broken down, stored, and ejected from the body by still other cells. Some cells carry sensations to the brain, while cells in the brain interpret these sensations and instruct the other cells to behave. How is all of this possible? Chance? All of these cells, their functions, and their arrangement, are all stored in the DNA of each cell. If all the coded instructions contained in a single human cell were converted to text, they would fill more than one thousand volumes (**Reader's Digest**, Oct. 1962, p. 148)!

In combining the teleological argument and the law of entropy, R. E. D. Clark formed the following line of reasoning:

- Whatever had a beginning had a beginner.
- The universe had a beginning (second law of thermodynamics).
  - (a) The universe is running down and, hence, cannot be eternal.
  - (b) The second law applies to the whole universe so far as we know.
  - (c) A rewinding of the universe is not probable, for there is no scientific explanation for how this would happen.
- Therefore, the universe had a beginner.
- In light of the organization of the universe, the Beginner must have been:
  - (a) Intelligent, since He engaged in advanced planning and organization.
  - (b) Moral, because He obviously valued His creation.

## ➤ **Human Instinct to Worship (Anthropological Argument #1)**

Man has a natural instinct to recognize a Supreme Being (or several supreme beings) and worship Him. The human race has not always agreed on the identity and form of divinity, but peoples from all cultures and all times, from ancient Rome to the deepest jungles of Africa, have recognized and worshiped a divine Being (or beings).

The natural question arises, What is the source of man's fascination with religion and belief in deity? Atheists have put forth the theory that (1) man created the concept of "god" as a psychological crutch, (2) in doing so he personified the elements of nature and eventually developed the idea of a supreme god of nature, and (3) ancient forms of polytheism evolved into the concept of one supreme God. These arguments do not stand up to reason.

Could man have created the notion of "god?" Such a theory is highly unlikely. Philosophers generally agree that the human mind is incapable of creating an extrasensory idea (i.e., a concept outside the five senses). The mind may analyze, combine, augment, and modify existing concepts, and discover new concepts with the use of the senses; but the mind cannot think up something completely new. David Hume, an infidel philosopher, says, "The creative power of the mind amounts to nothing more than the faculty of combining, transposing, augmenting, and diminishing the materials afforded to us by sense and experience" (**Campbell-Owen Debate**, p. 124). This being true, how did the concept of "god" come about? Further, even if we grant that one person somehow did dream up something completely new (the existence of an eternal, supreme spirit being), how did people in all parts of the world come to share this same belief? (This is also called the Ontological Argument.)

Supposing that man somehow created the concept of "god" and convinced the rest of the human race to buy into the notion, did man create gods based on the elements of nature? Historical evidence suggests otherwise. While some gods were based on elements of nature, many were not. In addition, the further back in history one studies, the fewer god-beliefs are based on the elements of nature. J. R. Swanton of the Smithsonian Institute concludes that such a view is "unproved and improbable" (**Communism: Its Faith and Fallacies**, p. 49).

The third premise of the atheistic theory regarding man's concept of god has all but been abandoned. As more and more ancient societies are unearthed by archaeologists, it is evident that the further one goes back in history, the fewer the gods recognized by humanity. In fact, the most ancient of unearthed cultures show beliefs in monotheism and dual-theism. It is not until much later that societies (e.g., Greeks, Romans) developed complex hierarchies of gods.

Where does that leave us? We know this: the mind of man is drawn to the belief of a divine being just as surely as a compass needle is drawn to the north. Where did the notion of such a belief arise, and how did it so thoroughly saturate the belief system of the entire human race? The only reasonable answer seems to be that an eternal, Supreme Being does indeed exist and that He has revealed Himself to His creation. The Bible is the record of God's revelation to His creation.

## ➤ **Existence of Morality (Anthropological Argument #2)**

Morality is the recognition of right and wrong, and humans are the only creatures who possess such a quality. Only humans are capable of guilt, shame, embarrassment, and a high sense of responsibility. In fact, humans have a conscience, causing guilt when we do what we know to be wrong, and a sense of well-being when we do what we know to be right.

If humans evolved from lower life forms, why are they the only animals with a sense of morality? Why do other animals not possess, at least to some degree, a sense of self-awareness? Evolution cannot explain this astounding difference between humans and other life forms. Without this quality, human society would not exist as we know it. Like animals, life would truly be a survival of the fittest governed by aggression and fear. People would do only what was right in their own eyes, and have no feeling of shame or regret for crimes committed against others.

Those who believe in God's existence believe that He created humans in His own image, endowed him with intelligence, will, and conscience (the three elements of the mind), and then instructed him verbally and in writing concerning the nature of right



and wrong (thus training the conscience). Further, they believe that they will be judged someday based on our behavior in response to divine instruction. The atheist has no explanation for how conscience and morality have arisen—only that they exist and are perpetuated through socialization for the good of society.

## ➤ **Conclusion**

We have outlined five arguments supporting the existence of God, just a fraction of the evidence available. Does any one of them prove to skeptics, beyond any doubt, that God exists? Probably not. True skeptics will be convinced only if they can sense God with one of their five senses (i.e. “hard” evidence). Such evidence is not available, for God lies outside the scope of our existence. Yet, when we take all of the evidence together, a strong case for God’s existence is made. God has left many signs that point to His existence if we will but consider them objectively. On the other side of the coin, is there any evidence that God does not exist? None. (So how can there be true atheists? How can one know for sure that God does not exist?)

Therefore, what we have built in this study is a *prima facie* case. In such a case, a thing is considered true if all the evidence points in that direction and no evidence can be offered to the contrary. The courts of our land convict criminals every day based on *prima facie* evidence. When considering the evidence for God’s existence, all of the evidence points to the fact that He does exist, and no evidence can be offered to the contrary. Therefore, we are left to conclude that He does indeed exist. Can it be proven beyond a doubt to hardcore skeptics? Probably not. But can it be proven beyond a reasonable doubt to the open-minded? Yes.

What explanation for our existence does the atheist offer? He argues, “In the beginning, there was nothing. Then, somehow, the nothing became something. This something eventually, by some unknown and unexplainable cause, became alive. This life-form evolved, eventually climbed out of the goo in which it was born, grew scales, feathers, skin, and hair, and eventually became you. From the goo to you by way of the zoo in only a few billion years! With the passage of time, this life-form also developed

a conscience, developed a theory to explain its own existence, and even wrote a book in which he attributed his creation to a higher power!" Is this reasonable? David wrote, "The fool says in his heart, "There is no God"" (Psalm 53:1).

Consider carefully the evidence presented in this lesson. If God does exist (and the evidence suggests that He does), then you a part of His special creation. According to His message revealed in the Bible, He loves you very much and wants you to come live with Him when your life here is complete. But in order to make this happen, He needs to know that you want to live with Him. In the remainder of our studies, we will consider the God's message found in the Bible and what we must do in order to live forever in our Father's house.

In another study, we will consider the evidence for the inspiration of the Bible, a study that also has a bearing on the evidence for God's existence. If the Bible is true, then it must have come from God, necessarily proving that God does exist.

## Questions and Answers

1. Can something come from nothing? \_\_\_\_\_

Does something exist? \_\_\_\_\_

What is the logical conclusion of these facts? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. In your own words, explain the first law of thermodynamics. \_\_\_\_\_

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3. In your own words, explain the second law of thermodynamics. \_\_\_\_\_

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4. What is the atheist's explanation for the existence of life? \_\_\_\_\_

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What is the Bible's explanation for the existence of life? \_\_\_\_\_

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5. What is the atheist's explanation for the order and design of the universe?

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What is the Bible's explanation for the order and design of the universe?

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6. What is the atheist's explanation for the human instinct to worship God?

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What is the Bible's explanation for the human instinct to worship God?

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7. What is a *prima facie* case? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **Thought Questions**

1. How do the first and second laws of thermodynamics support the case for God's existence?
2. Why is the Bible's explanation for the existence of life more reasonable than that offered by the atheist?
3. Why is the Bible's explanation for the order and design of the universe more reasonable than that offered by the atheist?
4. Why is the Bible's explanation for the human instinct to worship God more reasonable than that offered by the atheist?

### **Additional Study Goals**

1. Take the time to familiarize yourself with the arguments supporting the case for God's existence.
2. Memorize Psalm 53:1, "The fool says in his heart, 'There is no God.'"

### **Your Questions**

In the space below, write down any personal notes or questions that you had while reading through this lesson.

### CHARTING THE COURSE...

*Having noticed the evidence for God's existence, we will now embark on a study of His written communication with us—the Bible.*

*How familiar are you with the Bible? Do you know who penned the books and how they are arranged? Do you know the story of the Bible?*

*In the next lesson, we will seek to answer these questions in an effort to gain a foundation from which to understand God's Word.*