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Written by **Kurt Williamsen** on April 8, 2016

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What Science Says About the Existence of God

The second chapter of Carlos Calle's book *The Universe: Order Without Design* makes clear Calle's disdain for religious explanations of natural events:

Mythological tales that attempt to explain the universe can be found in most prescientific societies. The Minoan, Chinese, Norse, Celtic, Indian, and Mayan cultures all weaved myths to explain the universe that they observed.... Still other tales, such as the Genesis account, detail in an anthropomorphic way the creation of the Earth, the sky, the sun, the moon, the stars, the living creatures, and finally, the human race.[1]

Famed cosmologist Stephen Hawking begins his video documentary *Grand Design*, about the beginnings of the universe, in a similar manner, telling about the ignorant Norse and their religious beliefs.[2]

Derision is typical of arguments given against there being a god. Usually, the arguments are premised on the idea that, scientifically speaking, it is not logical for a god to exist: No scientific test has proven the existence of God. If God existed, and if He is all good as Christians postulate, why would He let bad things happen — especially to His followers? Also, the universe is a very inhospitable place that is, as far as we know, almost entirely devoid of intelligent life, and that fact calls into question the idea of some sort of grand plan: Why would a god create an entire universe to merely have one speck in the universe — Earth — suitable for a life-form such as man? Moreover, invisible beings — such as God, leprechauns, elves, and nymphs — must be imaginary and mythical because to exist they would have to be outside of space and time. And since science can explain how nearly everything came into being since the "big bang," even explaining the formation of intelligent life without a supreme being, it is likely that everything happened by chance, rather than being guided by a god.

Matters of Math and Matter

For those who do believe in God, it may come as a shock, but religious arguments — such as Scripture says, or the Koran says — are, objectively speaking, among the least compelling for convincing others of God's existence. This is true because those books are essentially history texts that transmit morals, and anyone who has a different set of morals (or doesn't believe the history) will tune out the message as inconsequential. So if one wants to try to prove that God exists, one should rely on known facts to build a case for the existence of God. The question is, "Is this possible?"

Atheists, especially those who consider themselves scientific, would say that it's not. So let us see.

The primary argument that theists — those who believe in the existence of God — often first argue is

that the simple fact that there *is physical matter at all* confirms the existence of God, because a tangible thing cannot come into being without it being created in the first place. (In religious-speak, this is the "first cause" argument: If one can explain everything back to the Big Bang, yet cannot explain what caused everything, the universe is still unexplained.) In response, some atheists contend that matter *has always existed* and that theists cannot prove otherwise. As well, some non-believers argue that it is as equally valid to ask theists where God came from as it is to ask non-believers where matter came from.

Here, both sides present arguments based on phenomena that are scientifically inexplicable. Theists contend that there is a *god that is outside space and time*, while atheists assert that not only can a physical object exist *without ever being created* (without causation), *it can exist forever*. One seems as improbable as the other — and as likely as the other.

To get around this logical conundrum, some scientists postulate that there really wasn't matter at all before the "big bang"; before the big bang was an era ruled by quantum gravity (in which gravity ceases to have an attractive force between particles), in which familiar space and time and particles are replaced by a nebulous mass of some more fundamental *unknown something*, something out of which space and time and particles can emerge — *somehow*.[3, 4] Stephen Hawking goes a step further, claiming in *Grand Design* that everything literally spontaneously formed from nothing other than the laws of physics.[2] He believes that since the universe is presently equal parts positive energy and negative energy, which when combined equal nothing, that the existence of everything can be attributed to an infinitesimally small, incredibly dense black hole, which packed nothingness together so tightly that it exploded and tore nothingness into positive and negative energy, which are the building blocks of matter. Since scientists have calculated that the density of a black hole can be so great that it literally stops time, Hawking believes that literally there was no time, no space, no anything before the big bang (though apparently there was an infinitely large vacuum that laymen might term "outer space").

Though mass and energy are indeed interchangeable at the quantum level — at the smallest levels, energy can become mass and mass become energy — these explanations merely create other questions: "If matter was static in a nebulous mass from eternity, why would it begin expanding a finite time ago (and, again, where did the particles of the nebulous mass come from)?" Or in Hawking's case, "How can a black hole form from nothing, since black holes are believed to form around extremely dense, solid matter (around a *something*), and isn't the vacuum of space a physical entity, and where did the laws of physics come from?" All told, the contentions that the universe came from an unidentifiable quantum state or that it came from nothingness packed into a superdense mass are unsatisfying explanations to resolve the theists' questions.

The second-most-used logical argument to prove the existence of God also contends that a *non-belief in God* relies on tremendous *faith*, a faith beyond what it takes to believe in God. It is the *mathematical argument*.

The mathematical argument says, in a nutshell, that God must exist because there have been happenings in the universe that were so unlikely to have happened via chance — the odds were astoundingly bad — that the most logical way to explain their occurrence is to deem them to have been the result of an intelligent plan. This type of argument is often described using the airplane-in-a-junkyard analogy, which says that to believe that something happened by chance against such astounding odds is like believing that a tornado can sweep through a junkyard and assemble the parts

into a fully functioning 747 airplane — if only once in a great while.

Fine-tuned for Life?

The most persuasive mathematical argument used to prove there is a god is the "fine-tuning argument," which essentially says that life in a universe can only occur if the physical parameters of the universe are very similar to how they actually are in our universe; even small changes would mean no life was possible, indicating the presence of a guiding hand.

The basic claim of the fine-tuning argument, which claims that for human life-forms to have appeared on Earth an incredible number of happy coincidences needed to happen, finds very little controversy. Hawking said about the universe: "The laws of science, as we know them at present, contain many fundamental numbers, like the size of the electric charge of the electron and the ratio of the masses of the proton and electron…. The remarkable fact is that the values of these numbers seem to have been very finely adjusted to make possible the development of life."[5]

Equally luminous astrophysicist Martin Rees listed in his book *Before the Beginning: Our Universe and Others* some of the areas where the conditions need to be just right:

For life to emerge, the local conditions must be "right"; but the entire universe must be propitious as well. The physical laws must allow atoms to combine into complex molecules in an environment warmed by a stable star. There must be sufficient expanses of space and time for stars to evolve, and for their nuclear waste to be recycled into a new generation of stars, some with attendant planets. These are stringent demands: they would not be fulfilled in a "typical" universe.[6]

On the other hand, the conclusion theists draw from the fine-tuning argument — which goes like this: Since the odds of a life-sustaining universe happening by chance are infinitesimally small, logic demands that the universe was made by an intelligent being with a plan — has received *lots* of criticism.

Non-believers attack this assumption about fine-tuning from different angles, which we'll address one at a time:

The universe is not fine-tuned for life, but life is fine-tuned for the universe: This is basically saying that "life will find a way": No matter how the universe came out of the big bang, life would find a way to exist. It's *fait accompli*.

But life in a universe is more than a little tenuous.

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Some variables in a universe's parameters, if changed, could virtually extinguish the chance that life of any type would form anywhere. For instance, stars as we know them, which are made of two of the lightest elements, hydrogen and helium, would likely not be possible if the nuclear force — the force binding protons and neutrons in the atomic nuclei — were slightly stronger than it is, because all the hydrogen would likely have been consumed in the first few minutes after the big bang. Another is that if the amount of matter and the density of the universe were greater, the universe would re-collapse on itself before it could cool, not providing life an environment to form, and if the universe were less dense, having too little matter, it would expand so quickly that there would not be time for planets and planetary systems to form, likely eliminating, at least, the chance for any intelligent life to form. And so on.[1, 6, 7]

Also, the argument is somewhat counterintuitive: If the constituent parts of the universe have, as atheists believe, indeed existed forever and life can "find a way to exist" under most any circumstance or situation, wouldn't God have logically found a way to exist?

In defense of their position, atheists often claim that life in the universe could possibly form from several elements on the periodic table, not just carbon, making the likelihood of life in any long-lived universe manifold greater. The website The Daily Galaxy explains:

Because carbon has worked for the conditions on Earth, we speculate that the same must be true throughout the Universe. In reality, there are many elements that could potentially do the trick. Even counter-intuitive elements such as arsenic may be capable of supporting life under the right conditions….

Sulfur is capable of forming long-chain molecules like carbon. Some terrestrial bacteria have already been discovered to survive on sulfur rather than oxygen, by reducing sulfur to hydrogen sulfide.[8]

Even water may not be necessary for the formation of life.[8]

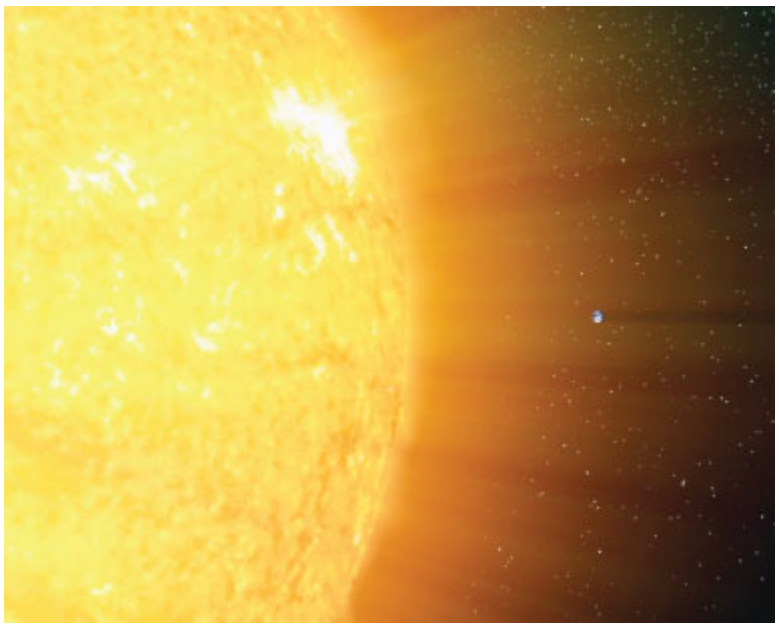
But even ignoring the fact that the vast majority of cosmologists believe that it is very unlikely life in a universe would form from any other element than carbon, several factors diminish the persuasiveness of the contention that life would come about "no matter what." First is the fact that though the Earth has the elements that have been suggested as possible replacements for carbon — such as silicon, nitrogen, and phosphorous — and these elements exist on Earth often in large quantities in places covering a gamut of conditions of heat, cold, pressure, and oxygen content, no life that we know of has evolved from them. As well, the most bandied element to replace carbon — silicon — does not in nature often exist in a form that would allow life to come from it. Because silicon readily reacts with oxygen — which commonly exists in the universe — hence forming sand and rocks, it isn't a likely source of life.[9]

It's no miracle that the universe is "fine-tuned"; seemingly highly unlikely events happen every day: Here it is postulated that what on the surface seem to be monumental odds against life in the universe are really the result of not seeing the situation from the correct perspective.

For instance, atheists have claimed that ending up with life in the universe is comparable to an individual being born: If one's parents, grandparents, great grandparents, etc., did anything significantly different in their lives, you would not exist. If one of them was sick on the day he actually met his spouse or if one drank a little more or less alcohol that night or if one forebear decided to take a new job and had moved to a different state or simply had a bad day and was cranky and unapproachable, etc., you would not exist. So your existence is utterly improbable and the culmination of stupendously unlikely odds — but here you are.

Then there's a similar one that says, suppose you drop $10 of pennies on the ground. The possible sequences of heads and tails is 2 to the 1,000th power, and so the odds against getting any resulting sequence is so low that for practical applications we could consider it to be zero. Yet every time you drop the coins, the mathematically impossible happens, so the odds against a life-nurturing universe, while improbable, are not impossible.

Or there's the one that says there are trillions of places in the universe with different conditions, so one was likely to be conducive to generating life.



With each of the above, here again, there is seemingly overly simplistic reasoning. The first two cases

above look at odds from the wrong angle. In the first case, while it is improbable that you as a unique individual were born, it was *very likely* that your parents, grandparents, etc., were going to have kids, since most adults have children. In other words the odds of that event happening were good. In the second case, while any given possible sequence of coins is nearly impossible to get, the odds of all the coins falling on their sides, not their edges, was virtually 100 percent — so the odds were good there too. In the last case, while it's true that there are trillions of different regions in our universe, allowing the likelihood of a life-friendly place such as Earth to exist in this universe, the fine-tuning theory doesn't dispute the fact that this universe is life-friendly: It shows that any type of intelligent life quickly becomes impossible anywhere *in other possible universes* unless tight parameters are met.

It should be obvious that the odds of a life-nurturing universe happening is not similar to the above examples. The above examples work backward from the culmination of a specific event to try to manufacture a scenario in which very likely events — such as a parent having a child — seem nearly impossible, to make it seem as if truly unlikely things happen everyday.

In reality, it only *seems as if* enormously unlikely events happen regularly. Take gambling. The odds of winning the MegaMillions lottery, which requires matching five out 75 balls drawn at random, plus matching one ball from a group of 15 balls, is one out of 258,890,850. Statisticians often joke that the lottery is a game of chance for people who don't understand math. (The only reason people regularly win such a game is because there are millions of players, each playing different sequences of numbers, hence decreasing the odds against the group, not the odds against the individual.) With all of the things that must happen to achieve a life-nurturing universe and all the possible non-life-affirming variables, the odds of it coming about become so unlikely that they are as close to impossible as can be — odds so terrible that no one with a grasp of math would say they could happen via luck. According to some people's understanding of string theory, the number of possible universe configurations is approximately 10^{500} (that's a 1 followed by 500 zeros).[1] For perspective, there are only 10^{80} elementary particles — the smallest measurable building blocks of matter, such as quarks and leptons — in the observable universe. And as Carlos Calle said, "Only a tiny fraction of these … universes ends up with a cosmological constant that could give rise to a universe that could give rise to the existence of life."[1]

Going back to the coin example above, say we marked each penny of our thousand pennies with a number, one through 1,000, and after throwing them in the air, we recorded how each of our pennies landed, either heads or tails. Then we promise to pay any scientist in the world $10 million if we throw the pennies in the air again and they all land in the same sequence as they did on the first throw — the catch being that they have to pay us $10 if the pennies do not land in the exact same sequence. Would we find any scientist in the world who would take this bet? I think not. Yet the odds of a life-tuned universe happening by chance are vastly less than those of having the pennies fall in sequence.

Since the odds of a life-nurturing universe simply occurring are infinitesimally small, many theists (and scientists) make a logical supposition that an all-powerful being must have "tuned" the universe to allow it to contain life.

At this point the outright denials of fine-tuning come into play. Those who criticize fine-tuning as a theory often posit, once again, that the odds against having a life-nurturing universe just aren't that great. The difference being that in this case the arguments accuse fine-tuning advocates of trying to make facts fit their agenda.

Victor Stenger — who was a particle physicist, author, and atheist — accused theists and others who accept fine-tuning of fudging facts, specifically making it seem as if a life-nurturing universe is nearly impossible by unreasonably examining only one of the criteria that determine the likelihood of a life-nurturing universe at a time, such as the strength of gravity *or* the rate of expansion of the universe after the big bang *or* something else. He said that if one merely changes more than one parameter at a time, the chances for life in a universe go up dramatically:

Changes in other parameters may compensate for the change in a selected parameter, allowing more room for a viable, liveable universe than might otherwise be suspected. We and others have concluded that the so-called fine-tuning is not as fine as has been advertised.[10]

However, he seems to have been simply wrong. Physicists generally *do vary the parameters*, changing more than one a time, and they still come out with a fine-tuned universe.[6, 11]

As mentioned earlier, there are also cosmologic theories such as Stephen Hawking's that suggest how creation could be explained without God. There are four main theories in this category, which are explained in Carlos Calle's book *The Universe: Order Without Design*. But each of these theories is no more than a hypothesis based upon what is mathematically *possible*, not *probable*. (For more details on the cosmologic theories, see "Do Multiple Universes Explain Away the Evidence of God?")

Also adding to the case that fine-tuning is so much more than coincidence is the fact that cosmologists can describe the universe and its contents using relatively simple and beautiful mathematics, even making predictions about the makeup of the universe that can be tested against, and explain a lot of, empirical data.

As to making predictions about the makeup of the universe based on math, the search for answers to the universe's rhythms assumes that everything is logically ordered, hence using math to predict such things as the existence of black holes and subatomic particles. If the universe were not designed, why would anyone expect that it would be predictable, rather than random?

As to beauty, as Dean L. Overman notes in his book *A Case for the Existence of God*, just as a symphony is not just a bunch of instruments playing at one time, the math that describes the universe is not just a jumble of random numbers and equations:

Physics Nobel laureates Paul Dirac and Richard Feynman were convinced that mathematical truth can be recognized by its beauty. Beauty points toward truth. Dirac was more concerned with the beauty in an equation than whether the equation matched an empirical experiment because he had discovered that beauty was a more accurate indicator of truth. He credited his sense of beauty with allowing him to find the equation for an electron, that … forms the basic foundation for the very successful field of quantum electrodynamics.[12]

And just as a beautiful symphony is the result of carefully and artistically choreographed noise, the math of the universe seems artfully arranged.

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Evolution of Everything

The apparent second-most-used mathematical argument used to prove the existence of God is the evolution argument. There are several variations to this argument, but the argument at its base professes that macro-evolution — evolution in which life spontaneously erupts from inanimate matter and then morphs from one species into another — has never been witnessed and has no definitive proof in the fossil record, so it is essentially more of a hypothesis than a proven theory. And even if it were true, the odds against life happening by accident, without the guidance of God, are so tiny that it is realistically impossible.

To understand the theists' arguments, one must first have a basic understanding of how most evolutionists believe life came to exist on Earth.

According to the theory now in vogue, approximately four to 4.5 billion years ago, shortly after Earth formed, it was in a shooting gallery, hit by asteroids and meteors, one after another, and this galactic shower deposited the organics needed for life to form, including CO_2 and water. Three and a half to four billion years ago, the Earth had oceans and a primitive atmosphere believed to consist mainly of carbon dioxide, carbon monoxide, and nitrogen. At the time, volcanoes, which were probably common because the Earth was still hot from its formation, added hydrogen and methane gases to the mix, gases that turned into amino acids — the building blocks of proteins — when they were subjected to an electric charge from lightning. (Lab tests done as early as the 1950s show that these gases do, in fact, turn into amino acids after being subjected to electricity.) The amino acids either then rained down into the oceans or sat in tidal pools near volcanoes. The amino acids subsequently linked, owing to chemical processes or the great energy generated by asteroid collisions with Earth, into chains called peptides. And these peptides bumped into each other in this "primordial soup" for millions of years until just the right combination of bits somehow linked together (no one knows how) to form a self-replicating entity that was the precursor to life. This self-replicating entity morphed into bacteria via natural selection, including creating cyanobacteria, which use photosynthesis for energy, hence oxygenating the planet and allowing organisms to cover the land. Evolution — repeated slight mutations in the genetic code over thousands of millions of years, magnified by geographic isolation of species — then led eventually to us: humans.[13, 14, 15, 16]

Atheist biologist Richard Dawkins, who is both infamous for his ranting, poorly thought-out verbal attacks against the religious and religions in books such as *The God Delusion* and famous for arguing rationally the case for evolution in *The Blind Watchmaker*, claims in the latter book that we can roughly calculate the odds of non-living material spontaneously springing forth into life (since it apparently took nearly a billion years for bacteria to inhabit our planet and since no other intelligent lifeforms have contacted us from space). He says that the odds are somewhere between once in a universe, and once in a solar system, adding that just because the odds are very poor, that doesn't mean it can't happen. Everything, according to him, falls within a range of possibilities of happening — from very likely happenings to astoundingly unlikely ones — including such events as a cow jumping over the moon or having a marble statue wave its arm. And everything on that scale could theoretically happen, if we simply wait long enough. So we should not be surprised if something very improbable happens, such as the spontaneous formation of life from non-living material. The fact that life is here, to him, proves that it can spontaneously erupt. He dismisses any involvement of God in the formation of life by deeming God as more implausible than the spontaneous eruption of life.[16]

Evolutionists such as Dawkins support their theory with some compelling evidence, including evidence of an old Earth; [1, 6, 7, 18] computer programs showing to what extent life could evolve (given small genetic changes and enough time);[16] fossils that show evolutionary transitions over time;[17] test-tube experiments wherein RNA very quickly mutates to adapt to poisons;[16] examples of evident animal and plant lineages resulting from evolution (such as the abundance of marsupials in Australia versus on other continents);[16, 17] the sheer fact that there were animals on isolated landmasses such as Australia, despite supposedly dying in Noah's flood; similarities, differences, and "mistakes" in organ development, such as lensless eyes in nautilus — a relative of the octopus[16] — and the four-headed male sex organ in the echidna, a mammal similar to a platypus;[19] successes in breeding dogs and horses in a few generations to vary in size from tiny to enormous; the fact that God would not intentionally make cruel beings, such as wasps whose eggs are laid in living caterpillars so that the wasp's larvae can eat it alive; layers of sediment in the oceans going back millions of years that contain diatoms that slowly change over time through the layers;[17] etc.

But perhaps the most compelling evidence brought forth to support evolution is genetic evidence. For instance, scientists use molecular sequence-reading techniques to examine DNA and find, in animals believed to have come from a common ancestor, that species indeed do have large chunks of DNA in common — implying heredity. As well, what is expected to be found in species if evolution is true is found. Lawrence M. Krauss explains a finding[20] about "the prediction of a genetic relationship between the great apes and humans via a common ancestor" that few in the Christian biology community would dispute:[21, 22, 23, 24]

Humans have twenty-three pairs of chromosomes, where all great apes have twenty-four pairs. If they have a common ancestor, this difference must be explained. One possibility is that two of the chromosomes in the great apes fused together at some point in the human lineage. But this makes two testable predictions. Each chromosome has a characteristic end, called a telomere, and a distinctive central part, called a centromere. If fusion had occurred, then one of the human chromosomes should,

in its central region, include remnants of two fused telomeres, lined up end to end. It also should have, roughly a quarter and three-quarters of the way along the chromosome, a structure identical to that of the great-ape chromosomes. This prediction, tested in the laboratory today … has been beautifully verified.

On the other side of the divide, the theists who postulate that life-forms as we know them did not come about by chance and that God himself molded each creature — people usually deemed "creationists" or believers of "intelligent design" — argue that evolution is not possible or logical. They make their case by trying to poke holes in evolutionary theory.

To start, they begin with the first evolutionary life, claiming that even the simplest conceivable self-replicating organism would still be extremely complex and far too difficult to create by chance. James F. Coppedge says in *Evolution — Possible or Impossible?*:

Dr. Harold J. Morowitz of Yale University has done extensive research for the National Aeronautics and Space Administration to discover the theoretical limits for the simplest free-living thing which could duplicate itself, or, technically, the minimal biological entity capable of autonomous self-replication. He took into consideration the minimum operating equipment needed and the space it would require. Also, attention was given to electrical properties and to the hazards of thermal motion. From these important studies, the conclusion is that the smallest such theoretical entity would require 239 or more individual protein molecules.

This is not very much simpler than the smallest actually known autonomous living organism, which is the minuscule, bacteria-like *Mycoplasma hominis H39*. It has around 600 different kinds of proteins.

From present scientific knowledge, there is no reason to believe that anything smaller ever existed.[25]

He adds that if it is "presumed that this minimal theoretical cell would in many ways resemble bacteria in its make-up," the odds of it forming by chance are 10^{123} (that's a 1 with a 123 zeros after it). Coppedge elaborated that evolutionary first life is even more astounding because "if we had all of them [the necessary protein molecules], they still could not duplicate themselves, so it would be the end of the line, unless chance could also produce the DNA code and the entire translating system."

Some creationists say that even this is not the end of the difficulties because there probably wouldn't be a "primordial soup" of amino acids and peptides to make into proteins in the first place. They argue that if, as evolutionists theorize, that there was no free oxygen in the air when life came about, then "there would be no ozone, so ultraviolet light would destroy [the] biochemicals."[26, 27]

And as the reaction necessary to create adenine — a building block necessary to create RNA and DNA for cells — "can occur only in the *presence* of oxygen," free oxygen in the atmosphere would have been present to "destroy organic compounds," such as amino acids.[26, 27]

And even if the amino acids were somehow not destroyed, they state, it is hardly conceivable that RNA, which is basically a molecular machine that performs operations of a cell, could design and build itself.[25, 28]

Not only is RNA presented as a hurdle that evolutionists cannot jump over with a natural explanation because RNA is a virtual machine that just seems to appear in the world (and machines imply design),

the fact that it follows a set of directions causes many to pause since the presence of information implies an information coder, and more importantly, the ability to transmit and decode information implies an active receiver.

Too, intelligent-design promoting biochemist Michael Behe and others insist that some things in nature are "irreducibly complex," meaning that it is not possible for them to develop from a more primitive form. Behe says that an item in nature is irreducibly complex when it is "composed of several well-matched, interacting parts that contribute to the basic function, where the removal of any one of the parts causes the system to effectively cease functioning."[29] He gives as an example a bacterium's flagellum, the tail-like structure that allows a bacterium to propel itself. Others give as an example birds' wings. (The problem with this one is that some physical systems that would be deemed irreducibly complex by Behe's definition have been shown to be simplified in other species.)[30]

They also point to the fact that some *gospel* beliefs in Darwinisim have been proven wrong, such as the belief that embryos go through the same stages and that "humans go through fish and reptile stages."

Creationists also, again, rely on a bit of math, claiming that if complex organs really came about because of advantageous micro-mutational changes, considering the fact that most mutations are disadvantageous and that the sheer number of positive mutations necessary to effect the changes would have had to have been huge, there simply wasn't time enough for the changes to occur. Mathematician D.S. Ulman "argued that it was highly improbable that the eye could have evolved by the accumulation of small mutations, because the number of mutations would have to be so large and the time was not nearly long enough for them to appear." (Both sides are in general agreement that if Darwinism is true, mutations would have to have been small, not large.)[31]

They also point to the fact that after great die-offs, such as the extinction of the dinosaurs, new species seem to have filled the void very quickly, seemingly improbable if multitudes of positive mutations are necessary for new species. Making the problem worse, since the time of Darwin, paleontologists have scoured fossil beds looking for transitional species, yet have found *relatively few* — as compared to the countless numbers that were predicted — that fit the bill (another fact both sides agree upon). Phillip E. Johnson notes in *Darwin on Trial* that though evolutionists do provide explanations for the rather skimpy proof in the fossil record, it seems strange "how Darwinist evolution always happened in such a manner as to escape detection." And even those fossils that are found may not be transitional at all, but merely wishful thinking: The "Piltdown man" was a hoax created from a human skull and an orangutan jawbone that went undiscovered for 40 years. "Nebraska man" — essentially a drawing of a humanoid derived solely from a fossilized tooth — was believed by a sizable portion of the paleontological community to be a predecessor of humans, until it was found to have come from an extinct peccary (essentially a wild pig).[31]

Finally, not only has the process of spontaneously generating life not been demonstrated in the laboratory (or anywhere else), features that should never have come about through natural selection (because they make a species less able to survive, such as a peacock's long tail) actually do exist.

The creationist viewpoint essentially concludes, as does Johnson: Though "Darwin's theory has impressive explanatory power, … how are we to tell if it's *true*?"

The arguments go back and forth, with evolutionists providing an explanation for every contention

forwarded by creationists. But though a large portion of biologists would likely admit, as did evolutionist Eugenie C. Scott in *Scientists Confront Intelligent Design and Creationism*, "that natural selection does not explain *everything* about evolution," the fact is that if God did take a direct hand in the creation of life (specifically, human life), there is absolutely no known way to prove it or test for it.[18]

Then again, regarding how life came about, there is no *absolute proof* that either side is correct; rather, each side makes its case with some conjecture and with less-than-perfect evidence. So one needs to assess which side has the preponderance of evidence on its side. But in deciding whether there is a God or not, it doesn't matter who wins the evolution/creation argument, because a miracle that happens slowly is as miraculous as a miracle that happens quickly, and as Dean L. Overman says, "Natural selection is only a component of the universe. As merely a component of the universe, it is not an explanation for the universe."[12]

Too, Dawkins' argument (and others like it) claiming that all things are possible if given enough time is specious in a manner similar to the earlier-mentioned cosmologic arguments: It is overly simplified, and turned backward. Because he doesn't take into consideration on his scale of probable happenings the fact that some things are "impossible," his argument is overly simplified. Under the laws of physics as we know them, no cow is ever going to jump over the moon, no marble statue is ever going to wave its arm, and no non-living thing is ever going to come alive — no matter how long one waits. And if, as he claims, the improbability of life erupting spontaneously can happen, so can God come into being — or exist eternally.

Circumstantial Case

Since we are concerned with a scientific argument about whether God exists, rather than building a case that might stand in a court of law, we cannot use eyewitness accounts of "God in action," such as the countless people who claimed to have experienced miracles, including two Green Berets and an Air Force pastor who were in a bus in Vietnam when their base suffered a prolonged mortar attack and claim that their bus was enveloped in a "giant transparent bubble, glowing faintly," shielding them,[32] or those many churchgoers who have found unprecedented fulfillment through giving themselves over to Christ, such as Oxford professor and former vehement atheist Alister McGrath,[33] or those who claim to have experienced Heaven or out-of-body travel during a near-death experience, such as Sergeant Gene Beck, who was injured and flat-lined in Canada and claimed to see a military memorial service for himself in California — he later surprised his fellow soldiers by not only telling them where they were sitting in the room, but what they were wearing.[32, 34]

But science may give credence to such claims anyway, as there have been cases where researchers have sought to confirm whether such extraordinary events are possible.

One case that people have probably heard about was the case of Dr. Duncan MacDougall, who in 1901 tried to weigh patients immediately before and after they died to see if a soul weighs anything. Unfortunately, his study was poor in design and execution and really showed nothing.

A more thorough effort to see if "unbelievable" claims are true was put forth by psychiatrist Ian Stevenson, who interviewed more than 2,000 children who claimed to remember parts of their past lives — including children who stood to suffer by their claims and had little use to lie, such as "twenty-

five cases … in Burma where children claim[ed] to remember lives as Japanese soldiers and exhibit[ed] Japanese characteristics," after Japan's soldiers had raped and slaughtered their way through that country in WWII. The Japanese were so hated in Burma that one child was burned alive by villagers for claiming to be a reincarnated soldier. Stevenson tried to verify or falsify the children's claims by, for instance, contacting the families of the deceased person the child claimed to have been and comparing their stories. (This study, which is partly documented in the book entitled *Old Souls: The Scientific Evidence for Past Lives*, was done before the availability of news on the Internet would have made all the claims suspect.)[35] Though many of the children knew facts they shouldn't have been able to know about the lives of the previously deceased they claimed to have been, however, here too, there were problems. None of the children had perfect recollection of a past life, and so a person has to trust that Stevenson did not skew the results — either intentionally or inadvertently — because he *wanted* to find evidence of reincarnation.

But to dismiss God from existence, one must audaciously conclude that every single one of the countless people who claim to have experienced a miracle or a supernatural event is either lying or deluded. If even one person who makes such a claim is truthful and correct, we can't overlook the possibility of God's existence.

In the end, both theism and atheism reside not on science, but on *faith*. And one must weigh the evidence and decide for oneself which belief system is more *reasonable* and requires the least *faith*.

Atheist scientists argue that they will likely be able to prove that all processes in the universe happened naturally, absent the hand of God, but they just don't yet have the technology to prove it, yet at the same time, they would mock a person who holds a religious-type belief — such as Ian Stevenson — for saying nearly the same thing: One day, science will figure out a way to prove that events deemed "supernatural" and a being called God are real.

Since much of society, especially academia, is becoming vociferously pro-atheist, we'll give a theist the last word on the matter. Dean Overman stated about the weight of the evidence for or against there being a god:

The existence of God explains why there is something rather than nothing; it explains the intelligibility and order of the universe; it explains the continuing existence of the universe; it explains the beginning of the universe; it explains the inherently mathematical nature of the universe; it explains the existence of the laws of nature; it explains the beauty in the universe and the relationship between mathematical beauty and truth; it explains the existence of information; it explains the existence of free will and the ability to recognize good and evil; it explains religious experience; it explains the fine-tuning in the astro-physics of the universe that allows for conscious life; and it explains why thoughts have the capacity to produce true beliefs.

Atheism lacks an adequate, coherent explanation for any of these things.[12]

Is there a chance that the atheists are correct? Yes, but according to the mathematical calculations, it's only a nano-fractional chance. Now, the question becomes, "Do you believe in math, science, and logic enough to believe in God?"

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