



I DON'T HAVE ENOUGH FAITH TO BE AN ATHEIST: DOES GOD EXIST?

Frank Turek

Did you know that you don't need the Bible or any Scripture to know that God exists? It's true, and it's an important thing to understand when talking to people who claim there is no God.

Because to argue the existence of God with an atheist, we need to provide evidence or compelling arguments that don't rely on believing the Bible.

This doesn't mean we don't trust the Bible or rely on it ourselves. It simply means that for those who don't believe the Bible to begin with, or even acknowledge the existence of God, we need to be equipped with evidence and arguments that will challenge their own notions and understanding of the world from their context.

Because if we want to win people to Jesus, if we want them to believe in the gospel, they first have to acknowledge that there is a God. Because Christianity can't be true if there's no God.

So I'm going to give you three arguments – which are taught in the Bible, but you don't need the Bible to know them – that support God's existence from evidence in nature.

The cosmological argument.

Simply put, this argument holds that if the universe had a beginning, it must have had a *Beginner*. Many Christian scholars say this argument points back to the Big Bang. I know that many Christians don't believe in the Big Bang, and that's fine. The argument of a necessary beginner still holds logical weight for the existence of God. That said, I believe in the Big Bang... I just happen to know who banged it.

The evidence for the big bang is so overwhelming that even atheists acknowledge the data supporting this view. Stephen Hawking, one of the greatest minds in physics to ever live, put it this way, "Almost everyone now believes that the universe and time itself had a beginning at the big bang."

Russian cosmologist Alexander Vilenkin, an agnostic, said, "With the proof now in place, cosmologists can no longer hide behind the possibility of a past eternal universe. There is now no escape. They have to face the problem of a cosmic beginning."

The bottom line is that if the universe had a beginning, then it seems it must have had a beginner. And we have one of two options to explain this beginning.

Either no one created something out of nothing, which is the atheistic view, or Someone created something out of nothing, which is the theistic view.



The question is, which view is more reasonable?

The idea that someone created something out of nothing is certainly a miracle, but at least there is a miracle worker. The other option that no one created something out of nothing, is also a miracle. But it's a miracle with no miracle worker.

Again I ask, which view is more reasonable?

The law of causality says everything that comes to be has a cause. There has to be an uncaused first cause. There has to be what Aristotle called "the unmoved mover." There has to be what the Bible calls the Great I Am. The being that had no beginning, the being that had no end, the being that gives being to everything else.

We all take the law of causality – that things don't pop into existence out of nothing by nothing without a cause – very seriously. Nobody is worried that while they are making dinner a Bengal tiger is going to suddenly materialize in their kitchen out of nowhere and devour them. If the whole universe could pop into existence out of nothing by nothing without a cause, why doesn't everything do so?

Why don't Teslas pop into existence out of nothing by nothing without a cause? Why doesn't dinner just magically appear on your table out of nowhere?

Because of the law of causality. If there is a beginning, from nothing, there must have been someone to create that beginning.

It's why I say that I don't have enough faith to be an atheist. Because atheists have a lot of hope and faith that something came from nothing, caused by no one.

If space, matter, and time had a beginning, then it seems evident that whatever created space, matter, and time can't be made of space, matter, and time.

In other words, the cause must be spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, and personal in order to choose to create. Because in order to go from a state of nothingness to a state of creation, someone had to make a choice and only personal beings make choices.

Impersonal forces don't make choices.

The being would also have to be intelligent in order to make a choice. When you think about a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent cause, who do you think of?

God.



This argument does not prove that God is the Christian God, just that He exists. But, if we continue to do the research, I think we'll see that the same being that walked out of the tomb in the first century A.D. is the same being whose divine nature created the universe out of nothing.

What this argument does accomplish is that it shows that a being like the God of the Bible appears to exist.

The next argument follows the cosmological argument rather nicely. Because it looks at the design of the universe and life after something came from nothing.

The teleological argument.

The design argument has two facets. The universe appears to be designed and so does life. I'll start with the universe first.

Scientists have discovered in recent decades that the universe is fine-tuned to such an incredible level that if you were to change any one of a number of factors about our universe – even to a virtually imperceptible degree – there would either be no universe or there would be no universe that could support life.

Here's what Stephen Hawking said about this:

“If the expansion rate of the universe was different by one part in a thousand million million, a second after the Big Bang, the universe would've collapsed back on itself or never developed galaxies.”

In other words, if the expansion rate was infinitesimally different, none of us would be here.

It's impossible to make an evolutionary argument for this. Why? Because, the expansion rate did not evolve to a particular rate, it started that way. This was part of the initial conditions of the universe.

So it seems logical that the same being who created the universe out of nothing also fine-tuned the expansion rate to be precisely what it needed to be.

But it's not just the expansion rate that's finely tuned.

If the gravitational force were altered by more than one part in 10 to the 40th power, we wouldn't be here. That's one part in one with 40 zeros following it.



To illustrate the magnitude of that number, imagine you take a tape measure and stretch it across the entire known universe. That's a long way. Set the gravitational force at a particular inch mark on that tape measure. I realize gravity's not measured in inches, but this just helps you scale the idea in your mind. If the strength of gravity were different by one inch in either direction across the scale as wide as the entire known universe, we wouldn't be here.

Either that value is designed or it's not. What makes more sense? That it's designed. In fact, this is just one of several aspects of the universe's structure that are clearly designed. You change any one of them, and none of us are here. Every one of these multiple variables has to be just right for our universe to exist. And the same thing is true about our solar system.

If earth were just a little bit closer or a little bit farther away from the sun, we couldn't survive. A little bit closer and we'd burn up. A little bit farther away, we'd freeze. We are in what scientists call the Goldilocks zone. It's not too hot, it's not too cold. It is just right.

The earth's axial tilt is 23.5 degrees. But if that were to change just slightly, we would not exist. Earth's rotation takes 24 hours. Change that slightly, we don't exist. The size and distance of the moon from us – change that slightly, we don't exist. If Jupiter was not in its current orbit, we couldn't exist here. Why? What does Jupiter do for us? It's a cosmic vacuum cleaner. Its gravitational force is so strong that it attracts most of the meteors and space junk to it rather than us.

On February 1, 2003, President George W. Bush entered the east room of the White House. It was Saturday afternoon. They turned the TV camera on. Every major network carried his address, including international networks.

The President looked into the camera and said, "My fellow Americans, this morning, our country experienced a great tragedy. Upon reentry into the atmosphere, the Space Shuttle Columbia burned up in the skies over Texas. There are no survivors. The Columbia is lost."

He then went on to quote from Isaiah chapter 40, beginning in verse 25. Why Isaiah chapter 40? Because, in Isaiah chapter 40, God is speaking. And what does God say?

*"To whom will you compare me?
Or who is my equal?" says the Holy One.
Lift up your eyes and look to the heavens:
Who created all these?
He who brings out the starry host one by one
and calls forth each of them by name.
Because of his great power and mighty strength,
not one of them is missing.*



President Bush then looked back in the camera and said, “The God that created and named all those stars is the same God that created and knows the names of the seven astronauts who perished today. While they did not return safely home to us, we can all now pray they’ve all returned safely home.”

Most of us have the wrong idea of what God is like. We think God is a big angel. No. You want to know what God is like? Look to the heavens. What do you see when you look to the heavens? You see a virtual infinite expanse.

Psalm 103:11 says,

God’s love to those that fear him exceeds the height of the heavens above the earth.

How high are the heavens above the earth? Stars equivalent to grains of sand on all the beaches on all the earth, over 200,000 years at five miles a second between those stars. Infinite. That’s the point.

The second element of the teleological argument deals with the design of life. More than 2,400 years ago, Aristotle recognized that all of nature is moving consistently in a certain direction.

For example, why does an acorn, if it’s properly nourished, always go in the direction of becoming an oak tree? Why doesn’t it become an elm tree or a birch tree, or a seahorse? Some will say, “Well, it’s programmed to become an oak tree.” Okay, but who programmed it? An acorn doesn’t have a mind of its own, yet it reliably goes in a direction. If it doesn’t have a mind of its own but reliably goes in a particular direction, there must be an external mind directing it toward an end. That’s what Aristotle called the unmoved mover.

By the way, this is only way we can do science. Natural laws must follow a consistent and persistent pattern that reflects ordered design in order to be studied so that hypotheses can be proven. The Apostle Paul put it this way: “In Jesus, we live and move and have our being.” He said, “Christ holds all things together,” and the writer of Hebrews says, “God sustains all things by his powerful word.”

In other words, the kind of design we’re talking about is not just way back when the big bang occurred. The kind of design we’re talking about means that every single moment God is sustaining the universe and the natural laws that structure our reality.

But as amazing and as fine-tuned as the heavens and nature are, they’re not nearly as amazing as humans. Because they are not made in the image of God, we are.

What does it mean to be made in the image of God? It doesn’t mean you look like God, because He’s immaterial. It means you’re a person like God – that you have a mind, emotions, and a will. That you know, you feel, you want, that you can make choices. And you can know right from wrong.



This brings me to the third argument for God.

The moral argument.

We've all heard people make the claim that we can't legislate morality. But that's simply untrue. All laws legislate morality. Every law declares one behavior right and the opposite behavior wrong. The only question is, whose morality will we legislate?

When somebody says, "Don't impose your morality on me." I say, "This isn't my morality. I didn't make this stuff up. I didn't make up the fact that murder's wrong, that abortion's wrong, that rape is wrong, that theft is wrong."

This is simply morality. The one Thomas Jefferson said was self-evident. The one the Apostle Paul said was written on the hearts of every man.

So if you don't like my morality, you don't have a problem with me. You have a problem with the Creator from whose nature this morality is derived.

Imagine you go out on a hike in Yosemite National Park and get lost. Your cell phone is dead. All you have to help you get home is a magnetic compass. And a magnetic compass is supposed to point to magnetic north, but instead of your compass pointing to magnetic north, your compass, no matter which way you turn, always points to you.

How helpful would that compass be? Not helpful at all. You already know where you are. You're trying to figure out where north is.

The question we must answer is, is there a moral compass to life, is there a right way to live, or can you just live life any way you want? Do we discover right and wrong, or do we determine right and wrong?

Our culture now says, "You don't discover right and wrong. You determine what's right for you."

If there is no God, our culture is right. Good and evil are just a matter of opinion.

Because, if there is no standard beyond us, then everything's a matter of opinion. If there is no true compass, how can anyone say that murder, or rape, or abuse are wrong? If there's no true compass, we can't say someone is doing something right or wrong. It's all subjective.

But the human experience doesn't actually support this. Instead, we seem to inhabit a moral universe. C.S. Lewis perhaps most famously argued this point. Early on in his life, Lewis was an atheist. He fought in World War I and concluded, "There can't be a good God. There's too much injustice in the world."



Then, one day he had an epiphany. In his book *Mere Christianity* he said that, as an atheist, “my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I gotten this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?” (38–39)

You see, you wouldn’t know what a crooked line was unless you knew what a straight line was. You wouldn’t know what unjust was unless you knew what justice was.

Justice can only exist if God exists to sustain a universal and transcendent standard of right and wrong.

Otherwise, everything’s just a matter of opinion.

You can’t have evil without good, because evil doesn’t exist on its own. It only exists as a perversion of the good. It is like cancer. If you take all the cancer out of a body, you’ll have a healthy body. If you take all the body out of the cancer, what do you got? Nothing. It doesn’t exist on its own. Now, you can ask why God would allow evil to continue, but that’s another question that has nothing to do with His existence.

In fact, evil could never disprove God, because you can’t conceptualize evil apart from a holy, good, and transcendent God.

Now, what can we conclude from the three arguments we’ve been through, cosmological, teleological, and moral? There’s a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, moral, personal, intelligent creator who created all things and sustains all things to this very moment.

And as Christians, we believe that this same all-powerful, eternal, personal God of the universe came to earth to rescue the people that rebelled against him. He became a man knowing He would be tortured and killed by man, so that he could take our punishment on Himself. And in return He says, “I’m going to give you my righteousness.”

This is the hope of the gospel that comes from the God who reveals Himself, not just in Scripture, but in the universe He created.



Take Your Study Further

For more apologetics content from Frank, read his book I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist.

For verses about God's design of nature: Psalm 8:3–4, Isaiah 44:24, Isaiah 48:3, Romans 1:20, Hebrews 3:4, Revelation 4:11

For verses about God's morality written on people's hearts: Romans 1 & 2

Resource based on "I Don't Have Enough Faith to be an Atheist" by Dr. Frank Turek. Used with permission. Learn more about Frank at crossexamined.org