

Session # 2: *THE GOD WHO IS THERE: Any Old God Won't Do!*

INTRODUCTION: THE ISSUE OF GOD

Our Last Session

- ❖ In our previous talk I argued that:
 - All humans *have beliefs*—it's part of being human,
 - All beliefs are *not created equal*—square circles can't be true,
 - Logic is an aid to *discovering what is true*—the distinction between objective and subjective truth is important for differentiating truth claims,
 - Human beings hold beliefs for a *variety of reasons*—sociological, cultural, psychological,
 - The *most important aspect* of any belief system is whether or not it's actually true—including Christianity.

And in this session we want to apply the notion of truth and knowledge as it pertains to the God question: *Does God Exist?*

The God Question—Is Linked to Our View of Reality

- ❖ When we come to the question of God's existence, we are probing into what philosophers call, "the big questions of life."
 - In fact, our views of reality concerning what is right, what is true, what is valuable, what is meaningful flow significantly from our view of *whether or not God is real*.¹

The God Question—Must Clarify Meaning

- ❖ Whenever we ask the question, "How do we know that God exists?" we must ask for the meaning of the term being used, or explain what we mean by God,

¹ Kenneth Richard Samples, *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions*, pg. 21, © 2004 by K.R. Samples, Baker Books: Grand Rapids, Michigan.

- Because in our society today people don't always use the term "God" as ***a referent to the God of Scripture***. We tend to assume that in conversation there is mutual understanding taking place.
- If we don't take the time to ask this question, we will be ***talking past each other*** and we will lose out on an opportunity of interacting meaningfully with a precious image bearer.

To offer a response to the question of God's existence we will be looking at:

- ❖ **Worldviews**
- ❖ **Differing Views of God**
- ❖ **Three Ways of Arguing for God's Existence**

I. WORLDVIEWS—WHAT ARE THEY and WHY ARE THEY SO IMPORTANT?

There's a wife of a man who thought he was dead and she was trying to convince her husband that he was actually alive. Regardless of her many persuasions, the man would not be convinced otherwise. She eventually took him to the doctor who assured him that he was alive. Nothing worked. It occurred to the doctor to get the man to agree that dead men don't bleed, so he pricked his finger with a needle and there was the "evidence." The man was certain that he was dead, but the fact was that his finger was bleeding, it was obvious. For many days after this doctor's visit, the man was saddened because his "certainty" of the "fact he was dead" was not in touch with reality. He returns to the doctor and exclaims, "Good Lord, dead men do bleed after all!" At the end of the day, this man's view of life was so dear to him that the facts did not matter.²

A. Worldviews Matter. When our outlook on life—worldview is immune to being revised—as is the case with the, "dead man bleeding" we fail to live a life of integrity, a life where the truth matters even if it hurts. And as disciples of Christ, this must not be the case.

² This section is borrowed from pages 9-10 of, *THE GOD QUESTION: An Invitation to a Life of Meaning*, ©2009 by J.P. Moreland, (Harvest House Publishers: Eugene, Oregon).

- i. Herein our brokenness is evident.** For if we are honest with ourselves, at times we also don't want our view to be shown lacking when confronted with the facts.
- ii. Herein the “dead man's” challenge is ours.** Receiving counsel that requires us to adjust our positions in life and the resulting changes that are demanded of us are frankly difficult to hear.
- iii. Even more difficult.** When we hear counsel that we've heard before and find it annoying, hostile, dull, silly or something even worse. Too often, familiarity does breed contempt.

B. What is a Worldview? For centuries mankind has pondered the meaning of life and how we got here. There's really nothing new under the sun as Solomon writes.³

- i. All people derive *meaning*** from life based on their *worldview*. Whether someone is aware of it, or not, they have a worldview
- ii. A worldview is:**⁴ *a set of beliefs* about the most important issues in life, it's a *conceptual scheme* by which we either, *consciously or unconsciously* interpret and judge all of reality.
- iii. A worldview is:** “forged out of beliefs that have the most consequence for a comprehensive vision of reality. It is an overall conception of reality that touches on the key areas that philosophy and religion have always addressed”⁵
 - 1. Eyeglass analogy.** The correct worldview is like *eyeglasses*, which helps us focus more clearly.
 - 2. Right conceptual scheme.** That is why putting on the right conceptual scheme can have important repercussions in understanding significant events and ideas.

³ Ecclesiastes 1:9

⁴ The following discussion on worldviews is taken from chapter 1 of Ronald H. Nash, *Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas*, Zondervan Publishing House, © 1992 by Ronald H. Nash

⁵ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith*, pg.74

iv. **Worldview and Disagreements.** When disagreements exist between people and societies it's because there's a **clash between competing worldviews**. These clashes occur between *individual people* but can also be *between nations*

1. **Similarities:** Certain worldviews are similar on most issues (e.g., Christianity, Judaism, and Islam are **monotheistic** i.e., the belief in one supreme God)
2. **Dissimilarities:** Others disagree more than they agree (e.g., Christians believe in **resurrection**, Hindus believe in **re-incarnation**)
3. **No agreement:** While still others have no overlap in their respective worldview (e.g., Christians **believe God exists** and has revealed himself to mankind in the person of Christ Jesus, but classic Atheists **deny God's existence**)

C. **Aspects of a Worldview:** are had by every worldview. They are:

- i. **Theological = God:** The most important aspect of a worldview is what it affirms or denies about God (i.e., is He personal/impersonal) While there are conflicting views about God: e.g., Hinduism vs. Christianity, the Reformed theologian, John Calvin observed that all men are incurably religious e.g.,
 1. **Times of distress** "Oh my God! Help!"
- ii. **Metaphysical = Ultimate Reality:** deals with Metaphysical beliefs (i.e., the nature of a thing). E.g., "What makes Joe a human and Tango a dog?" OR, "What is the essence of that red ball?"
- iii. **Epistemological = Knowledge:** deals with Epistemology (how we know anything). E.g., "What's the difference between knowing that I love my wife, as opposed to knowing that

2+2=4? OR, “How can we know that this life is an illusion, as opposed to that it is actually real?”

- iv. **Ethical = *Ethics/Morals***: deals with the *ought-ness* of our conduct (morals). E.g., “Why can’t I have an abortion, it’s my body?!” OR, “When is it time to take my grandfather off of life support?”
- v. **Anthropological = *Humanity***: deals with issues that concern peoples, civilizations, cultures, classifications, etc.

So, everyone has a worldview, it’s the big ideas that we hold to both judge and make sense out of reality, and if our worldview is not in touch with reality (like the man who believed that “Dead men do bleed!”), then we need to revise it if we care about living authentic lives where the truth matters. _____

II. DIFFERING VIEWS OF GOD. We now want to address the differing views of God that obtain. As I stated earlier, depending on the audience, the term “God” takes on different meanings. For the Christian the biblical worldview informs (or should inform) the way we look at reality. Below is a worldview chart of differing views on ultimate reality held to be true and thus to be trusted.⁶ But first consider what C.S. Lewis reveals about his worldview...

❖ **C.S. Lewis** is arguably one the most influential Christian thinkers of the 20th century. An Oxford University professor, and former atheist converted to Christianity, Lewis had an ability of expressing profound truths in simple language either through: radio, children’s books, and those geared toward adults (e.g., *Mere Christianity*).⁷ In his book, *The Weight of Glory and Other Addresses*, he says something astounding:

“I believe in Christianity as I believe that the sun has risen, not only because I see it, but because by it I see everything else.”⁸

⁶ Taken from: Dean Halverson, *Compact Guide to World Religions*, pg.15

⁷ Geisler, Norman L., *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, p.420, © 1999 by Norman L. Geisler.

⁸ Kenneth Richard Samples, *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions*, pg. 21, © 2004 by K.R. Samples, Baker Books: Grand Rapids, Michigan.

❖ **His claim:** Lewis seems to be claiming that in the light of the Christian worldview, he is able to make sense out of reality in a way that as an atheist he could not before. He sees the world through **different glasses** and as I've argued before, in light of the way we come to know truth, not all truth claims are created equal, nor are all glasses created equal for that matter. Consider the differences of this chart concerning the view of God.

VIEW	MONOTHEISM	COMPETING DUALISM	POLYTHEISM	BALANCING DUALISM	MONISM	ATHEISM
CONCEPT OF GOD	One Transcendent God	Two opposing gods	Many gods	Two opposing but interacting and balancing forces	An impersonal Oneness	No god
PRIMARY EXAMPLES	Judaism, (J) Christianity, (C) Islam (I)	Zoroastrianism ⁹	So called "Tribal" religions, Santeria, voodoo, Shinto, any form of "folk" religion	Taoism, the yin/yang concept ¹⁰	Hinduism, Buddhism, Sikhism, Sufism, the New Age Movement	Secular Humanism, Marxism, Confucianism
VIEW OF HUMANITY	Part of creation, but different in kind from the animals	Made to join in the battle against evil	Can be influenced and even possessed by the spirits	A microcosm of the two interacting Forces	Caught in the illusion of separateness but identical in essence to the oneness	A complex form of matter
MAIN PROBLEM OF HUMANITY	(J) Breaking God's law; (C) Rebellion against God (I) Failing to seek God's guidance	Choosing to do evil	Angering the gods	Living out of alignment with the ways of nature	Ignorance of one's innate divinity	Superstition and irrational thinking
THE SOLUTION	(J) Living according to God's Law (C) Being justified by faith based on God's saving work; (I) Seeking God's guidance	Choosing to do right	Appeasing the gods	Living in harmony with the ways of nature	Realizing that our essence is the same as the oneness enlightenment	Applying rational thinking to our problems
THE AFTERLIFE	The person continues in existence in either heaven or hell	The person continues in existence in either heaven or hell	Sometimes the person advances to the spirit world	Usually a person advances to some form of the spirit world	Either a person is reincarnated or merges into the impersonal oneness	The person ceases to exist

⁹ **Zoroastrianism** is a religion from ancient Persia—Iran. It dominated the region prior to the arrival of Islam and is now a minority religion. It is named after Zoroaster or *Zarathustra*, dates not clear. The dualism characterized is one of the god of light and goodness (Ahura Mazda), who is in conflict to overcome a powerful evil spirit. Today, Zoroastrians claim to be monotheistic and don't necessarily see the physical world as bad. C. Stephan Davis, *Pocket Dictionary of Apologetics & Philosophy of Religion*, pg. 125, Intervarsity Press, Downer © 2002 Stephan Davis

¹⁰ The **yin and the yang** is the view that "the whole world consists of two opposing yet complementary forces, yin and yang, which are optimally in perfect balance with each other". These forces in themselves are neither good nor evil. Good is achieved when these two are properly balanced with each other. Evil is an imbalance of these in either direction. See: Winfried Corduan, *A Christian Introduction to World Religions: Neighboring Faiths*, pg.282, © 1998 Winfried Corduan, (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois)

- A. Our concept of God.** We can see the chasm between theism and atheism. The former, God is the One Transcendent God, but in the latter view God does not exist—there is no god. When we speak of having a concept of God it refers to the cluster of properties attributed to the divine being.¹¹ In other words, *what is God like?* This is where our worldviews are on display. And our concept of God will be informed by
- i. Our source of authority.** Depending on your source of authority—where you get your facts from, the answers will be inevitably varied.
 - ii. What the chart demonstrates.** Worldviews matter! The chart demonstrates how different religious views are when looking at the big ideas: *God, humanity, the primary problems* and consequent *solutions* to those problems, and even the beliefs of the *afterlife* all come from a **worldview**.
 - iii. Opportunities that we have.** As Christians we have opportunities for *cross-cultural religious encounters*. We must therefore learn to live in a world of religious plurality. Indispensable to this endeavor is coming to understand our neighbor’s central view on human existence.¹²
 - iv. The importance of this topic.** Francis Turretin a 15th century Theologian noted, “...the discussion concerning God holds the first place in theology and embraces the sum of all saving knowledge.”¹³ Millard Erickson a 20th century theologian states: “*the doctrine of God is the*

¹¹ Ron Nash, *The Concept of God: An Exploration of Contemporary Difficulties with the Attributes of God*, pg.11, © 1983 Zondervan Corporation, Grand Rapids, Michigan.

¹² Winfried Corduan, *A Christian Introduction to World Religions: Neighboring Faiths*, pg.14, © 1998 Winfried Corduan, (Intervarsity Press, Downers Grove, Illinois)

¹³ Turretin, Francis, *Institutes of Elenctic Theology, First Volume*, pg. 169, Translated by George M. Giger & Edited by James T. Dennison, Jr., (Phillipsburg, New Jersey: Presbyterian and Reformed Publishing Company, 1992 by James T. Dennison, Jr.)

*central point for much of the rest of theology. One's view of God might even be thought of as supplying the whole framework within which one's theology is constructed and life is lived."*¹⁴

- B. Cultural Examples of the Concept of God.** Our view of God will inevitably dictate our theology and our theology will dictate the way we ultimately live. Many examples illustrate this truth.
- i. A Super-Soft Grandfather.**¹⁵ God is seen to be a benevolent (i.e., *kind*) being whose main job is to be nice. This kind of being at the end of the day is harmless and bound to forgive any offense. God's job *is* to forgive. Therefore we need not fear Him at all. Here, God's role is to coddle us. **Man-centered** notion (i.e., idolatry)
 - ii. A Spectacularly Great Being.** Consider the stars, moon, sun and galaxies, immeasurably light years away, with their end nowhere in sight. God made them all! He is immeasurably greater than all of it. Why would He want anything to do with us puny insignificant creatures? He wound up the universe like a watch, and it's now running down without any of His input.¹⁶ Here, God is too removed, unconcerned and impersonal. **Deistic notion** (i.e., a cold existence)
 - iii. A Mutual Back-Scratching Being.** This model is very common in the ***polytheistic world***. This is where humans find themselves bartering with the gods. The gods are all finite with personalities, quirks, weaknesses etcetera. They are *essentially needy*. Thus if you are in their

¹⁴ Erickson, Millard J., *Christian Theology: Unabridged One Volume Edition*, pg.263, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: 1983, 1984, 1985 by Baker Book House).

¹⁵ D.A. Carson, *The God Who is There: Finding Your Place in Gods Story*, pgs. 44, © 2010 by D.A. Carson, Published by Baker Books.

¹⁶ *Ibid.*, pgs. 45-45

domain, say the sea, and want to make a safe voyage you go to the temple of Neptune—the god of the sea. There you offer the requisite sacrifices or give donations. You scratch my back and I'll scratch your back. ***Let's make a deal!*** Some people who see themselves as Christians think that their relationship with God is of the “mutual back-scratching” kind. Here God is *too needy* and finite. If we get on His bad side we just might catch His wrath!

- C. **The God of the Scripture is Different.** He is ultimate, He is spectacularly great but near, He immeasurably loving and He also is angry. So how do we deal with a God that can't be bartered with nor is in need of us?
- i. **God Can't Be Manipulated (Acts 17:24).** Why can't He be manipulated? Because he exists from Himself. *Scripture teaches that God is not needy of creation in order to exist. In this text, His self-existence is self-evident.*

“Who has given to me, that I should repay him? Whatever is under the whole heaven is mine” (Job 41:11)

“For every beast of the field is mine, the cattle on a thousand hills. I know every bird of the mountains, and everything that moves in the field is Mine. If I were hungry I would not tell you, for the world is Mine, and all it contains” (Ps.50:10-12)

1. Paul is not saying that God can't disclose Himself in a temple if He so chooses.
2. Instead he is indicating that God can't be reduced to a temple to be manipulated and domesticated by a priestly class. These priests allegedly are the ones who can figure out what the gods want.¹⁷

¹⁷ Ibid., pgs. 46

3. **God depends on nothing or anyone** to exist. He is not a **contingent** being—one that depends on things or circumstances to exist.¹⁸ Instead it is He that is the source of all life, breath, and all things. **(Rom.11:33-36; Heb.1:1-3)**
- ii. **God Does Not Need Us (Acts 17:25).** To some people this might sound like terrible news concluding that they are not significant or special. Nothing could be further from the truth. We all are image bearers. **But don't miss the point.** Read a quote from D.A. Carson "*The God Who is There*" page 47.
- iii. **We Need God (Acts 17:25).** Unlike the Athenian *finite* gods, the God of creation is the source of all life, He is *infinite*. He is the one that gives us life and breath and everything else. Consider Jesus' words, "Are not two sparrows sold for a cent? And yet not one of them will fall to the ground apart from your Father. But the very hairs of your head are all numbered" **(Mt. 10:29-30)**. How then do we have a relationship with one who can't be bartered with? He's not a soft-hearted grandfather, He's not safely distant. Instead He's intensely personal but has zero needs. Only if He displays sovereign grace to you. That's it!¹⁹ He did this with Abraham a pagan whom God chose to use where eventually Messiah would come from his descendants.

Our view of God is never neutral. A brief glance from our chart shows the different views there are. There's the belief in one transcendent God (Monotheism) to the view that no such God exists (Atheism). Clearly both

¹⁸ Michael Peterson, *Reason and Religious Belief: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Religion*, p.67, ©1998 by Oxford University Press

¹⁹ D.A. Carson, *The God Who is There: Finding Your Place in Gods Story*, pgs. 47-48, © 2010 by D.A. Carson, Published by Baker Books.

views may be wrong, one of them may be right, but definitely both can't be right—they contradict each other.

Our view of God will inform the other questions that concern us—*what is humanity:* (creature) or an (accident), *what is our greatest problem:* (rebellion against a holy God) or (superstition and irrational thinking), *what is the solution:* (being justified by faith through Christ's redemptive work) or (Applying rational thinking to our problems), *is there an afterlife* (in heaven or hell) or (do we cease to exist).

Our concept of God is always informed ultimately by the sources of authority we come under. The notion therefore that all religions are basically teaching the same thing *can't* be true. And remember that worldviews are directly connected to this concept of God...it's the fundamental issue. We now want to consider three ways of arguing for God's existence.

III. THREE WAYS OF ARGUING FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

When considering the God question it should be kept in mind that we are trying to derive meaning in this life. In light of worldview thinking we are trying to come to a view of reality that is *meaningful* rather than *contradictory*. Why? Because when there's a contradiction we know there's a falsehood lurking in the shadows.

There's at least three ways we can argue for God's existence or put another way, we can show how **God uniquely accounts for** a state of affairs: the physical universe's beginning; the order, complexity and design evident in the universe and for the enigma of man.

A. God Uniquely Accounts for The Physical Universe's Beginning (A.K.A. *The Kalam Cosmological Argument*)

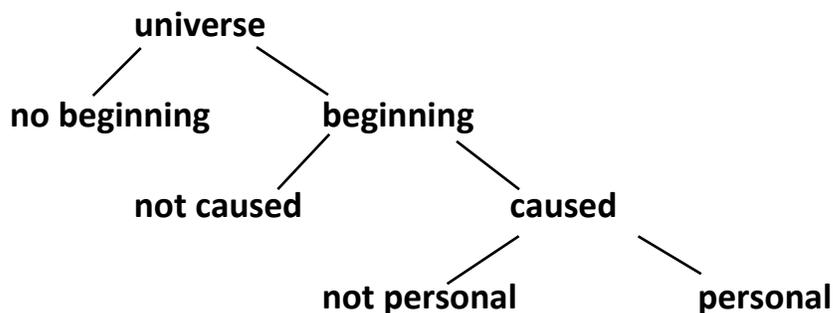
- i. **Defining our Terms.** The Greek term *cosmos* "universe" and *logia* "reason", hence cosmological argument ("CA"). This is an argument

from creation which reasons from the **fact—effect** of the existence of the universe to a cause of it—a **Beginner**.

- a. **Origin of argument.** The (KCA) was first developed by Muslim philosophers and today Christian philosopher William Lane Craig is a top proponent of this argument. It may be formulated as a series of logical alternatives (i.e., disjunctions) as follows:

ii. **The argument is as follows:**

Whatever **begins** to exist has a **cause**,
The **universe** had a **beginning**,
Therefore, the **universe** has a **cause**. A look at the premises:



- a. **The first premise:** “*Whatever begins to exist has a cause*”, is taken as axiomatic (i.e., it is ***self-evident***). Therefore, refutation of the first premise lies in the hands of the detractor. Make the opposition show you why you should buy into the assertion that the above premise is not logical.

1. Should someone **object:** “*There’s no need for a cause*” you could **respond**,

- a. First, this is contrary to the established *principle of causality* (i.e., **every effect has a cause**)

b. Second, it’s **contrary to the scientific enterprise**, which seeks a causal explanation,

- c. Third, it's **counterintuitive** to hold that something comes from nothing. In fact it seems logically incoherent (i.e., the "dots don't connect" rationally) because **nothing** has no power to do anything because it doesn't even exist.²⁰

So, whatever begins to exist has a cause...

- b. **The second premise: "The universe had a beginning"**, is defended on *philosophic* and *scientific* grounds:
 - 1. **Philosophic grounds:**²¹ Time cannot go back into the past forever, because it's **impossible to pass** through an *actual* infinite number of moments.
 - a. **Each moment that passes** uses up real time that we can never experience again (e.g. **moving our fingers across an infinite number of books** in a library we would never get to the last book).
 - b. We could never finish an infinite series of real things. **If this is true**, then **time** must have had a beginning.
 - i. If the **world never had a beginning**, then we could never have reached **"now."**
 - ii. **BUT**, we have reached this present moment—**now**, so time must have had a specific beginning point and proceeded to today.
 - iii. **Therefore**, the world is a finite event and needs a cause for its beginning.
 - 2. **Scientific grounds:**²² There are two lines of scientific argumentation that supports a beginning to the

²⁰ Geisler's, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Pg. 400

²¹ *Ibid.*, pgs.276-277

universe. The law of entropy also known as The 2nd Law of thermodynamics and the Big Bang Theory.

- a. **The 2nd Law of thermodynamics:**²³ In a closed, isolated system (e.g., the universe) the amount of usable energy is running down, thus it can't be eternal.
 - i. **Consider a cup of coffee** that goes from **hot to room temperature**. When things are left to themselves, they tend toward disorder, without outside intelligent intervention.
 - ii. **Since** the universe has **not reached a state of total disorder**, this process has not been going on forever. *Someone* has been tending it.

- b. **The Big Bang Theory:** According to this view the universe exploded into being some 15 to 20 billion years ago. If the time purported troubles you don't worry, because regardless of **when it happened** it actually **did happen**
 - i. **This cosmological model** is accepted by the vast majority of research scientists because of the extensive astronomical evidence and successful testing obtained.
 - ii. **What It demonstrates** is that the **universe is not eternal**, but had a specific beginning in a finite period of time.²⁴

So, whatever begins to exist has a cause; the universe had a beginning...

²² Ibid.

²³ For more detail on both the 2nd Law of Thermodynamics and the Big Bang Theory see: Moreland, J.P., *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*, Baker Book House, © 1987 by Baker Book House. In this book, Moreland provides philosophical, theological, and historical proofs for the faith. Advanced reading

²⁴ Kenneth R. Samples, *Without A Doubt*, pg.22, (© 2004 Kenneth R. Samples, Baker Books: Grand Rapids, Michigan)

- c. **Conclusion: “Therefore, the universe had a beginning”** This cause was either personal (immaterial) or impersonal (naturalistic). Why?
1. **Natural vs. Agent causation** There’s a difference between *natural vs. agent causation* For example: **“Arches National Park vs. Mount Rushmore”**
 - a. The **former**, has been caused by the erosion of time and water, etc. which is **impersonal**
 - b. The **latter**, was sculpted by artists who are **personal**
 - c. **Space and time and all of nature** were created at the Big Bang. Therefore, the cause must be personal.

iii. **Are There Other Options That Don’t Involve a Divine Creator?**²⁵

- a. **First option: the universe somehow created itself.** This conclusion is **irrational** because in order to create itself, the universe would have to exist—before it existed. This is **absurd** and **contradictory** because something cannot both exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense.
- b. **Second option: the universe popped into existence out of nothing and from nothing (or from no one).** This view is also irrational because something cannot derive from **nothingness** this means no energy, no matter, no mind, no reason, etc.
 1. An effect can never be greater than its cause. In this case the cause would be **nothing.**
 2. The fact is that “from nothing, nothing comes.”
 3. To conclude contrarily would be to violate one of the foundational principles of the scientific enterprise: **causality!**

²⁵ Ibid., pgs. 23-24

- c. **Third option: *there are multiple universes.*** This view suggests that there's an eternal mechanism in physics²⁶ may pop universes into existence one after the other. The problem: there's no observable data to support this position only theoretical speculation.
 - 1. Because this view is highly speculative and non-falsifiable it offers no viable challenge to the view that the universe had a beginning.
- d. **Fourth option: *other cosmologies—specifically those from Eastern religions.*** The problem with their cosmologies is that they deny the very existence of the physical universe (strands of Hinduism), and because of their incoherence don't comport with the best scientific evidence concerning the origin of the universe.

iv. **How Does Christianity Stand the Test with the Scientific Evidence?**

- a. ***The God of Scripture is the personal causal agent behind the universe.*** This statement comports well with the scientific evidence.
 - 1. ***Creation ex-nihilo:*** is the Christian doctrine that teaches that nothing existed but God—(an infinite, eternal, personal spirit) and that God through his incalculable wisdom and infinite power alone brought the universe—(all matter, energy, time, and space) into existence from nothing—(not from any preexistent matter) and sustains its existence moment by moment

Rom. 4:17 (as it is written, “A FATHER OF MANY NATIONS HAVE I MADE YOU”) in the presence of Him whom he believed, *even* God, who gives life to the dead and calls into being that which does not exist.

Col. 1:16-17 For by Him all things were created, *both* in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities—all things have been created through Him and for Him. ¹⁷ He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together.

²⁶ Physics in the natural sciences it' deals with matter and energy and their interactions in the fields of mechanics, acoustics, optics, heat, electricity, magnetism, radiation, atomic structure, and nuclear phenomena, *Webster's Seventh New Collegiate Edition*, © 1961

Heb. 11:3 By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.

So, **God doesn't only uniquely account** for the physical universe's beginning; but also for the order, complexity and design evident in the universe

B. God Uniquely Accounts for the Order, Complexity and Design Evident in the Universe

- i. The Anthropic Principle.** This *anthropic*—Grk. for “human-being” states that the universe was fitted from the very first moment of its existence for the emergence of life in general and human life in particular.²⁷

❖ **Agnostic Astronomer Robert Jastrow** noted that, “the universe is amazingly pre-adapted to the eventual appearance of humanity. For even if there were even the slightest variation at a moment at the moment of the big bang, making conditions different, even to a small degree, no life of any kind would exist. In order for life to be present today an incredibly restrictive set of demands must have been present in the early universe—and they were....The ***anthropic principle***²⁸ ...seems to say that science itself has proven, as a hard fact, that this universe was made, was designed, for man to live in. *It's a very theistic result.*”²⁹

a. What Evidence Supports the Anthropic Principle:³⁰

- i. Oxygen:** comprises 21% of the atmosphere (i.e., the whole mass of air surrounding the earth). If it were 25%, fires would erupt, if it were 15%, human beings would suffocate.
- ii. Universe expansion:** if the universe was expanding at a rate one millionth more slowly than it is, the temperature on earth would be 10,000 degrees Celsius

²⁷ Norman Geisler, *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Pg. 26

²⁸ Emphasis added

²⁹ *Ibid.*, pg.26

³⁰ These examples are borrowed from *Ibid.*, pgs. 26-27

- iii. **Earth's crust:** if the thickness of the earth's crust was greater, too much oxygen would be transferred to the crust to support life. If it were thinner, volcanic and tectonic activity would make life untenable
- iv. **Earth's rotation:** if the rotation of the earth *took longer* than 24 hours, temperature differences would be too great between night and day. If the rotation period was *shorter*, atmospheric wind velocities would be too great
- v. **Earth's seismic activity:** if there were more seismic activity, much life would be lost. But if there was less seismic activity, nutrients on the ocean floors and in river run offs would not be cycled back to the continents through tectonic uplift. Earthquakes are necessary to sustain life as we know it.

b. Reasonable Conclusion? The scientific community has contributed to heightening our intuition that the universe is not here by chance but by a Cosmic Designer. Even the staunchest atheists in the scientific community admit that the universe exhibits amazing order, regularity, complexity and intelligibility.³¹

The Anthropic principle supports the view that: there's a Designer that's behind the order and the complexity we can observe in the universe. So does the evidence in DNA.

❖ **Neo-Darwinist** Richard Dawkins when responding to a scientific theory called *Intelligent Design* says of living organisms that they, "give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." But for Dawkins and other contemporary Darwinist's this is merely an illusion. Why? "Because wholly undirected processes such as natural selection and random mutations can produce the intricate design—like structures in living systems."³²

³¹ Kenneth R. Samples, *Without A Doubt*, pg.24

³² Stephan C. Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, pg.4, ©2009 by Stephan C. Meyer, Harper Collins Publishers, New York, N.Y.

❖ **Intelligent Design** proponent and author Stephen C. Meyer says that “in contrast, the theory of intelligent design holds that there are tell-tale features of living systems and the universe that are best explained by an intelligent cause—that is by the conscious choice of a rational agent—rather than by an undirected process. This theory does not base its views on biblical authority, but infers its position from the scientific evidence.”³³

ii. **DNA Evidence.** DNA in a nutshell was discovered by James Watson and Francis Crick, it is an extremely complex molecule which contains a very specific arrangement of parts³⁴ it reveals how the cell stores and transmits hereditary information.³⁵ It stores information using a 4 character chemical alphabet. It is the **assembly instructions** for building the crucial protein molecules and machines the cell needs to survive.

a. **It’s coded language.** Like the exactly arranged zeros and ones in a computer program, the chemical bases in DNA convey information in virtue of their “specificity.” **Richard Dawkins** says, “The machine code of the genes is uncannily computer—like,” **Bill Gates** says, “DNA is like a computer program but far, far more advanced than any software ever created.”³⁶

b. **It’s also an enigma.** We know **what** it is, but we do not know from **where** it came. This is the puzzle. And this brings in the age old problem of the origin of life. One origin-of-life researcher has said, “The problem of the origin of life is clearly equivalent to the origin of biological information.”³⁷

i. **The more we know the more vexed naturalist’s become.** Watson and crick solved one mystery—the secret of how the cell stores and transmits hereditary information. **But**, what is the origin of the information needed to build the first living organism?

³³ Ibid., pg.4

³⁴ Moreland, J.P., *Scaling the Secular City: A Defense of Christianity*, pg. 48, Baker Book House, © 1987 by Baker Books

³⁵ Stephan C. Meyer, *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design*, pg.14

³⁶ Ibid., 12

³⁷ Ibid., 13

ii. **What is information?** We really value information and one thing we humans instinctively know is this: *that information originates in thought*—from conscious or intelligent activity. It invariably reflects the prior activity of conscious intelligent persons.³⁸

c. **What makes for the best explanation?** Things that are complex such as information in DNA come from mindless chance or an intelligent agent? The naturalistic position says that these biological organisms “...appear to be designed, but they are not.” What do you say?

d. **Embracing the grand evolutionary view.** Raises the issue of that which can be trusted regarding that which can be observed. But, people don’t generally accept the idea that information, knowledge, and truth can come from random, accidental sources.³⁹

iii. **Two Models to consider.** These two models offer opposing views explaining origins.⁴⁰

Naturalistic Atheistic model	Biblical Theistic Model
World was created from nothing	World was created by a Creator
Life came from non-life	Life came from Ultimate Life
Persons come from non-persons	Persons come from the Super-personal
Minds come from non-minds	Minds come from the ultimate Mind
Order comes from non-order	Order comes from an Order-er
Reason comes from non-reason	Reason comes from a rational Being
Morality comes from the non-moral	Morality comes from a moral Person
Information comes without a sender	Information comes from a Sender
Code comes from a non-programmer	Code comes from a personal Programmer
Truth comes from an accident	Truth comes from ultimate Truth

❖ **Kenneth Samples says it well:** “Naturalism in effect, purports that life, the mind, personhood, and reason came from a source that

³⁸ Ibid., 16

³⁹ Kenneth R. Samples, *Without A Doubt*, pg.24

⁴⁰ Chart taken from Kenneth R. Samples, *Without A Doubt*, pg.25

lacked each of these profound faculties and qualities. This would certainly be an effect much greater than its cause.”⁴¹

The anthropic principle and DNA supports that notion that God uniquely accounts for the complexity, order, and design in the universe. God also uniquely accounts for the enigma of man.

C. God Uniquely Accounts for The Enigma of Man. An important condition for accepting a religion as true is its ability to account for and explain the critical realities confronted in life. The enigma or puzzle that human beings are is certainly critical. Christian thinker Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) described man as an unusual mixture of “greatness and wretchedness,” being at the same time both the “glory and the rubbish of the universe.”⁴² And yet, Scripture offers an answer to this enigma called *man*.

i. Capable of great things. Humanity is capable of great achievements in the area of mathematics, science, technology, philosophy, the arts, humanitarian aid. This directly results from the *imago Dei*—creatures made in God’s image.

a. As image bearers mankind reflects the glory of its Maker. This means that in many respects, man is God-like especially when compared to the animals (Gen.1:26-28)⁴³

ii. Capable of shameful and evil acts. Humanity can equally perform heinous evil acts of rape, robbery, racism, slavery, and mass murder. Explaining human nature can be challenging both psychologically, philosophically, and spiritually.

a. The Fall in Genesis 3 reveals how Adam misused his freedom to rebel against God and the result he suffered was alienation from God.

⁴¹ Ibid., pg.25

⁴² Ibid., pg.29

⁴³ Ibid., pg.29

1. **The human race** has been entirely affected by Adam's disobedience such that they have inherited guilt and moral corruption from him (Ps. 51:5; 58:3; Rom.5:12, 18-19; 1 Cor.15:22)
2. **Man's capabilities in this fallen state** of sin, is that he can use his gifts for evil purposes. Neither the naturalistic worldview nor the alternative religions of the world do as good a job as the Bible of explaining the world's greatest riddle—mankind.

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- ❖ **Worldviews** really matter, they inform how we look at ultimate issues, everyone has one, and yet not all worldviews are created equal
 - ❖ **Differing Views of God** obtain which is a definite sign that all religions can't be teaching the same essential message
 - ❖ **Three Ways of Arguing for God's Existence** uniquely accounts for the physical universe's beginning; the order, complexity and design evident in the universe and for the puzzle that is man.
 - ❖ **Why won't any old God do?** Because the force of reason through the dual revelation of God in nature and scripture does not comport with said notion. Because the God who is there has spoken, is not silent and while other religions do have light, they pale in comparison to the God of creation, the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. The prophet Isaiah (Isa.46:5-13) over two millennia ago says:

⁵"To whom would you liken Me
 And make Me equal and compare Me,
 That we would be alike?
⁶"Those who lavish gold from the purse
 And weigh silver on the scale
 Hire a goldsmith, and he makes it *into* a god;
 They bow down, indeed they worship it.
⁷"They lift it upon the shoulder *and* carry it;
 They set it in its place and it stands *there*.
 It does not move from its place.

Though one may cry to it, it cannot answer;
It cannot deliver him from his distress.

⁸ “Remember this, and be assured;
Recall it to mind, you transgressors.

⁹ “Remember the former things long past,
For I am God, and there is no other;
I am God, and there is no one like Me,

¹⁰ Declaring the end from the beginning,
And from ancient times things which have not been done,
Saying, ‘My purpose will be established,
And I will accomplish all My good pleasure’;

¹¹ Calling a bird of prey from the east,
The man of My purpose from a far country.
Truly I have spoken; truly I will bring it to pass.
I have planned *it*, *surely* I will do it.

¹² “Listen to Me, you stubborn-minded,
Who are far from righteousness.

¹³ “I bring near My righteousness, it is not far off;
And My salvation will not delay.
And I will grant salvation in Zion,
And My glory for Israel.

- ❖ This word has been fulfilled in the Person of Jesus of Nazareth who in the fullness of time was born, lived, died and resurrected from the dead. Who is also coming back to judge the living and the dead.