

112, 407, 640 – CHRISTIAN APOLOGETICS
Lesson 3 – The Defense Begins
The Defense of the Biblical Worldview – Part 1

1 Peter 3:15

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts, and always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear;

We are going to begin today to give a robust defense (apologia) for the Christian Faith or the Biblical Worldview.

There are many different worldviews.

A worldview is how you see or understand the world to be. It's not just what you see, but what you see with.

It's the "lens" through which you see and understand reality.

Your philosophy might be how you would articulate that worldview and live accordingly.

One is your belief, the other your argument for why it best corresponds to reality, or why it's true.

As we will see, everyone has a worldview.

The question is, "Is it defensible?" Does it really correspond to reality? Is it coherent in its answers?

As Ravi Zacharias often says, every worldview has to answer at least four questions: the questions of

1. Origin – how did we get here?
2. Meaning – why are we here?
3. Morality – how do we determine right and wrong while we're here?
4. Destiny – where do we go from here?

For the next few lessons, at least, we will begin by defending the Christian or Biblical Worldview.

By doing this upfront, the hope is that you will be able to see the superiority of the Biblical Worldview in comparison to others we will discuss later if we have time!

We will begin with the larger, broader arguments for the existence of God and then move in closer to examine the proofs for the Bible and the Christian Faith.

I want to remind you of something we said last week, and expand on it before we begin:

“If a thing is true, it will be demonstrated to be true across the board; logically, scientifically, philosophically, as well as biblically. God made all things and thus, reality corresponds to His truth. This means that we do NOT have to be afraid of what scientific discovery or any other worldview has to say. We might not know the answers when asked, but we can be assured that the biblical worldview HAS an answer – not only to the question, but to the heart of the questioner as well.”

NOTE: Most of the arguments we will present here not only defend Christianity, but also argue to the weakness of the Materialist Worldview, which is prevalent in our culture.

QUESTION: Why is this significant?

Because materialism provides the scientific and philosophical underpinnings of secularism. (Foundation)

In other words, if the universe was brought about purely by natural processes (apart from a Creator), then there is no God.

If there is no God, there is no objective morality or meaning. All truth becomes subjective and relative.

This means I am free to create my own morality and meaning and live as I choose without regard to the traditional values of Christianity.

Secularism is the greatest challenge to Christianity in our culture today, so we need to be able to defend the Biblical Worldview and show that it is a better, more reasonable option than Materialism.

- I. The Cosmological Argument: Science has discovered that the Universe did indeed have a beginning, just as the scriptures reveal.

Genesis 1:1

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.

The phrase “the heavens and the earth” most likely denotes everything that there is.

The Latin phrase for this is *Ex Nihilo*, or “out of nothing.”

That is to say that there was no pre-existing matter before God spoke the universe into being.

This is hard for us to wrap our minds around, because we cannot conceive of nothing being out there – or of no “out there!”

We are not merely saying that God put the stars and planets into empty space. Before God created the universe, there was no space to fill.

In fact, before the material universe was created, there was no time, as time is part of the material universe.

Time is affected by such factors as gravity and acceleration, as is demonstrated in movies such as the recent Interstellar.

In other words, we now know scientifically that that energy, matter, space, and time had a beginning.

As we will see, this is a HUGE blow to the materialist who believes there is nothing more than the material universe.

It's important to understand that for YEARS science did not believe the universe had a beginning. It was considered to be "static and eternal" as the phrase goes.

As Carl Sagan, the famous astronomer and cosmologist quipped, "The Cosmos is all there ever was, is, or ever will be."

Not so, it turns out!

Einstein and others believed in the eternal, steady state model of the Universe until his own theory of General Relativity helped to confirm the fact that the universe did indeed have a beginning.

Two scientists in the 1920's, Russian mathematician, Alexander Friedman and Belgian Astronomer, George Lemaitre, took Einstein's theory at face value.

They each independently came up with an expanding universe model.

This eventually came to be known as the "Big Bang" model.

Einstein had actually come up with the same conclusions, but had "fudged" his numbers, adding what he called at that time a "cosmological constant" that kept the steady model viable.

The objections that Einstein and other scientists shared reflected their philosophical bias.

After all, an static, eternal universe gave the "undirected, natural processes of evolution" time to produce complex life.

Evolutionary processes by definition require an extremely large amount of time to do anything!

In fact, as scientific evidence continued to mount in the early twentieth century for a finite universe, it was met with huge resistance, since scientists could see the enormity of the implications.

However, in 1929 Edwin Hubble confirmed the findings of Friedman and Lemaitre.

From his Mount Wilson Observatory, he discovered that the light from distant galaxies was shifted to the red, implying that they were moving away from us.

This gave observable confirmation that the universe was expanding.

If one reverse-engineers this reality, it means that at some point in the past, the universe had a beginning.

This had enormous implications, particularly to those devoted to a materialistic worldview.

As the Kalum Cosmological arguments says:

1. Everything that comes into existence has a cause.
2. The material universe came into existence.
3. Therefore, the material universe has a cause.

Since we know that energy, matter, space, and time came into being with the creation of the universe, they cannot be used as part of the explanation as to what brought the universe into being.

Thus, the First Cause of our universe would have to be:

1. Immaterial – Matter was created. It wasn't there before. God is spirit (John 4:24).
2. Timeless – Time itself was created in the Big Bang. God is eternal (Jeremiah 10:10).
3. Intelligent – All the laws of physics came into being at the moment of this cataclysmic event. God is omniscient.
4. Powerful – This was an explosion of light and energy unlike anything that has happened since the formation of the universe. God is omniscient.
5. Intelligent/Intentional – To meet the exacting demands of a life-permitting universe, the First Cause had to be highly intelligent, far beyond our ability to “fine tune” instruments on earth, for example.
6. Personal – as we will see later when we unpack the Teleological argument for God.

Who does that sound like?

- Immaterial
- Eternal
- Omnipotent
- Omniscient
- Personal

It's almost a textbook definition for God!

Scientists are aware of these implications, and that is why they work so hard to refute this Big Bang model, which is now the standard paradigm of science.

Again, it's taken science all this time to discover what the Bible presupposed since Genesis 1:1 was penned.

John 1:1

1 In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.

Hebrews 11:3

3 By faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that the things which are seen were not made of things which are visible (immaterial).

Revelation 4:11

**11 “You are worthy, O Lord,
To receive glory and honor and power;
For You created all things,
And by Your will they exist and were created.”**

Why did the universe come into being? God willed it.
How did it come into being? He spoke and it was so.

The explanation science uses to describe the beginning of the Universe is called “The Big Bang Model” of creation.

Arno Penzias, who received the Nobel Prize for Physics for discovering the “echo” of the Big Bang, more officially called “The Cosmic Microwave Background” said this:

“The best data we have are exactly what I would have predicted had I nothing to go on but the first five books of Moses, the Psalms and the Bible as a whole.”

QUESTION: Why didn't science find this idea of a finite universe sooner?

1. Because the scientific method precludes any idea of the transcendent. In other words, if you invoke “God” into the discussion, you're giving up on science and you end your research.

NOTE: This is very important to understand: There need be NO conflict between science and belief in God.

One (God) explains the agent (who), while the other (science) simply explains the mechanism (how).

2. The second reason is that scientists are humans too, and they bring their own presuppositions and assumptions to the table.

Most scientists are Darwinian Naturalists or Materialists.

It is natural that we will look for evidence that reinforces our own biases and overlook evidence to the contrary.

NOTE: We ALL have biases. We need, however, to be honest enough to admit them and see if what we believe stands up to the evidence.

At least that's how scientists should approach the issue since they claim to be objective.

However, scientific inquiry has proven to be anything but objective in many cases.

Science has offered several arguments to try to offset the “God Hypothesis” as it is called.

We’ll get into some of these as we go to the next argument, but for now, it should be understood that the Universe could NOT have somehow created itself, because it would have had to have already existed in order to do so.

For X to create Y, X had to pre-exist. Since energy, matter, space and time did NOT exist before the universe came into being, they cannot account for its existence.

This is a REAL PROBLEM for the naturalist, since they hold that the material universe is all there is.

Whatever created the universe had to be of necessity an immaterial, intelligent Being of immense Wisdom, Knowledge, and Power.

The fact is, one does not get order out of chaos, and yet, as we will see as we discuss the Design features of the universe, something organized this universe in a most incredible way.

The father of modern astronomy, Adam Sandage, agrees. He says:

“I find it quite improbable that such order came out of chaos. There has to be some organizing principle. God to me is a mystery but is the explanation for the miracle of existence, why there is something instead of nothing.”

One thing seems certain: the arguments that are made to explain away the reality of a transcendent Creator are made more to protect a Materialist worldview than due to the evidence.

II. Argument from Design (the Teleological Argument)

These arguments for design can be made in every realm of scientific inquiry into the nature of our universe: physics, astronomy, cosmology, biology, etc.

We will look briefly at cosmology and biology to observe this compelling argument for design.

Just to make it clear, the point of this argument is that if the Universe is designed, then there is a Designer.

This would mean that it cannot be the result of unguided, natural processes as Darwin posited and as the Materialists, such as Richard Dawkins, Sam Harris, and others declare.

When we talk about the design of the universe, we are primarily talking about the “Fine Tuned” argument or, as it is also called, “The Anthropic Principle.”

We’ll explain these as we go.

A. Design in Cosmology

The idea behind this argument is that the fundamental laws and physics have been finely tuned to an amazingly narrow set of parameters to allow for life.

Listen to what Atheist scientist Sir Fred Hoyle said:

“A common-sense interpretation of the facts suggests that a superintellect has monkeyed with physics, as well as with chemistry and biology, and that there are no blind forces worth speaking about in nature. The numbers one calculates from the facts seem to me so overwhelming as to put this conclusion almost beyond question.”

In other words, “It sure looks like it has been designed!”

Physicist Paul Davies said, “The impression of design is overwhelming.”

These, while, not Theists, could not deny the incredible precision with which the universe is calibrated to support life.

You can hear the evidence and decide for yourself as to whether you think the argument for Design is powerful.

Regardless of what one chooses to believe, the fact is that the seemingly arbitrary and unrelated constants in physics have this in common: they have the precise values you need for a universe capable of producing and sustaining life.

That is the anthropic principle, from the Greek, *anthropos* for “man.”

In other words, we are here because the universe is fine tuned to an unbelievably narrow set of parameters to allow for life on our planet.

To put it more precisely – the whole thing was made just so we could be here on this particular planet.

When Christopher Hitchens, the late and very caustic atheist, was asked what to him was the most compelling argument for the “other side,” he said without hesitation, “The fine tuned argument.”

EXAMPLES OF PRECISION IN THE COSMOS:

1. What is known as the cosmological constant, which is the energy density of empty space, is fine tuned to one part in 10^{120} . That's a 1 with 120 zeros after it.

To give you some perspective, if you allow for the age of the universe to be 15 billion years, as the materialist say, then there have only been about 10^{17} seconds in the history of the universe.

If you took all matter in the universe down to the subatomic level and counted all those subatomic particles (protons and electrons) there are about 10⁸⁰ in the entire universe.

2. There are four fundamental forces in the universe:
 - a. The strong nuclear force
 - b. The weak nuclear force
 - c. The Gravitational force
 - d. Electromagnetic force

The value of these forces was set within the first few picoseconds following the Big Bang after the big bang.

(By the way, a picosecond is one trillionth of a second, or to describe it another way, the amount of time it takes for something traveling at the speed of light to cross something the breadth of a hair.)

The weak nuclear force, which operates inside the nucleus of an atom is so finely tuned that an alteration in its value by as little as by one part in 10¹⁰⁰ would have prevented a life-permitting universe.

3. If the initial explosion in the “big bang” had differed in strength by 1 part in 10⁶⁰ the universe would have either collapsed back on itself or expanded too quickly for stars to form.

NOTE: These numbers relate to the physics of the universe and may mean little to us other than to roughly communicate the precision by which our universe is tuned.

Let's move on to some factors that are perhaps easier to grasp.

The earth itself inhabits what has been dubbed by scientists as “the Goldilocks zone,” meaning that it's in just the right place to support life.

For years scientists have thought there was nothing particularly special about our earth.

We were an unremarkable planet in one of billions of billions of solar systems in one of billions of galaxies.

Now we know that is not true. We are not only special. Science is proving more and more that we are unique and singular.

It was once assumed by many scientists, like the late Carl Sagan that there were likely many, perhaps millions, of planets with life on them like ours in our galaxy alone.

In fact, such scientists assumed that all you needed was water and the right kind of star and life was bound to thrive, which fueled much speculation about the possibility of life on Jupiter's frozen moons, Europa and Ganymede.

Now, we know that is NOT so.

As we already said, it turns out that we are anything but ordinary.

Everything about us from our sun to our position in the galaxy is strangely “fortuitous,” as it were.

The more science discovers, the more we are seeing that we are alone in the universe.

1. Our type of galaxy, a spiral galaxy, and our exact position in it, is necessary for life.
2. We are exactly the right distance from our sun for water and water vapor to exist without burning off or freezing.
3. We also have the right circular orbit to stay where we need to in order to support life. (the other planets in our solar system have more elliptical orbits)
4. Also, out of the many kinds of stars (suns) there are, ours is the perfect type to support life – a yellow dwarf.
5. It has just the right mass.
6. It also emits the right colors on the spectrum – a combination of red and blue – to promote the buildup of oxygen and also to promote photosynthesis.
7. The luminosity of our sun is just right.
8. The position of the other planets in our solar system is of great importance as they take hits from asteroids for us (especially Jupiter with its great gravity), and they help us maintain our circular orbit.
9. Our moon, it’s size, gravity, and distance from earth is exactly as it must be to support life:
 - a. It stabilizes the tilt of the earth’s axis, giving us four seasons.
 - b. It increases our tides. The moon is responsible for 60%, whereas the sun is responsible for the other 40%. This helps by flushing out nutrients from the continents to the oceans. The tides affect the temperature of the earth and even the speed of its rotation.
 - c. The moon assists with the earth’s climactic stability.
10. The earth itself is just perfect.
 - a. It is large enough to retain an atmosphere – our atmosphere has about 20% oxygen (which turns out to be just right).
 - b. If it were too much larger, the surface gravity would be too great.
 - c. Also, strangely, because of the type of atmosphere we have, we are wonderfully able to observe the universe, enabling scientific discovery of the heavens.
 - d. Even eclipses are only possible because our sun is 400 times larger than our moon but also 400 times further away, allowing us to study the sun’s corona during the time of a solar eclipse, which has taught us a great deal about the nature of stars.

It’s as though the universe in general and the earth in particular were not only designed for life, but also for us to search the heavens and see the handiwork of God.

We haven’t even scratched the surface! THERE ARE THOUSANDS OF THESE ANTHROPIC PERAMATERS.

QUESTION: So, when all the data is correlated, what is the likelihood of another planet like ours in the entire universe?

ANSWER: Zero! All this precision makes a strong case for design, and if there is a design to the universe, there is a Designer.

For more information about his, consult *Case for a Creator*, by Lee Strobel.

Such precision in our universe has caused some leading scientists, such as Steven Hawking of Cambridge University, to come up with some wild theories to counter the “God Hypothesis.”

The Multiverse Theory – this theory posits that there are an unlimited number of universes, and we happened to live in the one that was capable of supporting life.

What is the evidence for it? NONE (Imaginary numbers)

Is this really more believable than the biblical notion that God simply created the universe?

QUESTION: What about the Materialist worldview? How does it stack up against this evidence?

As we’ve said before, materialism supplies the scientific and philosophical underpinnings for secularism.

In other words, “Darwin set us ‘free’ from objective morality.”

After all, if there is no God there is no transcendent moral Law Giver, thus, no objective moral law.

We can make things up for ourselves. This is particularly appealing when one wants to live on one’s own terms!

That may sound morally liberating at first, but there are some other not so pleasant implications as well.

In reality, Materialism isn’t fairing too well in the light of recent discoveries.

Whereas once the biblical worldview was on the defensive, it is not the other way around, as the Materialists are having to admit they don’t have the answers:

1. The complexity of living systems makes the theory of unguided, natural processes look very weak.
2. The Big Bang model of the universe limits the time these natural processes have to work, and as we will shortly see, these systems are **EXTREMELY COMPLEX!**
3. The almost unbelievable precision we see in both the universe lends itself to the reality of design rather than the old “matter plus chance plus time” paradigm of the materialist.

4. Lastly, existentially speaking, materialism does NOT satisfy the more subjective longings of the heart; such as the desire for meaning and purpose.

Let's plug Materialism into Ravi Zacharias' four question:

1. Origins – materialism has NO viable answer for how the universe came into being. The very nature of Ex Nihilo invokes the need for a Creator that transcends matter, energy, space, and time.
2. Meaning – if the Materialist is right, there is no meaning to life. The natural universe is completely indifferent to our existence. We live, we die, the end. As Miles Monroe said, “The purpose of a thing is the reason for its creation. However, if the universe is NOT created, there is no purpose.
3. Morality – if there is no transcendent Creator, there is no objective morality. There is no real right or wrong to speak of. However, the conscience of man and the reality of guilt say otherwise.
4. Destiny – if Materialism is true, there is no destiny but the grave, and ultimately even the universe will die a “heat death” when its energy is finally expended.