

WHY GOD?: SCIENCE, FAITH, AND EVIDENCE FOR GOD

Opening Prayer: Come Holy Spirit, fill the hearts of your faithful and kindle in them the fire of your love. Send forth your Spirit and they shall be created. And you shall renew the face of the earth. Amen.

Part I: Are Science & Religion Opposed?

1. Albert Einstein (1897-1955): "Science without religion is lame; religion without science is blind."
2. Pope St. John Paul II: "Faith and reason are like two wings on which the human spirit rises to the contemplation of truth."
3. Catholicism and the Bible: Vatican II says, "We must acknowledge that the books of Sacred Scripture firmly, faithfully, and without error teach that truth which God, *for the sake of our salvation*, wished to see confided in the Sacred Scriptures."
4. Catholicism and Science:
 - a. Church does not have official teachings on scientific theories
 - b. Only guided by the Holy Spirit on matters of FAITH and MORALITY
5. Pontifical Academy of Sciences
 - a. Founded 1603 by Pope Clement VIII as *Accademia dei Lincei*
 - b. World's 1st exclusively scientific academy
 - c. 80 members chosen regardless of gender, country, religion, race, etc.
 - d. 76 Nobel Laureates since 1902
6. Catholic Scientists
 - a. Bl. Nicholas Steno (1638-1686): anatomist & founder of geology, Lutheran convert
 - b. Gregor Mendel (1822-1884): Augustinian priest, founder of genetics
 - c. Georges Lemaitre (1894-1966): Belgian physicist and priest, proposed the Big Bang theory
7. Pope St. John Paul II: "Science can purify religion from error and superstition; religion can purify science from idolatry and false absolutes. Each can draw the other into a wider world, a world in which both can flourish."

Part II: Does God Exist?

1. God can be found through creation and reason. Romans 1:20: "Since the creation of the world...God's eternal power and divinity have become visible, recognized through the things he has made."
2. Joseph Ratzinger (Pope Benedict XVI): "Any attempt to reduce God to the scope of our own comprehension leads to the absurd." A god we can fully understand is not God.
3. Can we prove God exists 100%? What can we prove 100%? Rene Descartes (French philosopher, mathematician, & scientist 1596-1650): "I think, therefore I am."
4. Evidence for God:
 - a. First Cause: Everything is an effect of a previous cause, like dominoes
 - i. Big Bang theory says our universe had a beginning to all matter, space, & time
 - ii. Only a being outside of matter, space, & time could bring them into existence
 - b. Intelligent Designer (Is everything random chance or designed?):
 - i. Anthropic Coincidences: 30+ "fine tuned" forces in physics. For example, power of Big Bang explosion and strength of gravity are precisely calibrated

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- ii. How did life come from non-living matter (chemical evolution)?
- iii. DNA is code/information, which can only be found in an intelligent source
- iv. Considering the laws of physics, Einstein said, “An intelligence so superior is revealed that in comparison all the significance of human thinking and human arrangements is a completely worthless reflection.”
- v. Antony Flew (1923-2010): Grandfather of modern Atheism, converted in 2004, 2007 *There is a God: How the World’s Most Notorious Atheist Changed his Mind*: “I now believe that the universe was brought into existence by an infinite Intelligence. I believe that this universe’s intricate laws manifest what scientists have called the Mind of God. I believe that life and reproduction originate in a divine Source. Why do I believe this, given that I expounded and defended atheism for more than half a century? The short answer is this: this is the world picture...that has emerged from modern science.”
- c. Miracles: (need to be instantaneous, complete, & lasting)
 - i. Monica Besra of West Bengal, India cured by Mother Teresa’s intercession
- d. Pascal’s Wager:
 - i. Atheist has nothing to gain and everything to lose by rejecting God
 - ii. Theist has everything to gain and nothing to lose by believing in God
- 5. Problem of Suffering/Evil:
 - a. If there is an all-good, all-powerful God, why is there suffering in the world?
 - b. Two causes of suffering/evil:
 - i. Suffering from sin: freewill is required to be human, which allows us to both love but also sin and hurt ourselves and others.
 - ii. Suffering from the natural world: we need things like the water cycle (can cause floods & storms); tectonic activity (can cause earthquakes, volcanoes, & tsunamis); and mutations in DNA (can cause cancer) for life to exist as we know it.
 - c. Living with suffering/evil: Focus on true purpose in life – heaven! *Catechism of the Catholic Church* §311: “God is in no way, directly or indirectly the cause of moral evil. He permits it, however, because he respects the freedom of his creatures, and mysteriously, knows how to derive good from it.”
 - d. Good from suffering/evil:
 - i. Better appreciate God’s gifts, Make us more thankful, Make us more generous, Become stronger from suffering, Just punishment for our sin & deterrent
 - ii. Unite sufferings to Christ’s – “Offer it up”, “God allows suffering and deprives us of the lesser good of pleasure in order to help us toward the greater good of moral and spiritual education,” God suffers with us & teaches us how, Greatest evil produced the greatest good

Closing Prayer: God of the universe, I praise you and thank you for all that is good. Help me to see you in the people, experiences, and even the sufferings of my life. I give you all that I am, and I ask you to make me the holy servant you created me to be. Give me the courage to share you with those around me. Amen.

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