

How do we know God exists?

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Dr. Bert Thompson:

“The Case for the Existence of God”

- ***...when we employ the word “prove,” we do not mean that God’s existence can be demonstrated scientifically in the same fashion that one might prove that a sack of potatoes weighs ten pounds, or that a human heart has four distinct chambers within it.***
- ***Such matters as the weight of a sack of vegetables, or the divisions within a muscle, are matters that may be verified empirically using the five senses.***

Dr. Bert Thompson:

“The Case for the Existence of God” (continued)

- ***...And while empirical evidence often is quite useful in establishing the validity of a case, it is not the sole means of arriving at proof.***
- ***For example, legal authorities recognize the validity of a prima facie case, which is acknowledged to exist when adequate evidence is available to establish the presumption of a fact that, unless such fact can be refuted, legally stands proven.***
- ***It is the contention of the theist that there is a vast body of evidence that makes an impregnable prima facie case for the existence of God—a case that simply cannot be refuted.***

Proof??

**Or, ample evidence to
believe??**

Classical Arguments for God's Existence

- ***The cosmological argument***
- ***The ontological argument***
- ***The anthropological argument***
- ***The teleological argument***

Cosmological Argument

(1) Everything that has a beginning of its existence has a cause for its existence.

(2) The universe has a beginning of its existence.

(3) Therefore:

The universe has a cause for its existence.

*If the Cosmos had a beginning,
then there must have been a Beginner:
a Cause outside of resulting matter and energy.*

Ontological Argument

- *Man's "God-consciousness" implies a God who imprinted such a consciousness on him*
- *Pascal suggests there is a "God-shaped vacuum" in every man*

Anthropological Argument

- *Distinctly human, spiritual traits point to an intelligent, moral, personal Creator*
- *“Moral conscience” or “natural law” implies a moral Creator*
- *Religious experiences...*

C.S. Lewis:

“Mere Christianity”

- *Now what interests me about all these [arguments] is that the man who makes them is not merely saying that the other man’s behavior does not happen to please him. He is appealing to some kind of standard of behavior which he expects the other man to know about. And the other man very seldom replies: “To hell with your standard.” Nearly always he tries to make out that what he has been doing does not really go against the standard, or that if it does there is some special reason in this particular case why the person who took the seat first should not keep it, ... or that something has turned up which lets him off keeping his promise.*

C.S. Lewis:

“Mere Christianity” (continued)

- *... It looks, in fact, very much as if both parties had in mind some kind of Law or Rule of fair play or decent behavior or morality or whatever you like to call it, about which they really agreed. And they have. If they had not, they might, of course, fight like animals, but they could not quarrel in the human sense of the word. Quarreling means trying to show that the other man is in the wrong. And there would be no sense in trying to do that unless you and he had some sort of agreement as to what Right and Wrong are; just as there would be no sense in saying that a footballer had committed a foul unless there was some agreement about the rules of football.*

Teleological Argument

***The order and synergy
observed in the natural world
point to a purposeful Creator***

***“For since the creation of the world God’s
invisible qualities – his eternal power
and divine nature – have been clearly
seen, being understood from what
has been made, so that men are
without excuse.”***

Romans 1:20

***“Whence arises all that order and beauty
we see in the world?”***

- Sir Isaac Newton, 1650

Teleological Argument: Earth

- ***Consider Earth's:***
 - ***Narrow range of relatively moderate temperatures***
 - ***Protective and perfectly balanced atmosphere and magnetic field***
 - ***Just right gravity***



Teleological/Fine-Tuning Argument ***Anthropic/Goldilocks Principle***

Too
Much

Too
Little

Just
Right

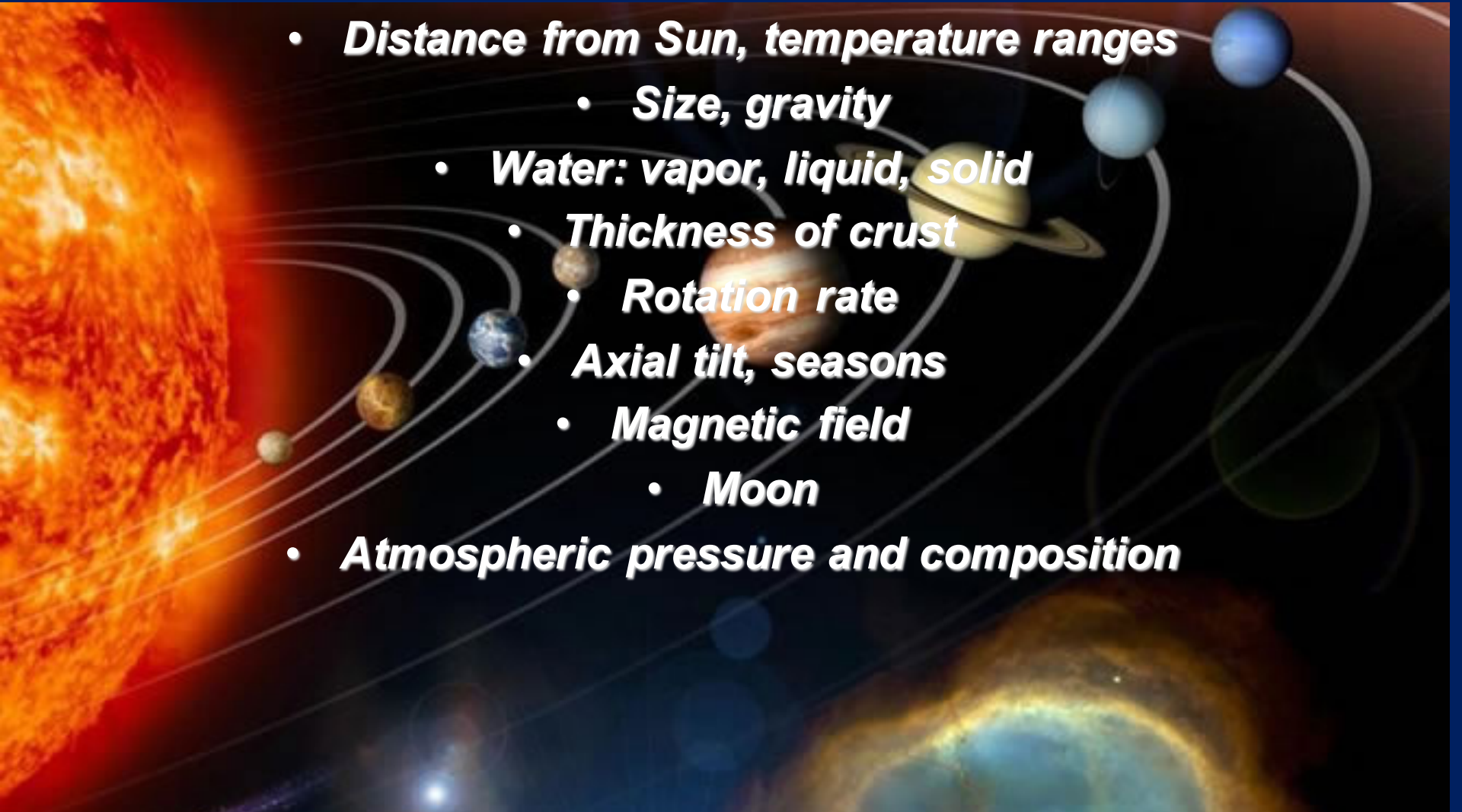
Change
Anything

Life
Cannot
Exist!



Just Right Earth

Cosmic Lottery??

- 
- ***Distance from Sun, temperature ranges***
 - ***Size, gravity***
 - ***Water: vapor, liquid, solid***
 - ***Thickness of crust***
 - ***Rotation rate***
 - ***Axial tilt, seasons***
 - ***Magnetic field***
 - ***Moon***
 - ***Atmospheric pressure and composition***

Change anything and life cannot exist!

Our Unique Earth

Thousands of extra solar planets have been discovered; many sun-like stars could perhaps support planetary systems...

All of our space exploration SO FAR has shown that our neighbors in space are not remotely capable of sustaining life of any complexity.



Fine-tuning throughout the universe

- **Electromagnetic force: chemical bonding**
- **Strong nuclear force: atom/element building**
- **Expansion rate of universe: galaxy/star formation**
- **Mass density of the universe: expansion/crunch**
- **Velocity of light: amount of radiation**



Against the odds...

- **Probability for 9 life-supporting characteristics existing in one of the traditional 9 planets of our solar system:
1 in 50 million**
- **If we consider the several hundred finely tuned characteristics of the entire universe, the odds are more like 1 in 10^{280} for life to exist anywhere in the cosmos!**



The Multiverse Hypothesis

- Primary counter-argument to “*telos*”, or purpose
- An infinite number of separate universes, each with a different set of physical laws
- More chances for one universe to get all the numbers just right?
- Multiverse speculations still rely on orderly physical laws...

Chance, or Intelligence?

“...the degree of bio-friendliness we observe in the universe seems far in excess of what is needed to give rise to a few observers... If the ingenious bio-friendliness of our universe were the result of randomness, we might expect the observed universe to be minimally, rather than optimally, biophilic. Note too, that multi-verse explanations still need to assume the existence of laws of some sort, so they do not offer a complete explanation of the law-like order of the universe. Finally, invoking an infinity of unseen universes to explain certain features of the universe we do observe seems the antithesis of Occam’s Razor: It is an infinitely complex explanation.”

- Paul Davies, theoretical physicist

Quantum Physics

“God does not play dice...” - Einstein

Does quantum uncertainty provide the space wherein God acts?

Our orderly universe is governed by physical laws

If God intervened haphazardly (miraculously) to overrule those laws:

- Order would cease
- Cause and effect would be de-coupled
- Actions would have no predictable consequences
- Free will would be meaningless

Maybe God is in the business of making the improbable probable!

Try to imagine a universe without fixed physical laws...



Without physical laws, the universe would be chaotic, having no order. There is no natural reason why the physical laws that govern the universe MUST exist.

- *Gravity, Relativity*
- *Coulomb's Law, Ohm's Law*
 - *Strong Nuclear Force*

Historical Argument

- *History gives evidence for God's existence*
 - *Belief in God is "universal"*
 - *The history of the Christian church*
 - *The Christian day of worship became Sunday in ~32 A.D.*
 - *Luke, the historian, traveled with Paul, researched his gospel account*
 - *Church history...*

Archaeological Argument

- *Archaeology has found much to validate the claims of the Bible*
- *Specific biblical events previously doubted have been confirmed*
- *Overall cultural background and practices confirmed*
- *Archaeology confirms biblical accounts in more than 25,000 sites*
- *Ancient historical dated coins*
- *Sacred sites identified*
- *Jerusalem: the temple, the Pool of Siloam*

Miracles Argument

- *Reliable records of Jesus' miracles*
- *They were performed in public*
- *Not denied by his enemies*
- *Jesus' miracles were done before unbelievers, skeptics*
- *Verified by testimony of the beneficiaries*
- *Demonstrated Jesus' various powers*

The Miracle of Jesus' Resurrection

The most significant miracle

- *Body buried by Joseph of Arimethea in a tomb*
- *No competing burial stories*
- *Sunday after his Friday crucifixion, his tomb was found empty*
- *Multiple appearances*
- *Confirmed by friends and foes of the faith*
- *Jesus' disciples were convinced of his resurrection*
- *Alternate stories rejected for lack of credibility and contrary evidence*
- *Demonstrates existence of God, credibility of Jesus*

The Argument from the Credibility of the Bible

- *Multiple manuscripts of Old and New Testament documents*
- *Biblical texts referenced and quoted as authority by ancient friends and foes alike*
- *New Testament canon criteria*
- *Fulfilled prophecies*
- *Historical corroboration*

Summary of Arguments for God's Existence

- *Cosmological argument*
- *Ontological argument*
- *Anthropological argument*
- *Teleological argument*
- *The historical argument, and*
- *The archeological argument,*
- *The argument from miracles*
- *The credibility of the Bible*

Resources

- *The Remarkable Spaceship Earth*, Ron Cottrell, Thousand Oaks, CA
- *Theism, Atheism, and Big Bang Cosmology*, *Reasonable Faith*, and *The Existence of God and the Beginning of the Universe*, William Lane Craig, theologian and philosopher, Talbot Seminary.
- *The Cosmic Blueprint*, Paul Davies, physicist
- “*Evidence for God from Science*”, Richard Deem, www.GodandScience.org
- *The Symbiotic Universe*, George Greenstein, theoretical astrophysicist, Amherst College
- “*Philosophy of Religion*”, Tim Holt, www.philosophyofreligion.info/index.html
- *The Universe*, Sir Fred Hoyle, astronomer and evolutionist
- *Until the Sun Dies*, Dr. Robert Jastrow, astronomer
- Greg Koukl, *Stand to Reason*, Long Beach, CA; www.str.org
- *Handbook of Christian Apologetics*, Peter Kreeft & Ronald Tacelli
- *Mere Christianity*, C.S. Lewis
- *Know Why You Believe*, Paul E. Little
- Dr. Hugh Ross and Dr. Fazale Rana, *Reasons to Believe*, Glendora, CA; www.reasons.org
- *Without a Doubt: Answering the 20 Toughest Faith Questions*, Kenneth Richard Samples
- *Faith & Reason: Why Christianity Makes Sense*, Austin Schmidt & Joseph Perkins
- *The Case for Faith*, Lee Strobel
- “*Reason & Revelation*”, Dr. Bert Thompson, www.apologeticspress.org