

APOLOGIA

Finding Answers to Life's Most Interesting Questions

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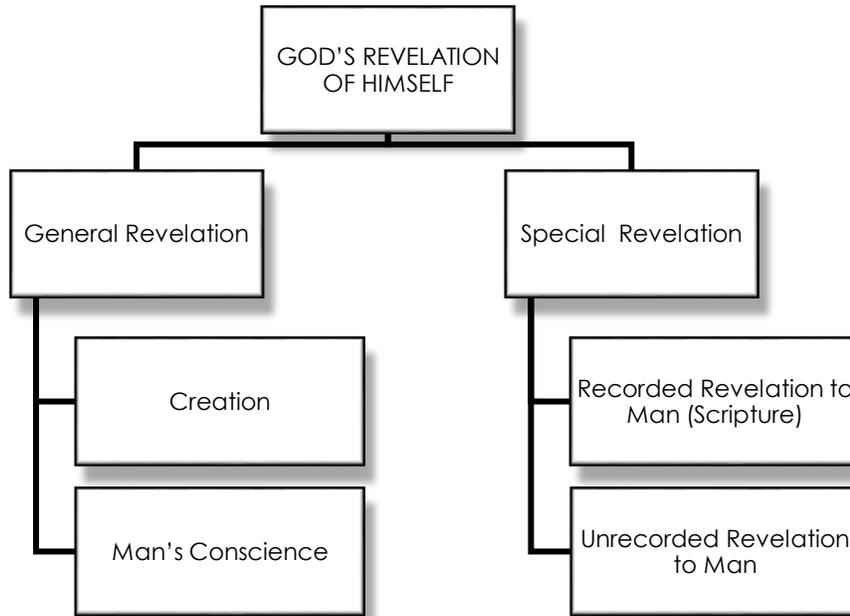
2 DOES GOD REALLY EXIST?

How do you know if God really exists? Sam the Skeptic asks, "If God actually existed there would be clear evidence of his existence but I don't see any such evidence."

Who is God? He's been described as everything from an impersonal life-force to a benevolent, personal, almighty Creator. He has been called by many names, including: "Zeus," "Jupiter," "Brahma," "Allah," "Ra," "Odin," "Ashur," "Izanagi," "Viracocha," "Ahura Mazda," and "the Great Spirit" to name just a few. He's seen by some as "Mother Nature" and by others as "Father God." But who is He really? Who does He claim to be?



I. HOW GOD HAS REVEALED HIS EXISTENCE TO MAN



A. GOD HAS REVEALED HIS EXISTENCE THROUGH GENERAL REVELATION.

Creation: God's existence can be seen in his creation so that people are without excuse (Psalm 19:1-2; Acts 14:15-17; Romans 1:19-20).

Conscience: God's existence is planted in the hearts of all humans (Romans 2:12-15).

B. GOD HAS REVEALED HIS EXISTENCE THROUGH SPECIAL REVELATION.

God has revealed himself through the Scriptures. God revealed himself to specific people, as found in the Bible. God has revealed himself through Jesus Christ.

Special revelation includes all the words of the Bible but is not limited to the Bible. It also includes, for example, many words of Jesus that were not recorded in the Bible (Luke 24:32; John 20:30, 21:25). There were probably many words also spoken by Old Testament prophets and New Testament apostles that were not recorded in the Bible (Daniel 8:26; Rev. 10:4).

GOD'S GENERAL REVELATION

II. LOGICAL ARGUMENTS FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE

Various non-biblical arguments reveal God's existence. These are sometimes grouped into cosmological, teleological, ontological, and moral arguments for God's existence.

A. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN THE _____.

Both Christian and non-Christian scientists are convinced that our universe began with one enormous explosion of energy and light, which we now call the "Big Bang." This was the singular start to everything that exists: the beginning of the universe, the start of space, and even the initial start of time itself.

Astrophysicist Robert Jastrow, a self-described agnostic, stated, "The seed of everything that has happened in the Universe was planted in that first instant; every star, every planet and every living creature in the Universe came into being as a result of events that were set in motion in the moment of the cosmic explosion...The Universe flashed into being, and we cannot find out what caused that to happen."²

B. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN THE _____ OF THE UNIVERSE

Scientists today acknowledge that there is evidence of intelligent design to the universe.³ How is this explained?

Michael Behe's excellent book "Darwin's Black Box," provides from the nature of a living cell strong evidence that it could not have originated by anything but intelligent design.⁴

No one at Harvard University, no one at the National Institutes of Health, no member of the National Academy of Sciences, no Nobel Prize winner—no one at all can give a detailed account of how the cilium, or vision, or blood clotting or any complex biochemical process might have developed in a Darwinian fashion.⁵

C. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN THE _____ OF THE EARTH AND MOON'S DISTANCES.

The earth is located the right distance from the sun. Consider the temperature swings we encounter, roughly -30 degrees to +120 degrees. If the Earth were any farther away from the sun, we would all freeze. Any closer and we would burn up.

Our moon is the perfect size and distance from the Earth for its gravitational pull. The moon creates important ocean tides and movement so ocean waters do not stagnate, and yet our massive oceans are restrained from spilling over across the continents.⁴

If the gravitational force were altered by merely one part in 10^{40} power the sun would not exist and the moon would crash into the Earth or veer off into space.⁶

Earth is the only known planet equipped with an atmosphere of the right mixture of gases to sustain plant, animal and human life. Oxygen comprises 21% of the atmosphere. If it were 25%

fires would erupt, and if only 15%, humans would suffocate.⁷

The Earth's size and corresponding gravity holds a thin layer of mostly nitrogen and oxygen gases, only extending about 50 miles above the Earth's surface. If Earth were smaller, an atmosphere would be impossible, like the planet Mercury. If Earth were larger, its atmosphere would contain free hydrogen, like Jupiter.

How can you explain this phenomenon if God does not exist?

D. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN THE _____

Plants, animals and human beings consist mostly of water (about two-thirds of the human body is water).

Water is colorless, odorless and without taste, and yet no living thing can survive without it. Plants, animals and human beings consist mostly of water (about two-thirds of the human body is water).

It has wide margin between its boiling point and freezing point. Water allows us to live in an environment of fluctuating temperature changes, while keeping our bodies a steady 98.6 degrees.

Water is a universal solvent. This property of water means that various chemicals, minerals and nutrients can be carried throughout our bodies and into the smallest blood vessels.

Water is also chemically neutral. Without affecting the makeup of the substances it carries, water enables food, medicines and minerals to be absorbed and used by the body.

Water has a unique surface tension. Water in plants can therefore flow upward against gravity, bringing life-giving water and nutrients to the top of even the tallest trees.

Water freezes from the top down and floats, so fish can live below the ice in the winter.

Ninety-seven percent of the Earth's water is in the oceans. But on our Earth, there is a system designed which removes salt from the water and then distributes that water throughout the globe. Evaporation takes the ocean waters, leaving the salt, and forms clouds which are easily moved by the wind to disperse water over the land, for vegetation, animals and people. It is a system of purification and supply that sustains life on this planet, a system of recycled and reused water.

E. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN THE _____

The human brain simultaneously processes an amazing amount of information. Your brain takes in all the colors and objects you see, the temperature around you, the pressure of your feet against the floor, the sounds around you, the dryness of your mouth, even the texture of your keyboard.

Your brain holds and processes all your emotions, thoughts and memories. At the same time your

brain keeps track of the ongoing functions of your body like your breathing pattern, eyelid movement, hunger and movement of the muscles in your hands.

The human brain processes more than a million messages a second. Your brain weighs the importance of all this data, filtering out the relatively unimportant. This screening function is what allows you to focus and operate effectively in your world.

The brain functions differently than other organs. There is an intelligence to it, the ability to reason, to produce feelings, to dream and plan, to take action, and relate to other people.

The eye can distinguish among seven million colors. It has automatic focusing and handles an astounding 1.5 million messages...simultaneously.

F. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN THE UNIVERSAL AWARENESS OF A _____.

Every culture generally has had an awareness of a supreme being.

Why do people in crisis instinctively call out to God? How can this be explained?

All people have an inner sense of God (See Romans 1:19-21, 25; 2:14-15; 8:15-16; Ps. 10:3-4; 14:1; 53:1; Phil. 3:8, 10; Ephesians 3:17; Col. 1:27; John 14:23; 1 Peter 1:8).

G. EVIDENCE OF GOD'S EXISTENCE IS SEEN IN MAN'S _____.

Man has always had an inner sense of right and wrong, and of the need for justice to be done. There must be some basis or reason for moral behavior that is beyond this life. How is this phenomenon explained?

H. TO DENY GOD'S EXISTENCE IS TO EXPERIENCE _____.

Pascal's Wager is an argument in philosophy devised by the 17th century French philosopher, mathematician and physicist Blaise Pascal (1623–62). It posits that humans bet with their lives that God either exists or does not.

Pascal argues that a rational person should live as though God exists and seek to believe in God. If God does not actually exist, such a person will have only a finite loss (some pleasures, luxury, etc.), whereas if God does exist they stand to receive infinite gains (as represented by eternity in Heaven) and avoid infinite losses (eternity in Hell).⁸

GOD'S SPECIAL REVELATION

It is through the Scriptures that man begins to understand not only his existence but also his amazing attributes.

III. GOD'S AMAZING ATTRIBUTES

A. GOD IS _____.

He is greater than the creation and independent of it. Things that he created, such as time, do not control him (Ephesians 4:6).

B. GOD IS _____.

God is actively involved in his creation. He is not an abstract deity removed from, and uninterested in his creation (Job 12:10; Acts 17:25, 28; Col. 1:17). To view God as being only transcendent or only immanent will give you an incomplete and incorrect view of God.

C. GOD IS _____.

He is all-powerful and is always able to do what he wants to do. He is the supreme ruler of all things. Is there anything God cannot do? What does God's omnipotence mean to you personally? (Jeremiah 32:17; Luke 1:37)

D. GOD IS _____.

He is in all places, all the time. He is fully present everywhere. He is not like a substance spread out in a thin layer all over the earth. What does God's omnipresence mean to you personally? (See Psalm. 139:7-10; Jeremiah 23:23-24).

E. GOD IS _____.

He knows everything and is all-wise (Job 37:16; I John 3:20). He is completely aware of our actions and thoughts (Psalm 139:2). What does God's omniscience mean to you personally?

F. GOD IS _____.

He never had a beginning and will never have an end (Deuteronomy 33:27; Isaiah 26:4; 57:15). There was never a time when he did not exist. God's existence preceded time as we know it, and he created time.

G. GOD IS _____.

Because God is infinite and we are finite or limited, we can never fully understand God (Psalm 145:3; 147:5). In this sense God is said to be incomprehensible where the term incomprehensible is used with an older and less common sense, "unable to be fully understood." This sense must be clearly distinguished from the more common meaning, "unable to be understood." It is not true to say that God is unable to be understood, but it is true to say that he cannot be understood fully or exhaustively.

H. GOD IS _____.

Unlike human beings who always change, God never changes and is not volatile or capricious (James 1:17; Hebrews 13:8). His love is steadfast and constant and is not subject to the ebb and flow of human love. His attitude toward sin is a fixed attitude, not like our fits of temper when something displeases us. He is unchangeably against injustice, cruelty, or deceit.

I. GOD IS _____.

God cares for us deeply (Matthew 10:28-30). He interacts with us as a person, and we can relate to him as persons. We can pray to him, worship him, obey him, and love him, and he can speak to us, rejoice in us, and love us (Isaiah 40:11; John 14:23). Apart from the true religion found in the Bible, no system of religion has a God who is both infinite and personal.

J. GOD IS _____.

He does not have a physical body but he is nonetheless real (John 4:24). His Spirit can communicate with our spirit (Romans 8:15-16). The Bible often uses anthropomorphic language (language that speaks of God in human terms) to describe God in ways that we can relate to and understand (e.g. Isaiah 40:11; 59:1).

K. GOD IS _____.

God does not need us, or the rest of creation, for anything, yet we and the rest of creation can glorify him and delight him. See Acts 17:24-25; Psalm 35:27, 37:23, 147:11; Proverbs 3:12, 11:20, 12:22).

L. GOD HAS _____.

While God does not have sinful passions like humans, he does have emotions. He rejoices (Isaiah 62:5). He can be grieved (Psalm 78:40; Ephesians 4:30). His wrath burns hot against his enemies (Exodus 32:10). He pities his children (Psalm 103:13). He loves with everlasting love (Isaiah 54:8; Psalm 103:17).

M. GOD IS _____.

God has moral excellence and is free from all limitations to his moral excellence (i.e. while he is holy and abhors sin, he can still be merciful, Habakkuk 1:13).

N. GOD IS _____.

His love is divine, a perfect love, loyal, kind. This was ultimately expressed and personified in Jesus' three-year ministry. The Bible speaks of his compassion for the sick, his acceptance of the sinner, his reaching out to tax collectors and outcasts, and his love for children (Matthew 23:37; Mark 1:41; 10:16; Luke 7:34; 15:1; John 3:16; 1 John 4:16).

O. GOD IS _____.

God's mercy means that he expresses goodness toward those in misery and distress (Isaiah 55:7; Micah 7:18; Matthew 9:27; 2 Corinthians 1:3). J. Dwight Pentecost used to say, "Mercy is God's ministry to the miserable." It is both intensely personal and immensely practical.

P. GOD IS _____.

God always acts in accordance with what is right and is himself the final standard of what is right (Deuteronomy 32:4).

IV. WHILE GOD IS KNOWABLE, HE IS ALSO INCOMPREHENSIBLE

From God's creation and his special revelation we can come to know much about God, but because he is so much greater than our finite capabilities of understanding, there is much about him that we cannot fully comprehend.

A. WE CAN NEVER FULLY UNDERSTAND GOD

His greatness is unsearchable (Psa. 145:3). His understanding is beyond measure (Psa. 147:5). His ways and thoughts are higher than ours (Isa. 55:8-9; Psa. 139:17-18). Because of this we are never to limit or restrict what he can do.

B. YET WE CAN KNOW GOD TRULY.

We can boast about knowing God's character (Jer. 9:23-24). We can know God through close fellowship and unity with him (John 14:23; 17:23). All people, great and small, can know God truly (Heb. 8:11).

V. NON-BIBLICAL VIEWS OF GOD

A. AGNOSTICISM

The term literally means “no knowledge” taken from two Greek terms, *a* (no) and *gnosis* (knowledge). A person who is agnostic has suspended his judgment about God because it is assumed that God’s existence cannot be proven or disproven.

B. ATHEISM

The belief that there is no God. An atheist insists that only physical matter exists and that the universe is merely the product of chance.

C. DEISM

The belief that God exists but he has abandoned the universe, in other words, God is not immanent. God is like someone who has created a mechanical clock, winds it up and then leaves it to run by the “laws of nature.”

D. GNOSTICISM

God can only be known through a “special knowledge” (*gnosis*) or enlightenment. Gnostics embrace a kind of dualism which states that spirit is good, and matter is evil. Many biblical interpreters see in certain NT books (such as 1 John) the attempt to answer or refute Gnostic teaching. Gnostics depict Jesus as a kind of emanation from the true God.

E. PANENTHEISM

The belief that God is everything (nature, trees, air) but he is also transcendent and greater than the universe. This view asserts that God is affected by each event in the universe, and therefore he changes and grows in knowledge (Process Theology).

F. PANTHEISM/HINDUISM/NEW AGE

Pantheism is Greek for “everything is God.” The belief that God is everything, nature, trees, air. God is not transcendent. Since everything is God, one is free to create their own world from their individual illusions. Pantheists, like Hindus and New Age proponents tolerate all gods.

G. SECULAR HUMANISM

The belief that denies the existence of God and the supernatural order and maintains that reality entails only the natural world. It glorifies the human creature above all else. Similar to this is

existentialism, a philosophy that people create real life by their free decisions and acts.

H. UNIVERSALISM

The belief that God will save everyone and there will be no eternal punishment. Mormonism is very similar to this view. Universalists believe that ultimately all humans are somehow in union with Christ and that in the fullness of time they will gain release from the penalty of sin and be restored to God. Twentieth-century universalism often rejects the deity of Jesus.

END NOTES

¹ But general revelation is not salvific (man is not saved through observing the universe as God's handiwork).

² Marilyn Adamson, *Is There a God?* < <https://www.everystudent.com/features/isthere.html> >

³ For a list over 25 such scientists see "Quotes from Scientists Regarding Design of the Universe" by Rich Deem < <http://www.godandscience.org/apologetics/quotes.html> >

⁴ (Geisler 26)

⁵ (Geisler 27)

⁶ (Geisler 27)

⁷ (Geisler 27)

⁸ Wikipedia, < https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pascal%27s_Wager >

WHERE TO GET MORE INFORMATION

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