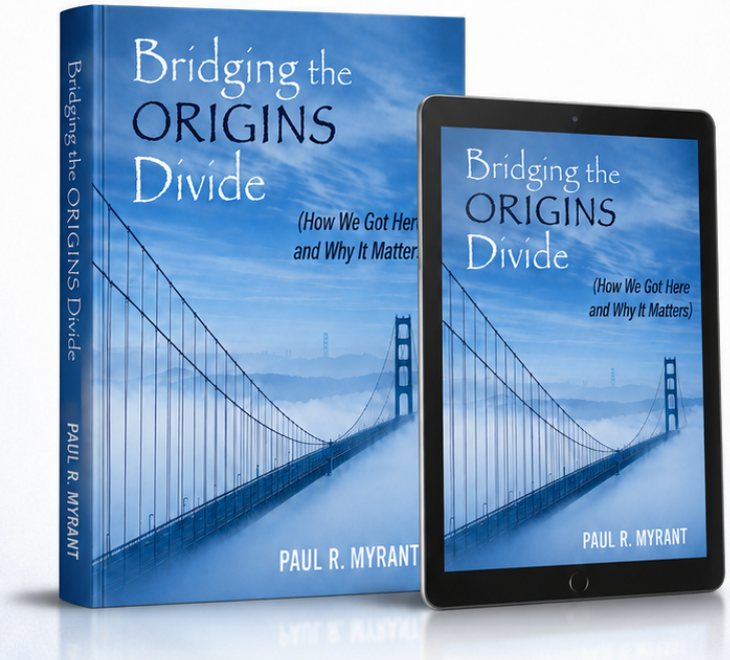
Exclusive Sampler:

Bridging the ORIGINS Divide

(How We Got Here and Why It Matters)

Paul R. Myrant challenges readers to consider whether there is a Creator and how the universe came into existence. Through philosophical arguments for God's existence, he addresses the divide between faith and science with clarity and conviction. He also examines Genesis and the consequences of rejecting biblical authority. With thought-provoking insights, Myrant invites readers to re-examine the foundations of their beliefs and the significance of creation in shaping our worldview. This book offers a thoughtful perspective on one of humanity's oldest debates.



A Note from the Author

To help you get the most out of this book, I have created a free Reader Bonus Pack. This resource is designed to help you, your small group, or your church move from theory to practice. It includes:

- **The Framework and Definitions Pack:** A quick reference to the key terms and beliefs concerning the existence of God and the conflict between creationism and naturalistic evolution.
- **The Study Guide:** Structured discussion questions and next steps designed for both solo readers and small groups.

Download your free Bonus Pack at:
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Bridging the Origins Divide

How We Got Here (and Why It Matters)

by
Paul Myrant

Bridging the Origins Divide:
How We Got Here (and Why It Matters)

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Preface

Throughout human history, the question of a Creator's existence generally centered around which god and which religion—mine or yours. Then came Darwin, who questioned the need for God or any creator. This opened the door for other scientists and renowned thinkers to celebrate creation without God.

Can we explain the existence of the universe without referring to an all-powerful creator? World-renowned astrophysicists Michio Kaku and Neil deGrasse Tyson believe in a god of order and beauty; at least, they are open to that possibility. Though they reject the God of the Bible, they are open to the God of Einstein. Even renowned atheists have come to recognize the universe as too organized and beautiful to have been created without an intelligence.

This book provides a logical and philosophical response to the questions around God's existence, nature and how He created the heavens and earth. I am not a scientist, nor the son of one. I am a philosopher, apologist and biblical theologian. I have spent much of my life researching and studying the philosophies that drive both science and biblical worldviews. I have examined every viewpoint of Genesis 1-11 and how they interact with the whole of Scripture.

I demonstrate three things: belief in God is the best and most logical conclusion that explains the creation of the heavens and earth and all living things; what the Creator is like; and how the Creator made the universe.

On this third point I am focused on the defense of the Genesis narrative as a valid perspective on Creation. Primarily, this is a discussion between the Young Earth Community (YEC) and the Old Earth Community (OEC). These two groups are generally a part of the Christian community. The OEC believes the earth is 4.5 billion years old, and some believe all life evolves from a single-celled organism. The YEC believes the earth is between 6,000 and 10,000 years old and that God created all life intact and complete.

Anyone who has objectively studied these perspectives will realize both represent valid scientific points of view. Each opinion is based on different assumptions. I don't believe you can categorically prove one perspective over the other. Bias, suppositions and worldviews color the arguments.

I am convinced of the Scripture's authority. The old earth worldview is based on false assumptions leading to what I call "scientism"—absolute conclusions made by members of the scientific community based on unproven and unprovable assumptions.

Uniformity, naturalism, anti-supernaturalism and anti-catastrophism are the basic assumptions to which scientists hold. These assumptions color the interpretation of data we find in geology and cosmology. Conclusions based on these are speculative and should always be stated as such.

In the final analysis, if the Bible is true and Earth is 6,000 years old, then the data "found" by science has been wrongly interpreted. The question is, what can we know for sure?

Chapter One

Origins: How We Got Here (and Why It Matters)

This book focuses on creationism, evolution and the apparent division between religion and science. We will address two questions that have dogged humanity throughout the ages—how we got here and why it matters. In answering these questions, we will examine three concepts: Is there a creator? If so, what is the creator like? If so, how did the creator make the universe?

Who owns the universe?

Imagine you have been lost deep in a forest or jungle for several days. You stumble into a clearing, and to your great relief and surprise, you find a house. You go to the front door and knock. There is no answer, so you go to the back door. You knock, and again there is no response. You are desperate for food and water, but being a civil person, you do not want to break in. You knock on the windows and call out, hoping someone will hear you and invite you in. All remains quiet. Finally, you decide to

go inside. You are surprised to find the front door unlocked, so you enter cautiously. You continue to call out as you search each room. "Hello! Hello! Anybody here?" You find no one. To your relief you discover plenty of food and water in the kitchen. You decide you must use some of the resources to stay alive. By early evening, your exhausted body is ready for sleep, so you choose a bed on which to rest. You sleep deeply and long into the next day.

You are greatly refreshed and relieved at being spared by this good fortune. After days, weeks and months no one shows up, and you become increasingly comfortable. You were desperately lost when you first came upon the house, so you decided to stay. There was plenty of food, water and everything you needed to survive.

You are lonely and miss family and friends, but you are safe and quite content. You begin to examine the house—food supply, refrigerator, plumbing and electricity—trying to figure out how everything works. You admire the construction of the house and the design of the rooms. You may wonder how old it is or how it was built.

Yet, in all your questions, you have forgotten the most important and basic question of all: who owns this house? To whom do these resources belong? Who owns the land, and who bought the materials to build the home? To whom should you be thankful?

We can and should ask the same questions concerning our remarkable Earth. As far as we know, it is the only planet in the universe capable of sustaining life. We are the perfect distance from the sun and have the perfect atmosphere, water and climate to sustain us. Food grows on plants and trees we never

planted, and there is an amazing variety of fish and animals to eat.

Could this be an accident? Or is it a message from the Creator? If we find a house in the forest that can sustain us and provide all we need for survival, we know it had a builder and an owner. Since we find ourselves on a planet capable of sustaining and providing all things we need, we know it must have had a builder and an owner.

> *"Gravity may put the planets into motion, but without the divine Power, it could never put them into such a circulating motion as they have about the Sun; and therefore, for this as well as other reasons, I am compelled to ascribe the frame of this System to an intelligent Agent.*[1]
>
> *"All variety of created objects which represent order and life in the universe could happen only by the willful reasoning of its original Creator, whom I call the Lord God."*[2]
>
> —Sir Isaac Newton

How did we get here?

If you lived in California in 1885 and awoke one morning to find a 1985 DeLorean in your barn, you would rightly ask what it was and how it got there. Without concrete evidence, some might be tempted to believe it magically appeared. Others might even consider it to be divine and deserving of worship. Everyone would question what it was and how it got there. Some might undertake an examination to determine its origin and how it works.

Since you are aware of metal, you could deduce aspects of

1 www.brainyquote.com/quotes/isaac_newton_737919
2 IBID

how it could have been made, though creating it yourself would be way beyond your skill or expertise. All this would be considered empirical observations.

However, there can be no direct empirical evidence of how it was made and how it got into your garage. Its placement was not and cannot be observed; it is beyond your comprehension. Unless an eyewitness comes forward, you can never know how or why it was put there.

What you can know for certain (albeit axiomatically), is that someone or some being with intelligence and power created the DeLorean and placed it into your barn. No scientist would assume it magically appeared or that it created itself and placed itself into your barn. Logic and reason dictate the DeLorean was made and transported by someone greater and more powerful than the farmer who found it.

Unlike the 1885 discovery and examination of the DeLorean, we find ourselves in an environment we did not create. From our beginning we have asked, "How and why am I here? For millennia, thinkers have pondered this deep and significant question.

For the past 500 years, scientists and philosophers have diligently investigated and theorized about an answer to this conundrum. Many, especially scientists, have abandoned the possibility that we got here through a power greater than ourselves. They are determined to find the answer without considering supernatural or other worldly causes. Instead, they focus on how things work and devise possible theories about how the universe was created (means of creation). They reject or at least ignore the possibility of an intelligent, powerful being behind it all.

Even if we could discover the *means* of creation, it would not tell us *why* the universe and all living things were created. What is the meaning and purpose of living beings? Is there objective morality, absolute right and wrong? To whom do the heavens and earth belong?

Science, Religion, Philosophy

The existence of God is a philosophical question and has nothing to do with science or religion. The differences between science and philosophy, and philosophy and religion, are often misunderstood.

Many scientists believe God's existence is a scientific question to which science will provide the final answer. However, science can neither prove nor disprove God's existence. They may discover how the universe was created but can never prove the who or why of creation.

Conversely, many spiritual leaders and individuals believe the existence of God is a religious question based in part on their personal faith. There are many philosophical arguments used to support faith in a creator. These arguments are not inherently religious, and they do not prove God exists any more than scientific arguments.

The Bible never seeks to prove there is a God; rather, it declares God exists and is the cause for the heavens, the earth and all living things.

Belief in a creator is a philosophical question that can only be answered by appealing to reason and simple logic. There are only two options: the heavens and earth were created, or they created themselves. They were either caused or uncaused. They either magically appeared out of nothing, or they were brought into existence by a being capable of doing so.

"Religion and philosophy are to be preserved distinct. We are not to introduce divine revelations into philosophy, nor philosophical opinions into religion[3]."

—Sir Isaac Newton

Whether God exists is the first of several questions that center around this topic. How did matter come to be? How was matter structured and designed? How did living things come into existence? Does life have meaning? Is there objective morality? Is there a soul? Is there any purpose to life? To say no to God's existence is to leave all these questions without an answer. All things end up being random and subjective without any meaning or purpose behind them.

Dr. Michio Kaku, co-inventor of string theory, recently admitted that science could not prove or disprove the existence of God. He stated:

"Science is based on what is testable, reproducible and falsifiable. That's called science. However, there are certain things that are not testable, not reproducible and not falsifiable. And that would include the existence of God."[4]

Scientists do have an opinion on the existence of a creator. In fact, all beliefs about a creator's existence are mere opinions. We must make a distinction between the means of creation (the how, or the process used to bring matter, energy, light and life into existence) and the underlying cause.

Do we live in a caused or uncaused universe? Can material things be their own cause? Can matter or its preatomic elements create themselves? If the Big Bang caused the universe to come into existence, what caused the elements and underlying

3 Isaac Newton www.brainyquote.com/quotes/isaac_newton_737919
4 (bigthink.com/culture-religion/

functionality to exist? How did gravity, electromagnetism, the strong and weak nuclear forces come into existence? To answer these questions, we must engage in a rational conversation based on logic and reason.

The best and most rational response to the existence of the universe is that it was caused. Logically, inanimate objects existing and functioning without a cause are highly improbable, if not impossible. Non-living, highly structured atoms and molecules require an intelligent being behind their existence. Adding to that difficulty, atoms and molecules exist in innumerable quantities, identical to all others in their category. For example, gold atoms have 79 protons all identical to one another. How could so many identical atoms exist? Their numbers are incalculable. There are millions of living organisms that also require a cause outside themselves, a being or intelligence greater than themselves.

Conversely, belief in a creator does not necessarily make a person religious. Proposing a creator as the cause of creation is simply a philosophical explanation for the existence of the heavens, the earth and all living things. Belief in a creator is a rational explanation for our existence. Some scientists say there is no evidence for a creator; however, creation itself is evidence—just as the computers, keyboards and monitors we use are evidence that there is someone who makes computers.

Religion is a set of beliefs and practices based on what different people and groups believe about a creator and how that creator expects them to behave. Being religious does not mean you are anti-science, anti-reason or a member of a cult. Neither does it make you righteous or a good person. It does not mean you are right about your beliefs, political ideologies or behavior.

Nor does it mean you have a relationship with the creator and are representing him when you speak.

While science cannot prove or disprove the existence of a creator, theories abound concerning how the universe was created. Understanding the means of creation is a secondary question to the creator's existence. We must first decide if there *is* a creator—a being who is the cause for the universe and all living things. Answering this question will tell us many things about the nature of the creator, including possible ways the universe and all living things were made.

Without appealing to a creator, what is the basis for meaning, morality and human existence? Can there be objective morality and meaning, or do individual leaders of society determine right and wrong? Is morality based on whomever is in power or the most persuasive person in the room? These issues are on par with asking where matter comes from. Of course, we still need to answer where the creator himself came from.

The Darwin Effect

Throughout history, few have questioned the existence of God. Most arguments were about which God—mine or yours. Since the enlightenment, the question has gradually turned toward the existence of and nature of God. In the Western world the Scriptures have been a primary source of information and education since Constantine. Religions (Judaism, Islam and Christianity) have been engaged in an ongoing conflict as to which faith was "true." Numerous wars and horrific acts have occurred between Islam and Judaism, Christianity and Islam, and shamefully within various sects of the Christian faith.

The Age of Enlightenment brought forth intellectualism. Professional educators and scientists have changed the narrative

from faith to reason. They rejected the supernatural and focused primarily on naturalism and empirical evidence. The idea of God's existence began to cast serious doubt within the intellectual minds of the world. Most of these leaders were not outright atheists but sought to see the world apart from the Bible and religion.

For several centuries, scientists such as Baruch Spinoza (a forerunner to the age of enlightenment) have questioned the Scriptures' perspective on God. Higher critics challenged the authorship of the Torah. They questioned the accuracy of the dates they were written, and the role Moses played in its transmission. Numerous men participated in this attack on the Scriptures. Their common belief was a rejection of the supernatural world and the Bible, which was considered a magical book ostensibly given to us by God.

A growing disbelief among these "scholars" gave rise to Hutton, Lyell, Darwin and Wellhausen, whose works laid the foundation for the greatest lie ever told. These most influential skeptics were about to undermine reason, faith and morality like none before them.

Hutton, Lyell, Darwin and Wellhausen

These four skeptics transformed a nominal Christian world into a secular, wanna-be, anti-Christian utopia. James Hutton and Charles Lyell developed the theory of uniformity, which claims that the geology of the earth is the result of millions of years of erosion and uplift along with other natural processes.

Uniformity's long geological ages opened the door for the theory of evolution. Uniformity provided the theoretical time Darwin needed for evolution to take place. Both philosophies directly contradict a literal six-day creation—the simplest interpretation of the biblical record.

Following on the heels of Darwin, higher criticism took the lead. Higher criticism is a school of thought that questions the authorship, dating and accuracy of the biblical texts. Specifically, this challenge focused on the first five books of the Bible.

Theologians who had already rejected the authority of the Bible began to publicly question the historical accuracy of the recorded events. Julius Wellhausen popularized the Documentary Hypothesis *(See Appendix 2)* along with a variety of similar theories which espouse an anti-supernatural view of the Scriptures. Wellhausen was directly influenced by naturalism, uniformity and the advent of Darwin's theory of evolution.

As this new theology and scientific worldview took hold in Western civilization, evolution's primary philosophy of naturalism replaced a supernatural view of the world and creation. Naturalism replaced faith in God, the biblical record, miracles and belief in a supernatural realm.

In many mainline Christian churches, belief in the Bible digressed from being the very words of God and a reliable source of historical truth to a collection of fables, myths and abstract religious beliefs.

Archeology and conservative Christian scholarship have repeatedly demonstrated the historical accuracy of the scriptures. However, many congregations, denominations, colleges and seminaries were unable to undo the progressive erosion of biblical authority.

In Europe, these challenges to biblical authority have had a devastating effect on historic Christianity. The 21st century church is only a shell of its former self. In his book, *The Suicide of the West*, James Burnham eloquently states, "The West remembers enough about Christianity to feel guilty for its

sins but not enough to recall where forgiveness comes from."[5]

The effect in America, while significant, was not as widespread. Fundamentalist religious groups in the United States successfully responded to and rebuffed these attacks. Americans are surprisingly strong in their belief in a personal creator, the rejection of evolution, and acceptance of the Genesis account of creation.

> *Fifty-three percent of adults believe God created human beings in their present form exactly the way the Bible describes it. Thirty-one percent believe humans evolved over millions of years from other forms of life with God having guided the process, and 12 percent said humans have evolved over millions of years from other forms of life without intervention from God.*[6]

By comparison,

> *"Only 7 percent of those surveyed in Great Britain said they take the biblical creation account of Genesis 1 literally […] Respondents in Germany, Norway, Russia and the Netherlands all ranked significantly lower than the United States in biblical literalism."*[7]

More recent surveys show the number of Americans who believe in a creator and the biblical record remains high, but there is a fast-growing component moving to a non-religious status.

> *Forty percent of US adults subscribe to a strict creationist view of human origins, believing that God created them*

5 Burnham, James. "Suicide of the West". The John Day Company, New York, NY. USA
6 news.gallup.com/poll/647594/
7 www.secularhumanism.org/library

in their present form within roughly the past 10,000 years. However, more Americans continue to think that humans evolved over millions of years—either with God's guidance (33%) or without God's involvement at all (22%).

As many as 47% and as few as 38% of Americans have taken a creationist view of human origins throughout Gallup's 37-year trend. Likewise, between 31% and 40% of US adults have attributed humans' development to a combination of evolution and divine intervention over the same period.[8]

There have been dramatic changes in Western Europe since the first edition of this book. Recently, *Creationism in Europe* was published by Johns Hopkins University Press.

It is based on five years of research, during which the team trawled through newspaper articles, internet sites, scientific studies, opinion polls, and reports by scientists in other European countries. Creationism, the belief that a god—not evolution—shaped life on Earth, is by no means restricted to people from the Bible belt in the US or illiterates in remote corners of civilization.

In fact, it's spreading in the very stronghold of evolution, Europe. That's the conclusion of five years of research that's been put into a new book on creationism. The book details how creationism is on the march throughout most of Europe.

"Creationism is most dominant in Eastern Europe and Turkey, but even some schools in the Netherlands are

8 news.gallup.com/poll/261680/

teaching creationism," says one of the book's authors Hans Henrik Hjermitslev, University College South Denmark. "Politicians in some German federal states are advocating that schools use creationist books alongside those about evolutionary theory in their lessons. This kind of struggle is going on, on a small scale in many places."[9]

Across Western Europe, most people say they believe in God. But in today's culture, believing in God does not necessarily mean belief in the God of the Bible.

Indeed, even though all 15 countries surveyed are historically Christian, and nearly all of them still have Christian majorities, fewer respondents say they believe in God "as described in the Bible" than say they believe in "some other higher power or spiritual force." And substantial numbers of people surveyed across the region do not believe there is any higher power or spiritual force in the universe.

Belief in the biblical God is much more common among church-attending Christians than it is among non-practicing Christians (those who attend church no more than a few times a year). While most non-practicing Christians say they do believe in God or some other higher power, most say they do not believe in God as described in the Bible. And among religiously unaffiliated people in Western Europe, the prevailing view is that there is no higher power of any kind.[10]

While there is encouraging news in these statistics, we know

9 sciencenordic.com/creationism
10 ibid

that those affiliated with non-religious beliefs are the fastest growing segment of society.

In America, progressive Christianity has made large inroads in traditionally conservative congregations—abandoning a literal reading of Genesis 1 and 2; adopting female pastors, bishops and elders; and an openness to aspects of the LGBTQ community. All these compromises began with a rejection of a literal understanding of Genesis 1 and 2.

The "Facts" of Evolution

Evolution is still taught as fact throughout the West's public-school systems. From elementary school through college, evolution is drilled into the minds and hearts of young people. *National Geographic* and *The Discovery Channel* continually tell us the earth is billions of years old. *The History Channel* speaks almost exclusively from an anti-supernatural view of the Bible; it continually questions biblical history and authority.

The long-term effect of these philosophies and the demise of authority of the Scriptures has led, in part, to the moral relativism that shapes contemporary Western cultures. Absolute right and wrong have vanished from the hearts and minds of many; people believe and do that which is right in their own eyes. *"If a creator exists, he is absent and unconcerned."* Beliefs which consider absolute laws of God have given way to beliefs based on feelings and stories of individuals who live on the fringe of society.

This challenge to Christianity is enormous. It has been marginalized and excluded from significant conversations taking place in our communities. In general, Christianity and religion have no say in the important topics we face. In the spirit of broadening the discourse, a foundation for the existence

of a caring God who is recognized as a personal being and is involved in our lives must be discussed in our communities. The Bible teaches that God's existence is an innate truth written on the soul of every person.

> *"The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom."*
>
> —Proverbs 1:7 NIV, Solomon

> *"He that comes to God must believe that he is and that he rewards those who diligently seek him."*
>
> —Hebrews 11:6 NIV

> *"…That which is known about God is evident within them, for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made."*
>
> —Romans 1:19, 20. NASB, The Apostle Paul.

The Psalmist David Wrote,

> *The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the works of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the end of the world.*
>
> —Psalm 19:1-4 NIV

Belief in a creator is the foundation of all rational thought. Apart from this foundation, humankind is left without a compass to navigate the myriads of personal philosophies espoused by humanity. However, if Paul's statements are true, we should be able to examine the universe and through the process of

deduction and reason demonstrate the existence and nature of the creator. This will in turn provide us with an objective source for belief in God apart from the aid of religion.

Chapter Two

Five Arguments for God's Existence

The existence of God has been discussed by great religious leaders, philosophers and scientists since the beginning of time. A modern and common belief is that science will prove or disprove this. Creation scientists, pastors and religious leaders are generally considered ignorant buffoons by the mainstream scientific community, and their opinions are largely ignored.

Michio Kaku, an American theoretical physicist and futurist, has stated,

> *"I have concluded that we are in a world made by rules created by an intelligence. To me, it is clear that we exist in a plan which is governed by rules that were created, shaped by a universal intelligence and not by chance."*[11]

Argument One: Matter Exists

In 1965, The Lovin' Spoonful band recorded the famous pop tune, *Do You Believe in Magic,* which peaked at number 9 on

11 bigthink.com/culture-religion

the Billboard Hot 100 chart. This could be a theme song for atheistic evolution. Magic is the only explanation science has for the existence of the universe and all living things.

Something has always existed. Imagine there is nothing—no people, animals or any living thing; no sun, moon, stars, planets or space itself; none of the four elementary forces of nature and no creator. There could be only one conclusion: the universe and all living things accidentally appeared out of nowhere with no cause, without reason and with no assistance from an intelligent being. In other words, it magically appeared—hardly a scientific response.

Logic dictates that someone or something is eternal; there is no other option. Three possibilities exist: The Creator is eternal, matter is eternal, or pre-atomic material is eternal. However, if matter is eternal how did it get here, and how was it shaped into objects and the living things we see? If pre-atomic material had always existed, where did it come from and how did things become what they are? Skeptic David Hume (1722–1776) once remarked on the supposed need for a creator and asked,

> *"Why may not the material universe be the necessarily existent Being? There is no warrant [reason] for going beyond the universe to posit a supernatural ground of its existence."*[12]

Hume was making the argument that matter is eternal and that the universe is its own cause. However, if the Big Bang is the cause for the universe (which most scientists believe it is), it would mean the universe did not exist at a point in the past to even come into existence. This means it had to be created by

12 David Hume, Dialogues concerning Natural Religion, ed (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1947), pt. IX, p. 190.

someone or something. Whoever or whatever caused it is the creator of all things. Dr. Stephen Hawking agrees. He said,

> *"So long as the universe had a beginning, we could suppose it had a Creator."*[13]

Thus, what the Big Bang model requires is that the universe began to exist and was created out of nothing. Scientist Victor Stenger speaks about scientists who believe in God. He calls them "Premise Keepers":

> *"To the Premise-Keeper, the big bang provides "evidence" that creation took place in time … Something cannot come from nothing, and so the universe needs a Creator. That the Creator must have come from nothing is finessed away. God is a different "logical type" than the universe—a type that does not require creation. Theologians do not make clear why the universe itself cannot be of this logical type."*[14]

Stenger clearly understands the issue. He seems to agree that something always had to exist. However, instead of a creator being the cause for the universe, he believes the universe is eternal and created itself. Here's my perspective:

> *"The reason the universe cannot be its own cause, is because matter is inert, it has no will, intellect, or capacity to bring itself into existence, and then shape itself into all the variety of matter that exists, especially in the mass quantity and incredible variety of living things. If you want to say that matter itself is the living apparatus,*

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13 Stephen Hawking, A Brief History of Time (New York: Bantam, 1988), p. 140-41 Stephen Hawking,

14 Stenger, Victor. www.secularhumanism.org/library/fi/stenger_19_1.html

the intelligent power, with forethought, and the ability to shape shift itself into itself, be my guest. This belief system is not scientific, it is like claiming the computer I am typing on created itself. It is a form of pantheism, a religious belief that claims, "everything is god".

In either case, the premise is sound. For matter and life to exist today, something or someone always had to exist. Theoretically, it could be the universe; however, we will show that a creator is the more logical option.

Is it possible for matter to be its own cause?

Matter is not magical. Atoms, molecules, light, energy and innumerable particles are real. The creation of matter requires intelligence, will and ability. Matter would have to be intelligent and capable of causing itself to come into existence. It would be capable of shaping and designing itself, planning and executing its own creation. Matter would need to be powerful enough to stretch the universe into existence and somehow create life.

Matter consists of non-living entities that were shaped and formed by something other than themselves. The amount of matter in the universe is incalculable. The sheer volume of matter could only have been caused by someone or something greater than that which exists.

Could preatomic material be the eternal cause of all things?

This is impossible for the same reasons. An explanation is required for how matter or preatomic material got here and how it could have been shaped and formed into inert and living things. To reject the concept of a creator as the cause for all things is to believe in magic. The universe and all living things

would have suddenly appeared on their own without intervention from an intelligent being.

There must be a creator.

Logically, we must conclude that a creator planned, shaped, designed and caused all things to come into existence. But from where did the creator come. Since something always existed, the creator must be eternal. It may be difficult to comprehend, but it is the best possible explanation for our existence.

Argument Two: Matter Is Shaped and Designed

Shapes are an integral part of objects and living things. They are critical aspects of design. The sun, moon and stars are all spheres. Plants, animals and human beings have distinct shapes.

Generally, shape is intentional as it is with the sun, moon and stars. However, the shape of a bird is more critical to its design and purpose than the shape of a rock. Rocks and mountains are shaped, but they are blobs of undefined matter. Rocks and mountains are randomly scattered about the earth and universe.

Randomness can be intentional or accidental. Modern artists intentionally splatter paint on a canvas for effect. It is random because it is not measured or specific; it is intentional because the process is premeditated.

If a paint shaker machine loses its grip on a can of paint which then splatters around the hardware store, it is accidental randomness. The resultant splatter shapes, though random, are accidental. Due to infinitely possible shapes, it would be conceivable to eventually discover a shape that resembles the Virgin Mary, Carl Sagan or even the United States. However, it would be an unintentionally random event.

The initial creation of the earth involved artistry and design—hills and valleys, beaches and plains. Dirt and stone and all the elements on and in the earth have beauty and value. All these were made and shaped intentionally, and served multiple purposes. Cosmetically, they are beautiful to behold and provide great enjoyment for humanity.

However, the mountains and geology of today's earth are not random; it was part of the process that shaped the earth after the global flood. The process would be predictable considering the forces engaged in the destruction of the first earth, massive amounts of rain, earthquakes and vulcanism around the globe.

While the simple existence of matter demands a creator, the nature of matter demands an intelligent, powerful and capable creator. Atoms and molecules have a specific structure—a nucleus and various numbers of protons, neutrons and electrons. Molecules are composed of two or more atoms. They are unique and specifically structured.

On a molecular level everything in the universe has a unique shape and structure, and they are distinct from one another. They are designed to be what they are.

Matter is intricately designed and engineered for a specific purpose. That purpose may be unknown, but it relates directly to the external shapes and internal designs.

Richard Dawkins detailed the intelligence of bats and their possible evolutionary beginnings. He proposed how an engineer might solve the problem of how they could be capable of navigating in the dark. He imagines what it must have been like for animals that had to learn survival. On their own and without capability, they created and transformed themselves into

functional creatures. Bats developed biological active sonar (echolocation) so they could fly and hunt at night. "If you saw an object shaped like a bat on the ground, most people would recognize what it was. If you examined the bat closely and discovered that it was a rubber toy, you would realize that there is much more to a bat's design than just its shape. The inner structure of the bat is equally as important as its outer shape. It must have muscles and bones that support its weight. Without a small brain that allows it to fly and a sonar system, it would walk around on its legs and probably be eaten or die of starvation. The bat's highly developed sonar system allows it to fly in the dark night, and in caves, without running into walls or other objects"

> *"Dawkins attributes the nocturnal activity of the bat to his belief that there were too many animals already hunting in the daytime. There was not enough food for the bats, so they decided to fly at night when it was less populated. Of course, they had a problem with how to fly at night, so bats decided to develop sonar so they could fly at night and then proceeded to do so."*[15]

Self-designing bats are improbable. They do not have the power or will to make these choices or the ability to change themselves. They must have been created with qualities we see today. The structural design of all things is proof that an intelligent, capable being created, shaped and designed matter.

This proposal is symptomatic of the difficulty in explaining an uncaused, purposeless, universe creating itself. Dawkins,

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15 Dawkins, Richard. The Blind Watchmaker WW Norton & Company, New York, London, 1987, 22,23. Quoted from Myrant, Paul, The Challenge of Evolution: 2009 Tate Publishing, pg. 56

through reason and logical cognition, attempted to explain the existence of complex living entities without the aid of a creator. He is himself a component of a shaped and designed universe living in denial of reality.

Argument Three: Shape and Design=Meaning and Purpose
Everything is shaped, designed and created for a purpose. Some things are primarily cosmetic such as a sunrise or sunset. They are beautiful and inspiring to behold but do little else for us.

The sun (our star) is also designed. Its heat prevents the earth from becoming a deep freeze and destroying everything on the planet. The sun's rays provide vitamin D which keeps us healthy and functioning.

Stars are often used for navigational purposes by sailors, but for the most part they are cosmetic. Other than our sun, stars give us no light to read by and no heat to warm us, but who does not stare in wonder at the night sky full of these great balls of fire? Who is not amazed at the sight of the birth or death of a star as seen through the eye of the Hubble or Webb telescope?

A sunset can instill hope, encouragement and refreshment. When we view a photograph or painting of a sunset, we appreciate the painter or photographer. How often do we ignore the creator and the sunsets he has given us day after day from the beginning of time?

Every invention built by human hands was designed with a purpose. It is illogical to believe all the amazing, highly structured things on earth could exist without the specific involvement of human creators.

Vacuum cleaners are ugly and odd-looking, but they are shaped and designed for a very specific purpose. No rational human being would suggest that they shaped, designed and

created themselves. Yet this is exactly what atheistic science is telling you about the heavens and the earth. Out of nothing everything came into being on its own for no specific reason. It is purpose without meaning.

> *"The total number of tree species on Earth is around 73,000, including roughly 9,000 not yet known to science."*[16]

Each tree is shaped, designed, distinct from other trees, and can reproduce innumerable times.

> *"The grass family includes over 11,500 accepted species, some grass taxonomists (Agrostologists) estimate there are as many as 13,000 species, considering their taxonomy is still a work in progress."*[17]

Each blade of grass is shaped, designed and distinct from other blades of grass and can reproduce innumerable times.

Life forms:

> *"Estimates range from 3 million to 100 million or even more. Taxonomists—biologists who specialize in identifying and classifying life on the planet—have named approximately 1.7 million species so far. Each year, in contrast, the lion´s share of unknown species are small, mostly microscopic organisms that live in some of Earth´s least-accessible habitats: beneath the ground, in the deep sea, in the crowns of tropical trees, and on the backs or in the guts of other creatures. Such insects, worms, mites, fungi, bacteria and other tiny life forms are what Harvard University biologist Edward O. Wilson calls "the*

16 seas.umich.edu/globalchangebiology/
17 naturalhistory.si.edu/research/botany/research/grass-research

black hole of taxonomy." Unimaginably abundant, their numbers could alter overall species totals by a factor of 10 or more."[18]

Design and purpose are opposite sides of the same coin. Design focuses on shape and appeal, while purpose reveals how an object is used and how it works. Purpose is *why* something was designed. Purpose gives objects and living things meaning, and meaning gives them value. Everything has purpose and value even if unknown to us.

Argument Four: Mankind

How were living things created and what brought life into existence? The creation of life is vastly more complex and complicated than simple matter. Neither could happen without a creator.

In answering the question, "Where does life come from?"[19] Dawkins ironically asks for a small miracle. He is implying there is at least a small degree of randomness necessary for the existence of life. Let's assume that Dawkins gets his miracle of life.[20] Is it more likely this small spark of life would have died or survived? Under what circumstances is it conceivable that this accidental, extremely fragile, spark of life survives?

Unless life entered the world in a mature form and capable of survival in a hostile environment, it is not reasonable to believe it would survive. Perhaps if life was created in perfect laboratory conditions, it might have a chance to survive. However, evolution's "spark of life" would have been very fragile, and survival would not have been assured.

Even in safe environments, newborn infants and animals

18 www.nwf.org/Magazines/National-Wildlife/1999
19 Dawkins, Richard. The Blind Watchmaker WW Norton & Company, New York, London, 1987
20 IBID

require a great deal of care to survive. Without a designer and creator, it is difficult to believe that life could begin or survive under less safe conditions. Evolution's "spark of life" would have had to occur many times, perhaps many hundreds or thousands of times. What are the chances of a second miracle happening, or even a third and fourth? How many miracles are required for life not only to exist, but to survive and thrive?

Lighting a fire in the wilderness by rubbing two sticks together is a difficult task. It requires skill, the right implements, great energy and perseverance to start a flame. Once you have started the fire, it must be constantly nurtured, or it will be quickly extinguished.

It requires a tremendous amount of blind faith to believe that life came into existence on its own and for no reason, then to survive without aid in a hostile environment. It's even more difficult to believe when you realize all life forms live a relatively short time. Author Thomas Hayden, in the July 2002 *US News and World Report,* writes:

> *"Scientists have learned that our planet has been rocked periodically by catastrophes: enormous volcanic eruptions that belched carbon dioxide, creating a super greenhouse effect; severe cold spells that left much of the planet enveloped in ice; collisions with asteroids. These convulsions killed off much of life's diversity."*[21]

With these massive catastrophes, shouldn't the evolutionary process begin time and time again? Hopefully, the more evolved flatworm survived the meteor strike. If the un-evolved flatworm survived instead, would it have to go through the entire evolutionary cycle again? In the same article, Hayden says,

21 Hayden, Thomas. A Theory Evolves. US News and World Report, July 29, 2002.

> *"'Half an eye would be worse than none,' creationists were fond of arguing. But partial eyes turn out to be common in nature, and biologists can trace eye evolution from the lensless flatworm eyespot to the complex geometry of vertebrate eyes."*[22]

Biologists cannot trace this process; they hypothesize about it. There is no conclusive proof or direct evidence of an eye in biological transition. All eyes are attached to completely formed living creatures. Should every creature have a "complete" eye? The *lensless* flatworm seems to have what it needs to function and survive.

Imagine an "evolution" of Adam and Eve. It would be impossible for Adam to have evolved from a single-classed entity; however, that is only half the problem. Both Adam and Eve would have had to evolve separately and simultaneously in a perfectly sustainable environment in which heat, water, shelter, food and everything else was present. We could just as likely have had Adam and Evan rather than Adam and Eve.

Can random chance produce life?

Random chance cannot account for the complex design of DNA. It is statistically and mathematically impossible. Harold Morowitz once calculated that the chances of a free-living, single-celled organism such as a bacterium might form by combining preexistent building blocks would be about 1:100,000,000,000.[23] Sir Fred Hoyle calculated that the chances of simple proteins forming an amoeba were $1:10^{40,000}$. The odds calculated by Morowitz and Hoyle are staggering.

The chances of winning a state lottery every week from the age of 18 to 99 are better than the odds of a single-celled organ-

22 IBID
23 www.khouse.org/enews_article/2006/1082/accessed January 18, 2008

ism being formed by random chance. The probability of spontaneous generation is about the same as the probability that a tornado sweeping through a junkyard could assemble a 747 from the contents therein.[24]

Dawkins agrees with this conclusion. He said,

> *"We have seen that living things are too improbable and too beautifully designed to have come into existence by chance. Furthermore, the amount of information in a fertilized human egg is astounding and could not be the result of a random process."*[25]

Although scientists have learned a great deal about the human genome, the overwhelming majority of DNA remains a complete mystery. According to Dr. Jerry Bergman, professor of science at Northwest College,

> *"At the moment of conception, a fertilized human egg is about the size of a pinhead, yet it contains information equivalent to about six billion chemical letters. This is enough information to fill 1,000 books, 500 pages thick with print so small you would need a microscope to read it! If all the chemical letters in the human body were printed in books, it is estimated they would fill the Grand Canyon fifty times!"*[26]

The complexity of life points to the unavoidable conclusion that we are not the product of chance. We are the result of some force, power or being that is the ultimate cause for everything that exists, or at the very least guides the process.

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24 www.khouse.org/enews_article/2006/1082/accessed January 18, 2008

25 Dawkins, Richard. The Blind Watchmaker WW Norton & Company, New York, London, 1987, 6

26 www.khouse.org/enews_article/2006/1082, accessed January 18, 2008 Paley, William, D.D. Public Domain 10802

Natural Selection: The Cause for All Things?

The theory of natural selection states that over long periods of time life evolved from a single cell into all kinds of life we see today. Is natural selection the cause for all living things? Dawkins believes it is and has assured us that natural selection is blind and does not make plans. So how are objects able to adapt?

> *"Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life, has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan for the future. It has no vision, no foresight, and no sight at all."*[27]

According to Dawkins, natural selection occurs because of its need to survive. *"The cumulative process is directed by non-random survival."*[28] So this cumulative process is not random but a series of "right" choices.

What explanation can there be for natural selection or matter creating the environment needed for our survival? How or why would inanimate objects place themselves in just the right locations to support living things? Why does matter itself want to survive? If natural selection is blind and unplanned, how does it get anywhere? If it is not random, then it is directed.

In 1859, Charles Darwin wrote *The Origin of the Species.* For many scientists, natural selection (Darwin's theory of evolution) is the answer to the creationist philosophy of intelligent design. To understand fully his position on natural selection,

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27 Dawkins, Richard. The Blind Watchmaker WW Norton & Company, New York, London, 1987, 5

28 IBID, pg. 43

it is best to see it in contrast with the philosophy of intelligent design.

Intelligent design is not really a new theory but an updated version of the argument from design held by many theists in history. William Paley's dissertation, "Natural Theology," is the classic treatise on intelligent design. Dawkins presents his philosophy of natural selection by contrasting it to Paley's intelligent design.

Paley then compares nature to the watch. His basic argument is that if you find a stone on the ground you would not question it being there. However, if you found a watch on the ground you would rightly assume it had a creator that caused it to be.[29]

Paley's basic argument is that is impossible to believe that life with its complexity could exist without the presence of a designer or watchmaker, an intelligent agent or cause for the universe.

In *The Blind Watchmaker,* Dawkins answers Paley's arguments. He believes natural selection is how the universe developed. He says,

> *Dawkin's response is that Paley is wrong: All appearances to the contrary, the only watchmaker in nature are the blind forces of physics, albeit deployed in a very special way. "Natural selection, the blind, unconscious, automatic process which Darwin discovered, and which we now know is the explanation for the existence and apparently purposeful form of all life has no purpose in mind. It has no mind and no mind's eye. It does not plan. It has no vision, no foresight, and no sight at all. If it can be said*

29 en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Watchmaker_analogy

to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker.

"We have seen that living things are too improbable and too beautifully designed to come into existence by chance. How, then, did they come into existence? Darwin's answer is, a gradual, step-by-step transformations from simple beginnings, from primordial entities sufficiently simple to have come into existence by chance.[30]

Dawkins claims to know the explanation. He claims to know this not because of the facts but because he has ruled out any other possibility. He utterly rejects a creator or any intelligent being as a cause.

Dawkins's prejudice and bias against the supernatural has blinded him to any objective truth on this topic. He is saying that natural selection is not only the cause for the purposefulness (complexity) of life but is somehow also responsible for the existence of life. He concedes that natural selection is a blind, mindless, purposeless and automatic process without foresight. He believes it cannot see or even consider what might happen in the future, yet somehow it is the cause for all life and complex life forms.

How does this blind, mindless, purposeless, automatic process work? By taking an unguided, unplanned and innumerable number of tiny steps over millions and millions of years for unknown reasons.

To suggest that an unknown, unseen and unplanned series of simple cumulative steps leads to a complex end is not an argument for random chance. Is it more difficult to take several

30 Dawkins, Richard. The Blind Watchmaker WW Norton & Company, New York, London, 1987, 5

large steps in the darkness than many small ones? You may miss a hole with a large step or fall into one with a small step.

If you find yourself in a pitch-black cave without a reference point, it makes no difference if you take thousands of tiny steps instead of hundreds of large steps. It makes no difference if you turn right instead of left or go up instead of down. In fact, it makes no difference what you do, since there is no plan in the first place. Is your purpose to get out of the cave or to stay inside? Without a plan or purpose, it does not matter if you get out or stay in. If you by chance came upon something interesting while inside, it would be meaningless because there was no forethought or purpose.

Without a design or purpose, natural selection is still a random process, regardless of any statements to the contrary. It can only be considered an incredible stroke of luck for evolution to reach any destination, especially one as lofty as the human being.

Natural Selection: A Process, Not a Cause

Natural selection is a theoretical process which deals primarily with the evolution of living matter. It is a theory that attempts to explain how living things move from simple to complex life forms.

As a scientific theory, it leaves many ideas unexplained such as the origin of the universe or living things. It cannot explain how the spark of life happened and how it survived in an extremely precarious environment. Natural selection cannot explain why there are so many different, fully developed, functioning species.

Micro vs. Macro Evolution

Natural selection is based primarily on the theory that microevolution (small changes within a given species) proves macroevolution (cross species mutation). Microevolution is nothing more than adaptation. Adaptation is the ability of a living thing to change as its environment changes. An animal's fur will change color in different environments. In the arctic, a fox is white; in the desert it is brown. This is quite different from a pig becoming a giraffe or a chimpanzee becoming a human being.

Cross species mutation is in direct conflict with the biblical record of creation. Genesis 1:11 and 1:21 reveal that "everything reproduces after its own kind." A biblical kind or species is defined as any being that can successfully produce offspring through mating.

There is no evidence that a species has ever transitioned to a new and different kind. Evolution's speculation of massive cross-species mutation is unproven and without evidence. Science believes it happens because it fits naturalistic assumptions concerning creation. Additionally, cross-species mutation fits their belief that similarity of design demonstrates macroevolution. However, it is more likely that design similarities speak of a single highly intelligent being who not only designed all living things but also provided them with the capacity to adapt to changing environments over long periods of time.

The process of adaptation within a specific species is logical. Environmental changes demand adaptation to survive. However, there is no reason for cross-species mutation; the elephant is quite capable of survival as an elephant. An elephant that evolves into a new species is not likely to survive in the

new form as it was in the old. It would certainly be difficult to survive in a transitional form, so most likely it would not. In the case of bacteria. For example, adapting to antibiotics would not be evidence of a cross-species mutation.

It is the same with all species. There is no indication that any life form *must* change its basic form. Other than the need to explain complexity without a creator, there is no need for cross-species mutation. Does the chimpanzee desire to be human? Humans are more intelligent than chimpanzees, yet chimpanzees seem quite content in their own world. There are things they can do that we cannot; and in some situations, they might have a greater chance of survival than humans. The chimpanzees' feet are built for climbing trees much more easily than humans. Their long hair keeps them protected from the elements better than us.

Argument Five: Morality

Does absolute right and wrong exist? Are there absolute moral standards? Will human behavior be judged? Does our behavior have consequences? If so, how do we determine what is right and wrong? By whose standard do we mete out justice and judgment?

At the time of this writing, the world is engaged in a moral argument. Some support Hamas as freedom fighters combating the tyranny of Jewish occupation. They justify their actions—targeting civilians and beheading babies of Jewish descent—based on their moral standards. Others are outraged at the atrocities and demand the eradication of Hamas members and all terrorist groups. Who has the right to pass judgment on human actions? To be sure, what Hamas did was unconscionable and pure evil, but without the benefit of an eternal and just creator, it is only my opinion.

For example, one father may love and provide for his family while another abuses and neglects his family. Who is to say which father has the "right" values? While almost everyone would support the first father, it is just a matter of opinion without an objective source. Relativism says there is no absolute truth. Agnostic philosopher of science Michael Ruse said,

> *"The position of the modern evolutionist is that … morality is a biological adaptation no less than hands and feet and teeth and ethics is illusory. I appreciate that when somebody says, 'Love thy neighbor as thyself,' they think they are referring above and beyond themselves. Nevertheless, such reference is truly without foundation. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction … and any deeper meaning is illusory."*[31]

The only objective basis for morality must come from the one who made the laws of nature and of human interaction in which the universe operates. Not just the laws of nature, but the laws of human relationships.

On one hand, if all actions are equal and merit the same reward, and if our actions have no consequences, then life is without meaning. On the other hand, someone must determine the laws and constructs that protect us against murder, theft, adultery, pedophilia, assault, etc.

Apart from a creator there can be no objective morality. An atheist can live a relatively moral life, but there would not be an objective reason on which to base his beliefs. Only the one responsible for the world and humanity has the moral right to

31 Michael Ruse, "Evolutionary Theory and Christian Ethics," in the Darwinian Paradigm (London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 262-269)

set human standards and judge human actions. He is both the lawgiver and the judge.

Education and Science

If atheistic evolution is true, the beliefs about science and religion would be rendered completely irrelevant. It would not matter what a scientist says about the origin of life or what a church believes about a creator. Life would be nothing more than animated dust. *"All we are is dust in the wind."*[32]

Lawlessness and Anarchy Reign

The logical conclusion of atheistic evolution puts mankind on the brink of anarchy and chaos. If Stenger and others like him choose to believe life does not need meaning or purpose, that is their opinion. But is this a reasonable answer for the realities of human existence? People living in misery and poverty around the world would not appreciate being told their life has no meaning at all and that survival of the fittest is the only rule of the universe.

If survival of the fittest is an acceptable rule of life, get strong and just take what you want. Be nice to people only if it benefits you. Do whatever makes you happy. Eat, drink and be merry, for tomorrow we die. Having come from nothing, we will return to nothing.

Our One Hope

Humanity's one hope is that there is a creator and that he is good. We must have faith that someday the suffering and pain of life will make sense. To believe otherwise is to give into nihilism and a profound hopelessness for the future of mankind.

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32 Dust in the Wind" written by Kerry Livgren,

We want to believe there is a creator who is greater and wiser than mankind and who will judge the actions of Earth's inhabitants. We need to know that those who murder, rape and steal will be punished. Those who claim not to care are not being honest with themselves. Perhaps they have given in to their own hopeless world view.

Chapter Three

Why It Matters

When I entered the dry sauna, a young man and a middle-aged woman were warming themselves. The woman's eyes were closed, and she was wearing earbuds. She may as well have had a sign on her forehead that read, "Please do not disturb." I decided to strike up a conversation with the young man. We spoke for about 15 minutes on the existence of God and other spiritual things. He believed in a creator and was very interested in the topic. When he was done, he stood up and left.

During this conversation, the woman never looked at me or gave any indication she was listening or interested in our topic. As soon as the young man left the room, I turned toward her and asked her what she thought about the conversation. To my surprise, she looked at me and said, "I do not believe in God."

We then began a dialogue on the merits of theism. About five minutes into our conversation, I changed my approach and asked her if anything had happened to her that may have influenced her non-belief in God. Her response floored me. She told

me she was the only member of her family of eight who had survived a deadly car crash. Additionally, she had recently lost her 16-year-old son to cancer.

I was deeply moved by her story and found myself in the unusual position of having nothing to say. I prayed silently, asking the Lord for direction. In the end, I was led to tell her two things.

The first thing I said to her was that God did not cause the deaths of her family or son and that His plan was not for them to die that way. Secondly, I mentioned that God loved her very deeply, understood her pain and wanted to help her if she would let him. I then asked her if I could pray for her, and to my surprise she said yes. I prayed that God would heal her heart and that she would have a revelation of the love of Jesus in her life. She left, and I have not seen her since.

Doubt and non-belief can occur for different reasons. Non-belief may result from conflicts with science, a negative religious experience, deep pain and loss, or even from an influential teacher or mentor. Some may question why an all-powerful God allows evil in the world. Atheism is often a cover for a painful root cause which has affected a person's belief system.

Religious Indoctrination

One cannot separate atheism from religion; they are opposite sides of the same coin. Atheists almost always come from a religious background. In fact, atheism is often a reaction to overbearing or abusive religious institutions.

In his online article, *Religion's Real Child Abuse,* Richard Dawkins promotes the notion that the greatest abuse of children by the church is not rampant sexual abuse; rather it is the indoctrination of children into religious beliefs. The assumption by men like Dawkins is that belief in God is the result of religious

brainwashing by "charismatic charlatans" found in religious institutions. We must not allow negative personal experiences to unduly influence the discussion about the existence of a creator.

Belief in a creator is based on observation and deduction, not on the behavior of religious leaders, the Bible, Quran or any other religious book. Religious books and institutions can play a role in this belief, but they are not foundational to it.

To answer a child's query about the universe with the words, *God made it,* is not religious indoctrination. It reflects the logical belief held by most of humanity concerning the existence of the universe and living things. Dawkins, Harris and other renowned atheists are attempting to indoctrinate children and anyone they can to their worldview. I affirm their right to do so; however, church leaders and philosophers have the same rights. It is not brainwashing to simply express one's beliefs.

Philip Pullman, author of *His Dark Materials,* is an atheist whose stated objective is to promote atheism and to "kill God in the minds of children."[33] He has stated that he despises C.S. Lewis and *The Chronicles of Narnia.* When pressed about his reasons for rejecting the existence of God, Pullman said,

> *"Well, all right, it comes from history. It comes from the record of the Inquisition, persecuting heretics and torturing Jews and all that sort of stuff; and it comes from the other side, too, from the Protestants burning the Catholics. It comes from the insensate pursuit of innocent and crazy old women, and from the Puritans in America burning and hanging the witches–and it comes not only from the Christian church but also from the Taliban."*[34]

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33 goodreads.com/author/quotes3618.Philip_Pullman
34 IBID

His views reflect those of many atheists and agnostics. One has only to read *Letters from the Earth* by Mark Twain, *The God Delusion* by Richard Dawkins, or *Why I Am Not a Christian* by Bertrand Russell to see that a negative view of religion is shared by most atheists.

Admittedly, it would be almost impossible to tell the history of western civilization if we were to leave out references to religious wars, inquisitions, greed and corruption in the church. Sadly, many have forgotten the words of Jesus: "Love thy neighbor as thyself" and "Turn the other cheek." Instead of caring for the poor, some religious leaders have become wealthy at their expense.

There has been corruption within many religious organizations. The Catholic Inquisitions, contemporary Muslim Jihadists and overt racism within southern American churches have all made it difficult for some to believe in a good creator. Many professors at elite doctoral universities are hostile to religion, the Bible and the existence of a creator. The ease with which Christian Europe accepted Darwinism and schools of higher criticism are also evidence of a predominantly negative view of religion.

Individuals from every profession—actors, educators, governors and doctors to name a few—have betrayed the morality and values of their professions. They have abused and harmed the very people they were supposed to help. Scientists developed the drugs and chemical fertilizers that pollute the earth every day, not to mention creating almost every weapon known to mankind.

Nazi scientists performed experiments on human beings that no normal person would perform even on animals. Very

few people have written books intended to undermine belief in science or its value to mankind.

It is especially grievous when religious people abuse others in His name. I recently spoke with two middle-aged men who had very negative histories with religious people. I could give them no satisfactory answer to placate their anger and disappointment. Their rejection of a creator was in part the direct observation of ungodly behavior by religious people. I was saddened for their sakes and embarrassed by their stories. However, we should remain objective and keep this in mind:

> *The existence or non-existence of a creator has nothing to do with the way religious people behave. The issue is not that religious people have failed to live up to the Creator's standards (which they certainly have). It is whether there is a creator who has standards to live up to.*

The Good of Religion

Though many religious leaders and their followers have been known to exhibit questionable behaviors, we should acknowledge the many good deeds that have been done in the name of religion. The existence of hospitals, universities and representative forms of government throughout history are great examples.

The same can be said for child literacy and education, a high regard for human life and for the existence of standards of justice. Civil rights and the eradication of slavery in America were driven by Christians and abolitionists preachers who held that all men were created equal in God's eyes.

In England, William Wilberforce fought for almost fifty years at great personal cost to see slavery outlawed and to avoid

a civil war. Wilberforce based his defense on his Christian faith. Science was likely founded by believers who wanted to know the mind of the Creator.

Good and evil exist in every level of culture, profession and institution governed by human beings. Humans are the impetus for activity, and we have the potential for both good and evil. Belief in a creator is not an endorsement of religion or faith; it is simply a logical explanation for the existence of the universe.

Does it matter?

In the west, the long-term effects of atheism are often obscured by the prevalence of a biblical worldview engrained in most Western cultures. Unlike many other cultures, the West places a high value on altruism, human life, care for the poor, justice and freedom for all. An atheist in our society will practice these Christian values without hesitation or reflection as to their source. So… do good and evil exist, and are there eternal consequences for our actions?

How we answer these questions is critical. Some atheists are kind and live generally moral lives, but that does not negate the reality of the destructive nature of individuals who have no conscience or fear of judgment from an eternal creator.

The behavior of certain religious people throughout history pales in comparison to the morally reprehensible slaughter of human beings in the 20th century. The atheist Stalin murdered over 20 million of his own citizens without any consideration of the eventual judgment of a creator. Hitler murdered 6,000,000 Jews, and over 70 million people died in World War Two.

Hitler falsely claimed to be religious and a Christian, but like many manipulators he used God and religion as a tool. He was directly involved in the occult, which was the real power

behind his behavior. He lived as an atheist and a man without a conscience, and he had no concern for a creator who would judge his actions.

What we believe about the existence and nature of a creator will have a profound impact on our life and the lives of those around us. If human beings are simply soulless entities—the random offspring of an unplanned, uncaused evolutionary process—then our actions do not really matter. When our bodies die and we cease to exist, and if there are no eternal consequences for our actions, then objective morality and meaning are simply constructions of mass guilt and manipulation by those in power.

If the creator is a disinterested entity or non-personal energy, then judgment of our actions is not relevant. However, if the creator is a personal being who cares about humanity and is intent on bringing justice to those who are mistreated and judgment to the guilty, it may curb the unbridled actions of evil individuals.

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About the Author



Paul R. Myrant is a Christian author, Bible teacher, pastor and church planter with more than 45 years of pastoral ministry and a lifelong dedication to Scripture, evangelism, discipleship and Christian teaching. Shaped from an early age by a home centered on biblical truth, he has spent his life studying God's Word and equipping others through preaching, apologetics, pastoral ministry and church leadership.

He holds bachelor's and master's degrees in New Testament, Bible, theology and ministry studies. Paul writes with a passion to help people come to faith, grow in spiritual maturity, and understand who they are in Christ. His work reflects a deep commitment to biblical truth, spiritual formation, and unity within the body of Christ.

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