

Does God Exist?

A cumulative case asks which worldview best explains why anything exists, why reality is ordered and life-permitting, and why some moral obligations seem to bind us whether we approve of them or not.

If objective truth exists, then “God exists” is either true or false regardless of anyone's preference. The question is not whether belief in God is comforting or culturally familiar. It is whether reason and evidence give us good grounds for believing that a transcendent Creator exists.

No single argument below establishes every doctrine of Christianity. The aim is a cumulative case: several independent lines of reasoning converge on an ultimate reality that is uncaused, eternal, beyond the physical universe, enormously powerful, and intelligent. Later questions - revelation, Scripture, the identity of Jesus, and the Resurrection - must still be examined.

The Worldview Question

Everyone interprets reality through a worldview, even if it has never been written down. The question is not whether we have one, but whether it explains the world adequately.

- Atheism: no God or gods exist.
- Agnosticism: God's existence is unknown or perhaps unknowable; it can accompany belief or unbelief.
- Theism: a personal God created and sustains reality.
- Deism: a Creator made the universe but does not ordinarily intervene through miracles or special revelation.
- Pantheism: God and the universe are ultimately identical; reality collectively is divine.

What Would an Ultimate Explanation Be Like?

If something explains the existence of all dependent physical reality, it cannot simply be another dependent object inside that reality. We should expect the ultimate explanation to possess several characteristics.

- Uncaused: if it depended on something else, it would not be ultimate.
- Eternal: it could not itself have begun to exist.
- Beyond physical space and matter: it could not be merely one more object within the universe it explains.
- Enormously powerful: it must be sufficient to account for physical reality.
- Personal or intelligent: an intentional mind may better explain why a contingent, ordered universe exists than an impersonal mechanism alone.

The case is cumulative because different features of reality point toward different aspects of the explanation.



The Cosmological Argument: Why Is There Something?

Cosmology scientifically studies the universe's origin, development, structure, and possible future. Cosmological arguments are philosophical arguments asking what ultimately explains the universe and its existence. There is not just one form. The Kalam argument focuses on beginning; Aristotle on change; Aquinas on causation and dependence; Avicenna on necessary existence; Leibniz on contingency and explanation.

One familiar form can be stated simply:

- Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
- The universe began to exist.
- Therefore, the universe has a cause.

The argument is philosophical even when it draws support from cosmology. Contemporary models describe an expanding universe with a finite observable history, but physics continues to investigate the earliest state. The central point does not depend on pretending that science has answered every detail. Describing what the universe did in its earliest moments is not identical to explaining why physical reality exists at all.

DEVELOPMENT IS NOT ULTIMATE ORIGIN

Explaining how an oak grew - its roots, water, sunlight, trunk, and branches - does not explain the acorn. In the same way, describing the universe's early development may leave the deeper question untouched: why is there a universe capable of developing?

Could the Past Be Actually Infinite?

Defenders of the Kalam argument often add a philosophical case against an infinite sequence of past events. An actual infinite, they argue, cannot be formed by adding one event after another. Imagine being told to start at negative infinity and count to zero. There is no first number called "negative infinity" from which the process begins. Every number selected remains only finitely distant from zero.

The analogy is debated, and the philosophy of infinity is complex. Its purpose is to explain why some thinkers conclude that a temporal sequence formed moment by moment cannot have an actually infinite past. Yet even if one granted an eternal physical universe, another question would remain: what explains its changing, dependent existence right now? The cosmological family of arguments is broader than a single claim about the Big Bang.

Nothing Is Not a Physical Something

The Latin phrase *creatio ex nihilo* means creation out of nothing. Here "nothing" must be used carefully. In physics, popular discussions sometimes call a quantum vacuum "nothing," but a quantum vacuum is not absolute nothing. It has a physical description, fields, structure, and laws. A multiverse, if one exists, would likewise be an enormous physical reality - not the absence of reality.

Appealing to a quantum state or multiverse may propose a mechanism by which our universe arose. It does not necessarily answer why that larger physical system, its laws, or its capacities exist. The explanation may have moved back one level without reaching the ultimate question.

Absolute nothing has no matter, energy, space, time, fields, laws, properties, potential, or causal power.

Asking "What would stop something from coming from nothing?" subtly treats nothing as if it were a state with a capacity to produce unless restrained. But if it possesses a possibility, tendency, mechanism, probability, or power, it is no longer nothing. Nothing cannot stop anything - and for exactly the same reason, nothing cannot cause, generate, or choose anything.

THE BETTER QUESTION

Not “What stops nothing from producing something?” but “What causal power does absolute nothing possess?”
By definition, none.

The Design Argument: What Best Explains Organized Information?

Design arguments ask whether certain features of nature are better explained by intelligent causation than by undirected processes alone. The argument is not simply, “This looks complicated, therefore God.” Natural processes can produce patterns and complexity. The sharper question is what kinds of causes best explain highly organized, functionally specified, information-rich effects.

Imagine finding the words “John loves Sarah” carved into wet sand. You would not assume the waves became romantic. The important feature is not merely a pattern of marks; it is an arrangement that carries recognizable meaning. In ordinary experience, meaningful language and computer code arise from minds.

Now grant, for the sake of argument, that the early universe, matter, energy, and physical laws already exist. Human cells contain DNA sequences involved in specific biological functions. Gravity attracts matter, energy drives change, and chemistry follows regular laws. None of those descriptions by themselves possesses intention or foresight. The design question is whether undirected processes adequately explain the origin of the organized biological information required for life.

This is an inference to the best explanation, not a license to place God wherever current science has an unanswered question. A serious design argument must engage proposed natural mechanisms, distinguish complexity from functional specification, and avoid claiming that every ordered pattern requires direct intelligent action.

A CAREFUL DESIGN CLAIM

Natural forces can produce patterns and complexity. The design argument asks whether they are sufficient to explain specified, functional information.

Fine-Tuning: Why Is the Universe Life-Permitting?

Fine-tuning asks why the universe possesses the kind of order and physical conditions that allow complex chemistry and life. It does not claim that everything is perfectly arranged for human comfort. It observes that certain fundamental relationships must fall within life-permitting ranges for stable matter, stars, complex elements, and habitable environments to be possible.

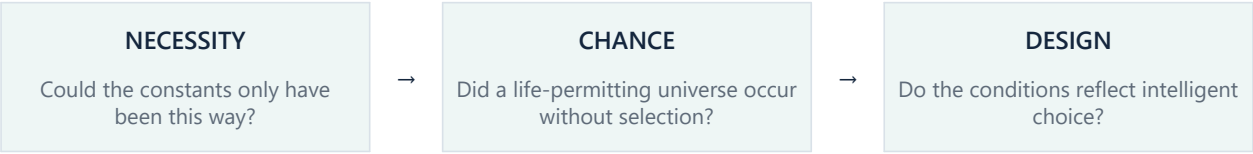
Picture a control board covered with dials. If several are turned far enough, we do not merely get a slightly different universe. We may get one without long-lived stars, stable atoms, or the chemistry complex life requires.

- Gravity: substantially different strength relative to other forces would alter the formation and stability of stars, galaxies, and planets.
- Nuclear interactions: changing the relationships that bind atomic nuclei would alter which elements can exist and how stars produce them.
- Cosmic expansion: a radically different balance between expansion and gravitational attraction could prevent the large-scale structures required for stars and galaxies.
- A habitable environment: life also depends on a suitable star, available energy, liquid water under the right conditions, an atmosphere, and complex chemistry. These local conditions rest upon the deeper universe-level conditions that make planets possible at all.

The argument looks at the total pattern: mathematically orderly laws permit complex matter → complex chemistry becomes possible → stars produce heavier elements → planetary systems form → some environments can sustain complex organisms.

Three broad kinds of explanation are commonly considered. Necessity says the universe had to possess these values. Chance says the life-permitting range occurred without selection, perhaps within a larger multiverse. Design says the conditions reflect

intelligent selection. Fine-tuning does not merely say “unlikely, therefore God.” It asks which explanation best accounts for a universe capable of supporting intelligent life.



The Moral Argument: What Grounds Objective Obligation?

The moral argument does not claim that atheists cannot recognize or practice morality. People from every worldview can show courage, compassion, and sacrifice. The question is deeper: what makes an objective moral truth objectively true?

Suppose every society decided that torturing innocent children for entertainment was acceptable. Would agreement make it right? If the answer is no, then moral truth appears to stand above individual preference, majority vote, government, and culture. Even universal human agreement could be morally mistaken.

- Individual opinion? Then moral disagreement would reduce to preference, and no person could be objectively mistaken.
- Majority vote? Majorities have approved grave injustice.
- Government? Governments can enact evil laws; legality and morality are not identical.
- Evolution? Evolutionary accounts may explain why certain moral feelings developed, but that differs from explaining why an action is truly right or wrong.

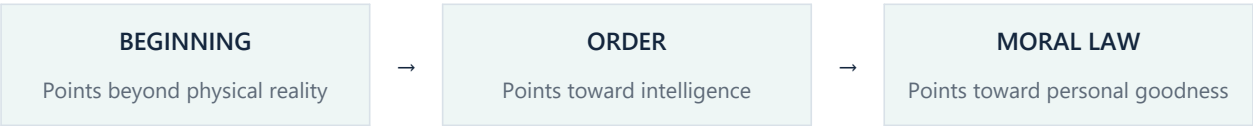
If genuine obligations bind individuals, cultures, governments, and humanity itself, their foundation must transcend those human sources. Theism offers such a foundation in the character of a good personal God. Moral duties are then neither arbitrary rules nor independent standards above God; they express the nature of the perfectly good One.

KNOWLEDGE AND FOUNDATION

The moral argument does not ask whether nonbelievers can know moral truths. It asks what ultimately grounds the truths that believers and nonbelievers alike recognize.

A Cumulative Conclusion

The cosmological argument asks what explains the existence of dependent reality. The design and fine-tuning arguments ask what best explains order, intelligibility, biological information, and life-permitting conditions. The moral argument asks what grounds objective obligation. Each argument can be debated, but together they form a broader explanatory case.



The conclusion at this stage is modest but important: theism is a reasonable explanation of reality. The case points toward an uncaused, eternal, nonphysical, powerful, intelligent, and morally good source. It does not yet establish the Trinity, the inspiration of Scripture, or the Resurrection. Those are further questions requiring further evidence.

WHERE THE ARGUMENT LEADS

A cumulative case for God is not the end of apologetics. It opens the next investigation: Has this Creator acted in history and made Himself known?