

BIBLICAL INSIGHTS #26: IS THERE REALLY A GOD “UP THERE”?

By John Temples

A preacher studied with a young man about the existence of God. The young man accepted the evidence for God as reasonable and convincing. But when asked if he would respond in obedience, the young man said no. “Why?” asked the preacher. “Because I would have to change the way I live.” A sad but honest answer.

The percentage of Americans who believe in God has been trending steadily downward for some time. A Pew Research Center survey in 2018 found that while 90% of American adults believe in a higher power of some kind, only 56% believe in the reality of the God of the Bible. And even fewer--45%--let their belief in God make any meaningful difference in the way they live, by attending a church service at least once a month. Also, the “unchurched” share of the population, consisting of people who describe their religious identity as atheist, agnostic or “nothing in particular,” now stands at 26%, up from 17% in 2009.

(<https://www.pewforum.org/2019/10/17/in-u-s-decline-of-christianity-continues-at-rapid-pace/>)

So...is there really a God “up there” somewhere? This question is vital, because it is basic and fundamental in explaining the universe and answering the question, “Why are things the way they are?”

This question also has important implications for each individual. That’s because if there is a God--the God of the Bible--then there’s a judgment coming. Each of us will stand before Him and give an account.

Interestingly, the Bible (which claims to be a book given to us by God) never undertakes to prove the existence of God. There is no Bible chapter entitled “Ten Proofs That God Exists.” The Bible just starts out, “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.” It simply assumes God’s existence to be “something intuitively obvious to the most casual observer.” Throughout history, people

haven't even needed to be TOLD that there is a God--they instinctively know it. Every major civilization or culture that has ever existed has had a system of religion and a belief in some kind of supreme being. They get His nature and attributes wrong, but they do not question the existence of a higher power.

There's really no excuse for not believing in God. Psalms 14:1 says, "The fool has said in his heart, there is no God." Romans 1:20 affirms, "For since the creation of the world, His invisible attributes (even His eternal power and Godhead) are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made." The certainty of God's existence was the central theme of Paul's address to the pagan Greek philosophers on Mars Hill. Yet, as Paul found out, convincing many people that the God of the Bible is real is a daunting task.

But here is something that may startle you: I don't have to prove the existence of God. The burden of proof is not on me. There are too many things in this universe that can NOT be explained without God. No, the burden of proof is on those who do NOT believe in Him. They must show that He does not exist. And they have an impossible task. Why? Because to show that there is no God, they would have to search every square inch of the universe and demonstrate that God is not there, nor did He leave any footprints--evidence of His existence. It's like the fisherman who fished a whole day and caught nothing. He said, "See, that proves there are no fish in this lake." But he can't prove that, because he didn't fish every square inch of that lake.

In the early days of the space race, a Russian cosmonaut orbited the earth for several days. Upon his return, he said at a press conference, "I didn't find God up there, so He does not exist." Sorry, buddy, but there's a whole lot more to space and the universe than earth's immediate surroundings. Besides, God does not really have a physical address.

Also, those who deny God's reality must be able to account for every aspect, every complex system of our universe with a purely natural explanation.

So here is my challenge to the doubters and the atheists: If there is no God, then how did certain things and processes get here?

FIRST: HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN LIFE WITHOUT GOD?

A scientific law (not a theory, a law) says that **life can only come from existing life**. It's called the Law of Biogenesis.¹

There are only two possibilities for how life began: either matter created itself (something came from nothing), or some intelligent Higher Being created life. Which is more logical and reasonable, *based on the evidence we can actually see*?

“Oh,” but people say, “the Big Bang created life.” What was the Big Bang? *An explosion*. The last time I checked, explosions do not produce order; they produce a whole bunch of disorder. And life is an incredibly complex *orderly system*.

Furthermore, there had to be some fuel (matter) for the Big Bang. Where did that come from? You see headlines saying, “Scientists create life in a test tube.” Those headlines are sensational but inaccurate. Invariably, what they did was to manipulate already existing genetic material to make some new life form or variant.

The point is, whatever scientists achieve, they have to start with *something*--some existing substance. When God made Adam, He started with *nothing*. He first created matter by simply speaking it into existence. Next, He took that matter and made a human being (and all other life forms).

There's an old story about a secular (atheist) scientist who says to God...“Hey, we scientists have figured out how to make life from dirt, just as You claim to have done in that book of Yours, Genesis.”

God: Is that so?

Scientist: Yes.

God: Show Me.

¹ For an excellent discussion of the Law of Biogenesis, go to <http://apologeticspress.org/apPubPage.aspx?pub=1&issue=1018>.

So, the scientist starts to gather some dirt, and just as he is about to start working with it, he is interrupted...

God: Hold it, stop!!

Scientist: What?

God: What are you doing?

Scientist: I'm gathering some dirt to generate life, just as described in Your book.

God: Oh, no. That's My dirt. I created it. You make your own dirt!

Human beings can manipulate life, but they cannot create life. The gap between non-life and life is simply too wide to accommodate any natural explanation. You cannot explain life without God.

SECOND: HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN COMPLEXITY AND DESIGN WITHOUT GOD?

In 1982, Doctor Robert Jarvik made history by implanting the first artificial heart in a 61-year-old man. (<https://time.com/3605433/artificial-heart/>) That heart worked for 112 days. This was hailed as a great scientific achievement. But this question cries out for an answer: Who made the man's *physical heart*, which was totally self-contained and worked for 61 years with no maintenance?

Consider what a great invention a *camera* is. Would anybody claim that a camera is a result of random, chance arrangements of atoms and natural materials? Of course not. Yet the human eye is infinitely more complex and intricate than a camera. How is it that people can readily admit that a camera is a complex device requiring great skill and technology to produce, yet claim that the physical eye is just an accident of nature? Evolutionists (who deny God's creation) quote freely from Charles Darwin, the modern "father" of their theory of the origin of life. One thing Darwin said, however, they do not often mention. In his book *The Origin of Species*, Darwin said, "To suppose that the eye, with all its inimitable contrivances for adjusting the focus to different distances, for admitting different amounts of light, and for the correction of spherical and chromatic aberration, could have been formed by natural selection, seems, I freely confess, absurd in the highest degree." (Darwin, Charles. *The Origin of Species*, J.M. Dent & Sons Ltd, London, 1971, p. 167.) Darwin went on to say that in spite of the absurdity of it, he believed

the eye evolved; but this highlights the lengths of credulity to which evolutionists are willing to go to eliminate God from the discussion of the origin of life.

Some other “complexity and design” challenges:

- If you are walking on the beach and come upon an elaborate sand castle, do you exclaim, “Look what the wind and the waves produced”?
- If you have ever visited Mount Rushmore, you can’t help but be awed by the gigantic carved faces of four presidents and marvel at the skill of the sculptor. If a park ranger told you “the natural forces of wind, rain, and erosion produced those faces,” would you not laugh her out of the park?

Consider these principles:

- Design implies a designer.
- Complexity implies a superior intelligence behind it.
- Whoever creates a complex system is necessarily greater than the system created.

These principles are readily understood and accepted by the majority of people in regard to earthly achievements and inventions; yet, when the subject shifts to the origin of life, these principles are thrown out the window. No, you can’t explain life without a lifegiver, and you can’t explain design without a designer.

THIRD: HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN HUMAN REPRODUCTION WITHOUT GOD?

The marvel of human reproduction is a special case of the “complexity and design” discussion. There are so many requirements and variables involved in human sexual reproduction that to believe they all happened by chance, without God, takes far more faith than simply accepting the Bible account.

Consider just some of scenarios that would have had to happen for human life to begin and continue:

- A human male and a human female would have to have evolved, by random chance, in the same place and at the same time.
- This human pair would have had to possess completely developed and intricate body parts that just happened to fit together for reproduction. “The amazingly complex, radically different, yet complementary reproductive systems of the male and female must have completely and independently evolved at each stage about the same time and place. Just a slight incompleteness in only one of the two at any stage would make both reproductive systems useless, and the organism would become extinct.” (<https://www.creationscience.com/onlinebook/LifeSciences42.html>)
- This human pair would have had to have compatible genetic characteristics down to the DNA level.
- The first female must have had in her body the complete mechanism for bringing an infant to term and successfully delivering the child.
- After giving birth, the female had to possess the ability to generate suitable milk for the infant.

Brother Bert Thompson says, “Sexual reproduction is not merely the product of millions of years of evolution.... [T]he highly complex and intricate manner in which the human body reproduces offspring is not a matter of mere chance or a “lucky roll of the dice.” Rather, it is the product of an intelligent Designer.” (<http://apologeticspress.org/APContent.aspx?category=12&article=164>)

FOURTH: HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN MORALITY WITHOUT GOD?

Human beings possess a sense of fairness, right and wrong, and morality--a sense of “I ought.” When you make statements like:

- Something is not “fair”--
- Something is “right or wrong”--
- Something “ought” or “ought not” to be done--

--then you acknowledge the existence of a moral law.

Where did that moral law come from? No animal possesses such a sense. No lion is wracked with guilt after killing another animal for its noon meal. How, then, if we came from animals, did we humans develop this sense of right and wrong? Where did conscience come from? You cannot get something from an ancestor that was not present in the ancestor to begin with. Where there is a law, there had to be a lawgiver. That is true of both natural laws and spiritual laws.

Closely related to our sense of morality is the question of human emotions (love, hate, jealousy, etc.). How do you explain the gamut of human emotions without God?

FIFTH: HOW DO YOU EXPLAIN THE BIBLE WITHOUT GOD?

We spoke a moment ago about how design and complexity imply a designer. The same is true in regard to the Bible.

Here are some qualities of the Bible that must be explained if it is a product of mere men unaided by divine inspiration:

- Inerrancy--no mistakes of fact, history, geography, etc.
- Lack of contradiction, in spite of having been written by 40 different men over 1,500 years.
- Fulfilled prophecies (with a 100% fulfillment rate).
- Instances of scientific foreknowledge (e.g., Job 26:7, Isaiah 40:22).
- A moral tone unsurpassed in literature (the Sermon on the Mount, the parables of Jesus, the Psalms, etc.)

And the Bible is OLD. The most recent parts of it are nearly 2,000 years old; the oldest parts go back some 3,500 years. How many other 3,500-year-old books do you have in your library? And in spite of its antiquity, the Bible has never had to be edited, corrected, or updated because of any scientific, archeological, or historical discovery. In fact, there has been a steady stream of scientific discoveries confirming the Bible. No other book can make that claim. We have to replace books that are *20 years old*--how much more so would a 2,000-year-old book need replacing, if it were merely a product of the human mind?

Here are the points we have made:

- You can't explain *life* without God.
- You can't explain *complexity and design in the natural world* without God.
- You can't explain *human reproduction* without God.
- You can't explain *morality and conscience* without God.
- You can't explain *the Bible* without God.

The first verse of the Bible says, "In the beginning ____ created the heavens and the earth.

You fill in the blank:

- Eternal nothingness
- Eternal matter
- Random fluctuations in the cosmos
- A disturbance in the Force
- Blind chance
- Dumb luck
- Space aliens
- Swamp slime

The only credible blank filler is "GOD."

Here's the deal: suppose that, in spite of all this evidence, there is no God. Suppose that when you die, there's no consciousness, no heaven, no hell, no judgment. Think about the situation of a Christian--a believer--as opposed to a non-believer.

If there is no God, then neither of us "wins." Neither of us has an advantage over the other. We both just go into that long night of eternal nothingness. But really, the Christian hasn't lost anything by being a Christian--in fact, he or she has lived a full, satisfying life.

But if it turns out there IS a God--then the Christian wins, but the non-Christian loses--everything.

Somebody put it this way on Facebook: "If I'm wrong about God, then I've wasted my life. But if you're wrong about God, then you've wasted your eternity." Is it worth the gamble? --John Temples