The Bridge Bible Fellowship
Summer "Why We Believe" Series
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Why We Believe God is Our Creator

The assigned title can be viewed either as a proposition to be debated or as a question to be investigated. The notes that follow are directed toward presenting arguments in support of the proposition that God is the Creator, even arguments that can only be countered by antagonists provided they borrow core presuppositions that can only be true if God not only exists, but is indeed the Creator-Definer of reality.

An Argument in Defense of the Proposition/Question:

God exists
The Bible is God's authoritative Word (revelation to man)
The Bible presents God as Creator of all things
The Bible contains convincing evidences of its inherent truthfulness
Therefore, God must be the Creator that the Bible declares Him to be

Note: The argument begins with presuppositions, and possesses a distinctly 'circular' character.
Questions: Is such an argument satisfying? Is it even useful? Does it qualify as a convincing 'apology' for God as our Creator? Can we do better?

Undeniable Principles:

- We can agree that something exists – there is a reality – the cosmos (universe) really exists.
- We can agree that out of nothing, nothing can come (*ex nihilo, nihil fit*).
- We can conclude that, since something exists, the cosmos must either have existed eternally or it had to have had an origin in time (it has a finite age).
- We can agree that, if the cosmos had an origin in time, then there must be an originating causal basis for its appearance (for its coming into existence).

Comment: The issue of the eternal existence of space/matter/energy has convincing, even devastatingly negative, counter arguments and thus will not be addressed in this study.

Opening Perspective: Two Opposing Worldviews

The titled proposition/question before us is, in a real sense, a *worldview* issue. A worldview is a philosophical framework for explaining the existence of reality, particularly a framework for explaining the origin of the cosmos together those principles that underlie its operation.

To this point, when distilled to its tap-root essence, there are two basic, but quite contrasting (even opposing), worldviews that bracket the range of proposed answers to our proposition/question. In this study we will center our attention on the following two worldviews.

Biblical Theism & *Ex Nihilo* Creationism
- A Creator, God, exists
- The Bible is His special revelation
- He is the eternal First Cause of all reality

Atheism & Scientific Naturalism
- There is no Creator (God)
- The Bible is mostly myth & allegory, and is unreliable as history or scientific foundation
- The natural, material cosmos comprises the full extent of reality

Note: When speaking of "opposing/contrasting" views, it needs to be noted that objective discourse requires, at minimum, that at least one of the views must be incorrect … or that it may emerge, in fact, that neither view rises to the level of possessing reasoned validity.

Key Question: Which of the views stated above provide the best correspondence with reality; that is, which has the broadest consistency with reality as it has been observed, analyzed & experienced?

Comment: Some debaters may immediately suggest that the assumption of theism (i.e., the existence of a Creator-Person called God) is the premise that is most unsupported by reason, and therefore must be most distant from the truth (most disconnected from any correspondence with reality).

Our charge in this lecture is to examine the issue "head on", proceeding with minimal preconditioned bias. Of course, bias always exists – any and all who address the issue of origins and engage in a search for the truth about reality will necessarily approach the subject with presuppositions – postulates that arise from a bias of initial philosophical perspective. The author freely admits an entrenched bias toward the worldview of "Biblical Theism & *Ex Nihilo* Creationism", but undergirded with "firm reasons".

Apologetic Approach: Arguing in Defense of the Preferred Worldview

To pursue the "why" question before us we will adopt a "contrarian approach". We will start with the worldview position that is in opposition to our bias. As such, a few selected statements that articulate the most prominent presuppositions underlying the worldview of "Atheism & Scientific Naturalism" will be taken for analysis. The focus will be on assessing their soundness with respect to both content and logic.

It is the author's opinion that we are best served by starting "where we are". That is, we will start our argument with several basic 'truths' that are beyond dispute in human reason & experience. In this lecture we will examine the 'beyond dispute' issues of:

- Natural Law – its uniform existence and operation in the natural realm.
- Self-Consciousness & Personhood – the essential essence of what it means to be human.
- Moral Consciousness/Discernment – its undeniable, active governorship in every person.

No reasoning person doubts, or argues against, the real existence of these essences in human experience.

As already noted, any worldview must start with core presuppositions (undergirding premises). If these premises can be shown to rest on shaky, or even on vacuous, foundations – if they do not stand the test of consistency & reasoned analysis – then the consequent superstructure of that worldview must crumble into dust & ashes. To the point of the assigned proposition, "Why We Believe God is Our Creator", this proposed starting point is strategic and leads to far-reaching conclusions.

We begin with statements that expose the philosophic foundation of *naturalism* and *materialism*.

Naturalism: The belief that natural laws & natural causes possess the necessary causal power, plus the source of information, to explain the appearance & operation of the entire cosmos.

Materialism: The belief that the whole of what is real is contained entirely within the whole of the material realm … within the whole of the space/matter/energy realm of the natural world.

Author's Note: The reader should observe that these are "belief" systems … philosophical systems resting on "faith-based" foundation … on indispensible premises beyond proof.

❖ Argument #1: The Argument from Natural Law

Level-1 Point

The statement in the first textbox below reveals a basic starting point of scientific naturalism. The presumed existence of natural law (as we understand it today) is taken as having a causeless origin and a universal operation. Natural law is presupposed to have a pre-existence, and to hold an effectual rulership in nature without any efficient cause for its uniformly omnipresent force. Thus, the view of scientific naturalism is seen to import into its basic framework the ubiquitous and precise operation of natural law without any undergirding justification (i.e., without any causal basis).

"Because there is a law like gravity, the universe can and will create itself from nothing. … Spontaneous creation is the reason there is something rather than nothing, why the universe exists, why we exist. It is not necessary to invoke God to light the blue touch paper and set the universe going."
Hawking & Mlodinow
("*The Grand Design*") M210

"Now we go back in time beyond the moment of creation, to when there was no time, and to where there was no space. From this nothing there came spacetime, and with spacetime there came things. In due course there came consciousness too, and the universe, initially nonexistent, grew aware." … "In the beginning there was nothing. … From absolutely nothing, absolutely without intervention, there came into being rudimentary existence. … Extreme simplicities, emerged from nothing."
Atkins ("*Creation Revisited*") M209

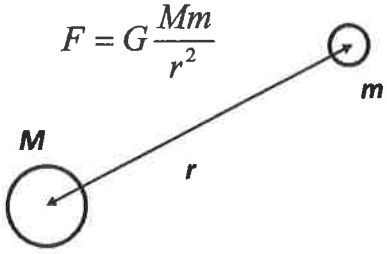
To invoke the law of gravity is to invoke the pre-existence of "something" – it is certainly not "nothing". Now, since natural law comprises a force-principle that operates uniformly in the material realm, and it is amenable to mathematical manipulation as an principle of "truth" – a foundational principle established beyond need of continued proof – it seems rationally clear that such law carries with it a source of information. Natural law communicates, it informs, and this presence of information implies the necessary existence of a superintending intelligence. Mathematical expression & uniformity of operation rationally require the underlying action of intelligence. Hence, and simply put, the existence of natural law begs for (yea, it demands!) the causal pre-existence of an intelligent Law-Giver … who also serves as omnipotent and omnipresent Law-Enforcer and Law-Sustainer.

Even natural laws require an efficient cause – both for their existence and for their continued operation. They cannot arise spontaneously from "nothing" … or particularly, from "unintelligent" matter/energy.

> "If the laws of nature are themselves stochastic and random, then there is no prescribed "cause" for our universe. Under the general principle that anything that is not forbidden is allowed, then we would be guaranteed, in such a picture, that some universe would arise with the laws that we have discovered. No mechanism and no entity is required to fix the laws of nature to be what they are. They could be almost anything." L.M. Krauss ("A Universe from Nothing: Why There is Something Rather Than Nothing") M221

Law of Gravitational Attraction

$$F = G\frac{Mm}{r^2}$$



Level-2 Point

Natural law, in many cases, has been formalized in very precise mathematical statements. Now, mathematical formulation and analysis involves an "abstract" level of reasoning – it is a "non-material" form of reasoning … a reasoning "wholly by the mind".

Questions: Why is there an abstract reality? Is it an entirely material essence? Why does it exist? And, how did it come to be?

Ans. If abstract reality is a material essence, then the soul of man must be a purely material property, for abstract reasoning is most certainly a "soul action".

To endow lifeless, inert matter with an intrinsic power to create natural law, and then to enforce uniform stability of its created laws throughout the cosmos – without any appeal to external intelligence or authoritative working – is to make an enormous leap of faith without a slightest thread of causal & rational support.

Summary syllogism:

1. If there are fixed and uniformly valid natural laws, then there must exist a Causal, Transcendent, Personal, Law-Giver.
2. There are fixed and uniformly valid natural laws.
3. There must exist a Causal, Transcendent, Personal, Law-Giver

Question: Why do we believe that God is our Creator … and that ex nihilo creation is true?

Answer:

a) Because all alternative postulates for the existence of reality are irrational at their formative level … they are plagued by problems of contradiction and by lack of true causal foundation.
b) Because a Self-Existent, Personal Creator is not only 'necessary Being' for a rationally based worldview, but such Being alone satisfies the requirement of a sufficient First Cause for reality.

Rationally obvious and rationally necessary truths:

- Impersonal nature cannot (and does not) make laws by itself for its own governance.
- Impersonal nature cannot (and does not) enforce laws for its own operation according to its own will.

- Only an Intelligent, Personal Creator can define laws His creative handiwork must obey.
- Only a Sovereign, Personal Creator-LawGiver can establish, enforce & sustain laws that govern uniformly the entire realm of His creation.

"Then Yahweh answered Job out the whirlwind and said, 'Who is this that darkens counsel by words without knowledge? Now gird up your loins like a man, and I will ask you, and you instruct Me! ... Do you know the ordinances of the heavens, or fix their rule over the earth?' " *Job 38:1-2, 33*

"For by Him all things were created ... and He existed prior to all things, and in Him all things hold together (endure)." *Col. 2:16-17*

The laws of nature exist only because God, the Personal Intelligent Creator, wills them to exist. They are the means that He has ordained for governing & sustaining His creation – the entire cosmos and all that is in it. They exist by His will and they fulfill His will. They are His designed tools for the exercise of His sovereign providence.

The atheist/naturalist has no causal explanation for their origin or for their operational force ... or for their fixity ... or for their uniformity across the whole realm of physical reality.

There is a designed, providential stability of natural law that can be attributed to God alone – to the Personal, Intelligent, Creator-Designer who is the Law-Giver, Law-Enforcer & Law-Sustainer behind & above the whole realm of nature and of all operations of natural law within nature.

❖ Argument #2: The Argument from Self-Consciousness & Personhood

Starting Point

- Start with a self-evident truth about myself: I exist – I am a self-conscious, personal being.
- Start with self-consciousness as a universal property of humankind … with the defining attribute of personality and personhood.
- Start with a universal, innate attribute of persons which begs for a universal, personal cause.

Stage-1 Questions: From whence is self-conscious personhood derived? From whence does a person derive/obtain personhood?

Ans. Certainly not from oneself, for that would violate the law of non-contradiction – one would have to 'not have' self-consciousness and 'have' self-consciousness in reference to oneself at the same time.

Stage-2 Questions: Does it derive from parents? Does self-consciousness descend through a material process of genetic transmission?

Ans. If so, then it follows by deduction that the parents obtained their personhood from their parents, and so on down the family tree. If so, then we arrive at a more ultimate question.

Stage-3 Question: Where did the original set of parents obtain their personhood?

Ans. If we must regressively follow the trail down the family tree until we arrive at the stump – at the original set of parents – then we arrive at an impasse in our search. Our possible options are twofold. Either self-conscious personhood was:

- self-created by and in the original parents; … or, alternatively,
- it was created by an eternally Self-Existent Person and externally implanted in the original creature-parents … a real "soul essence" implanted into a real physical essence.

Logic affords no alternatives. Clearly, self-created consciousness must necessarily be dismissed as having no possible relevance in reality because it would violate the fundamental law of non-contradiction → a single creature cannot simultaneously possess personhood and not possess personhood at the same time (i.e., simultaneously in relation to itself).

The law of non-contradiction requires that personhood can only be derived from a pre-existing person or an eternally existing Person. In addition, the law of cause and effect requires that the effect of self-

conscious personhood must derive from an efficient cause – namely, a Self-Existent Person who holds an intrinsic power of Being entirely within Himself. Furthermore, such an eternally self-existent person must not only possess the innate power and authority to create the natural world, but also, and in particular, to create creature-persons in His own image & likeness … to create persons with self-consciousness plus Creator-consciousness (the truly ultimate consciousness).

Self-consciousness is a non-material essence intrinsic to personhood. Ability to think, to doubt, to act with intention, to have affections, to possess & assert moral consciousness, and to be exercised in abstract, moral-spiritual reasoning – engagement in all of these personal activities can be experienced by persons independent of a full complement of limbs (of wholeness of physical essence).

This truth naturally raises the following questions:

- Is a material, non-personal cause sufficient for the effect of a non-material, personal reality?
- Does self-consciousness & personhood find its origin and fountain solely within the structure of matter/energy, arising spontaneously out of processes described entirely by natural law?
- Can chance (i.e., non-intentional, uncontrolled) interactions of matter/energy be a sufficient underlying cause for the existence of self-consciousness, and for all the inherent capacities implied in true personhood?

If the answer to these questions is "*yes*", then reason is irrational, the underpinning principles of logical analysis are illogical, and language is devoid of capacity to communicate truthfully.

Summary Conclusion:

In summary consequence of our trail of reasoning, we can frame a conclusion in terms of an irrefutable syllogism (a method of affirming the conclusion of a process of reasoning).

1. If there are self-conscious beings, then there must be an Ultimate, Self-Existent Being.
   - [this is a premise that contains an antecedent proposition plus a consequent truth]
2. There are self-conscious beings.
   - [this antecedent proposition is reasoned to be true]
3. There must be an Ultimate Self-Existent Being.
   - [the consequence stated in the first premise is reasoned to be true because each of the premises are reasoned as true – true by the fundamental principles of epistemology]

Self-consciousness in a creature must be an effect … an effect that is derivable solely from a personal cause. In truth, it is only derivable from an Intelligent, Personal, First Cause – namely the First Cause identified as the Creator-God whose existence is affirmed in *Gen. 1:1*. *If* self-conscious personhood does not derive from a Self-Existent Personal Creator, *then* there can be no life after death, and the innate sense of eternality in every person is a myth … or worse, a monstrous deception. But, even a universal, self-conscious deception requires a personal cause for its existence. Hence, we are inescapably driven to embrace the terms outlined in the above conclusion, and God is absolutely necessary as our Creator.

❖ Argument #3: The Argument from Moral Consciousness & Moral Discernment

Postulate: There exists in every person a moral consciousness which is manifest in:

- an innate disposing sense of moral discernment and of moral "oughtness"; and
- an innate sense of guiltiness associated with recognized violation of "moral oughtness", plus a consequent inescapable fear of ultimate judgment.

Follow-on Questions: Questions which must receive reasoned answers in a consistent worldview

- ♦ What is the moral first cause underlying the existence of an acknowledged, universal moral code?
- ♦ Does not a universal moral consciousness rationally require the *a priori* existence of a transcendent, Personal & Moral First Cause?

- How can a personal attribute spring spontaneously from a purely material causal source? Does not such a source imply a self-created, spontaneous effect without an efficient (i.e., moral) cause?

- Is it reasonable to assume that universal standards of right & wrong can arise spontaneously in every generation, and among all people groups, without a transcendent, Personal & Moral First Cause?
- Does not the spontaneous appearance of moral standards without the pre-existence of a moral law of human nature violate the Law of Cause and Effect?

- From whence does an essentially universal sense of "moral oughtness" derive?
- Are moral standards simply personally adopted preferences of a local society?

- Why should a uniform sense of moral outrage exist in regard to certain heinous actions?
- Who defines what constitutes 'heinous action', and does not "moral outrage" call for a moral (judgmental) response?

- Why is there a pervasive sense of guilt among all people if there is no transcendent, Personal & Moral First Cause?
- Why does a pervasive sense of ultimate judgment & justice exist if no transcendent, Personal & Moral Judge, who is the Creator, exists? Can one speak of justice if no ultimate moral judge exists?

"If anyone will take the trouble to compare the moral teaching of, say, the ancient Egyptians, ,Babylonians, Hindus, Chinese, Greeks and Romans, what will really strike him will be how very like they are to each other and to our own."

"There are two points I wanted to make. First, that human beings, all over the earth, have this curious idea that they ought to behave in a certain way, and cannot really get rid of it. Secondly, that they do not in fact behave in that way. They know the Law of [Human] Nature, they break it. These two facts are the foundation of all clear thinking about ourselves and the universe we live in."

C.S. Lewis, "Mere Christianity"

"No ultimate foundations for ethics exist, no ultimate meaning in life exists, ..."
(William Provine)

"I think that part of the historical mission of science has been to teach us that we are not the playthings of supernatural intervention, that we can make our own way in the universe, and that we have to find our own sense of morality."
(Steven Weinberg)

"Then Yahweh Elohim said, 'Behold, the man has become like one of Us, knowing good and evil; ...' " *Gen. 3:22*

"So give Thy servant an understanding heart to judge Thy people to discern between good and evil." *I Kings 3:9*

"But solid food is for the mature, who because of practice have their senses trained to discern good and evil." *Heb. 5:14*

Author's Conclusion: To argue that there is no universal moral code prevailing among mankind is to argue against experience, history and anthropology. That is, it is to argue against empiricism, naturalism, and scientism – and against any other non-theistic worldview. It is also to 'reason against reason'.

God has made the reality of His existence an undergirding necessity to any & every argument for His existence – and it is equally so for any argument seeking to establish His non-existence. His existence is indispensible to the very capacity for reason and to engage in the exercise of reasoned analysis.

A thinking, logically-consistent, self-conscious person must, by innate necessity and in consistency with the essence of his/her very being, believe that God as Creator is indispensable to a true view of the world. All worldviews that postulate a starting point other than God as Creator are both logically deficient and internally self-contradictory with respect to truth about reality – even that reality wherein we, as human creatures live & move & have our being as self-conscious persons with a moral consciousness.

"I hold that belief in God is not merely as reasonable as other belief, or even a little or infinitely more probably true than other belief; I hold rather that unless you believe in God you can logically believe in nothing else." (Cornelius Van Til)