

## **Ultimate Question #1**

### **Is there anyone out there?**

**Intro:** Every day our minds entertain many questions—some of them are trivial; some are serious; and some are tremendously important. Even now there may be many weighty questions on your mind. Will I be able to conquer this health problem? Will someone I care about get well? Do I have enough to live on when I retire? Do I have a future at my job? Will my children turn out o.k.? Though serious questions, these are not the “ultimate questions”.

There are questions more important even than these. These questions are what we might call the “big” questions. They relate to the most fundamental issues of life: Where did I come from? Why am I here? Where am I going? If we fail to ask and answer these questions, it will not matter whether I successfully answer the less important questions in our lives. So I urge you to consider with me an “ultimate question”—“Is anyone out there?”

Have you ever let your thoughts go beyond the skies? Have you ever wondered? Is there anything, anyone beyond the farthest reaches of the universe? It is the most fundamental and important question we will ever ask. And, how we answer that question will determine our “world” view and then that view will become the operating assumption of everything that we say or do.

I would affirm that there is someone there beyond the vastness of this universe. Most of us who are here today are convinced that that someone is the God we read about in the Bible. I have not come to convince you of that; but I want to confirm your faith and show you how to speak to others. There may be others who have questions and need evidence. To you I want to supply that evidence. There may some who have never given this ultimate question much thought. To you I want set forth a challenge to think about this ultimate question.

#### **A quick look at the apologetic method**

*Let’s make our conclusions on reason rather than “wishful thinking” or blind leaps into the darkness.*

Being a believer doesn’t mean you have to “check” your brains at the door.

In fact, the Biblical apologetic for God appeals to reason that leads to “faith” (1 Pet. 3:15)

Faith is not conviction in the absence of evidence, but the reasonable response to evidence!

*Let’s start with what we know and reason with it.*

We are here.

We have the power to reason concerning our existence and our surroundings.

### **The cosmological argument**

*Let's just start with what we know exists and reason from it. The world exists; we exist. And our existence and activity in the world operates on the principle of causation. Simply put, "Every effect in the universe must have an adequate cause".*

The universe has not always existed. This is acknowledged by scientists like astronomer Robert Jastrow:

Only as a result of the most recent discoveries can we say with a fair degree of confidence that the world has not existed forever... The lingering decline predicted by astronomers for the end of the world differs from the explosive conditions they have calculated for its birth, but the impact is the same; modern science denies an eternal existence to the Universe, either in the past or in the future (1977, pp. 19,30, emp. added).

Whatever caused the universe must then exist outside of it. It must not be subject to the principles that make the universe work. It must be timeless or self-existent, able to energize the universe, and superior to all that is in this universe. So we are looking for three qualities:

Something eternal or self-existent

Something with awesome powerful

Something not human but "divine"

***Now notice Paul's fascinating argument in Romans 1:18-20.***

*For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, 19 because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. 20 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, so that they are without excuse. (Romans 1:18-20)*

He affirms that the universe must be the creation of an eternal, powerful, and divine being. Reasoning from our own universe backwards leads us to something, someone eternal, powerful, and "divine"—what we call God.

***So it is reasonable, on the basis of the universe's existence, to infer the existence of an eternal, powerful, divine being—God.***

### **The teleological argument**

*When we look at our world, see not only that it exists; but that it exists in a way that give it a oneness or organization that causes us to see order. And it is clear that this order is not random, but that there is in the universe an implication of design or intelligence.*

Even unbelievers cannot deny that order exists in the world. Richard Dawson seeks to answer the powerful and familiar "watch" argument for the universe with these words:

There may be good reasons for belief in God, but the argument from design is not one of them. ...despite all appearances to the contrary,

there is no watchmaker in nature beyond the blind forces of physics.... Natural selection, the unconscious, automatic, blind yet essentially nonrandom process that Darwin discovered, and that we now understand to be the explanation for the existence and 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, no sight at all. If it can be said to play the role of watchmaker in nature, it is the blind watchmaker.

In contrast we affirm that our universe has not been organized randomly but by intelligent planning in a way that is suitable for someone to live in it. You sense that the world was made to be lived in! That it is a "house" to be inhabited by the life forms that exist in it. The evidence is overwhelming:

The Sun's interior temperature is estimated to be over 20 million degrees Celsius (Lawton, 1981, 89[1]: 102). The Earth, however, is located at exactly the correct distance from the Sun to receive the proper amount of heat and radiation to sustain life as we know it. If the Earth were moved just 10% closer to the Sun (about 10 million miles), far too much heat and radiation would be absorbed. If the Earth were moved just 10% further from the Sun, too little heat would be absorbed. Either scenario would spell doom for life on the Earth. Notice how the ratio is maintained:

The Earth is moving around the Sun at 70,000 miles per hour while the Sun and its solar system are moving through space at 600,000 miles per hour in an orbit so large it would take over 220 million years just to complete a single orbit. Interestingly, however, as the Earth moves in its orbit around the Sun, it departs from a straight line by only one-ninth of an inch every eighteen miles. If it departed by one-eighth of an inch, we would come so close to the Sun that we would be incinerated; if it departed by one-tenth of an inch, we would find ourselves so far from the Sun that we would all freeze to death (Science Digest, 1981, 89[1]: 124).

The Earth is poised some 240,000 miles from the Moon, whose gravitational pull produces ocean tides. If the Moon were moved closer to the Earth by just a fifth, the tides would be so enormous that twice a day they would reach 35-50 feet high over most of the Earth's surface. What would happen if the rotation rate of the Earth were halved, or doubled? If it were halved, the seasons would be doubled in their length, which would cause such harsh heat and cold over much of the Earth that it would be difficult, if not impossible, to grow enough food to feed the Earth's population. If the rotation rate were doubled, the length of each season would be halved, and it would be difficult or impossible to grow enough food to feed the Earth's population. The Earth is tilted on its axis at exactly 23.5 degrees. Were that tilt to be reduced to zero, much of the Earth's water would accumulate around the two poles, leaving vast deserts in their place.

The oceans provide a huge reservoir of moisture that is constantly evaporating and condensing, thus falling upon the land as refreshing rain. It is a well-known fact that water heats and cools at a much slower rate than a solid land mass, which explains why desert regions can be blistering hot in the daytime and freezing cold at night. Water, however, holds its temperature longer, and provides a sort of natural heating/air-conditioning system for the land areas of the Earth. Temperature extremes would be much more erratic than they are, were it not for the fact that approximately four-fifths of the Earth is covered with water. In addition, humans and

animals inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. On the other hand, plants take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. We depend upon the world of botany for our oxygen supply, but often fail to realize that approximately 90% of our oxygen comes from microscopic plants in the seas (see Asimov, 1975, 2:116). If our oceans were appreciably smaller, we would soon be out of air to breathe.

Can a person reasonably be expected to believe that these exacting requirements for life as we know it have been met “just by accident”? The Earth is exactly the right distance from the Sun; it is exactly the right distance from the Moon; it has exactly the right diameter; it has exactly the right atmospheric pressure; it has exactly the right tilt; it has exactly the right amount of oceanic water; and so on. Were this many requirements to be met in any other essential area of life, the idea that they had been provided “just by accident” would be dismissed immediately as ludicrous. Yet atheists and agnostics suggest that the Universe, the Earth, and life on the Earth are all here as a result of fortuitous accidents. Physicist John Gribbin (1983), writing on the numerous specific requirements necessary for life on our planet, emphasized in great detail both the nature and essentiality of those requirements, yet curiously chose to title his article, “Earth’s Lucky Break” —as if all of the precision, orderliness, and intricate design in the Universe could be explained by postulating that the Earth simply received, in a roll of the cosmic dice, a “lucky break.” In thousands of ways we can see at every level of the world’s make up (whether at the planetary level, or the ecological level, or at the cellular level) there is profound evidence of design. The earth as a part of the greater universe has been designed for life. Suppose you are driving through the country and you come upon a house like this. Is there every any doubt that such a place suitable for habitation has been planned and constructed piece by piece for those who live in it?

***Notice again the Hebrew writers fascinating argument Heb. 3:4.***

*For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God. (Hebrews 3:4)*

**The Hebrew writer embraces in this one statement both the cosmological and the teleological argument for God.**

Every house is built by someone (causation).

Every house is built by someone (design).

***And so philosophically, even without a Bible we are led to the view that there must be some supreme consciousness that organized this world into a universe. It is a “cosmos”, an ordered entity.***

**Conclusion: The earth’s very existence and our existence on it is a powerful argument for God. Which is more reasonable—that all this was produced by the “blind watchmaker” or by the “all-seeing eye” of the Almighty God?**