

EPC workshops

- Talk 1: Ideas of how to present arguments for the existence of God
- Talk 2: Geology - The development of Surtsey Island in Iceland
- Talk 3: Ideas of how to present arguments about historicity of the biblical account on Creation from geology/biology

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NATURALISM

NATURE IS ALL THERE IS

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SCIENTISM

“Science, modeled on the natural sciences, is the only source of real knowledge.” Ian Hutchinson, MIT physicist

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The problem - Naturalism

Methodological naturalism was determined as part of the scientific method sometime during or shortly after the Enlightenment period of the 18th century.

Methodological naturalism and Scientism are philosophical concepts, which are not supported by science (they cannot be tested empirically).

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What kind of methodology should Christians propose?

- A “synoptic” view, that takes into account the best of all fields of knowledge. The great scientists of the past were not dependent on methodological naturalism, i.e. Isaac Newton, Galileo Galilei, Johannes Kepler.
- Forensic sciences – identifies both natural processes and intelligent agents+
- Its not God of the Gaps reasoning

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*“A knowledge of the historic and philosophical background gives that kind of independence from prejudice of his generation from which most scientists are suffering – This independence created by philosophical insight is – in my opinion – **the mark of distinction between a mere artisan or specialist and a real seeker after truth.**”*

Albert Einstein

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IS NATURE ALL THERE IS?
DOES GOD EXIST?

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Our Universe is special
Life is special
We are special

The Universe is functional – the laws of nature are fine-tuned allowing for life

The Universe seems to have a beginning

Nature shows evidence of design – Engineering marvels/Foresight/Programming

Some attributes of humans transcend the natural world, e.g. Reason, laws of logic, morality, free-will

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- ### Arguments for the existence of God
1. The Cosmological Argument
 - Kalam Cosmological Argument
 2. Teleological Argument I: The Fine-Tuning Argument
 3. Teleological Argument II: Biological complexity
 4. The Transcendental Argument
 5. The Aesthetic Argument
 6. The Moral Argument
 7. The Experiential Argument

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The Kalam Cosmological Argument

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
2. The Universe began to exist.
3. Therefore, the Universe had a cause.

Cause = God

Craig, W. L., 1999, The Ultimate Question of Origins: God and the Beginning of the Universe, *Astrophysics and Space Science*, 269-270: 723-740

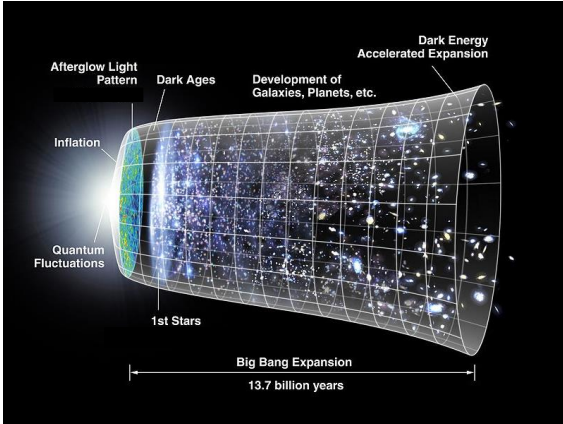
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2. The Universe began to exist.

Physical Inflationary Models of the Universe

1. Redshift (doppler effect)
2. Cosmic microwave background radiation

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Vilenkin, Many Worlds in One, 176.

“It is said that an argument is what convinces reasonable men and a proof is what it takes to convince an unreasonable man. With the proof now in place, cosmologists can no longer hide behind the possibility of a past eternal universe. There is no escape, they have to face the problem of a cosmic beginning.”

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3. Therefore, the Universe had a cause.

Cause = Immaterial, eternal, spaceless, unchangeable, incredibly powerful and personal.

Craig, W. L., 2002. Must the Beginning of the Universe Have a Personal Cause?, *Faith and Philosophy* 19:94-105.

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Objections

- Models for infinite universe
 - String models
 - Oscillating models
 - Chaotic inflationary models
 - Quantum Gravity models
 - Vacuum Fluctuations models
- Answers:
 - Infinite Universes are unlikely because of the law of entropy

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2- Teleological Argument I: Fine-tuning Argument

The laws of nature are elegantly fine-tuned making the universe functional allowing for life.

Relative strength of the quantities and constants in nature

- Gravitational constant: 1 part in 10^{34}
- Electromagnetic force versus force of gravity: 1 part in 10^{37}
- Weak atomic force: 1 part in 10^{100}
- Ratio proton and electron: 1 part in 10^{37}
- Cosmological constant: 1 part in 10^{120}
- Mass density of universe: 1 part in 10^{59}

• **Number of subatomic particles in the visible universe is 10^{80}**

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2- Teleological Argument I: Fine-tuning Argument

The fundamental laws, the gravitational force, the electromagnetic force, the weak and strong nuclear forces, are perfectly well balanced.

Halsmer et al., 2009. The Coherence of an Engineered World, *International Journal of Design & Nature and Ecodynamics*, Vol. 4(1):47-65.

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The universe is elegantly fine-tuned from the beginning



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Barnes pp.38-39

“The point is this: however many ways there are of producing a life-permitting universe, there are vastly many more ways of making a life-prohibiting one...Amids the possible universes, life-permitting ones are exceedingly rare. This is fine-tuning par excellence.

Barnes L., 2012, The Fine-Tuning of the Universe for Intelligent Life. *Publications of the Astronomical Society of Australia*. 29(4):529-564. doi:10.1071/AS12015

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The Fine-tuning Argument

- The fine-tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance or design.
- It is not due to physical necessity or chance.
- Therefore it is due to design.

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Objections

- The multiverse
- Different universes may account for different forms of life
- Life developed in our universe because it was life-permitting

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Life is Special

Design – Designer / Foresight
 Life – Life giver
 Information - Mind

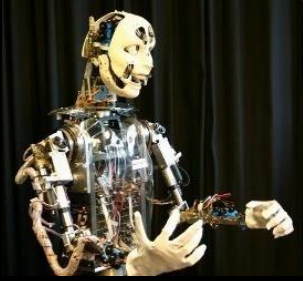
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3 - The Teleological Argument II: Biological complexity

1. Design necessitates a designer.
2. The world exhibits the qualities of design.
3. Therefore, the world has a Designer.

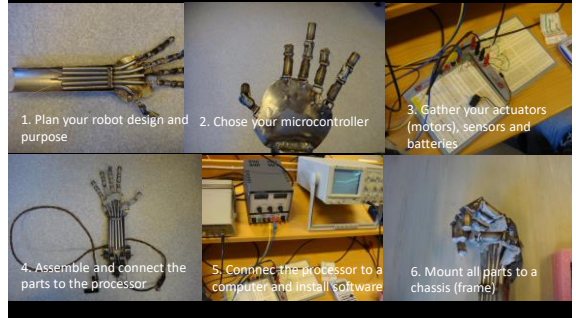
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1. Design necessitates a designer



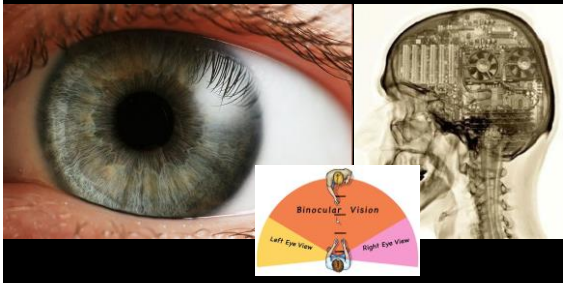
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A mechanical hand - instructions



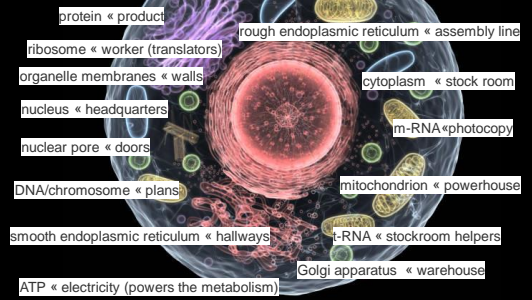
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2. The world exhibits the qualities of design



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Cell as a factory



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Life is information-based



Sternberg, R. V., 2008. DNA Codes and Information: Formal Structures and Relational Causes," *Acta Biotheoretica*, Vol. 56(3):205-232.
 Meyer, S. C. and Nelson, P. A., 2011. Can the Origin of the Genetic Code Be Explained by Direct RNA Templatng?," *BIO-Complexity*, Vol. 2011(2).

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Information in 1 mm³ of DNA

A cubic millimeter of tightly packed DNA can store 1.9 x 10¹⁸ bits of information (237 Petabytes)

1 DVD = 4.7 Gbytes



3 Empire State




6 Everest mountains

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The Teleological Argument

by William Paley

1. Every watch has a watchmaker.
2. The world is more complex than a watch.
3. Therefore, the world must have had a World-maker.

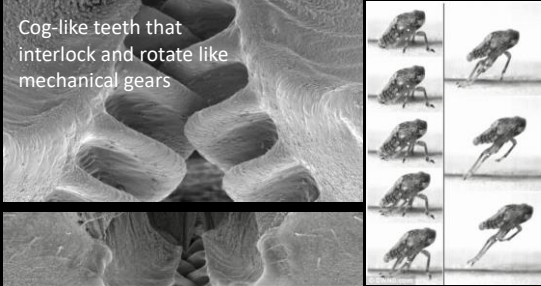


www.anticwatch.com/mwslw/837b.jpg

Paley, William, 1809, *Natural Theology: or, Evidences of the Existence and Attributes of the Deity* (12th ed.), London: Printed for J. Faulder


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Cog-like teeth that interlock and rotate like mechanical gears



The Issus bug

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How came the bodies of animals to be contrived with so much art, and for what ends were their several parts? Was the eye contrived without skill in Opticks, and the ear without knowledge of sounds?...and these things being rightly dispatch'd, does it not appear from phenomena that there is a Being incorporeal, living, intelligent...?

Isaac Newton
Opticks

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Objections

1. The design is flawed
Answer: Does not do away with designer as a cause
2. Some animals and plants are designed for predation
Answer: Modified behavior? Adaptation to harsh circumstances? Genetic mutations? Other?
3. Evolution can account for the complexity and is proven to be true
Answer: Problems with evolution
 1. Irreducible complexity of structures inside cells
 2. Interdependence of life forms
 3. Patterns in the fossil record does not support gradual evolution
 4. Genetic entropy
 5. Not enough time
 6. Life is information-based

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Humans are Special

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4 - The Transcendental Argument

That logic, morals, free will and science ultimately presuppose a theistic worldview, and that God must be the source of logic and morals.

Butler, M., 2002, The Transcendental Argument for the Existence of God, In Steven M. Schlissel. *The Standard Bearer: A Festschrift for Greg L. Bahnsen*. Nacogdoches: Covenant Media Press. pp. 64-124.
Reppert, V., 2012, The Argument from Reason, in: *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, pp. 344-390

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4 - The Aesthetic Argument

Argument from Beauty

1. Epistemological aesthetic argument

- We are capable of detecting beauty

Williams, P. S., 2001, Aesthetic Arguments for the Existence of God, *Quodlibet Online Journal of Christian Theology and Philosophy*, Vol 3, n 3

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5 - The Aesthetic Argument

Argument from Beauty

2 – Ontological aesthetic argument

- Beauty exists *per se*.
- I.e.: Laws of mathematics, symmetry in nature

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C. S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory

“We want so much more – something the books on aesthetics take little notice of...We want something else which can hardly be put into words – to be united with the beauty we see. . . to receive it into ourselves. . . to become part of it. . .”

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C. S. Lewis, Mere Christianity

Creatures are not born with desires unless satisfaction for those desires exists. A baby feels hunger: well, there is such a thing as food. . . If I find in myself a desire which no experience in this world can satisfy, the most probable explanation is that I was made for another world.

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6 - The Moral Argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective moral values do exist.
3. Therefore, God exist (as the moral Lawgiver).

Linville, M. D., 2012, The Moral Argument, in: *The Blackwell Companion to Natural Theology*, pp. 391-448

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'All kinds of materialism lead one to treat every man as an object... in no way different from the patterns... which constitute a table or a chair or a stone.'

Sartre, French philosopher

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7- The Experiential Argument

Come close to God, and God
will come close to you
Jas 4:8

Kwan, K.-M., 2006, Can religious experience provide justification for belief in God? The debate in contemporary analytic philosophy. *Philosophy Compass* November

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Conclusions I

What is the best explanation for our reality?

Observations

- The Universe has a beginning
- The laws of nature are elegantly fine-tuned permitting a functional Universe and life
- Nature shows signs of design
- Some attributes of humans transcend the natural world (morality, laws of logic, free will...)

**Purpose, intentionality and design (contrary to chance)
God stands as the best explanation for our existence and
of the universe. Nature is not all there is.**

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Conclusions II

Some characteristics of God:

- All-powerful, immaterial, eternal, spaceless, unchangeable (The cosmological argument)
- Organized (Teleological, Fine-Tuning argument)
- Personal (Aesthetic argument, Moral argument, Transcendental argument)
- It is possible to know Him (Experiential argument)

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Has God revealed Himself to us?

The three major worldviews

- Monotheism (Judeo-Christian, Muslim)
- Polytheism (i.e. Nordic gods, Hindu gods, Greek Mythology)
- Atheism (No god or gods)

Cause of the Universe = Immaterial, eternal, spaceless, unchangeable, incredibly powerful and personal.

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The Bible

Cosmological argument	<i>By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. For he spoke, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast. Psalms 33:6,9</i>
Fine tuning argument	<i>For thus saith the LORD that created the heavens; God himself that formed the earth and made it; he hath established it, he created it not in vain, he formed it to be inhabited: I am the LORD; and there is none else. Isaiah 45:18</i>
Biological design	<i>And the LORD God formed man of the dust of the ground, and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life; and man became a living soul. Genesis 2:7</i>
The transcendental argument	<i>So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. Gen 1:27</i>
The moral argument	<i>...I will put my law in their inward parts, and write it in their hearts; and will be their God, and they shall be my people. Jeremiah 31:33</i>
The aesthetic argument	<i>Honor and majesty are before him: strength and beauty are in his sanctuary. Psalms 96:6</i>
The experiential argument	<i>Draw near to God and He will draw near to you. James 4:8</i>

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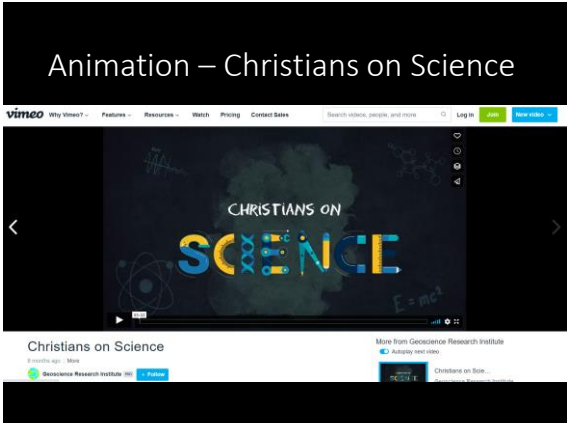
Within the monotheistic worldview we find the person Jesus of Nazareth

- Claimed to be God
- Life and ministry prophesied in the Old Testament
- Lived a pure and holy life
- Performed miracles
- Resurrected on the 3rd day after his crucifixion

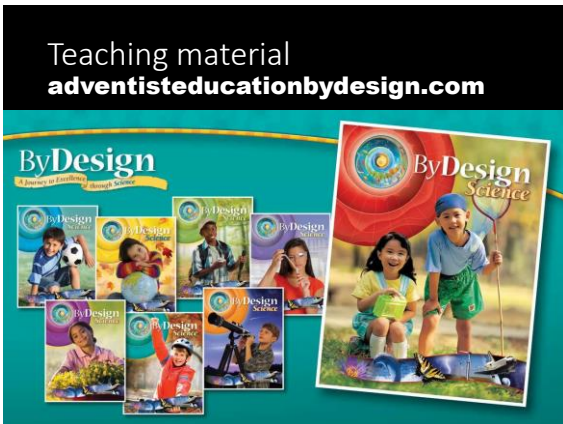
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Book recommendations

Popular

- Craig, W. L., 2008, *Reasonable faith: Christian and apologetics*, Crossway books
- Craig, W. L., 2010, *On Guard – Defending your faith with Reason and Precision*, David C Cook publisher
- Meyer, S. C., 2010, *Signature in the cell – DNA and the evidence for intelligent design*, Harper Collins Books
- Eberlin, M., 2019, *Foresight: How the chemistry of life reveals planning and purpose*, Discovery Institute
- Meyer, S. C., 2013, *Darwins Doubt – The explosive origin of animal life and the case for intelligent design*, Harper Collins Books

Technical

- *The Blackwell companion to Natural Theology*, Ed. Craig W. L. and Moreland, J. P., Wiley-Blackwell
- *The Nature of Nature – Examining the role of Naturalism in Science*, Ed. Gordon B. L. and Demski, W. A.