

Week 2: Does God Exist? Design and Creation

Objective: Present a reasoned case for the existence of God using Scripture and evidence from design in nature (teleological argument), and affirm the Biblical view of creation.

Introduction – 5 minutes

- Ask: "Why do you believe in God?"
 - Introduce today's topic: Making a reasoned case for God's existence.
 - Emphasize the need for both Scripture and reason - faith is not blind (Hebrews 11:1) – it is rooted in observable reality.
 - Remember the point of this class:
 - Both believers and skeptics must examine the **assumptions** behind their beliefs.
 - Key Verse: **1 Peter 3:15** "But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect"
 - Guiding Question for Today:
If the universe cannot create itself, and human life is filled with meaning and design, what is the most reasonable explanation?
 - **C. S. Lewis:** Humans recognize beauty, morality, awe, purpose - all signals pointing beyond nature.
 - Transition: The Bible claims God created us. Science provides extraordinary support for that claim.
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The Biblical Claim – 5 minutes

- Read **Genesis 1:1** - "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."
 - God is the eternal, uncaused Creator.
 - **Psalms 19:1-4** - "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they reveal knowledge. They have no speech, they use no words; no sound is heard from them. Yet their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."
 - The natural world *actively communicates* the reality of God.
 - **Romans 1:20** - "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities - his eternal power and divine nature - have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse."
 - God's invisible attributes are clearly seen in creation.
 - Creation reveals God's power and divine nature so clearly that mankind is "without excuse."
 - Establish that the Bible affirms - that creation points to a Creator.
 - Scripture teaches **general revelation** - people can know God exists *from the created order itself*.
 - The Bible does not ask for blind trust; it repeatedly points to **observable evidence**.
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The Argument from Design (Teleological Argument) – 10 minutes

- Define: The teleological argument says design implies a designer.
 - Can be traced back to ancient philosophers such as Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, who contemplated the existence of an intelligent cause behind the cosmos.

- The argument gained prominence in the Middle Ages, particularly through the works of **Saint Thomas Aquinas**, who included it as one of his "**Five Ways**" to demonstrate God's existence.
 - In the 18th century, **William Paley** famously articulated the argument using the **watchmaker** analogy, comparing the complexity of living organisms to that of a watch, which clearly requires a watchmaker.
 - Tell watchmaker analogy, smartphone analogy, or walking at the beach analogy.
 - Wow... look what millions of years of wind, heat, and erosion accidentally assembled!
 - **Claim:** Wherever we find *complexity, purpose, and information*, we infer **intelligent design** - never chance.
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- Examples:
 - The Human Body Shows Astonishing Design: look at the complexity of the human eye
 - Lots of parts in the eye: cornea, lens, iris, pupil, retina, optic nerve, etc.
 - The retina alone contains ~130 million photoreceptors plus dozens of specialized cell types arranged in a precise, layered network.
 - The lens is composed of thousands of highly ordered fiber cells.
 - Together, the eye contains millions of precisely arranged biological components.
 - The retina performs an enormous amount of computation (about 10 billion operations per second) – all before the signal reaches the brain.
 - Edge detection
 - Motion detection
 - Contrast enhancement
 - Noise filtering
 - The optic nerve contains ~1.0 million retinal ganglion cell axons (a huge bandwidth of visual information flowing into the brain continuously).
 - The system is perfectly integrated.
 - Disrupting any layer impairs vision, which gives the impression of **irreducible** complexity.
 - **CONCLUSION:** The degree of integration between optical, neural, biochemical, and developmental systems in the eye raises questions about how such coordination could emerge stepwise without foresight.
 - DNA: The Most Powerful Evidence for a Mind Behind Life
 - DNA is like the **instruction manual** for life - it tells your body how to grow, function, and look. Every living thing, from tiny bacteria to humans, has DNA; **it's what makes you you.**
 - DNA isn't just chemistry, though; it is a digital, symbolic information code.
 - It is a "recipe book"; but only containing four "ingredients" – A, T, C, and G. 3 billion varying combinations arranged in a precise sequence build the human body. DNA sounds like a computer program; it uses:
 - Alphabet
 - Syntax
 - Encoding
 - Error correction
 - Information compression
 - Redundancy systems
 - What does it store?
 - **Inheritance:** You get half of your DNA from your mom and half from your dad. That's why you might have your dad's eyes or your mom's smile.
 - **Uniqueness:** Except for identical twins, no two people have the exact same DNA. It's what makes you unique.

- **Blueprint for life:** DNA doesn't just decide what you look like - it also controls how your body works, from digesting food to fighting off illness.
- Science does not know how DNA came about - they have not yet demonstrated a purely unguided path from simple molecules to DNA
- *Even origin-of-life researchers admit that the emergence of a symbolic code is an unsolved problem.*
- All known sources of information come from a mind.
 - Books → authors
 - Software → programmers
 - Music → composers
 - Blueprints → engineers
- *Werner Gitt, Information Scientist* "The DNA molecule is the most efficient information storage system in the universe."
- Even more amazing facts
 - DNA is extremely stable - readable after tens of thousands of years (e.g., woolly mammoths).
 - DNA stores information at densities far higher than silicon chips.

 - One gram of DNA theoretically holds up to 215 petabytes of data. (bits, bytes, mega, giga, tera, peta)
 - *ASK: ever get overloaded by streaming services?*
 - 43–53 million HD movies (enough to store every movie ever made in history, tens of thousands of times over.)
 - 43–70 billion MP3 songs (more songs than have ever been recorded by humanity.)
 - The entire Library of Congress has about 40 million books (about 20 TB). One gram of DNA - over 11,000 times that size.
 - POINT: Your body has roughly 160 grams of DNA. That's equivalent to 160 entire Internets' worth of data. And all of that fits inside a human body without you noticing.

- The Human Mind: Evidence Beyond Evolution
 - Although animals show forms of intelligence, human cognition is categorically different, not merely greater by degree.
 - Humans alone possess:
 - Rationality (logic, mathematics)
 - Humans reason abstractly, symbolically, and recursively.
 - We derive universal principles (geometry, calculus, logic) far beyond survival needs.
 - Mathematics describes the fundamental structure of the universe – if I was evolved only for biological fitness, this doesn't make sense. $E=mc^2$ not necessary for my survival.
 - Morality and conscience
 - Humans make judgments about right and wrong that transcend self-interest.
 - We admire self-sacrifice, justice, and compassion - traits that don't align with strict survival optimization.
 - Moral reasoning is guided by principles and standards rather than solely relying on instincts.
 - Self-awareness

- Humans reflect on their own thoughts (“I know that I know”).
 - We contemplate meaning, purpose, the future, death, and the infinite.
 - This metacognition is vastly beyond what is required for reproduction or survival.
 - Appreciation of beauty, music, art
 - Humans create symphonies, literature, architecture, and abstract art.
 - Aesthetic appreciation has no clear adaptive function yet consumes enormous time and energy.
 - Language with infinite creative expression
 - Human language is infinitely generative: we can create and understand sentences never spoken before.
 - No animal communication system has recursion, syntax, metaphor, or symbolic abstraction.
 - These capacities point not just to intelligence, but to mind-like capacities that far exceed biological necessity.
 - These traits do not follow from mere survival advantage.
 - Evolutionary survival needs:
 - Find food
 - Avoid danger
 - Reproduce
 - But humans invest massive resources into:
 - philosophy
 - religion
 - ethics
 - art, music, literature
 - science and mathematics
 - long-term planning
 - cosmology and metaphysics
 - None of these activities reliably increase survival or reproductive success. Many even reduce it (e.g., spending time on art instead of resource acquisition, or risking one’s life for moral principles).
 - Scientists and philosophers note the “excess” of human minds:
 - Steven Pinker calls music “auditory cheesecake” - pleasurable but inexplicable under strict adaptation.
 - Thomas Nagel argues consciousness and reason are not easily reducible to physical evolution.
 - Roger Penrose maintains that mathematical insight cannot be explained by computational biology alone.
 - Marc Hauser and Jonathan Haidt show that humans apply moral reasoning beyond utilitarian benefit.
 - **THUS**, human mental life seems to overshoot what survival would require.
 - Interpretation: Human beings exhibit capacities - rationality, moral consciousness, artistic creativity, self-reflective awareness - that correspond not to brute evolutionary survival, but to the characteristics of a rational, moral, creative mind. The human mind operates in domains that mirror the qualities traditionally attributed to a Creator: reasoning, valuing, creating, meaning-seeking, and symbolic communication.
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- Fine-tuning of the universe (to make it human-friendly)

- Modern cosmology shows that the fundamental constants of nature are astonishingly precise.
 - These values are not determined by any deeper physical law (as far as we know); they are simply given.
 - Change them ever so slightly, and a life-permitting universe becomes impossible.
 - **Gravitational Constant** (the strength of gravity in the universe): If altered by 1 part in 10^{60} , stars (they produce the heavy elements required for life) and planets (where we live) could not form. To put that in perspective,
 - 1 part in 10^{60} : *like taking the entire mass of the galaxy and adding one grain of sand.*
 - If gravity were slightly stronger, the universe would collapse into black holes.
 - If slightly weaker, matter would never clump, and no stars could ignite.
 - **Cosmological Constant** (an energy that acts like a repulsive force countering gravity, preventing the universe from collapsing)
 - If changed by 1 part in 10^{120} ; the universe would collapse or explode instantly.
 - The cosmological constant is fine-tuned to a precision beyond comprehension - comparable to hitting a target smaller than a proton while shooting from trillions of light-years away.
 - **Strong Nuclear Force** (holds atomic nuclei together; remember protons repel each other)
 - If the strong force were slightly weaker, protons wouldn't bind in nuclei, meaning no atoms heavier than hydrogen would form, meaning no chemistry and no life.
 - If slightly stronger, all hydrogen would fuse immediately → no water, and no fuel for long-lived stars like the Sun.
 - The strong force sits on a razor's edge that makes complex chemistry possible. Without this precise value, the periodic table - and life - vanishes.
 - Even atheistic physicist **Fred Hoyle** admitted: "A superintellect has monkeyed with physics."
 - **Paul Davies** (physicist) says the universe "looks suspiciously like a fix." And "There is no reason for the universe to exist in a form suitable for life. The laws of physics seem to be structured with extraordinary ingenuity."
 - The physical constants governing our universe fall within unimaginably precise ranges that allow matter, stars, chemistry, and ultimately conscious beings to exist. The probability that these values would arise by chance alone is effectively zero. Fine-tuning at this level resembles calibration, not coincidence - suggesting the universe is the product of an intelligent, purposive mind.
- ASK: Could these features arise by chance?
 - **Sir Isaac Newton** "This most beautiful system of the sun, planets and comets could only proceed from the counsel and dominion of an intelligent and powerful being."
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The Universe Had a Beginning – 5 minutes

- Scientific agreement: The universe is not eternal (Big Bang theory aligns with Genesis 1:1, 'In the beginning').
- Law of cause and effect - whatever begins to exist has a cause.
 - Scientists search for cause because the world operates by causal order.
 - If the universe began to exist, then something - or Someone - must have caused it. A beginning without a cause violates the most basic principles of rational inquiry.
- The Necessary First Cause Must Be:

- Spaceless - because space itself began at the Big Bang.
 - Timeless - because time began with the universe, so the cause cannot be bound by temporal succession.
 - Immaterial – because matter came into existence at the beginning; the cause cannot be material.
 - Powerful – because the universe was brought into existence out of nothing physical.
 - Intentional - the cause must be capable of choosing to create; otherwise, the effect would be eternal.
A timeless cause producing a temporal universe implies an act of will.
 - The scientific and philosophical evidence converges on a cause that is immaterial, eternal, spaceless, unimaginably powerful, and capable of volition – what does that sound like? A description that aligns not merely with generic theism, but specifically with the God revealed in Scripture.
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Responding to Common Objections – 5 minutes

- Objection: "Science disproves God."
 - Response: Science describes how natural processes work, not why they exist.
 - Many founders of science (Newton, Kepler, Boyle, Pascal) were Christians because they believed in an orderly, rational Creator.
 - In short, science describes mechanisms; God explains the origin of the mechanisms.
 - Objection: "Design is just an illusion."
 - Response: In every other field - biology, engineering, archaeology, cryptography - we infer design when we see complex, specified information. It is inconsistent to dismiss the most sophisticated patterns in nature as "just an illusion."
 - *Remember the duck!* If something consistently looks designed, functions like design, and contains information like design, the simplest explanation is design.
 - Objection: "Who created God?"
 - Response: Causes are needed only for beginnings; God has no beginning - God is eternal (**Psalm 90:2** "Before the mountains were born or you brought forth the whole world, from everlasting to everlasting you are God.")
 - Objection: "The universe created itself."
 - Self-creation is logically impossible because something would need to exist before it exists in order to cause itself.
 - "Nothing" cannot produce "something" - this is not science, but a contradiction in terms.
 - A universe with a beginning requires a cause outside itself.
 - C.S. Lewis' Argument from Reason: "If human thoughts are the result of blind, mindless chemical reactions, why should we trust them?"
 - Naturalism undermines its own foundation because it turns rationality into an accident.
 - Rationality makes sense only if we come from a rational Creator.
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Application and Encouragement – 5 minutes

- Creation points us to God's power and care.
- Helps build confidence in our faith.
 - Timothy Keller: "If God created the universe, then life has intrinsic meaning and you were made on purpose."
- Encourages worship: **Revelation 4:11** (the throne in Heaven)- " You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being."
- Assign: Read Acts 17:16–34 for next week - Paul reasons with Greeks about the true God.

Class Discussion – 10 minutes

Discussion Questions:

1. What part of nature most clearly shows you that God exists?
2. Which scientific argument today resonated most with you — and why?
3. How could you explain design or fine-tuning to a non-believer?
4. What objection about God's existence do you hear most often?
5. How does knowing the universe had a beginning shape your view of God?

Next week... "The Reliability of the Bible"