

How Did God Create Himself: Questions About God | Part 1

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The existence of a personal moral God is fundamental to all that Christians believe. If there is no moral God, there is no moral being against whom we have sinned; therefore, salvation is not needed. Furthermore, if there is no God, there could be no acts of God (miracles), and the stories of Jesus can only be understood as fiction or myth. So the first question that must be addressed in pre-evangelism is, “Does God exist?” The second question is very closely related to the first: “If God exists, what kind of God is He?” – (Excerpted from “When Sceptics Ask”)

Questions about God: DOES GOD EXIST?

Arguments for the Existence of God

There have traditionally been four basic arguments used to prove God’s existence. They are called the cosmological, teleological, axiological, and ontological arguments. But since these are technical terms, let’s just call them the arguments from Creation (*cosmos* means creation), design (*telos* means purpose), moral law (*axios* means judgment), and being (*ontos* means being).

Argument from Creation

The basic idea of this argument is that, since there is a universe, it must have been caused by something beyond itself. It is based on the law of causality, which says that every limited thing is caused by something other than itself. There are two different forms of this argument, so we will show them to you separately. The first form says that the universe needed a cause at its beginning; the second form argues that it needs a cause right now to continue existing.

The universe was caused at the beginning.

This argument says that the universe is limited in that it had a beginning and that its beginning was caused by something beyond the universe. It can be stated this way:

1. The universe had a beginning.
2. Anything that has a beginning must have been caused by something else.

3. Therefore, the universe was caused by something else, and this cause was God.

In order to avoid this conclusion, some people say that the universe is eternal; it never had a beginning—it just always existed. Carl Sagan said, “The cosmos is all that is, or ever was, or ever will be.”^[1] But we have two ways to answer this objection. First, the scientific evidence strongly supports the idea that the universe had a beginning. The view usually held by those who claim that the universe is eternal, called the steady state theory, leads some to believe that the universe is constantly producing hydrogen atoms from nothing.^[2] It would be simpler to believe that God created the universe from nothing. Also, the consensus of scientists studying the origin of the universe is that it came into being in a sudden and cataclysmic way. This is called the Big Bang theory. The main evidence for the universe having a beginning is the second law of thermodynamics, which says the universe is running out of usable energy. But if it is running down, then it could not be eternal. What is winding down must have been wound up. Other evidence for the Big Bang is that we can still find the radiation from it and see the movement that it caused. Robert Jastrow, founder-director of NASA’s Goddard Institute of Space Studies, has said, “A sound explanation may exist for the explosive birth of our Universe; but if it does, science cannot find out what the explanation is. The scientist’s pursuit of the past ends in the moment of creation.”^[3]

But beyond the scientific evidence that shows the universe began, there is a philosophical reason to believe that the world had a starting point. This argument shows that time cannot go back into the past forever. You see it is impossible to pass through an infinite series of moments. You might be able to imagine passing through an infinite number of dimensionless points on a line by moving your finger from one end to the other, but time is not dimensionless or imaginary. It is real and each moment that passes uses up real time that we can’t go back to. It is more like moving your finger across an endless number of books in a library. You would never get to the last book. Even if you thought you had found the last book, there could always be one more added, then another and another.... You can never finish an infinite series of real things. If the past is infinite (which is another way of saying, “If the universe had always existed without a beginning”), then we could never have passed through time to get to today. If the past is an infinite series of moments, and right now is where that series stops, then we would have passed through an infinite series and that is impossible. If the world never had a beginning, then we could not have reached today. But we have reached today: so time must have begun at a particular point in the past, and today has come at a definite time since then. Therefore, the world is a finite event after all and it needs a cause for its beginning.

Now that we have seen that the universe needs a cause of its *beginning*, let's move on to the second form of the argument. This argument shows that the universe needs a cause of its existence *right now*.

The universe needs a cause for its continuing existence

Something is keeping us in existence right now so we don't just disappear. Something has not only caused the world to come into being (Gen. 1:1), but is also continuing and conserving its existence in the present (Col. 1:17). The world needs both an originating cause and a conserving cause. In a sense, this question is the most basic question that can be asked, "Why is there something rather than nothing?" It can be put this way:

1. *Finite, changing things exist.* For example, me. I would have to exist to deny that I exist; so either way, I must really exist.
2. *Every finite, changing thing must be caused by something else.* If it is limited and it changes, then it cannot be something that exists independently. If it existed independently, or necessarily, then it would have always existed without any kind of change.
3. *There cannot be an infinite regress of these causes.* In other words, you can't go on explaining how this finite thing causes this finite thing, which causes this other finite thing, and on and on, because that really just puts off the explanation indefinitely. It doesn't explain anything. Besides, if we are talking about why finite things are existing right now, then no matter how many finite causes you line up, eventually you will have one that would be both causing its own existence and be an effect of that cause at the same moment. That is nonsense. So no infinite regress can explain why I am existing right now.
4. *Therefore, there must be a first uncaused cause of every finite, changing thing that exists.*

This argument shows why there must be a present, conserving cause of the world, but it doesn't tell us very much about what kind of God exists. How do we know that this is really the God of the Bible?

(The next article will address the arguments from design, moral law, and being.)

Notes

1. [↑](#) Carl Sagan, *Cosmos* (New York: Random House, 1980), p. 4.
2. [↑](#) Robert Jastrow, *God and the Astronomers* (New York: Warner Books, 1978), p. 99.
3. [↑](#) *Ibid.*, p. 105.