

The logo for "Explore God" with "explore" in white lowercase letters and "God" in blue uppercase letters with a trademark symbol.The title "THE 7 BIG QUESTIONS" in white uppercase letters on a black background.

### "Is There a God?"

**Idea:** When it comes to the existence of God, we must understand that the issue is not about proving whether God exists, but about making an informed decision based on the evidence.

**Intro:** Is there a God? It seems that there are differing opinions about God and His existence. Current research is showing a decline in the belief in God in America. A Gallup Poll conducted in May and June of 2016 asked the question, "Do you believe in God?" That poll indicated 89% of Americans say they believe in God and 10% do not. When the question was rephrased and the respondents were given more answer options, 79% indicated they believe in God, 10% were not sure, and 11% stated they do not believe in God. Overall, the research reveals that belief in God is down from previous decades. In 1944 96% of those polled affirmed a belief in God. From a global standpoint, research published by the *Christian Post* in 2011 indicated that only 51% of the world's population claim to believe in God's existence.

Is there a God? Do you ever wonder if God really exists? Personally, I have placed my faith in Jesus Christ. I have dedicated my life to preaching God's Word. I communicate

with God every morning and throughout the day. And still there are occasions when I find myself wondering if God really exists. I imagine you do the same thing.

Most likely all of us have wondered at some point in our lives about the existence of God. In fact I believe that the only ones who never doubt are those who never really think. It is okay if you find yourself questioning your foundational beliefs concerning God's existence. It is not a sin. In fact it is a necessary prerequisite for faith. It is good to ask the question, "Is there a God?" If you do not ask the question, you will never discover the answer. Therefore, let's tackle this big question today.

**Inquiry:** Now, before we begin to answer this question, it is imperative that we understand two facts. First, there is a presupposition that influences our belief. Read Genesis 1:1a. We presuppose the existence of God based on our belief in the validity of Scripture's testimony. Second, we cannot definitely prove the existence of God. How do you prove the existence of a supernatural, invisible being? How do you prove without a shadow of doubt the reality of a being that exists outside of the natural realm? How do you prove the validity of a being that cannot be observed or measured scientifically? Thus, at this point it is crucial that we recognize the difference between proof and evidence. Allow me to illustrate what I mean.

The other day as I was working in my office, I could hear typing on a keyboard and the shuffling of papers in an office next door. I concluded that it was our receptionist Jenny, even though I couldn't see her. Why? First, the office next door is Jenny's. Second, because earlier that day she had called me from her extension next door. Third, the only other time someone sets at her desk and types is when she is gone, and she was not gone that day. Based on the evidence can I prove that it was Jenny who was typing in the office next door? No. There is the possibility that it could have been any one of you setting here. However, the evidence argues strongly for the fact that it was Jenny and not one of you.

It is impossible for me to prove God's existence, but I can provide evidence that strongly argues for His existence. With that said, I can't make anyone believe the evidence. Dr. Robert Jeffress shares a story in his book *How Can I Know?* of a man who went to a psychiatrist convinced that he was dead. The psychiatrist tried everything to assure the patient that he was not dead. The patient remained undeterred in his belief. Finally, the psychiatrist asked him, "Do dead men bleed?" The patient said dead men do not bleed. The psychiatrist then pulled out a pocketknife, reached over, and nicked the man's finger. The patient exclaimed, "What do you know? Dead men *do* bleed!"

When it comes to the existence of God, we must understand that the issue is not about proving whether God exists but about making an informed decision based on the evidence.

Often times when the Lord Jesus was asked a question, He answered it by asking a question. We are going to answer the question of God's existence by asking two questions.

Is there a God?

### **1. Why is there something rather than nothing?**

This morning, as you were driving to church, what did you see? Did you see trees, fields, houses, vehicles, streets, and sunshine? Look around you right now. What do you see? You see pews, windows, people, musical instruments, and your Bible. Why do we see something rather than nothing? Lets narrow the question and ask, "Why do we see?" We could narrow it even further and ask, "Why are we even asking this question?"

The naturalist's explanation for the existence of everything we see is found in this simple formula:

No One x Nothing = Everything

That doesn't sound like a very good answer to me. Paul gave a much better answer in Romans 1.

*19 For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. 20 For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. – Romans 1:19-20*

The vastness of the universe and the existence of you and me seem to strongly suggest that Someone brought something into existence out of nothing. *Ex Nihilo*

Think about the enormity of the universe. Our solar system exists in the Milky Way Galaxy, which astronomers tell us is made up of at least 100 billion stars. The average distance between those stars is 30 trillion miles. How far is that? Norman Geisler illustrates the distance by asking us to imagine boarding one of the decommissioned Space Shuttles and flying through the Milky Way. The shuttles traveled at 17,000mph or five miles per second. At that speed it would take us 201,450 years to travel 30 trillion miles. In all that time, we would have only reached one star.

With such a vast universe before us, we must ask how it came into existence? Why is there something rather than nothing?

Some atheists like Carl Sagan have held to the belief that the universe was eternal and had always existed. But astronomy clearly reveals that stars and planets are forming, thus, expanding the universe. This science tells us that there is a beginning to everything. Therefore, there had to have been some burst of energy that set everything into motion.

Sir Frederick Hoyle, a humanist astronomer and mathematician, in 1950 mockingly coined the term “the big bang.” The Big Bang Theory surmises that the beginning of the universe took place with an explosion of matter that set everything into motion.

The question of why is there something rather than nothing is part of an argument known as the Cosmological Argument, which is built upon Thomas Aquinas’ Argument from Motion. This argument attempts to prove that God exists by showing that there cannot be an infinite number of regressions of causes to things that exist. It states that there must be a final uncaused-cause of all things...an Unmoved Mover. This uncaused-cause/unmoved mover is asserted to be God.

In other words, Someone or Something had to push the first domino and get the creation process started. Someone or Something had to create the mass of matter from which everything has been made.

The cosmological evidence discloses that there must be a God who created all that there is. Creation screams that there is a God. Why else is there something rather than nothing?

*1 The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork. – Psalm 19:1*

The fact that there is something rather than nothing proves that there is a God.

## **2. How do you explain the universe’s complex design?**

Have you ever thought through how complex the universe is? It is astounding how intricate and sophisticated the universe is. Unfortunately, those who hold to a worldview that denies the existence of God

will argue that such complex design is the work of random chance. It's interesting though that while they are arguing the randomness of the universe; they are basing their theory of the origin of the universe on scientific laws founded on order rather than chaos.

In asking the question about the existence of God, one cannot help but take into consideration the complexity of the universe. The evidence from the design and order of the universe is often called the teleological argument for God (τέλειος means "design"). It stems from Aquinas' Argument from Design and was popularized by William Paley and his Watchmaker Argument in the 18<sup>th</sup> century. Paley argued that if you found a watch in an empty field, you would logically conclude that it was designed and not the product of random formation. Likewise, when we look at life and the universe, it is natural to conclude there is a designer since we see how perfectly the universe and life forms operate.

Just how perfectly designed is the universe? For sake of time, let's look only at the Earth and the cell. As we consider the earth, it is quite clear that while the universe, as a whole seems hostile toward life; the earth has been intricately designed to allow for life. William Dembski writes in his book, *Intelligent Design: The Bridge Between Science and Theology*, "Imagine you discover an abandoned cabin in the mountains. As you approach the cabin, you notice something strange. Your favorite meal is cooking in the oven, the TV is turned on to your favorite program, and all your favorite books, DVDs, and video games are lying on the table. What would you conclude? The best explanation would clearly be that someone was expecting your arrival. Scientists have recently learned that the universe is much like this cabin - it's crafted uniquely for us."

Scientists estimate there are more than one hundred conditions on our planet that form an astronomical/biological *welcome mat* for humanity. The earth is uniquely suited for human life. Think about the size of Earth. The size is perfect, providing an atmosphere with just the right mixture of oxygen and nitrogen. It is exactly the right distance from the sun to support life.

Our bodies are two-thirds water. Water's unique properties make our existence possible. Water has a high boiling point and a low freezing point, which allows humans to live in highly fluctuating temperatures. Water is also chemically neutral, allowing food, minerals, and medicines to be absorbed into our bodies. Water is essential for life, and Earth has an abundance of it.

Think about gravity. Physicists tell us that gravity must remain constant for life to be able to exist on Earth. If our planet's gravitational force were altered by one part in ten thousand billion billion billion relative to other forces, life could not exist. On top of that, if the gravitational pull of the moon were any stronger, ocean tides would flood our planet.

Earth's atmosphere is perfect. It is comprised of 21% oxygen. If the percentage were higher, fires would ignite spontaneously across the planet. If the percentage were lower, we would suffocate. Likewise, if the carbon dioxide level were higher, the greenhouse effect would incinerate everything. If it were lower, it would disrupt the essential process of photosynthesis, making life impossible.

The earth is uniquely suited for human life.

How about the cell? Charles Darwin believed that the first unicellular organism emerged from some sort of

primordial goo by random chance and slowly mutated over billions of years into the life forms that we have today. Michael Behe contends that the complexity of the cell renders Darwin's theory unsustainable. In his book *Darwin's Black Box*, Behe explains that a cell requires a number of functioning systems that must be present at once rather than evolving over a period of time, including a functioning membrane, a system to build the DNA units, a system to control the copying of DNA, and a system for processing energy.

What is the possibility of a fully functioning cell assembling itself together by chance? Humanist Sir Frederick Hoyle writes, "The likelihood of the formation of life from inanimate matter is one to a number with 40,000 [zeroes] after it...It is big enough to bury Darwin and the whole theory of evolution...If the beginnings of life were not random, they must therefore have been the product of purposeful intelligence."

Design is everywhere. It is impossible to deny that beauty, symmetry, design, and purpose are all woven into the universe like a masterpiece. How can one deny it? Still, many refuse to believe that there is a God. Instead, they attempt to make sense of the universe by holding onto theories of chance in a desperate attempt to avoid the implications of design.

*1 The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."*  
– Psalm 14:1a

**Conclusion:** There is no way that we can prove or disprove the existence of God. The supernatural simply cannot be measured by the natural. So how can we know whether or not there is a God? I believe we have to examine the evidence. Does the evidence argue for or against the existence of God?

Everyday we make decisions based upon the best evidence



rather than proof. The amount of evidence we require to make a decision is determined by the importance of the decision.

Illust: Let's say that this afternoon at lunch the waitress brings two glasses of iced tea to the table. One is sweet and the other is unsweet because you ordered sweet tea and your spouse unsweetened. Unfortunately, the waitress can't remember which one is sweet tea. I bet you will be willing to take a chance and select one of the glasses, hoping you picked the sweet tea. The consequences aren't very bad.

However, suppose instead of adding sweetener to the tea, your waitress accidentally dropped a cyanide tablet into one of the glasses and can't remember which one it fell into. I bet you would require a lot more evidence before you chose a glass.

Our choice to believe or not believe in God carries far greater consequences than drinking poisoned tea. If there is a God who created all that there is, then you and I as creations of the Creator by implication are accountable to the Creator. Therefore, we must examine the evidence in order to determine whether or not we are accountable to a Creator God. This requires an honest, humble, and thorough investigation. We must be willing to listen to the evidence and adjust our lives accordingly.

I believe the evidence of the universe clearly reveals that there is a God who created all there is. I also believe the Bible's depiction of God reveals best who that God is.

*35 To you it was shown, that you might know that the Lord is God; there is no other besides him. – Deut 4:35*

God is the Lord God revealed to us in the Bible. He is eternal, sovereign, all-powerful, all-knowing, and all-good. He is the Creator, the Redeemer, and the Sustainer of all life.