

Always Be Ready to Give a Defence (5)

Background

Last time, we began to consider various reasons, apart from Scripture, to believe that God exists. These reasons are not sufficient in themselves to prove the truth of the Christian faith but they may encourage someone to think more about it.

Questions

Our first reason to believe in God came from considering the question, “Why is there something rather than nothing?” Our second reason comes from considering a similar question, “How did the universe begin to exist?”

- What does the Bible say about the origin of the universe (Gen 1v1; John 1v1-3; Col 1v16; Heb 1v2)? What does the Bible say about the origin of God? (Exod 3v14; Ps 90v2; Rom 1v17; 1 Tim 1:17)

Either the universe is eternal; this is what many Greek philosophers believed. Or the universe had a beginning that was uncaused; this is what many atheists seem to believe. Or the universe had a beginning that was caused. An argument in favour of the last option can be expressed as follows:

Proposition 1 Whatever began to exist has a cause

Proposition 2 The universe began to exist

Deduction The universe has a cause
(from Proposition 1 & Proposition 2)

This argument is called the Kalam cosmological argument.¹

¹ This argument and the substance of the notes that follow have been taken from William Lane Craig, *On Guard: Defending your Faith with Reason and Precision*.

Proposition 1 seems to be highly plausible. Some scientists believe that our universe came from fluctuations of energy contained in a vacuum; some believe that it came from another universe. However, it seems unreasonable to believe the universe (or anything else) could come from absolutely nothing caused by absolutely nothing.

Proposition 2 also seems more plausibly true than false. If the universe had no beginning, there would have been an infinite number of days prior to today. Since each day can only be passed through one at a time, it seems impossible that the universe could ever reach today. (To illustrate this try to count to infinity. No matter how long you spend, you can only ever reach a finite number.)

There is also provisional scientific evidence in favour for Proposition 2. According to the Friedman-Lemaître model, commonly known as *the Big Bang theory*, the current expansion of the universe can be traced back to a single point in space and time, beyond which there was no space or time.

Again, it could be argued that our universe was caused by another universe (or a multiverse). However, there is no evidence for this and, even if it were true, we could also argue that such a multiverse had a beginning (otherwise it would never have reached the day on which our universe began).

An atheist could say that the same argument applies to God. But we believe in a personal God who is the Lord of time. He has always existed; he does not need a cause outside of himself. His decision to create the universe was a free act of his will, independent of any prior conditions.

Application

You could raise this topic in a conversation by asking, “How did the universe begin to exist?” Depending on the answer you receive, you would then aim to show the difficulties of believing in an eternal universe, or the incomprehensibility of believing that the universe came from absolutely nothing. You could then describe what the Bible teaches about God.