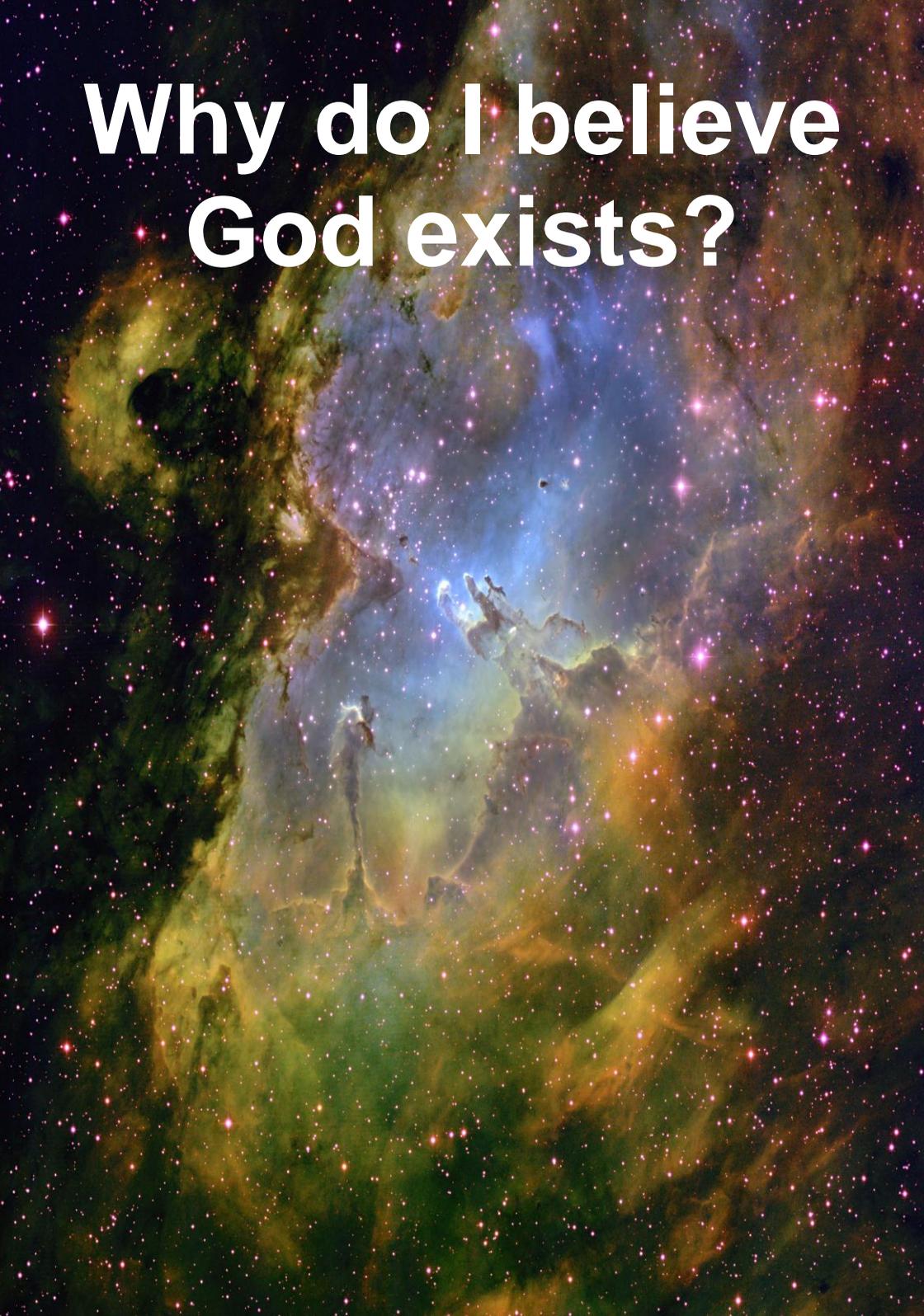


**Why do I believe
God exists?**



Why do I believe God exists?

Consider these words from the Bible:

“...what may be known about God is plain to them, because God has made it plain to them. 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 men are without excuse...” Romans 1:19-20

This writer is saying that there is enough evidence in the world to convince people that God exists. This “evidence” is the cumulative weight of many “convincing clues” rather than 100% iron clad proof. Here are six of them:

1. In the beginning...

Scientists have known for a long time that the universe had a beginning – the first clue was the discovery that the universe is expanding. This led to the “Big Bang” theory, which states (very simply) that there was a moment 15 billion or so years ago when the universe began with an unimaginably bright flash of energy from an infinitesimally small point. All matter appeared and was flung out into what we might call space, but space itself did not even exist – there was just “nothingness”. No-one can explain “how” or perhaps more importantly, “why” this happened – what caused nothingness to suddenly change into something? American scientist, and former atheist, Francis Collins writes:

“I can’t imagine how the universe could have created itself. And the very fact that the universe had a beginning implies that someone was able to begin it.”

2. Perfectly balanced...

Our universe is governed by Laws of Physics. And these laws are governed by special numbers called “universal constants”. There are 15 of them, and they are known very precisely indeed. If any one of these numbers was out by the tiniest fraction then the universe could not exist! The chances that our universe somehow randomly put itself together are infinitesimally small. Cambridge mathematician, Stephen Hawkins, has commented:

“The odds against a universe like ours emerging out of something like the Big Bang are enormous. I think there are clear religious implications... it would be very difficult to explain why the universe would have begun just this way except as the act of a God who intended to create beings like us.”

3. The origin of life...

Let's assume for a moment, that the statistical odds of the universe arising were met, how does life itself arise? How did the first living cells form in order to evolve?

Science has no answer, but if you want to, you could believe in a creating being – a “god”.

4. Perfectly Designed...

In his book “Natural Theology” 19th century naturalist William Paley demonstrates how perfectly designed our world, and especially the human body is – his first example is the human eye in which every part is perfectly designed for and necessary for sight. Perfect design, indicative of intelligence, is compelling enough for self-help guru Paul McKenna:

“This 'aint an accident! There's too much design and intelligence. I was an atheist – now I believe in God!”

5. Beauty...

Consider the vastness of space... or the grandeur of mountains... or the delicacy of a little flower... or a breathtaking sunset... or a new-born baby... We feel a sense of wonder and instinctively “worship” – a reaction which Richard Dawkins grudgingly acknowledges:

“Beauty stirs with us awe, a feeling of being overwhelmed, a desire to worship... our impulse is to attribute it [worship] to God!”

6. Morality...

Everyone has a conscience, a sense of morality, a means for determining right from wrong. But where does this come from? Why do people the world over generally have similar understandings of right and wrong? Richard Dawkins admits:

“I do have a strongly developed sense of good... but as a biologist I haven't a very well worked-out story of where that comes from... I would say that it is just something that has emerged. I know it's there, but I don't know why!”

Morality does not come from, nor does it fit easily into a godless naturalistic worldview. But it does seem logical to accept the notion that an all all-powerful, intelligent, purposeful creator who creates **physical laws** to govern life perfectly, would also establish **moral laws** to govern life - perfectly.

What happens if I don't believe God exists?

If someone chooses to reject god then they most likely live an inconsistent life...

They want **morality**... they want “good” to triumph. But in rejecting “god” they have adopted a worldview that depends on what we now deem to be “bad” in order to exist! Evolution requires survival of the fittest – ruthlessness, selfishness etc. Richard Dawkins wants his evolutionary cake, and he wants to eat it as well:

“We get our immorality largely from our Darwinian past. We get our selfishness, we get our drive for self-interest, for ruthlessness, for cruelty perhaps, and I think the first thing we should do is throw out Darwinism; we should regard Darwin's natural selection as a great evil... although, of course, we remain Darwinian as far as our understanding of how the world got to be the way it is.”

People such as Richard Dawkins believe they **have significance**, but by rejecting god they become very insignificant indeed, merely the fortunate chance outcome of billions of random mutations over time – lucky to be part of the human branch of the evolutionary tree.

If God exists... what is he like?

God may be all powerful, intelligent, appreciative of beauty, upright.... but what is he really like? What is his name??

You may be like a friend of mine, who remained unconvinced by these clues, and who wanted proof, wanted “god-in-a-box”, so he could see, touch, hear him. If he had those things, then he could believe god existed. This is a modern version of an old question...

asked by a man called Philip. He was disciple of Jesus Christ. In John's account of Jesus' life we read:

Philip said [to Jesus], "Lord, show us the Father and that will be enough for us." (In other words – we want to know what God is like!)

Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me? The words I say to you are not just my own. Rather, it is the Father, living in me, who is doing his work. Believe me when I say that I am in the Father and the Father is in me; or at least believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves. John 14:8-11

In other words, if my friend had lived 2000 years ago in Israel he would have been able to see, touch, hear, and spend time with God in person. That is the outrageous claim of the Bible – that Jesus is God. Jesus didn't just claim this – he proved it by the things he did:

"...believe on the evidence of the miracles themselves"

By his life, words and actions Jesus showed us what **God** is like – because he was/is god.

And he showed us what **we** are like too. Because God exists...

...we are **created** beings. But far from making us insignificant, that bestows on us the dignity and significance that we crave. "I am a special creation of God – my life has value."

...we are **moral** beings... who have rebelled against God's moral constraints... who deserve to be punished (we call this justice). The Bible says this punishment is eternity separated from God. If we keep him out of lives in this life, he will keep us out of his in the next

...we are **loved**... the same Bible that talks of our eternal punishment also talks about the one sent from God to die in the place of a sinful/guilty humanity in order to satisfy his holiness and righteousness and justice **and his mercy**. This one's name was Jesus!

*"God demonstrated his love for us – while we were still sinners
Christ died for us!"*

This booklet began life as a sermon, part of a series preached in autumn 2011 tackling big questions have about God, faith and life.
We hope you find it helpful.

The original sermon can be listened to on the church website:

www.allhallows-church.org.uk

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