

# Defending Your Faith: The Case for a Creator Part III

## “The Cosmological Argument”

**John 1: 1-3 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.* <sup>2</sup> *He was in the beginning with God.* <sup>3</sup> *All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made.*

✚ “Understanding has improved, but within the physical sciences, anomalies have grown great, and what is more, anomalies have grown great because understanding has improved.” — *David Berlinsky, - “The Devil’s Delusion: Atheism and its Scientific Pretensions”, Basic Books; Reprint Edition September 22, 2009, p. 183*

Contrary to what many think, believers in God have nothing to fear from science. Discoveries made in the areas of astronomy, biology and physics are increasingly pointing to evidence of a Creator. In fact, it is now often the secular scientific community that is finding it difficult to reconcile its belief system with the findings of science.

**Psalms 19:1 (ESV)** <sup>1</sup> *The heavens declare the glory of God, and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.*

❖ **Cosmological Argument** - An argument for the existence of God that claims that all things in nature depend on something else for their existence (i.e., are contingent), and that the whole cosmos must therefore itself depend on a being that exists independently or necessarily.

**There are traditionally three recognized variations of cosmological arguments for the existence of God:**

- ✓ **Thomistic** - developed by Thomas Aquinas who was a Roman Catholic Saint who lived in the mid-11th century.
- ✓ **Leibnizian** - developed by Gottfried Wilhelm von Leibniz who was a German mathematician and philosopher that lived in the later part of the 15th century.
- ✓ **Kalam** – an argument whose origins can be traced to medieval Jewish, Christian and Muslim thinkers, but most directly to Islamic theologians of what is known as the Kalām tradition.

Ancient Greek philosophers held that the universe was eternal in nature and that matter was necessary and uncreated. Hebrew writers held that the universe has not always existed, but was created by God at some point in the past. These two philosophical belief systems have battled with one another for centuries.

**Al-Ghazali**, a 12<sup>th</sup> century Muslim theologian, concerned that Greek philosophy was influencing traditional belief in a creation, wrote a withering critique of these views in a work titled, “*The*

*Incoherence of the Philosophers.*” This writing has evolved over time into what is known today as, “**The Kalam Cosmological Argument.**”

The **Kalam Cosmological Argument** consists of three simple premises:

1. **Whatever begins to exist, must have a cause.**
2. **The universe began to exist.**
3. **Therefore, the universe must have a cause.**

**Premise 1, “Whatever begins to exist, must have a cause.”**

**Common experience teaches us that nothing comes from nothing.**

- **Contingent** objects owe their existence to some cause other than themselves. All **concrete** objects exist contingently. Concrete objects are objects that exist in a material or physical form; real or solid objects. As such, everything found in the material universe exists **contingently**.
- **Necessary** objects do not depend upon anything else for their existence. They exist independently of any cause outside of their own nature. Necessary objects are sometimes called **abstract** objects and traditionally include things like numbers, sets and mathematical properties.

Contemporary physicists have misrepresented facts associated with the laws of quantum physics to infer that the universe could have come into existence on its own from nothing whatsoever. However, this is a deliberate misrepresentation of what “nothing” really is.

**Properly understood, “nothing” does not mean just empty space. Nothing is the absence of anything whatsoever, even space itself. As such, nothingness has literally no properties as all, since there isn’t anything to have any properties!**

**Premise 2, “The universe began to exist.”**

This premise is the most critical, and is also the one most often disputed. We will examine two philosophical arguments and one scientific argument to support the claim that the universe began to exist.

- ❖ **First philosophical argument – “An actually infinite number of things cannot exist.”** - Actual infinities do not exist and cannot exist in the physical world. If actual infinities did exist in the physical world, we would see absurdities and effects we could not live with, literally.

- ❖ **Second philosophical argument – “You cannot pass through an infinite number of events one at a time.”** - All of history has been formed by adding one event after another. So that, the entire series of past events is like a sequence of dominoes falling one after another until the last domino, today, is reached. But, no series that is formed by adding one member after another can actually be infinite. For you cannot pass through an infinite number of events one at a time. If the universe has no beginning, and time has always existed, we must conclude that there would be an infinite number of sequential events that have occurred in the universe’s never ending past.

“The infinite is nowhere to be found in reality. It neither exists in nature nor provides a legitimate basis for rational thought. The role that remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea.” – *David Hilbert (One of the greatest mathematicians of the 20<sup>th</sup> century)*

- ❖ **Scientific Argument – “The expansion of the universe.”** – When Albert Einstein published his theory of General Relativity in 1915, his mathematical formulas indicated that the universe should either be expanding or contracting. Unable to accept what his equations were telling him, Einstein “fudged” his math to reflect a static eternal universe. It was later proven through observations made by Edwin Hubble that the universe was in fact expanding and Einstein’s initial findings had been correct.

This dramatic breakthrough led scientists to conclude that the universe originated from what is now called a singularity approximately 13.7 billion years ago. This singularity emerged from absolutely nothing, which has resulted in the secular scientific community scrambling to present a theory capable of evading a true cosmic beginning.

- ✚ A watershed event occurred in 2003, when three of the world’s leading scientists, Arvind Borde, Alan Guth and Alexander Vilenkin, were able to prove that any universe that has, on average, been expanding throughout history cannot be infinite in the past. But, must have a past space-time boundary.

**As a result of the philosophical and scientific evidence, it is overwhelmingly evident that the universe began to exist.**

**At this point, a common objection heard from atheists might be...“If God created the universe, then who created God?”** – This is a misunderstanding of the first premise of the Kalam Cosmological Argument. The first premise states that, “*Whatever begins to exist, must have a cause.*” Believers would consider God to be a **necessary** entity and the first uncaused cause. To ask who created God would be to engage in an infinite regress of causes, which we know cannot occur.

**Premise 3, “The universe must have a cause.”**

**Based upon the findings of science and the classical model of the origin of the universe known commonly as the “Big Bang”, the cause of the universe must possess the following characteristics:**

- Must rely on nothing for its existence.
  - Must be itself uncaused, because we’ve seen that an infinite series of causes is impossible.
  - Must transcend space and time, since it created space and time.
  - Must be immaterial (non-physical).
  - Must be unimaginable powerful, since it created all matter and energy.
- And finally, it must be personal. This, due to the fact that the universe is temporal in nature, caused to exist by what must be a timeless cause.**

Thus, the scriptural description of the creation of the universe, is entirely consistent with both the philosophical and scientific evidence associated with the beginning of space and time. Science has failed to present any established theory capable of answering the question, or even addressing it at all.

**Questions for discussion:**

1. Did the information in this lesson change your understanding of what “nothing” truly is? Why is the statement by secular scientists that the universe came into being out of nothing misleading?
2. We discussed that there are two categories of things, “contingent” and “necessary”. All contingent entities owe their existence to some cause. Why is the universe itself considered a contingent entity, rather than necessary?
3. Why is it impossible for the universe to have existed forever?
4. How are we justified in believing that God is necessary, rather than contingent?
5. Why don’t theories such as the “oscillating universe” and “multi-verse” allow secular scientists to avoid the need for explaining a cosmic beginning?
6. How can you respond to non-believers when they ask, “If God created the universe, who created God?”
7. How does our understanding of the characteristics of God’s nature, allow us to reasonably claim him to be the cause of the universe’s existence?