

Does God Exist?

Part II

By Lewis Winkler

Something does exist.

God, by definition, is a necessary being. And while we cannot arrive at certain Christian definitions of God through reason alone without special revelation (the Bible), we can arrive at a point of recognition that someone (who is, by definition, God) created the universe. Here, we have the proof of the definition: if there actually is something, that is to say, that if the physical universe does exist (although some, using their existence as a basis, deny that they or anything really exists!), then I think we are rationally forced to find an explanation for it.

The Nature of Contingent Beings

Herein lies the problem. If something exists, then we must (or at least *should*) ask where it came from. Why is there something instead of nothing, and since something cannot come from nothing, where did everything come from? This leads us to the issue of the nature of being. If a being cannot say that it contains, in itself, the explanation for itself, then it must be contingent. That is to say, it relies upon another being for its coming into existence, because it could not itself exist without another causing it to come into existence. This is the nature of all contingent beings. They are not self-caused, but rather, caused by another.

Once we understand that we are contingent, that we do not have in our being the reason for our existence, then we must ask the next logical question: “If I depend upon someone else (for example, my parents) for my existence, then where did he or she come from?” Upon whom did he or she depend on for existence? I could continue to ask that same question back into the far reaches of time, but at some point I would have to realize that I cannot continue to go back forever and ever and find an explanation for what exists. Adding contingent (dependent upon another) being to contingent being only provides me with more contingent beings, but it does not ultimately explain why there are contingent beings in the first place, nor how and why they came to exist.

If the question seems unimportant, it is not, for even science with its claim to objectivity (hardly supportable in my opinion) seeks through evolutionary theory to explain who we are and where we really came from. But even here, regardless of the truth or falsehood of evolution, there remains a need to explain where the “raw materials” to produce life from non-life came from. To say life came from another planet (a scientific theory called *panspermia*) is only to push the question back further without answering it. There is a need in the heart of every person to know if they exist for a purpose, to know how and why they exist. The Nihilist has simply surrendered his heart to the assumption that we came from nothing and so tragically answers this question by concluding that we are nothing and will proceed into nothing. Life to the Nihilist really is nothingness and meaninglessness.

Where did we come from?

Where, then, did we come from? If we depend upon another for our existence, can we regress into the past forever and find that matter and all its constituents are in fact eternal after all? Are we simply dependent upon matter for our existence? Is matter the ultimate “thing” that explains all other existences? Has matter always existed? To answer the question and remain an atheist, many have concluded just that; namely, that matter is eternal! Matter becomes the ultimate cause of all existence. Here is idolatry in a sophisticated form, the elevating of the creation above the Creator!

As a brief sidelight, many people are frustrated when the theist explains that to ask where God came from is to misunderstand the nature of God. If God is eternal, then He is necessary. That is to say, He has always existed because it is part of His very nature to exist, as much as it is a part of His nature to be loving or holy. To the atheist, considering God to be eternal and thus always existing, is foolishness. Yet, when he is asked the very same question about matter, “Where did it come from then?” he balks and says along with Carl Sagan, that “The Cosmos is all that is or ever was or ever will be.” It just exists. It always has existed and always will exist. It is unnecessary to explain its existence. This is an unjustified double standard. If it is not nonsense to say that matter is, by its very nature, eternal (and this is eminently debatable), then the theist is at least equally justified in saying that God, by His very nature, is eternal.

Such words (that matter is eternal) are nonsense, not because it is nonsense to say that something has always been and always will be. This is by definition what “eternal” means! Rather, these words are nonsense because of the nature of matter. Matter is changing, decaying, “running down,” according to the second law of thermodynamics. Matter cannot be eternal, for it is constantly going from a state of greater order to a state of lesser order. To say that matter is eternal is to simply deny the inherent, proven nature of matter. It must have had a beginning (like the big bang) because it had to start at a point of highest energy, and it is now on its way to a point of lowest energy. This is what scientists call equilibrium. If matter were indeed eternal, it would have reached equilibrium already, but since it is not at that state yet, all time could not have passed, and the universe could not be eternal.

All of this is to say that matter cannot possibly be the answer to how we came to be. Something else must have caused both us *and* all other matter to come into existence, for both matter and living beings do not find an explanation for their existence within themselves.

A beginning is necessary.

To find such an explanation, we cannot keep going back into an infinite regress of caused beings because this is impossible. A beginning is necessary, because you can never add finite to finite and suddenly wind up with infinite. Finite, contingent, beings do not contain in themselves the nature of infinity (eternity). To illustrate, you cannot add an infinite amount of chocolate together for an infinite period of time and suddenly produce an elephant from it. Why? Because chocolate does not contain in its nature “elephantness.” Only elephants can produce other elephants. Just because you have lots of time and lots of chocolate does not change its ultimate nature in the least. It still remains chocolate.

It follows then, that God is, by definition, the necessary starting point, the necessary being. If finite beings exist, which do not find within themselves the cause of their existence, then there must be a being (defined as God) who is necessary, who is infinite, who has the explanation for Himself within Himself. He is not self-caused (which is a contradiction), but He is the uncaused causer. He has to exist, because we exist. To ask who created God is really only to ask who is *really* God, because God is not contingent upon another, but has the cause of all contingent beings within Himself. He is the starting point and sustainer of all being because He has within His very nature, within His very character, the quality of existence which is not and cannot be dependent upon another. Otherwise, by definition, He would not be God, but a creation of God, and therefore, a contingent being, but God is not a contingent (created) being. This is why the Bible describes Him as responding to the question of what is your name (i.e., who are you?), by using the verb “to be,” that is, “I am that I am.” In other words, I exist. I simply am, by the nature of my character, God. I exist. I always have existed, and always will exist, for I am the source of being, existence matter, reality, space, even time. I AM!

Infinite regress is impossible.

Where you must decide if my argument is valid is not at the point of the definition of God and how He came about. He always was, is, and will be, by His very definition. Rather, you must decide whether or not it is valid for me to say that there cannot be an infinite regress of finite beings into infinity past. As in the Kalam cosmological argument, I believe that it can be demonstrated that there cannot be such a regress. To say that there is such a regress in space-time reality is to argue for the absurd, for how can we add to infinity, if infinity past is, by definition, the set of all possible events, numbers, etc.? Yet if the past is infinite, then we are adding to infinity moment by moment, second by second. The second hand on our watch shows that all the possible moments in history have not already taken place, therefore the past up until the present cannot possibly be an infinite amount of time. To say that we can add to infinity is merely to say that the set of all possible events is not actually infinite, for you cannot add anything to an actually infinite number of events. Time adds events to the present from the past. As such, the past cannot be infinite, but rather *must* be finite and only potentially infinite.

We depend upon God for our existence.

We find our existence a dependent one. We cannot find our explanation in other dependent beings who are also dependent upon other dependent beings for their existence. Thus, God is the independent being. He owes His existence to no one, needs no one, and would still exist, even if nothing else existed besides Him. He is never lonely, needy, or bound by His creation. That He would create us, care for us, and die for us even though He did not need us, is a profound expression of unconditional love. We would do well to acknowledge this kind of love as we fall down and worship Him as our sovereign Master and Lord.

“Now to Him who is able to keep you from stumbling, and to make you stand in the presence of His glory blameless with great joy, to the only God our Savior, through Jesus Christ our Lord, be glory, majesty dominion and authority, before all time and now and forever. Amen.”

—Jude 24-25.