

# ***“Does God Exist?”***

## **PART 1**

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This morning I would invite you to turn with me to Romans 1 as we think about several verses written by the apostle Paul concerning the existence of God (p. 1759). When we think about the existence of God, most of us would probably agree that the question of God’s existence is a very important question. In other words, if there is a God, then God is all that really matters in this life. And if there is not a God, then nothing really matters at all. If he does exist, then there is an eternal heaven to be gained and there is an eternal hell to be avoided, and this means everything to us. So, it is an important question and a question with eternal consequences in one of two very different directions. I want us to notice what Paul says about the existence of God and the importance of the issue in Romans 1:18-23,

***For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because that which is known about God is evident within them; for God made it evident to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse. For even though they knew God, they did not honor Him as God or give thanks, but they became futile in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures.***

So we find here, according to the apostle Paul (a highly educated man), that the knowledge of God is **“evident”** to all of us. In fact, Paul says that when we look at the world around us, we are **“without excuse.”** Of course, many in our society are growing up with the idea that science in some way has disproven the existence of God. Many believe that there is no real evidence for us to consider. As Paul said right there in Romans 1, there are many people around us who are actively working to suppress the truth of God’s existence. There are those who are trying to suppress the evidence.

This morning, then, I would like to begin a brief series of lessons just outlining some of the evidence for God’s existence. And to do this, I will give you a little “heads up” that we will not be sticking with one paragraph of scripture for each lesson as we normally try to do during our Sunday assembly. We will be looking at the scriptures; however, as we think about God’s existence and as we think about sharing this knowledge with the

world around us, it hardly makes sense to just quote a verse from the Bible to try to prove that God is. After all, those who do not believe in God obviously do not believe in the Bible either. And another reason for this is: The Bible does not spend a lot of time trying to prove God's existence either. Instead, the Bible just starts right out with the assumption that God is obvious, and so in the very first verse of the Bible, for example, the text just says, ***"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."*** There is no attempt to prove God, but we just start out with a statement telling us what God did.

I would make another note concerning the evidence for God's existence, and it ties in to the nature of the evidence. We cannot scientifically demonstrate God's existence in the same way that we demonstrate gravity. We cannot do an experiment and show a little piece of God in a test tube. However, even our own legal system recognizes that a fact can be proven even without the demonstration of some kind of experiment. We look around us, and our own legal system recognizes the validity of a "prima facie" case. You can look up "prima facie" in a legal dictionary, and you will find that it comes from two Latin words – "first" and "face," and it refers to a situation where enough evidence is available to establish the presumption of a fact, which, unless it can be refuted, legally stands as a fact. You can look at the available evidence and come to a reasonable conclusion unless that evidence can be refuted. Here is an example: Imagine going to bed at night. You wake up at four in the morning to the sound of thunder, and when you get up two hours later, you find that all of the grass is wet, you look outside, you see that there are puddles in the streets, and there are water droplets all over your car. In this situation, you can make a prima facie case that it rained overnight. Of course, someone could come in and refute that evidence if they could show some other reason why everything is wet outside. But on the surface, unless it can be refuted, the conclusion is that it rained. In a similar way, when we first look at the evidence, we can make a very reasonable conclusion that God exists, and we can hold to that belief until the evidence can be refuted.

This morning, then, I would like to start by presenting two of the reasons why I personally believe in God.

**I. And again, we are just doing a brief overview here, but the first argument is very basic – it is sometimes referred to as the LAW OF CAUSE AND EFFECT.**

And the idea is: The universe is real, and it had to have a cause. The universe is an effect, and the Law of Cause and Effect states that every effect has to have an adequate cause. I know we are not basing our arguments here on the Bible – after all, that would be some circular reasoning to try to use the Bible to try to prove God exists – however, I find it interesting that the Bible does at least state this argument. The passage is found in Hebrews 3:4, where the author says, ***"For every house is built by someone, but the builder of all things is God."*** I just want us to look at the first part of that verse, ***"Every house is built by someone."*** To most people, that is a rather obvious statement. As far as I know, all of us here this morning live in some kind of structure – maybe a house, maybe an apartment building – and when we look at the structures where we live, we can safely come to the conclusion that somebody built those structures. You may not know WHO built the place where you live. Maybe you never SAW the people actually building your home or apartment building. But you cannot deny that somebody built your house. Your house is an effect, and all effects must have an adequate cause. Your house did not build itself. And that is this argument in a nutshell. Every effect must have an adequate cause.

As I see it, we have four possibilities concerning the universe: 1.) There is no universe – this is all just an illusion, 2.) The universe created itself (the idea that something came from nothing), 3.) The universe has always existed (the idea that the universe is eternal), and 4.) The universe was created. Looking back on those, I can dismiss #1 very quickly, and I hope you can as well. We look at number 2, and it is truly hard to find

someone who really believes this. Who believes that something comes from nothing? How can nothing lead to nothing? Of course, many scientists will refer to some kind of Big Bang, but really, all they've done is back it up a little bit. Even they don't say that something came from nothing. They say that everything came from an extremely dense cluster of something that very rapidly inflated. Alright, but what they have not answered is: Where did that original little cluster of something come from? Something does not come from nothing on its own. So, even today, most scientists do not really believe that something truly came from nothing. The third possibility is that the universe is eternal, that the universe has always existed. Of course, when we look at the universally accepted 2<sup>nd</sup> Law of Thermodynamics, we find that all closed systems are eventually headed toward a state of equilibrium. In other words, stuff has a way of slowing down, and cooling off, and wearing out over time. Of course, with this in mind, we can project back into the past, and there has to be a beginning point. That's why almost all scientists today will admit that the universe had a beginning. The universe is not eternal.

As I see it, then, that is where we are left with that final option: 1.) The universe is real, 2.) The universe did not spontaneously create itself out of nothing, 3.) The universe is not eternal, 4.) Therefore, eliminating these other possibilities, the universe (as an effect), must have had an adequate cause, and that cause is God. You might be thinking: But where did GOD come from? And I would say: God is not an effect. God is a cause.

I am reminded of Robinson Crusoe as he was stranded on the island thinking he was all alone. Of course, one day he went out and found a single human footprint on the beach. And that's all it took! Based on that one footprint (the effect), he concluded that someone (the cause of the footprint) was on the island with him, that he was not alone, and that was a valid conclusion based on the law of cause and effect.

Of course, as I hinted earlier, many people come into this discussion having made up their minds that God is now allowed, that no matter what conclusion they reach, God absolutely has to be excluded. From time to time, I will refer to the column in the Sunday newspaper by Marilyn Vos Savant, the woman on record as having the world's highest IQ. Several years ago, someone wrote in with this question, "I assume that you, like most intellectual types, are not a religious person. So what do you think of the Big Bang theory?" This is her answer – she said, "I think that if it had been a religion that first maintained the notion that all the matter in the entire universe had once been contained in an area smaller than the point of a pin, scientists probably would have laughed at the idea." Very interesting! And I think she is exactly right. As the author of Hebrews said, "Every house is built by someone." Every effect must have an adequate cause, and the cause of this universe is God. That is one of the first reasons why I believe in God: God is the only sufficient cause for everything we see around us.

## II. **There is another reason why I personally believe in God, and it goes back to the idea that there is DESIGN in so many of the things we see around us.**

And the idea is: If it is clear that something has been designed, then it should also be clear that a designer has been involved. I want us to notice again what Paul said in Romans 1:20, ***"For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse."*** In other words, we can know something about God, ***"through what has been made."*** As I understand it, that little phrase comes from a single Greek word, the word POIEMA. Does that word sound familiar (POIEMA)? As I look at it, the universe and everything in it is basically described as God's POEM. When we look at a poem, we know that somebody wrote it. When we see the arrangement of the rhyme and the rhythm, we know that those letters on a page were arranged by somebody. Those letters did not end up rhyming by accident, but we understand that a poem was written by a

poet. In the same way, when we look at the creation, when we look at the world around us, we know that the creation has a Creator. The world is God's work of art. The universe is a poem by God and about God. The poem has a poet. The design we see around us has a designer.

Dr. Michael Behe is a scientist who has done a lot of writing on the idea that there is design in the universe, and in one of Dr. Behe's books, he quotes Dr. Richard Dawkins, a rather well-known evolutionary biologist. Dawkins' name might be familiar to us right now, because he just came out in an interview about a week ago, defending certain forms of pedophilia. As a staunch evolutionist, though, Dr. Dawkins has said this, "Biology is the study of complicated things that give the appearance of having been designed for a purpose." Very interesting! So, one of the leading evolutionists of our time clearly admits that the world around us has the appearance of having been designed for a purpose. In his book, Dr. Behe also quotes Francis Crick, the co-discoverer of DNA. Dr. Crick says, "Biologists must constantly keep in mind that what they see was not designed, but rather evolved." Again, very interesting! According to one of the leading scientists of our time, we see evidence all around us that God designed the earth and everything in it, but (in his words) we must constantly remind ourselves that there is no God!

When we look carefully, though, the admissions sometimes accidentally slip. Several years ago, I showed you some pictures from when our family visited the Lincoln Park Zoo down in Chicago, and as we were looking at the lions, the sign right beside the building caught my eye. I seriously doubt that the people who designed the displays at the Lincoln Park Zoo would admit that God created the heavens and the earth, but it seems that they let it slip just a little bit, because if you look at the title on the sign, it says, "A Deadly Design." Think about that for just a moment! Let that sink in a little bit! And then, if you look even more carefully at the first paragraph, they go on to say this, "Everything about a lion's skull is designed for hunting, killing, and eating large animals such as zebras and wildebeests." They have a skull right there on the sign, and they are telling us that this skull was designed! We would simply ask: Who designed it? Who created the lion, and who designed the lion to be uniquely equipped for killing and eating large animals? Who did that?

If we look in our science textbooks at school, they will say that everything came into existence as the result of a huge explosion – often referred to as the Big Bang. And yet, have you seen the results of an explosion? Here in this nation, this past Wednesday we just had a somber anniversary. Twelve years ago, we saw what happens when a plane fully loaded with fuel crashes into a building. When that happened, did people rejoice at all of the new life forms created? Were people impressed with the order and complexity that came out of those explosions? Does an explosion make things better or does it make things worse? We know the answer to that question. A big bang does not "design" the skull of a lion. One of our members here at Four Lakes is a chemical engineer. His work involves designing batteries. And I would suggest that if we could look at one of the batteries he designed, we would be able to say, "I can see that this was planned." Generally speaking, great new inventions don't come about as the result of an explosion taking place in the lab.

Back in the summer of 2008, our family had the privilege of visiting the National Zoo out in Washington, DC, and while we were there, one of their displays also caught my attention. I think it might have been a sea otter – I'm not exactly sure what the critter was, but do you notice the huge heading on top of this display? Very interesting, "Built to Survive." This particular animal was "built to survive." Let that sink in for a little bit. Who built it? Even evolutionists apparently believe that the sea otter was "built to survive." As we found in Hebrews, ***"Every house is built by someone, and the builder of all things is God."***

What about the little critter known as the archerfish? This is something we also looked at several years ago, but it never ceases to amaze me. This little critter lives underwater (obviously, it's a fish), but it has the ability

to accurately shoot a stream of water to dislodge an insect sitting on a branch several feet above the water. Scientists tell us that the archerfish has the ability to accurately judge the size of its prey and to adjust the size of the stream and the force of the blast. It would be a little like a hunter today thinking about what he or she is hunting, and then making a decision on the weapon and the caliber. Just a few years ago, German scientists confirmed that the archerfish even has the ability to shoot down targets in flight! I don't know if we can really appreciate what it takes to accurately shoot down a target above the water from under water – especially a target that is moving or even flying! Have you ever opened your eyes underwater? Some of you people are going deer hunting in a few weeks. I am not a hunter, but I want to make a suggestion (based on the archerfish), a suggestion that should guarantee your success during the upcoming hunt. I want to humbly suggest that you take your rifle, that you hold your breath, that you jump in a lake, that you swim across the lake underwater, and when you get to the other side (while still underwater), that you sneak up on a deer and shoot it from underwater. And as you do that, I want one of your buddies to catch it all on video. But you know, we look at the archerfish, and it works – it works perfectly! They are able to shoot down their dinner in flight, from underwater. Do we really think that this skill evolved over millions of years as the result of millions of random mutations, all being the result of a massive explosion? Or does that indicate some kind of design?

Some of you might have noticed a story that hit the news just this past Thursday. Researchers have now discovered the first use of gears in a living creature, in the jumping mechanism of a tiny insect, the *issus*, which is half the size of a fire ant. The picture in the middle was taken by an electron microscope. The image on the left is a close-up and slowed-down version of the gears working, and the image on the right is a picture of what happens when those gears do what they were originally designed to do. Here is the opening paragraph of the article,

With two diminutive legs locked into a leap-ready position, the tiny jumper bends its body taut like an archer drawing a bow. At the top of its legs, a minuscule pair of gears engage—their strange, shark-fin teeth interlocking cleanly like a zipper. And then, faster than you can blink, think, or see with the naked eye, the entire thing is gone. In 2 milliseconds it has bulleted skyward, accelerating at nearly 400 g's—a rate more than 20 times what a human body can withstand. At top speed the jumper breaks 8 mph—quite a feat considering its body is less than one-tenth of an inch long.

They go on to explain,

“As the legs unfurl to power the jump, both have to move at exactly the same time. If they didn't, the animal would start to spiral out of control.” Larger animals, whether kangaroos or NBA players, rely on their nervous system to keep their legs in sync when pushing off to jump—using a constant loop of adjustment and feedback. But for the *issus*, their legs outpace their nervous system. By the time the insect has sent a signal from its legs to its brain and back again [to adjust the trajectory of the jump], roughly 5 or 6 milliseconds, the launch has long since happened. Instead, the gears, which engage before the jump, let the *issus* lock its legs together—synchronizing their movements to a precision of 1/300,000 of a second.

Later on in the article the researchers explain,

The gears themselves are an oddity. With gear teeth shaped like cresting waves, they look nothing like what you'd find in your car or in a fancy watch. There could be two reasons for this. Through a mathematical oddity, there is a limitless number of ways to design intermeshing

gears. So, either nature evolved one solution at random, or ... the shape of the insect's gear is particularly apt [appropriate] for the job it does. It's built for "high precision and speed in one direction...it is a prototype for a new type of gear."

Even stranger is that the insect doesn't keep these gears throughout its life cycle. As the adolescent insect grows, it molts half a dozen times, upgrading its exoskeleton (gears included) for larger and larger versions. But after its final molt into adulthood—poof, the gears are gone. The adult syncs its legs by friction like all the other planthoppers. The researchers are amazed. Their idea: If one of the gear teeth were to slip and break in an adult (the researchers observed this in adolescent bugs), its jumping ability would be hindered forever. With no more molts, it would have no chance to grow more gears. And with every bound, "the whole system might slip, accelerating damage to the rest of the gear teeth," the researcher says. "Just like if your car has a gear train missing a tooth. Every time you get to that missing tooth, the gear train jerks."

All of this is impressive – just amazing! But what really impresses me is the speculation. The article explains how researchers believe that this little critter "...evolved its acrobatic prowess because it need[ed] to flee dangerous situations." So here is this creature about to get eaten by a larger animal, and it thinks to itself, "You know, what I really need are some gears – right in my hips! If I only had gears, I could really get away from this situation!" The researchers go on to explain, "There's been enormous evolutionary pressure to become faster and faster, and jump further and further away." So, as I see it, God is screaming to the world, "Here I am!" And people in the world are screaming right back, "No you aren't!" What also amazes me is this: Let's say the world was created 6,000 years ago. God made this little critter with gears in its legs, knowing that the human race would not discover this little feature for 6,000 years! In my opinion, God could totally see this coming. The way I look at it, God said to himself, "I'm going to put these gears in here, and there are some researchers in England who will be totally blown away by this in the year 2013!"

We look at the animal kingdom, therefore, from lions, to sea otters, to the archerfish, and even to tiny little jumping insects with gears in their hips, and we are reminded of the words of Job in Job 12:7-9, where Job says,

***But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you;  
And the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you.  
Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you;  
And let the fish of the sea declare to you.  
Who among all these does not know  
That the hand of the Lord has done this.***

We don't have time to go into design in our solar system or design in the human body or design in any number of other systems that God has created. But just in the animal kingdom, we clearly see the evidence of God's design. We see God's footprints all around us.

### **Conclusion:**

Next week we hope to put a special emphasis on singing, but hopefully we can pick up with our series two weeks from this morning with two more reasons for believing in God. This morning, we have looked at the Law of Cause and Effect, the idea that every effect must have had an adequate cause. We have also looked at the idea of design, and the fact that if something has been designed, then there must have been a designer.

This morning we started our study in Romans 1, and in that passage we learned that our belief in or rejection of God has consequences. If we choose to reject God, Paul tells us that we begin the slide into darkness. He referred to people's **"foolish hearts"** being **"darkened."** He referred to becoming **"futile"** in our **"speculations."** And in the rest of that paragraph, Paul describes a culture that rejects God as a culture sliding into darkness. In my own mind, I have the picture of somebody driving as the sun goes down, but as it gets darker and darker, they refuse to turn on their headlights, and they soon get to the point of being dangerous. That's what it's like when people refuse to believe in God – their foolish hearts are darkened, and eventually it gets to the point where people are just totally absorbed in all forms of sin; because, as Paul says in Romans 1:25, **"they have exchanged the truth of God for a lie and have worshiped and served the creature rather than the Creator"** [paraphrased].

Thankfully, most of us here this morning believe in God. And that is a good step. That right there is huge. However, when it comes to learning what God did for us and when it comes to what we actually need to do, that is where we need the written word of God. The word tells us that God loved us so much that he sent his only Son as a sacrifice for our sins. We respond to that sacrifice by turning away from sin, by publicly stating our belief in Jesus as the Son of God, and by allowing ourselves to be briefly buried in water for the forgiveness of our sins. If you would like to talk about it, please let us know. But if you are ready to obey the good news right now, you can come to the front as we sing this next song...

To comment on this lesson: [furlakeschurch@gmail.com](mailto:furlakeschurch@gmail.com)