

God: The Failed Hypothesis

How Science Shows
that God Does Not Exist

Vic Stenger

The Method



- ◆ Assume a god who has specific **attributes** that should provide objective evidence for his existence.
- ◆ Look for such **evidence** with an open mind.
- ◆ If such evidence is found, conclude that this god is **viable**.
- ◆ If such objective evidence is not found, conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that a god with the assumed attributes **does not exist**.

Caveats



- ◆ The attributes examined are those traditionally associated with Judeo-Christian-Islamic God, but some apply to the gods of other religions.
- ◆ Nevertheless, I leave it up to theologians and believers to decide whether **their gods** have any particular property.
- ◆ I cannot rule out **every possible god**. Just those with the presumed attributes.
- ◆ I do not claim “proof” as in logic or mathematics. Rather proof as **evidence or argument** in establishing a truth beyond a reasonable doubt.

Model Gods

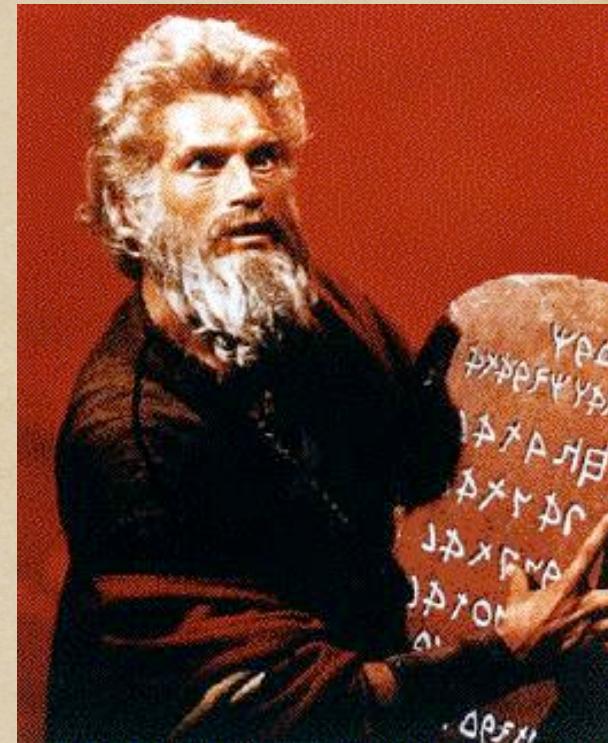
- ◆ Source of **morals** and **values**.
- ◆ Omniscient, omnipotent, omnibenevolent ("3O").
- ◆ Intelligent **designer** of universe and life.
- ◆ Endower of humans with **supernatural souls**.
- ◆ Revealer of truths about universe.
- ◆ **Creator** of the universe.
- ◆ Provider of **special** privileges for humanity.
- ◆ Author of the **laws** of nature.



Treated
separately

If God exists, he should be the source of our morals and values

- ◆ Hypothesize a god who is the **author** of moral principles and other societal values.
- ◆ Assume that god has made **knowledge** of those principles available to us in scriptures and other revelations.
- ◆ These principles should be **original** and clearly not of **natural** origin.
- ◆ Believers should be observed to **live by** these principles and not decide right and wrong for themselves.



Empirical Facts

- ◆ Even the most devout believers often make moral and ethical decisions that **contradict** the teachings of their religions.
- ◆ Religious leaders and other believers are **selective** of religious teachings and interpret them by reference to the judgments of their own **consciences**.
- ◆ Believers of all faiths and nonbelievers have agreed to a **common set** of important universal moral principles and societal values that in some cases contradict the teachings of religions. These seem to have evolved naturally.
- ◆ **Nonbelievers** do not behave less morally than believers.

The Moral Teachings of Jesus



The Golden Rule

Therefore all things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law of the prophets." (Matthew 7:12, KJV)

Love your enemy

Ye have heard that it hath been said, Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy. But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you, and persecute you. (Matthew 5:43-44 KJV)

Ancient Noble Ideals

Golden Rule not unique to Christianity

“What you do not want others to do to you, do not do to others.” –Confucius (c. 500 BCE)

“Do not do to others what would anger you if done to you by others.
–Isocrates (c. 375 BCE)

“This is the sum of all true righteousness: deal with others as thou wouldst thyself be dealt by.”
–Mahabharata (c. 150 BCE).



“Love thy enemy” not original either

Taoism:

I treat those who are good with goodness.
And I also treat those who are not
good with goodness. Thus goodness is
attained. I am honest with those who
are honest. And I am also honest with
those who are dishonest. Thus honesty
is attained.



Buddhism:

Conquer anger by love. Conquer
evil by good. Conquer the stingy
by giving. Conquer the liar by
truth.

“The sentiments attributed to Christ are . . .
already found in the Old Testament. . . .
They were familiar in the Jewish schools,
and to all the Pharisees, long before the
time of Christ, as they were familiar in all the
civilizations of the earth—Egyptian,
Babylonian, and Persian, Greek and Hindu.”

—Historian Joseph McCabe

Slavery Justified

“The right of holding slaves is clearly established in the Holy Scriptures, both by precept and example.” (Richard Furman 1822)



“[Slavery] was established by decree of Almighty God...it is sanctioned in the Bible, in both Testaments, from Genesis to Revelation.” (Jefferson Davis).

The Bible Regulates Slavery

When you buy a Hebrew slave, he shall serve six years, and in the seventh he shall go out free, for nothing. (Exodus 21:2 RSV)

Bid slaves to be submissive to their masters and to give satisfaction in every respect;
(Titus 2:9)



Yet Christians also led abolition movement.

The Bible and Qu'ran Assign Women Inferior Status



St. Paul:

Wives, be subject to your husbands, as to the Lord. For the husband is the head of the wife as Christ is the head of the church, his body, and is himself its Savior. (Ephesians 5:22-23 RSV)

Most Christians disagree.

Biblical Atrocities

Now therefore, kill every male among the little ones, and kill every woman that hath known man by lying with him. But all the young girls who have not known a man by lying with him, keep alive for yourselves. (Numbers 31:17-18 RSV)

And he said to them, "Thus says the Lord God of Israel, 'Put every man his sword on his side, and go to and fro from gate to gate throughout the camp, and slay every man his companion, and every man his neighbor.' " (Exodus 32:27 RSV)

Jews and Christians do not follow these examples.

“Obligations” of Christians and Jews

If you get your morality from the Bible

- ◆ You must stone to death anyone (brother, son, daughter, wife, friend) who tries to entice you to serve other gods. (Deuteronomy 13:6-11)
- ◆ You must arrange have a rebellious son stoned to death by the village elders. (Deuteronomy 21:18-21)
- ◆ You must put to death anyone who does any work on the Sabbath. (Exodus 31:15)

Few Christians or Jews obey.

Followers of God's Will

"Everything I did, I did for God."

-Yigal Amir, who assassinated Israeli prime minister Yitzhak Rabin in 1995.

"I feel very honored that they are most likely going to kill me for what I did. I'm certain, to be quite honest, I'm expecting a great reward in heaven for my obedience."

-Paul Hill, who murdered abortion provider Dr. John Britton in Florida in 1994.

"What moved me to do what I did was purely my faith. . . . I was motivated by the law that commands me to cut off the head of anyone who insults Allah and his prophet."

-Mohammed Bouyeri, the Muslim extremist who killed Dutch filmmaker Theo Van Gogh in 2004.

WHEN INTELLIGENT DESIGN GOES BAD

THE KORAN SAYS
WE CAN KILL
THE INFIDELS!



THE BIBLE SAYS
IT'S OK TO OWN
SLAVES!



THE TORAH SAYS
THIS LAND IS OURS!



Was Jesus Good?

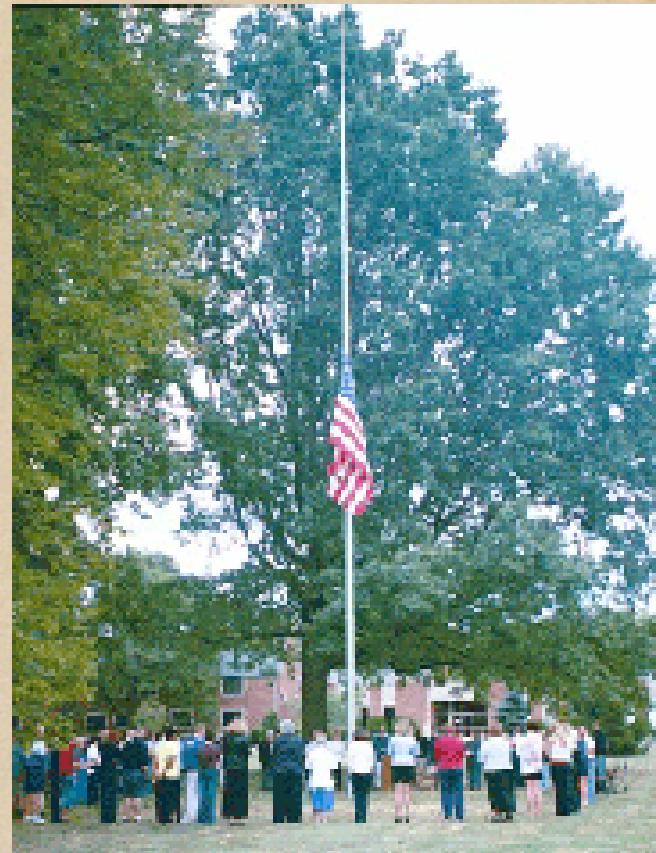
Think not that I have come to abolish the law, or the prophets: I have come not to abolish them but to fulfill them. (Matthew 5:17 RSV)



Do not think that I have come to send peace on earth: I have not come to send peace, but a sword. For I have come to set a man at against his father, a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; and a man's foes will be those of his own household. He who loves father or mother more than me is not worthy of me; and he who loves son or daughter more than me is not worthy of me. (Matthew 10:34-37 RSV)

Other Biblical Commands

And when you pray, you must not be like the hypocrites; for they love to stand and pray in the synagogues and at the street corners, that they may be seen by men. Truly I say to you, they have received their reward. But when you pray, go into your room and shut the door and pray to your Father who is in secret; and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. (Matthew 6:5-6 RSV)



Few Christians obey.

A Higher Good

- ◆ Observable human and societal behaviors look just as they can be expected to look if there is **no God** who is the source of morals and values.
- ◆ We conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that a God like our model God, who has defined good, evil, and human values accepted by most humans and made that knowledge available to us in scriptures and other religious teachings, **does not exist**.

Revealed Truth

- ◆ Hypothesize a god who has **revealed truths** about reality in scriptures and by communicating directly to select individuals throughout history.
- ◆ The scriptures and other recorded teachings of religious figures should contain information and other insights about the universe, life, and humanity that **could not have been known** to the authors by any material means.
- ◆ That information and insight should be of great importance and thus have **observable consequences** such as testable predictions.

Religious Experiences Are Testable

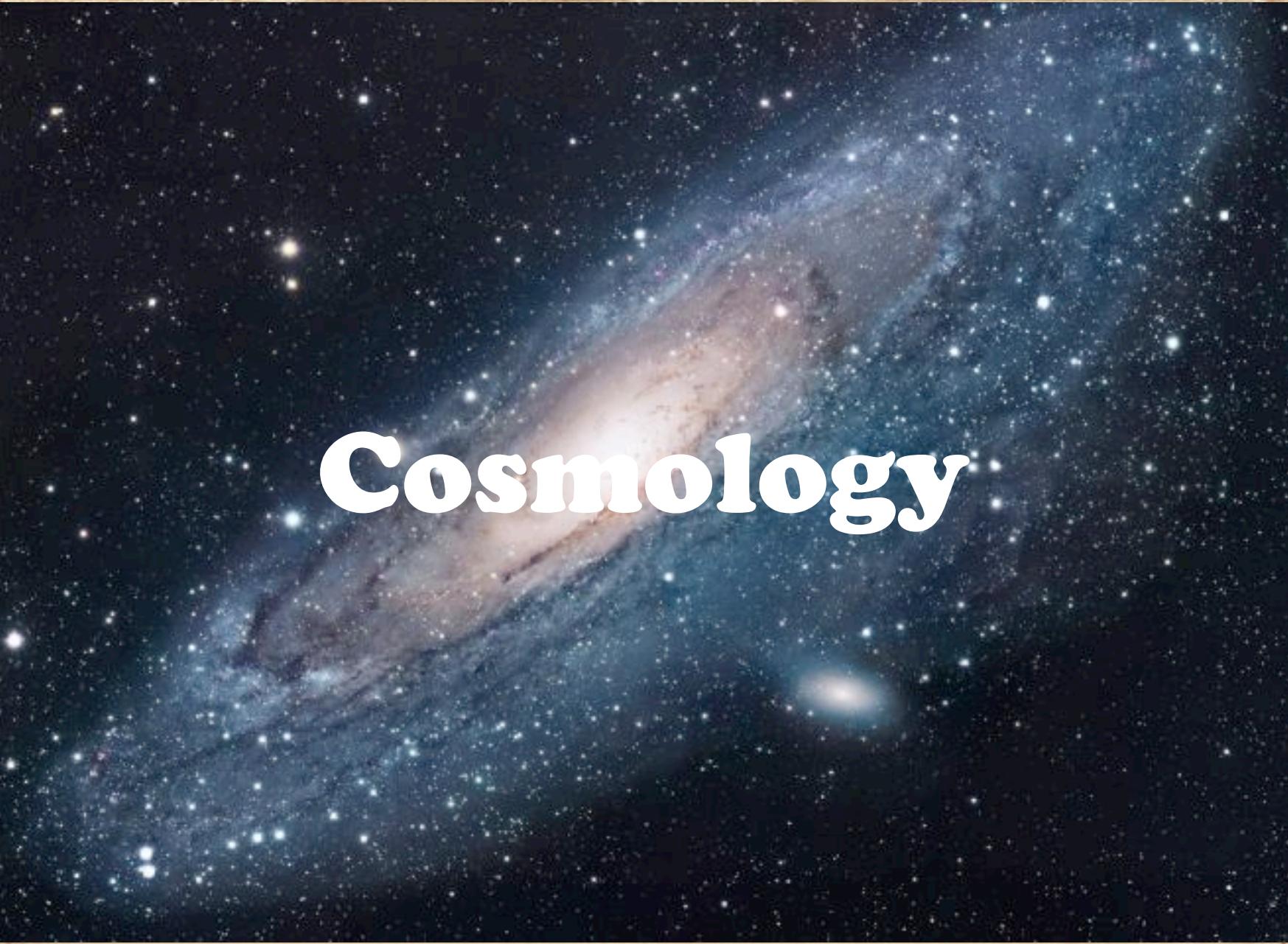
Examples:

- ◆ Provide knowledge about universe not previously known.
- ◆ Successfully predict some unexpected future event.

Empirical facts:

No information from scriptures or supposedly gained during a mystical or religious experience, which could not have been otherwise known to the individual claiming the experience, has ever been confirmed.



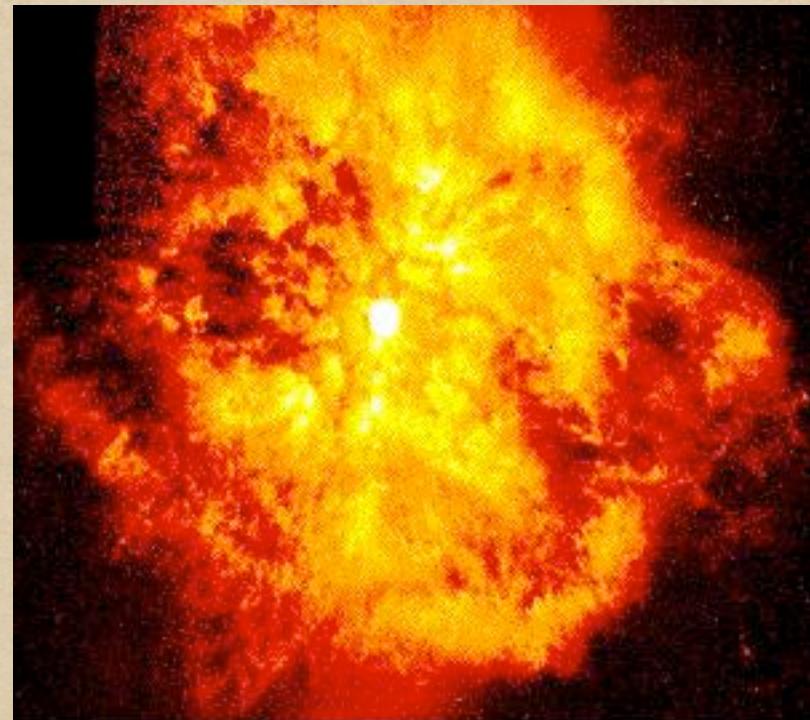


Cosmology

No Miracles Required to Produce Universe

Conservation of Energy
is **not** violated in big bang.

The positive energy of
the universe is **exactly**
balanced by negative
gravitational potential
energy.

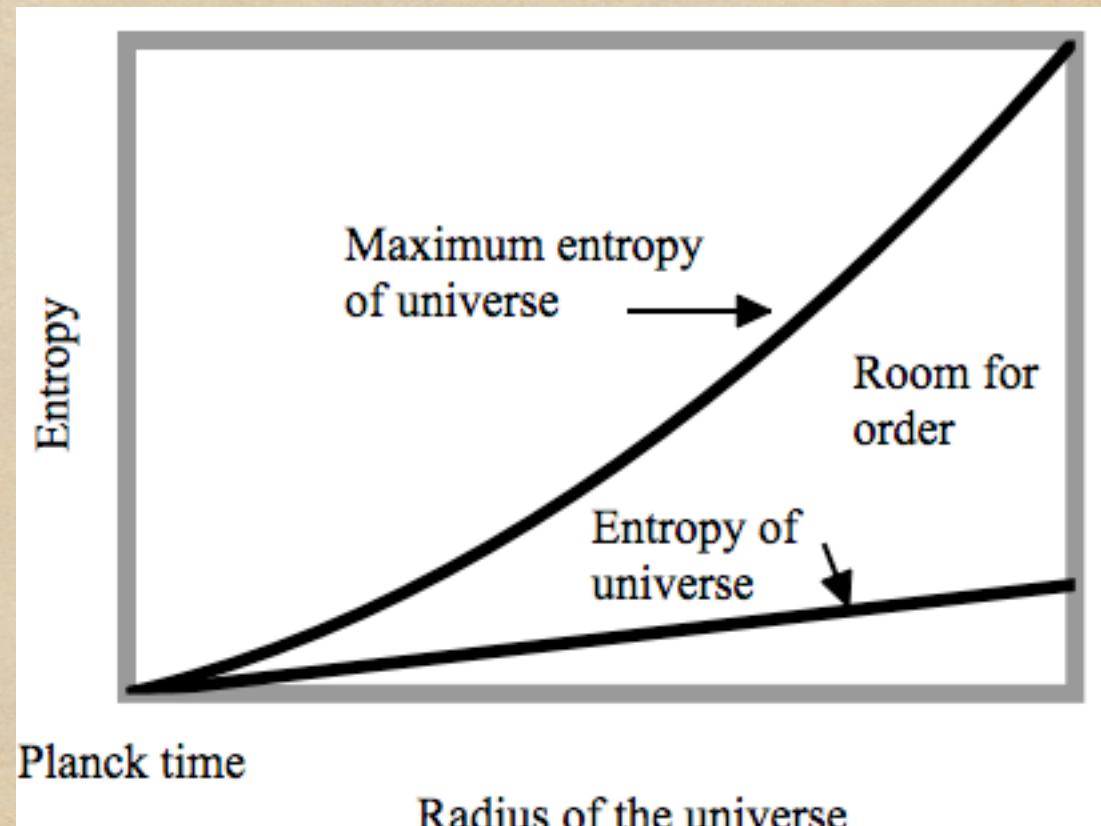


$$E = K + Mc^2 - V_g = 0$$

No Memory of a Creator

The **entropy** (disorder) of the universe was **maximum** at the start of the big bang. Any information about a prior creation was lost.

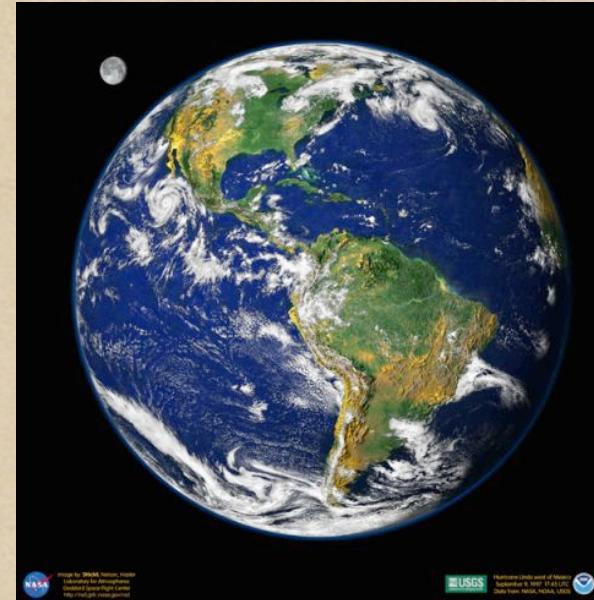
No violation of
Second Law of
Thermodynamics.
Expanding
universe allows
increasing room
for order to form.



The Privileged Planet

Conditions on Earth, particularly those that make human life possible, are also optimized for scientific investigation.

This constitutes "a signal revealing a universe so skillfully created for life and discovery that it seems to whisper of an extraterrestrial intelligence immeasurably more vast, more ancient, and more magnificent than anything we've been willing to expect or imagine."



—Astronomer
Guillermo Gonzalez
and theologian Jay
Richards

WONDER WHO?

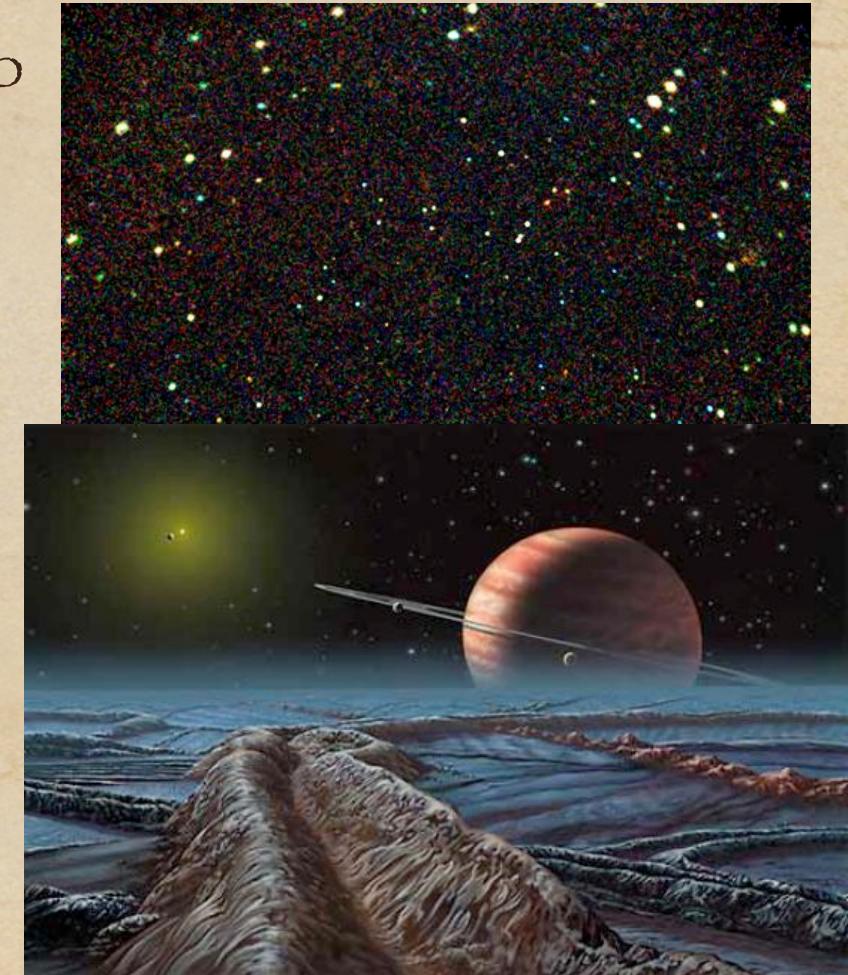
The Underprivileged Universe

If humanity is special, why so much **wasted** space, time, energy and matter?

Universe is **mostly** random particles. Carbon is 0.0007 of mass of universe.

Humanity is **very unlikely** to populate the universe.

The universe shows no evidence of being designed with humanity in mind.



Errors of Scientific Fact in the Scriptures

Fact	Bible	Science
Age of universe	~10,000 years	13.6 billion years
Structure	Firmament	Expanding
Earth formed	Before sun and stars	9 billion years after first stars
Earth structure	Flat	Spheroid
Life	Immutable	Evolved

Exodus is a Myth

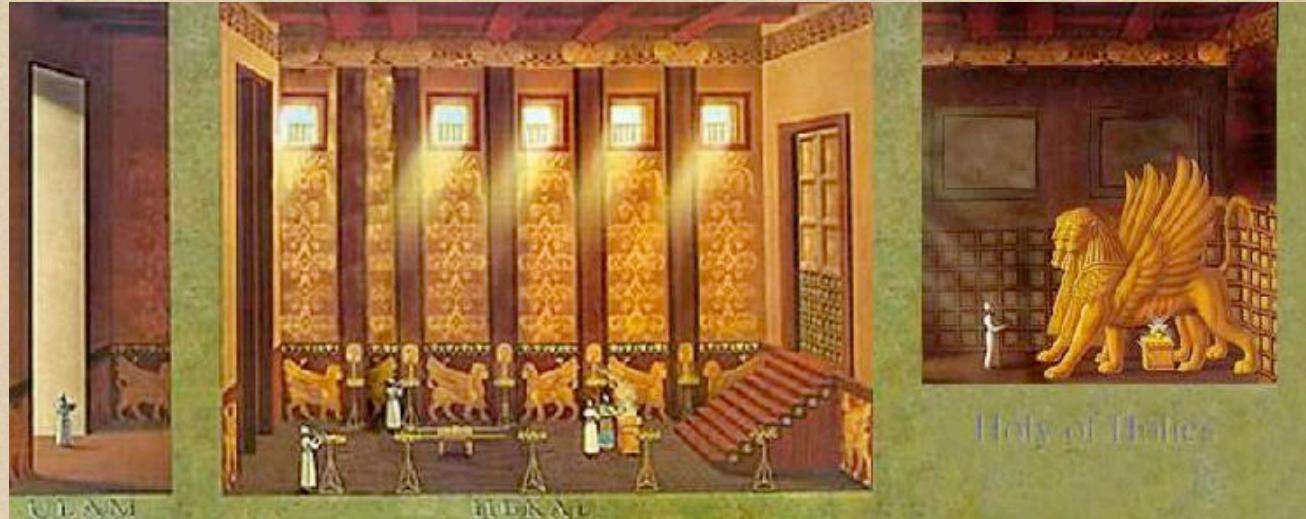


Recent Israeli excavations at Kadesh-Barnea, the Sinai oasis where the Israelites are said to have encamped for forty years, have revealed an extensive settlement, but not so much as a potsherd earlier than the tenth century B.C. . . .

Absolutely no trace of Moses, or indeed of an Israelite presence in Egypt, has ever turned up. Of the Exodus and the wandering in the wilderness—events so crucial in the Biblical recitation of the "mighty acts of God"—we have no evidence whatsoever."

—Archaeologist William Dever

Other Biblical Myths



Physical and historical evidence rules out events as described in Bible:

- ◆ Jewish conquests in Canaan;
- ◆ A great empire of David and Solomon;
- ◆ Solomon's Temple;
- ◆ Birth and death of Jesus.

The information in scriptures and other revelations look just as they would be expected to look if they are of purely human origin.

The “30” God



1. Omnipotent
2. Omniscient
3. Omnid benevolent

Evil Exists

Every 3.6 seconds someone dies from hunger...



75% are children under 5.



Therefore the ~~30~~ God cannot exist

“Some apologists tell us that God remains hidden from us so as not to coerce our worship. But God is not hiding out of solicitude for our freedom. We have not forgotten Job: therefore we understand that God is hiding out of cowardice. God is in hiding because He has too much to hide. We do not seek burning bushes or a pillar of smoke. No—we wish to see God. Can God stand before us? Can God see the face of suffering humanity—and live?”

—Philosopher Evan Fales

The Problem of Evil - Solved

Relax one of the O's

1. Not omnipotent

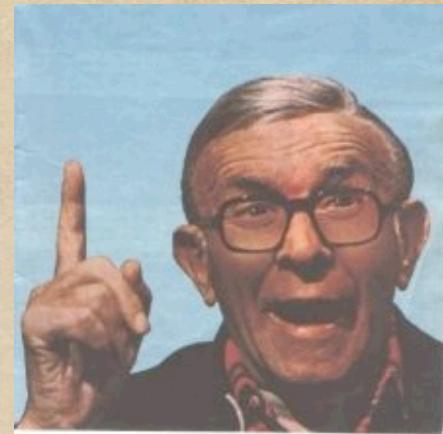
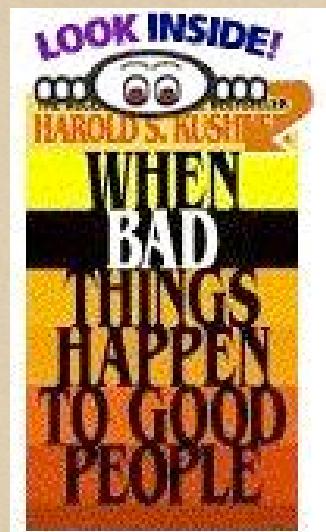
Can't prevent all evil

2. Not omniscient

Doesn't see all evil

3. Not omnibenevolent

Creates evil



God of the Bible?

The Argument from Design

Most common reason given
for belief in God:

“I cannot understand how
the universe and life, in
all their complexity,
could have happened
naturally...”

therefore, they must have
happened
supernaturally.

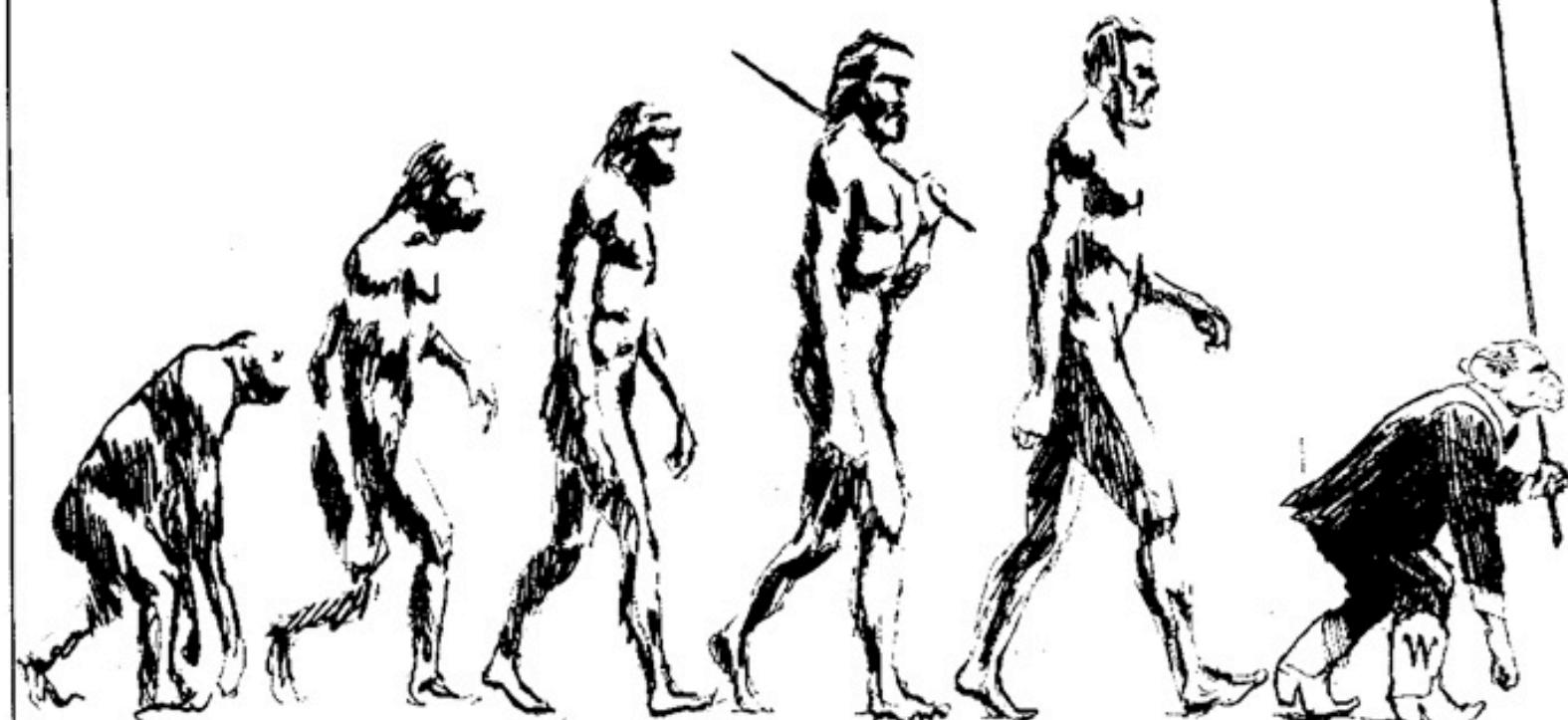


Argument from
ignorance

REXBABIN

THE SACRAMENTO BEE

INTELLIGENT DESIGN



By Rex Babin, The Sacramento Bee, North America/King Features Syndicate

During the minute that it takes me to compose this sentence, thousands of animals are being eaten alive, many others are running for their lives, whimpering with fear, others are slowly being devoured from within by rasping parasites, thousands of all kinds are dying of starvation, thirst, and disease.

It must be so. If there ever is a time of plenty, this very fact will automatically lead to an increase in the population until the natural state of starvation and misery is restored. . .

The universe that we observe has precisely the properties we should expect if there is, at bottom, no design, no purpose, no evil, no good, nothing but pitiless indifference.

—Richard Dawkins

Complexity and Simplicity

Complex structures can be formed from simple systems by purely natural processes:

- ◆ Universe can arise from a quantum fluctuation.
- ◆ Laws of physics can have come from “nothing.”
- ◆ Life evolved by natural processes.
- ◆ Self organization common in nature and lab.
- ◆ The universe and life “look” undesigned.

Example: The Double Spiral

Very common in nature



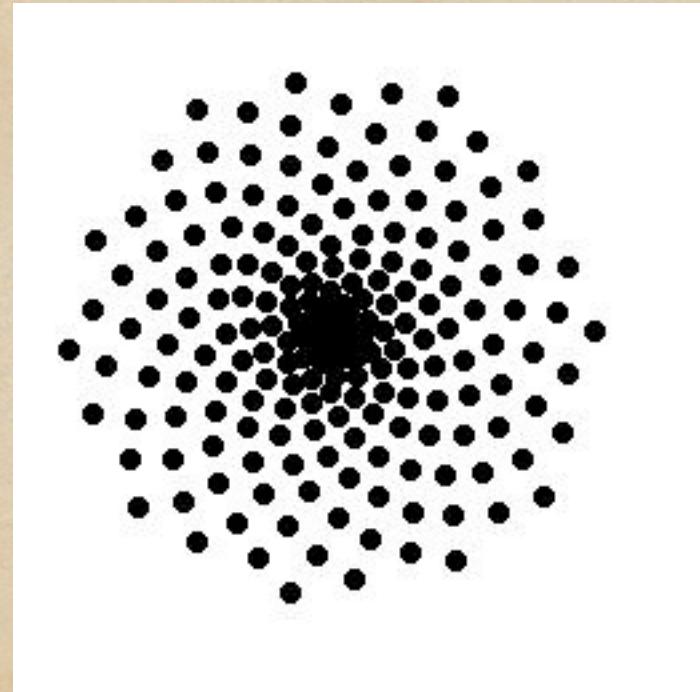
Computer Simulation

- ◆ Place charged particles one-by-one in rings of increasing radius.
- ◆ Minimize potential energy.

No other rules.

Example of “spontaneous broken symmetry.”

Structure in universe arises from spontaneous broken symmetry.



Conclusion

The universe looks just like it can be expected to look if

- ◆ Humans are the source of morals and values.
- ◆ Evil is not prevented by a God.
- ◆ The universe and life are not designed.
- ◆ Humans do not possess supernatural souls.
- ◆ No truths about universe have been supernaturally revealed.
- ◆ Universe arose naturally.
- ◆ Not congenial for humanity.
- ◆ Laws of nature came from nothing.

A GOD WITH ANY OF
THESE PROPERTIES DOES
NOT EXIST BEYOND A
REASONABLE DOUBT