

I. ME

A. Welcome/Online/So what about?/Groups

II. WE

A. Something I know about you... you believe something.

1. **Everyone has a belief system**... how you answer those deeper questions... origin, right and wrong, spirituality, life and death

2. Your life is shaped by what you believe.

- a. Why you get up in the morning
- b. Who you live your life with
- c. The decisions you make... who you vote for
- d. What you eat, drive, wear, etc
- e. ...All stem from beliefs that you hold.

B. We all have a belief system... which means we are all skeptics...

C. Having a belief system requires skepticism.

1. Believing in one thing means you have to challenge and exclude other things.
 - a. Zeus/Thor/Flying S. Monster/God?

D. Skepticism/doubt is good...

1. It means you are engaging your brain and not just accepting or ignoring everything that comes your way.

E. But it has to lead somewhere

1. **Example-** Car shopping
2. GK Chesterson- To believe in everything is to believe in nothing.
3. Asking questions for questions sake doesn't actually lead anywhere
4. If you are truly pursuing truth, You have to be willing to change your belief system if the evidence points otherwise

F. Why we are doing this series a 6-part dialogue about questions or problems many of us have with Xianity...

1. I believe that if we follow the evidence there ARE answers and they could change your life.
2. Based loosely on book... the Problem of God by Mark Clark
3. Atheist turned Xian turned pastor.

G. My background

1. Home- Raised in pastors' family but always allowed to ask anything
2. School- Not very open to other ideas
3. College- became not just emotionally convinced but intellectually convinced.

H. Maybe your experience was different

1. Weren't allowed to ask questions (one way or the other)
2. When you finally did (either b/c you got out of the house, or got the courage to investigate) realized there weren't good answers
3. Or it's just something you've not thought about much... more interested in the here and now/or different religion and curious...

I. Our ground rules...

- 1. Follow where the evidence leads. Not where you hope it leads.**
2. For both Xian and not-Xian
3. This is a discussion not a way to get ammo to win an argument.
4. Engage your thinking not just your emotions
5. **Example-** Me and the Traverse.
6. Might take courage... but you can handle it.

- J. Start this discussion with a nice easy warm up-
 1. The Existence of God
 2. Just going to barely scratch the surface and going to move very quickly
 3. But important to lay the groundwork for rest of our discussion

- K. Often when you see people talk about these things... it's either some kind of YouTube debate where PHD is debating some Joe Shmoe Xian who just keeps quoting the Bible and screaming about faith.
 1. Will show that **Belief in the existence of God is not the abandonment of reason**
 2. Remember you have to be willing to follow the evidence

III. GOD

- A. **Is there evidence/proof that God exists?**
 1. Alvin Plantinga (prominent philosopher)- 2 dozen or so philosophical arguments for God's existence.

- B. 2 main categories
 1. **Anthropology (People)**
 2. **Cosmology (The Universe)**

- C. **Anthropology**
 1. **Morality**- CS LEWIS
 2. C.S. Lewis makes the case that we all have a sense of morality and this is evidence of God's existence.
 3. What do people usually argue about?
 - a. Simplest version- "You did wrong." "No I didn't."
 4. They are both appealing to some innate standard of behavior
 - a. One says they broke it the other says they didn't.
 5. Kids do it all the time/when someone cuts you off or cuts in line/They said they'd do one thing and did the other.
 6. It's a common thread throughout all of humanity... there are things you should do and things you shouldn't do...

- 7. **Where does this sense of right and wrong come from?**
- 8. Xianity says it comes from God
 - a. In order to have a moral law, you need to have a moral lawgiver.
 - b. Someone who decided cutting in line is wrong and designed humans to feel the same way.

- 9. **Arguments**- It's simply a result of your culture and society.
 - a. "What's right and wrong for one group isn't necessarily right and wrong for another."

- 10. Why that doesn't work
 - a. If one holds to this belief they could never be upset or annoyed if someone cuts them off or steals from them.
 - b. They could never condemn any act of evil
 - c. All you could really say is that you don't prefer when people do that... but why would you care if they knew that? What right do you have to impose your preferences on anyone?
 - d. There are acts that even if we went to a completely foreign culture we would still condemn as wrong.
 - e. Why we can talk about just and unjust war/human rights/how children *should* be treated/the #metoo movement

- 11. And it doesn't have anything to do with religion
 - a. Something often misunderstood... Xianity doesn't teach that you need God in order to know right from wrong, or that you can only do or want good if you believe in God.
 - b. Xianity teaches that we all have that in us b/c there is a God who put it there
 - c. **Romans 2:14-15**

12. "That's nice, but isn't this all just a **product of our evolution**... those who learned to work together survived and past that trait on."
- a. The problem is, if we simply inherited our sense of morals from our genes, where the ultimate goal is survival... then many of our moral ideas are unexplainable or completely counterproductive
 - b. **Example**- putting your life at risk to save a stranger (Lillea and the wasps)/Every soldier/Feeling good when giving to charity
 - c. Another example- taking care of those less able: elderly, sick, disabled.
 - d. If you follow strict natural selection to its natural conclusion...
 - 1) There are races of humans more advanced than others and are therefore favored.
 - 2) **Darwin: "Man scans with scrupulous care the character and pedigree of his horses, cattle, and dogs before he matches them, but when it comes to his own marriage he rarely, or never, takes any such care... Both sexes ought to refrain from marriage if they are in any marked degree inferior in body or mind."**
 - 3) **Leads to eugenics**... only fell out of favor after Nazism tried to actually do it.
 - e. Now if that's the natural outcome of natural selection... why are we completely disgusted by it?
 - f. Points to evidence that God wrote a moral law on our hearts.
 - g. Other evidence...

D. Cosmology-The Universe

1. The Big Bang

- a. Late 1920's Edwin Hubble discovered that the galaxies were moving away from each other
- b. Later discoveries showed that they were moving b/c they had been flung apart by a massive explosion
- c. **Proves the universe had a beginning.**
- d. Prior- leading thought was that the universe was eternal, always existing
- e. What caused it? What's the logical answer?
- f. Leading theory- The nothing hypothesis
 - 1) Nothing x Nothing = Everything
- g. Using our rational minds we know this doesn't work scientifically, philosophically or experientially.
- h. Everything has a beginning
- i. **Example**- iPhone found in the forest/Rocks chipped to make tools

2. Design

- a. There is a strange design and order to the universe that points strongly to a designer who crafted the world with precision and balance.

b. DNA

- 1) Coherent and information filled code
- 2) Amoeba enough data to fill 30 encyclopedias
- 3) That's a single cell
- 4) Yet we know that this genetic code is built into every living organism down to the level of a single strand of DNA.
- 5) Why would every organism have this coherent code written in it?

c. Astronomy

- 1) **We have a fine tuned universe**
- 2) The mathematical chance of our universe ever existing is so tiny that its mind boggling... not to mention it being just right to be allow life to exist.
- 3) 122 variables that must be lined up in precise values for our universe to come into existence
- 4) If just one was off by even one part in a million millionth there would be no matter... stars/planets/people
- 5) Where did these dials even come from in the first place?

d. Laws of Physics

- 1) When did they come into existence?
- 2) For our universe to exist... the law of physics would have to exist BEFORE the Big Bang.
- 3) They could not come into existence at the same moment or else they would not do their work.
- 4) Certain conditions had to exist prior to the existence of the universe.
- 5) **Mind came before matter**

3. Evidence points to a mind outside of universe. An uncaused first cause that created everything else.

E. Other Options

1. Two Leading

2. Lucky Us Hypothesis

- a. Yes chances are extremely low that this could happen but it did. So... lucky us. Accept it and enjoy.
- b. Like being dealt a Royal Flush... not likely but it happened. Celebrate!
- c. Doesn't even compare... for it to be comparable you would have to be dealt that Royal Flush every time forever...
- d. If that happened no one would say lucky you... they would say you interfered with natural chance by cheating.
- e. Chance and Lucky Us is not a rational explanation.

3. Multiverse Theory.

- a. There are an infinite number of universes all existing alongside each other (like bubble in foam)
- b. Or accordion expanding and contracting...Universe did begin with big bang but it was just the latest in a long series of big bangs... the universe bangs and then crunches forever... recreating with different variables
- c. Infinite universes with every outcome possible... etc.
- d. We just happen to be in the one that is perfectly tuned for life.
- e. 2 Top Problems...
 - 1) Modern Science pretty certain the universe does not crunch but is destined to expand forever. Major piece of evidence is "red shift"; every object in the universe is speeding up faster away from every other object.
 - 2) There is absolutely, not one shred of evidence for other universes.
 - 3) And we agreed to follow the evidence.

4. Both of these theories are simply faith positions with no actual evidence at all.

IV. YOU

- A. So what do we do with this?
 1. **Follow the evidence.**
 2. Does all of this prove that the God of Xianity is the one true God and everything the Bible says is right?
 3. No.
 4. But, taken together, the evidence does point to an intelligent Creator.
 5. So is it crazy to believe that a God actually exists, is it simply a cop out for the unintelligent... "God did it"
 6. The evidence that we see in ourselves and the universe suggests otherwise- with all respect...the evidence seems to point that the real cop out is... "It just happened."

- B. Now... Xianity take this evidence further...
 1. It gives this creator an identity- **Gen 1:1**
 2. It goes even further by saying God not just a cosmic creator but a personal Father.
 3. That created all of this because he loves us and wants us to know and love Him.
 4. And that this love was proven by Jesus... but we'll get to that later.

V. WE

- A. So maybe there is more to Xianity that crazies shouting about Genesis and the Bible and all of that.
- B. Maybe there are rational reasons to believe that there is a creator
- C. Maybe it's not just chance
- D. Maybe you existing isn't just "lucky you" but part of something bigger... something better.
- E. You could chalk all of it up to chance... but that takes more blind faith than coming to the logical conclusion that the evidence takes us too.
- F. Maybe it's not all about being emotionally convinced but that true belief requires logical rational thinking.

- G. Leave you with one question...
 1. Since we all have some kind of belief system...
 2. **What evidence supports your belief?**