

How Do I Know There Is a God?

I want people to be saved, to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior. Before that takes place there are some foundational truths that must be accepted. The first hurdle that some must overcome is the simple fact of believing there is a God. As some of your eyes fall on these lines, you almost take a breath of exasperation while thinking, "Doesn't everybody really believe there is a God?" I will admit there are many who lean strongly in their mind to believing there is a God and yet will try to reason with themselves and others that there surely must not be. And this is done for a myriad of reasons. One being they don't want to be personally accountable to Deity. However, there are some sincere unbelievers that if they had reasons for believing would jump at the chance. And it is those who have come to this jumping point that I want to address. I did not coin this term; I heard this from a young college student last week that has corresponded with me on more than one occasion, fighting his own inward doubts. By the way, he was rejoicing that he had come to grips with faith and God had made himself very real to him. He said he came to this "jumping point." The phrase reminded me of Kierkegaard's "leap of faith." I submit to you, the leap of faith is not a dangerous one, for you fall into the arms of your loving Great Shepherd. The leap of faith is not a difficult one as though like a sprinter going for a long jump who trains for it, strains for it and when he finally makes his jump, runs until he can run no more and even as he leaps, he hopes and prays he makes his mark. God, who is good, did the straining for us. Christ left the glory of Heaven, lived the perfect life for 33½ years we could and would have never lived, and died the death of the cross in our place. Then He rose again from the grave to give us eternal life. So, for you perspective jumpers out there, hear me out. First of all, I believe there is a God because of:

1. Arrangement

Look around us. Listen carefully. Observe ever so minutely. There is order, yea, arrangement that is far too coincidental to be coincidental. I am in a place that is easy for me to believe in God. As I write these words, I can lift up my eyes and see the stars above me, placed in a symmetry that has been studied by astrologists since man has been upon this planet. The definition from the secular dictionary says constellations are "group of stars forming a recognizable pattern that is traditionally named after its apparent form or identified with a mythological figure. Modern astronomers divide the sky into eighty-eight constellations with defined boundaries." Please make note of two statements from this secular definition: "recognizable pattern" and "defined boundaries." The most ancient book of the Bible says of God: "*Which maketh Arcturus, Orion, and Pleiades, and the chambers of the south. Which doeth great things past finding out; yea, and wonders without number*" (Job 9:9, 10). When daylight comes I can lift up my head and see the famous Diamond Head Mountain. Should you argue that this was the result of volcano action...I will be quick to assert, yes, and isn't it marvelous that God can take even that which we would describe as cataclysmic, stop it and cover it with gently, flowering foliage and make something so beautiful? This morning, I am listening to the sea roar into the beach at Waikiki and marvel that it stops at designated points. This process is so sure, massive structures, such as the one in which I am staying, can be built and stay for years towering into the sun...just a few feet from this vast expanse called the Pacific Ocean. "*He hath compassed the waters with bounds, until the day and night come to an end*" (Job 26:10). "*By the word of the LORD were the heavens made; and all the host of them by the breath of his mouth. He gathereth the waters of the sea together as an heap: he layeth up the depth in storehouses. Let all the earth fear the LORD: let all the inhabitants of the world stand in awe of him. For he spake, and it was done; he commanded, and it stood fast*" (Psalm 33:6-9). Every law a scientist can name that keeps the water within these bounds is a law of order that He, who is all order, placed into existence. Even the argument of our apparent chaos such as seen in a giant tsunami can be countered with the question: "And what caused the water, after washing over the earth, to return to its parameters?"

From the monumental works of nature to the most minute flower and pollination process, I see arrangement. My use of the human hand to write these words and my ability to see with this incredible complex organ called the eye is inexplicable from a mere human standpoint. If you believe the eye can easily be explained, do us all a big favor and make one for us. Even man's most advanced technological advances rely upon an order in the universe that is beyond human understanding. *"When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; What is man, that thou art mindful of him? and the son of man, that thou visitest him?"*(Psalm 8:3,4).

Last week nostalgia took the best of me. While speaking in central Florida, I took a ride down the street where I lived as a boy. I was blessed to have a godly and knowledgeable father who was very open to any questions his children would have. I recall as a youngster of around eleven or twelve thinking, I believe all of this, but do I believe all of this because of my Christian upbringing? How do I know this for sure? In my heart of hearts, I truly believed with all my child-like faith I had. There was just this doubt that was lodged, like an itch longing to be scratched. So, I formed a question to my learned dad like this: "Dad, I believe. But I don't know all the reasons why I believe what I believe." I continued, "What if I have a friend who asks me, how do I know there is a God, what do I tell him?" Dad did not panic, he did not fret, but took me outside and laid his loving hand upon my shoulder as we looked into our back yard. We could see fruit trees lifting their fruit boughs over the orderly green grass beneath and then we stood next to a tall pine lifting its majestic head into the sky above us. That same sky that was soon to bless the earth with an afternoon shower of rain held by clouds formed above which had gingerly lifted the waters from the earth through evaporation and was soon to bless us with a return of that water in a purified state. As I stood there, my dad asked me to consider the order of nature and ask myself, could this possibly be accidental? I don't remember everything Dad said to me, because as soon as he brought order and complex premeditated creation to my mind, I began to see arrangement in every leaf, every flower and to every little kumquat that grew on the tree beside me.

Look at the watch. If I told you a bucket held the contents of a disassembled watch and I posed this question, how long would I have to shake it before it would come together and work? Your answer would most likely be something like, "You could never expect this to accidentally come together." If I asked you why, you would most likely reply, "Because it is obvious; its very existence is proof of intelligent design." And I would say, "Exactly!"

I love this story I came across a couple of years ago. A skeptic was standing on the campus of a famous mid-western university. The novice arrogantly challenged, "If there is a God, let Him strike me in 60 seconds." He began to do the countdown. "Fifteen seconds, no God! Twenty-five seconds, God still hasn't showed!" As he began his diatribe, a young football player was walking back to his dorm from practice, still in his sweaty football garb. He heard it all. "Thirty seconds; my, my I guess God cannot make it. Where is He? Where is He?" The football player snapped his helmet back onto his head, braced himself as though he were at the line of scrimmage and when the foolish skeptic began to do the final count-down of 10-9-8-7, the player began to run through the crowd like a bolt of lightning. The player buried his helmet into the young agnostic's solar plexus, sending him sprawling into the grass. As the dazed young man sat up, the young believing football player said, "God told me He was busy and asked me to take care of your request for Him."

I don't claim to be fulfilling a request from God as I write these words, but I write them as a fellow seeker who found The Way, The Truth and The Life (John 14:6). Next week I want to continue our thoughts on how I know there is a God."

- Pastor Pope -

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