

## Is He Really out There?

A French mathematician, Blaise Pascal, proposed an unusual wager in which he demonstrated that betting against the existence of God places us in a no-win situation. If God does not exist and I choose to believe in him, my eternity will be no better and no worse than anyone else. However, if God exists and I choose not to believe in him, I have lost everything. Thus, even if the chances are fifty-fifty, the only rational choice is to believe in God and live accordingly. So from a purely statistical viewpoint, one must accept God's existence. Pascal was not trying so much to prove God's existence as he was demonstrating that disbelief is a no-win situation.<sup>1</sup> And if I am willing to stake my eternal soul on God not existing, then I had better be absolutely certain because at stake is our eternal destiny.

God has revealed his existence to us (Romans 1:18-21). We see his fingerprint in the world around us (Psalm 19). No extraordinary series of lucky, random coincidences can explain the complex chain necessary to produce life. Only a carefully wise, loving craftsman could have brought this about. He has given us his Word so we can know his will. He has not left us in the dark about how he wants us to live. Jesus came into the world to model the kind of life God demands us to live. Since the world about us exhibits intricate design, a supreme designer must have fashioned it. William Paley asks us to suppose that we are walking along the beach. In the sand, we see a circular, metallic object with a glass face and the numbers one through twelve in a circle. When we put the object to our ear, we hear ticking. Then, we note that it displays the correct time. Where did the object come from? Perhaps an explosion in a watch factory hurled all of the parts together and the watch landed here. Or perhaps a watchmaker crafted the watch. Which of these two options seems more plausible? Can a random accident produce an intricate piece of machinery designed to keep time correctly. If it is possible for a watch to be the result of an explosion, then we can reason that we can produce new cars from automobile accidents.

Random chance cannot have produced life. When we look at the world, we see an entire universe perfectly tuned to produce life. If any one of these vital factors is even off a part of a fraction, then life could not exist. If the expansion rate of our universe were slightly slower then it would have collapsed—thus, no life. If it were slightly faster, then galaxies would not form—thus, no life. The velocity of light, the mass of the universe even the nuclear force holding the atom together must all be just right or life cannot exist.<sup>2</sup> If Earth were not tilted 23 degrees on its axis, water would accumulate into mountains ice at each pole making life impossible. If it were closer to the sun or rotated more slowly, then life could not stand extreme temperature changes.<sup>3</sup> Even the simplest possible life form, a virus, shows that life cannot result from random chance. The chance of a virus with 239 protein molecules to exist and reproduce is 1 in  $10^{137.915}$ . The observable universe contains only  $10^{80}$  particles. Even if protein molecules came together randomly each second that scientists believe the universe to exist ( $10^{18}$  seconds), the universe is vastly too small and too young to have come about on its own. Can we not know that a Worldmaker exists? Since the universe cannot have produced life on its own, we can know a Worldmaker exists—a Worldmaker who deeply cares for his creation. Just as we can know a watchmaker made the watch, we know that a Worldmaker made our world.

Morals and values point to the existence of God. What is the source of our values? At one time behavioral psychologists proposed that all behavior and values even personality stems from the type of stimulation we receive from our environment. Positive stimulation produces healthy individuals; negative stimulation results in criminal and/or psychologically unstable people. Yet, people receiving the same type of stimulation turn out differently. Psychologists now realize that we are born with certain personality traits. If God doesn't exist, then we are merely the sum of our experiences. People are not machines which we can program to behave properly. We set our own values influenced by—not programmed by—our environment, and we act in line with our ideals and values. If God doesn't exist, then what difference is there between man and cockroaches? After all, both are mere collections of atoms arranged randomly into one compact form. We are simply arranged differently—larger perhaps but essentially the same. Yet, what is the penalty for squashing a bug? How can we hide behind the pompous attitude

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<sup>1</sup>Some may argue that the existence of unicorns can be proven by using this same argument. However, this misses the point. Pascal simply argues that unbelief's no-win status makes it an unpalatable choice even if we could not prove God exists. It is the equivalent of playing Russian roulette with our destiny.

<sup>2</sup>Astronomer Hugh Ross details seventeen essential characteristics necessary for our universe to be inhabitable. If any one of these is out of sync, then life cannot exist. See **Fingerprint of God**, pp.119-138.

<sup>3</sup>Rubel Shelly, **Prepare to Answer** (Nashville: 20th Century Christian, 1990), pp. 39-40.

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that we are “higher” life forms? If we are a product of a long, sequence of random events as atheists insist, then our morals and values cannot measure appropriate behavior since they are mere accidents like ourselves.