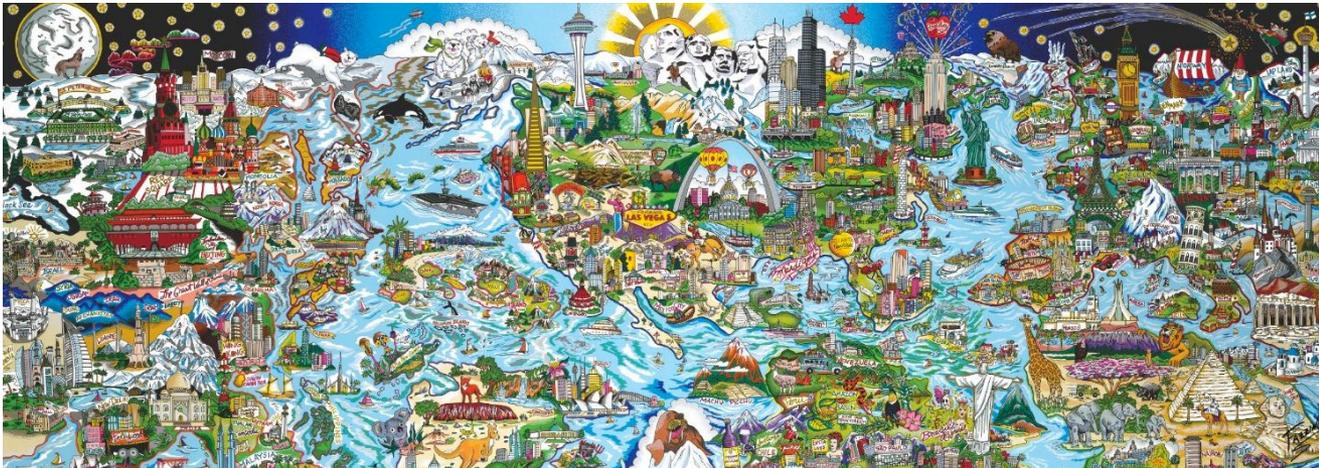


The Box Top



In order to have **UNITY** among the **Diverse** subjects
We would need to have the “Box Top” or worldview
That shows us how it all fits together.



5 Most Consequential Questions in Life:

1. **Origin**: Where did we come from?
2. **Identity**: Who are we?
3. **Meaning**: Why are we here?
4. **Morality**: How should we live?
5. **Destiny**: Where are we going?

3 Major Categories of Worldviews

THEIST: Anyone who believes in a personal God who created the universe, but is NOT part of the universe.

- Judaism
- Christianity
- Islam

PANTHEIST: Someone who believes in an impersonal God that literally IS the universe.

- Zen Buddhism
- Hinduism
- New Age

ATHEIST: Someone who does NOT believe in any type of God

- Happy Faced:
Religious Humanism
- Sad Faced:
Nihilism

Faith and Religion

Religion requires faith, but **not only faith**. **FACTS** are also central to all religions and worldviews. Many of the “truth claims” can be evaluated through scientific and historical investigations.

For Example: THEISTS say that the universe had a beginning. ATHEISTS and PANTHEISTS have traditionally stated that it did not have a beginning (the universe is eternal). These claims are mutually exclusive and can't both be true. By investigating the nature and history of the universe, we can reasonably conclude that one view is right and the other is wrong.

Science and religion are NOT mutually exclusive categories as some suggest.

OBSTACLES to Belief in Christianity

1. **Intellectual Obstacles**: (the problem of evil, evolution, etc)
2. **Emotional Obstacles**: (exclusivism, doctrine of hell, hypocrisy, etc.)
3. **Volitional Obstacles**: (Christian morality, yielding one's life to Someone, etc.)

Can We Handle the Truth?

4 Key questions:

1. What is truth?
2. Can truth be known?
3. Can truths about God be known?
4. So what? Who cares about truth?

Question #1: What is Truth?

Telling it like it is.

That which corresponds to its object.

That which describes an actual state of affairs.

1. Truth claims are absolute, narrow, and exclusive. (It excludes the opposites)
2. Truth is discovered, not invented. It exists independent of anyone's knowledge of it.
3. Truth is trans-cultural.
4. Truth is unchanging (even though beliefs about it change).
5. Beliefs cannot change a fact, no matter how sincerely it is believed.
6. Truth is not affected by the attitude of the one professing it.
7. Contrary beliefs are possible, contrary truths are not possible.

The Road Runner Tactic: (Identifying and refuting self-defeating statements)

Saying, “there is no truth” is a truth claim. Saying, “there are no absolutes” is an absolute statement.

Question #2: Can Truth Be Known?

Agnostic: “I don’t know whether there is a God.”

Atheist: “I know there is no God?”

Ordinary Agnostic: “I don’t know anything for sure.”

Ornery Agnostic: “I can’t know anything for sure.”

Quote...“Evidence cannot convince the unwilling.”

Can All Religions Be True?

Similar “Moral Codes”; but disagree about most every major issue:

The nature of God: Triune? One? Many? Knowable? Loving? Etc.

The nature of man: Image of God? Sin nature?

Sin: Is there sin? What is sin?

Salvation: Grace? Works? Grace + Works? What kinds of works?

Heaven: What is it like? What are we like in heaven?

Hell: Is there hell? What is hell like?

Authoritative Books: The Bible? Book Koran? Bhagavad Gita?

Since different religions believe in “mutually exclusive” beliefs, they cannot all be true.

Four Categories of how we arrive at our beliefs:

Sociological: Parents, Friends, Society, Culture

Psychological: Comfort, Peace of Mind, Meaning, Purpose, Hope, Identity

Religious: Scripture, Pastor, Priest, Guru, Rabbi, Imam, Church

Philosophical: Consistency, Coherence, Completeness (best explanation)

1. Any teaching—religious or otherwise—is worth trusting only if it points to the truth.
2. Many beliefs that people hold today are not supported by evidence, but are merely subjective opinions. People most often believe what they find attractive.
3. In order to find truth, one must be ready to give up those subjective preferences in favor of objective facts.

Western vs. Eastern Logic:

Either – Or logic vs. Both --- And logic.

The Law of Non-Contradiction: Contradictory claims cannot both be true at the same time in the same sense. In other words, the opposite of true is false.

David Hume: Since there are no sense experiences for concepts beyond the physical, any metaphysical concepts (those concepts beyond the physical, including God) should not be believed because they are meaningless.

--**The Principle of Empirical Verifiability:** A proposition can be meaningful only if its true by definition or if its empirically verifiable.

Norman Geisler states that this principle is self-defeating because it is neither true by definition nor empirically verifiable (road runner tactic). Certainly claims that are empirically verifiable or true by definition are meaningful, but those claims do not comprise ALL meaningful statements.

Immanuel Kant: The structure of your senses and your mind forms all sense data, so you never really know the thing IN ITSELF. You only know the thing TO YOU after your mind and senses form it. Therefore, we cannot know anything about the real world (even empirically verifiable things).

Geisler states that this principle violates the Law of Non-Contradiction. Kant claims that no one can know the real world, but how does he KNOW that? In order to know that, he must KNOW that it is unknowable.

“Nothing –but” data implies “more-than” knowledge. In order for Kant to differentiate the thing in the real world from that which his mind perceives, he would have to be able to see both. But this is what he says cannot be done. There is no difference between your mind and the real world.

How is Truth Known?

First Principles: These are inherent to the nature of reality and are self-evident.

1. The Law of Non-Contradiction: Contradictory claims cannot both be true at the same time in the same sense. In other words, the opposite of true is false.

2. The Law of the Excluded Middle: Something either is, or is not. (Either God exists or he does not).

Logic tells us if a conclusion is valid from the premises.

1. All men are mortal.
2. Billy Bob is a man.
3. Therefore, Billy Bob is mortal.

The conclusion is logical. But that doesn't mean the premises are true.

1. All men are four-legged reptiles.
2. Jimmy Joe is a man.
3. Therefore, Jimmy Joe is a four-legged reptile.

Since the premise is faulty this statement is not true, even though it is logical.

Deductive Reasoning: Lining up premises in an argument and arriving at a valid conclusion.

Inductive Reasoning: Drawing conclusions from specific observations (the scientific method). Most conclusions based on this reasoning are “highly probable” but not absolutely certain. Only if all the particulars are known can you have “perfect induction”. We can, however, be sure beyond a reasonable doubt (not all doubt).

How Are Truths About God Known?

Observation and Inductive reasoning.

Example: Why do you assume that a book is an effect of a human mind? Observational experience says that a book is the result of preexisting intelligence (an author). We've never seen rain, wind, etc. produce a book. So despite not seeing anyone write this book, you've concluded that it must have at least one author.

Are there observable effects that we can observe that point to God?

So what? Who Cares About Truth?

1. Even though some people may claim truth in morality doesn't matter, they don't really believe that when someone treats them immorally.
2. Moral choices have an impact on success in life. (some bring success, others ruin)
3. All laws legislate morality. The question is whose morality.
4. If the Bible is true, then our eternal destinies are at stake. If it's not true, then a lot of people are wasting a lot of time, money, and lives.
5. In this life religious truth matters because it directs the actions of people (jihads, Mother Theresa, etc.)

Ideas have consequences:

C.S. Lewis: "Men without chests"

"In a sort of ghastly simplicity we remove the organ and demand the function. We make men without chests and expect of them virtue and enterprise. We laugh at honor and are shocked to find traitors in our midst. We castrate and bid the gelding be fruitful."

“Cosmological” Argument

Premise 1: Everything that had a beginning had a cause

Premise 2: The Universe had a beginning

Conclusion: Therefore, the Universe had a cause

Premise 1: Everything that had a beginning had a cause

- This is the “Law of Causality” ie Cause and Effect (the fundamental principle of science).
- This premise is the basis for rational thought and is well established and undeniable.
- Premise #1 is true.

Premise 2: The Universe had a beginning

- **S.U.R.G.E.**

- **S** = The Second Law of Thermodynamics (study of matter and energy)
 - The Universe is running out of usable energy
 - The **First Law of Thermodynamics** states that the total amount of energy in the Universe is constant (finite amount of energy).
 - If your car has a finite amount of gas (First Law) and whenever your car is running it continually consumes gas (Second Law) would your car be running now if you had started it up an infinitely long time ago?
 - AKA the Law of Entropy which states nature tends to bring things to DISorder (things naturally fall apart). The Universe cannot be eternal because we have not reached complete disorder (entropy) yet.

Premise 2: The Universe had a beginning

S.U.R.G.E.

U = The Universe is Expanding. The theory of General Relativity predicted an expanding Universe (the universe isn't expanding into empty space but space itself is expanding).

The Hubble telescope has confirmed for many scientists that the Universe is expanding from a single point.

Premise 2: The Universe had a beginning

S.U.R.G.E.

R = Radiation from the Big Bang (technically called “Cosmic Background Radiation”) is the afterglow of heat from the initial explosion. Predicted to exist as early as 1948 but confirmed to exist almost 20 years later. Its presence confirms that the Universe is NOT is an eternal steady state.

Premise 2: The Universe had a beginning

S.U.R.**G**.E.

G = Great Galaxy Seeds. The temperature ripples from the waves of the big bang would cause matter to congregate by gravitational attraction into Galaxies. The ripples found that the explosion and expansion of the universe was precisely tweaked to cause just enough matter to congregate to allow Galaxy formation, but not enough to cause the universe to collapse back on itself. The ripples are so exact they have been called the “machining marks from the creation of the universe” and the “fingerprints of the maker.”

Premise 2: The Universe had a
beginning

S.U.R.G.E.

E = Einstein's Theory of General Relativity. This Theory shows that time, space, and matter are co-relative. That is, they are interdependent—you can't have one without the others.

“Cosmological” Argument

Premise 1: Everything that had a beginning had a cause

Premise 2: The Universe had a beginning

Conclusion: Therefore, the Universe had a cause

The Teleological Argument:

Premise #1: Every design has a designer.

Premise #2: The universe has highly complex design

Conclusion: Therefore, the universe had a Designer.

Evidence of Design:

Anthropic Principle: “anthropic” =
Greek for “human” or “man.”

This principle refers to the highly precise and interdependent environmental conditions needed for human life on earth.

1. Oxygen Level: 21% of the atmosphere. If it were 25% fires would erupt spontaneously; If it were 15%, human beings would suffocate.

2. Atmospheric Transparency: Less transparent would mean not enough solar radiation would reach the earth's surface. If it were more transparent, we would be bombarded with far too much solar radiation. (Also the composition of the atmosphere must have precise levels of nitrogen, oxygen, carbon dioxide, and ozone)

3. Moon-Earth Gravitational Interaction:

Too much gravitational interaction would mean very severe tidal effects on the oceans, atmosphere, and rotational period. Too little would cause climatic instabilities.

4. Carbon Dioxide Level: Too high and we'd have a runaway greenhouse effect (we'd burn up); if too low plants would not be able to maintain efficient photosynthesis.

Over 122 anthropic constants:

**Chance of human life on another
planet = 1 in 10^{138}**

The Teleological Argument:

Premise #1: Every design has a designer.

Premise #2: The universe has highly complex design

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