



Back to the Beginning

Young people tell pollsters that modern science has settled the question of God. We should align our lives to scientific knowledge, they say, not to outdated religious faith that the world left behind long ago.

But contemporary science is wrestling with three questions that undermine this youthful atheism.

Extra-galactic evidence that the universe continues to expand has led physicists to trace matter and energy backwards mathematically to a moment when everything began.

Was the Beginning the moment of creation? Scientific knowledge discloses the Beginning but cannot explain it. Science gives us knowledge *that* time and space came into being but cannot tell us *how*, because the scientist's competence does not extend beyond the borders of time and space. Precisely here, at the limits of time and space, *belief* in a Creator beyond time and space takes the question of God further, into the realm of faith.

Mounting scientific evidence for the Beginning of space and time confirms the compatibility of science's assurance *that* the world began with faith's confidence in the truth of *how* it began. New scientific knowledge of creation strengthens the believer's case for its Creator.

A second front of controversy centers on the astoundingly precise fine-tuning modern physics reveals in the harmonious regulation of the universe. Elegant mathematical equations disclose universal "constants" that govern the underlying order of the cosmos to an infinitesimal degree. Even the slightest changes in these numerical relationships would make the existence of the universe impossible.

How to explain such fine-tuned complexity? The odds make it almost infinitely unlikely that it happened at random. Faith sees evidence of a Master Designer at work—evidence that gives good grounds for belief but does not pretend to prove it conclusively. Nonetheless, this is evidence that atheists have not found easy to refute.

Evolutionary biology raises yet a third challenge for atheism today: the need to explain the origin of life. In the sub-microscopic universe a different form of fine-tuning comes to light: highly sophisticated cellular coding sets in motion mind-bogglingly intricate sequences of information exchange on which life depends. But no code writes itself; every code comes from a coder. An intelligible program necessarily implies an intelligent programmer. Faith would call that programmer God.

A fine-tuned universe with a beginning and life-compatible coding—if we follow the science, it leads us back to the question of God.