

APOLOGETICS



Keep The Faith

Episode 6 – Kalam Down!

Hi guys and welcome back to another companion of this exciting series of the podcast!

In this week's episode we continued on from the previous weeks, in which we looked at the first two premises of the Kalam Cosmological argument, those being everything that begins to exist has a cause, and the universe began to exist.

In the podcast we've looked at the fact that things don't pop into being without a cause, the absurdity and impossibility of an actual infinite, and the scientific underpinning of a finite universe.

In these companions we've rebutted an article from answers in genesis, dealt with some objections, showed you extra tactics to use in discussions, and fleshed out our understanding of the premises.

Today we're confronted with the conclusion to our first argument!

Premises 1 & 2 are plausibly and likely true, therefore the conclusion logically follows – that the universe has a cause.

In this episode we had a little dig into some tactics in discussions and some of the questions this conclusion might bring up!

First-off, you might initially find it quite hard to get this argument into a discussion naturally. Don't worry, that's perfectly normal.

I find there's two general ways of getting the argument into play – you can either use the argument as is, so stating the argument's premises and conclusions in its proper formulation, or you can bring them in individually as you steer the conversation in the direction you want.

There are pros and cons to both approaches. For example, if you state the premises and conclusions upfront you get it all out at once and you have set the roadmap for where the conversation is going from the off. That's a pro as it not only lets you stay on topic, it also helps you to remember the argument as you move forward, since the other person has

already heard it once.

The cons here, however, may be that the person you're talking to sees the route you're going to take ahead of time and decided they 100% absolutely are not going to go along with you on it. This means they'll fight you on every premise, they'll get stuck in a circle trying to avoid the conclusion, and it becomes a nightmare.

On the other hand, if you try to only produce one premise at a time in the conversation, as it comes up organically, you avoid this issue. Generally, most people aren't going to spot where you're going with the conversation until it's too late, so keeping the actual function of the argument concealed at first helps to avoid people putting up a wall and closing their mind off.

Unfortunately, however, this approach can get you lost in the weeds. I don't know if you know this, but not many people are skilled or knowledgeable debaters, and people tend to bounce from topic to topic when they talk generally, so don't be shocked if you end up miles off target in the discussion. Additionally, when people do eventually twig where you're going with it, you've got the same problem as before – they'll dance around it and try to avoid the conclusion.

My personal opinion is that it's easier to drop the premises in organically, or wait until a natural point in the conversation to introduce the argument, rather than try to lead off with it.

Let me give you an example.

In my chat with the young lad on Friday night, as I alluded to in a previous episode, I allowed him to contribute the bulk of the argument, I just steered him with questions. This is roughly how it went:

"Is it possible that God exists?"

"No"

"Why's that?"

"Cos science"

"Oh right, what scientific theory, specifically?"

Now, at that point in the real discussion he said he wasn't sure and I suggested he get back to me with an answer next week, which he did.

"The big bang" he said.

"Oh interesting" I replied, "do you realise that the big bang is actually great evidence that God *does* exist?"

"Nah, the big bang shows how the universe was created so we don't need God" he replied.

Which is exactly the issue we were dealing with in the article from answers in genesis – a misunderstanding of what the big bang actually shows. Read the companion from week 3 for how to deal with that. So, I explained the concept that it's an explanation of what happened immediately after creation, not of how the universe was created, and he wasn't sure he agreed with me, so I employed a really handy tactic you guys can try in your own discussions. I said "well, can we just assume that's true so we can move on for a bit? We can always come back to it".

Why is that a good tactic?

Well, firstly it lowers the buy-in from the other person. They can still retain their doubts, which means they don't have to give up a belief in public in front of people, so there's no embarrassment or actual mind-changing that needs to happen. Secondly, it moves the discussion along nicely without getting stuck on the intricacies of each premise.

Once he had taken his free buy-in, I asked him if things just randomly pop into being without

a cause, and he said of course not, because he's a thinking person.

I then asked him if he believed the universe began to exist.

This is where it got more interesting because, and I'm inferring this from context I don't know for sure, I think he saw where the discussion was headed, so he said "well, not necessarily".

Now, I'm sure you have twigged the issue here – he was denying the very thing the big bang theory states, and the big bang theory was the science he had put forward as his belief. He was holding two contradictory beliefs at the same time!

This goes to show why it's so important to let your discussion partner do the talking initially, because he couldn't back out of it now! He didn't like where the discussion was going but he was already committed.

But there we have it, anyway – a great example of dropping the premises into a discussion naturally, and also letting people tell you what they believe so you can hold them to it later even when it becomes disadvantageous for them.

Now let's look at what happens after we drop the conclusion.

Once you have made the claim that therefore, the universe has a cause, the question then becomes "well, why does that cause have to be God?"

Seems like a legit question, right? Let's review it.

First off, you have to ask what other options there might be!

There's not a lot of good options, quite honestly. The only three that come up much are either that the universe is simply a necessary entity, it was created by a universe generator, or that it is part of a multiverse.

We can be pretty confident that the universe isn't a necessary entity – after all, it could have been different! I won't go into this too much because we'll cross into the territory of the teleological/fine-tuning argument, but you need to know that the universe being this way is *ludicrously* unlikely. It was *vastly* more likely to be life-prohibiting than life-permitting.

Since we're in the companion here, and I like to give you guys something to peak your interest and reward you for making the effort to get here!

Let's watch this video about the fine-tuning argument:



The idea behind the fine-tuning argument is that the universe has no reason to be the way it is, vis a vis life-permitting, other than having been designed by a designer.

In the same way as someone might stumble across a watch in the forest and wonder “who made this, it’s too complicated and evidently designed for it to be here accidentally!”, we can also look at the highly designed and complicated nature of our universe and realise it is too evidently designed for this to happen by chance. It also cannot be here by necessity, and we’ll see this when we encounter this argument, because it could have very easily been otherwise! In fact, it’s way more likely to have been different! The universe being this way is mathematically impossible, frankly.

Anyway, hopefully that gets you excited for the series when we deal with this argument!

Secondly, the idea that there’s a universe generator somewhere doesn’t really move the discussion on much. It’s something that would be as highly intricate and designed as our own universe, if not more so, and would still be a physical object, to it would be even more in need of an explanation than this universe! Secondly, there is literally no evidence that such an entity exists, so if they scoff at the idea of a God existing, something which can be quite convincingly and logically argued, then they absolutely cannot claim with any integrity that there’s a universe generator somewhere.

Finally, the idea of a multiverse, because apparently we live in a Marvel movie!

This has the same issue as the universe generator, namely that there is literally no evidence to support this idea – you would be believing this purely on blind faith. It’s just another example of intellectual dishonesty if they scoff at God’s existence but cling to this hypothesis.

This leads us to our final point – why can we be so confident that ‘God did it’, so to speak?

We won’t go into the fact that the bible says God created the universe, and we believe the Bible to be infallible and inerrant, so we believe God created the universe.

The major thing is that there’s a lot of attributes whatever created the universe would have to hold in order to be able to do it.

They would need to be spaceless, as space didn’t exist yet; timeless, as time didn’t exist yet; omnipotent, as matter didn’t exist yet so would need to be created; necessary, as they existed before time and had nothing to create them... you can see where this is going. What fulfils all of these criteria?

Two things, actually, believe it or not. God and abstract objects such as numbers.

But we know it’s not a number that caused the universe as a) abstract objects are ‘causally effete’, meaning they have no power to do things, and b) whatever created the universe needed to decide to do so, which abstract objects cannot do as they have no will.

The only thing with all of those attributes and a will to go with it is God.

So, there we have it – our first argument!

Sorry this episode was a bit longer, we had a lot to get through.

Our scripture of the week this week is Revelation 4:11 – *“Worthy are you, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honor and power, for you created all things, and by your will they existed and were created.”*

Why is this the scripture this week?

We’re looking at the origin of the universe and the fact that God chose to create. This is clearly articulated here. What’s even more interesting though, is that this makes it crystal

clear that God's will was instrumental in creation. Whatever created the universe, because it is not a necessary entity, had to choose to do so, lest it wouldn't be here.

Our question of the week that we will be discussing in our Thursday night debate club is this – how are you going to use the Kalam Cosmological argument now that you know it?

That's all for now then, guys!

As always, don't be afraid to get into the youth whatsapp chat and let us know how you are, what you're up to and what you're thinking. Get your prayer requests ready for Thursday and get involved in our Bible study! And you can grab us on Instagram @chawnyouth.

Speak to you next week!