



Acts 17:16-32 represents the discourse Paul delivered to the Athenians at Mars Hill (or the “Areopagus”). In it, we find a total of three reasons Paul chose Christianity (though other religions/viewpoints did exist). And they (along w/the resurrection) sb the same reasons you and I are Christians (today):

1. Because all people are religious whether they like it or not (22, 26-28).

Every human being’s moral choices are determined by the answer they give to three questions some philosophers call “the ultimate questions” since the answers (we all give) are - by reason of our absence/inability to be eyewitnesses, entirely faith-based. Those three questions are: 1) The question of our existence (How did I get here? Who or What made us?), 2) The question of our purpose (Why am I here? What is our human responsibility?), 3) The question of our future (Where am I heading? What is the end-game for humanity?).

2. Because all other religions fail miserably in their answers and proof (regarding the ultimate questions) (23, 18, 29-30).

Paul was a Christian, not b/c it was the religion he was raised in, or b/c it was the one that best fit w/his lifestyle choices or made him feel good. He chose Christianity b/c he saw that the others failed miserably in their attempts to answer the three ultimate questions and their ability to prove they indeed had the absolute truth. This includes Agnosticism, Atheism and all other non-Christian and pseudo-Christian religions. The response of Paul to our current culture’s love affair w/these false religions and man-made doctrines/gods would be the same as it was in his day (30).

3. Because Christianity is the only religion with the answers and the proof (regarding the ultimate questions).

3.1. The question of our existence (How did I get here? Who or what made us?)

Answer: The material universe of time, space and matter as well as the immaterial world of spirits, were intentionally and intelligently created by the only, personal and sovereign God, Who is uncreated, eternal, and therefore outside the laws of time and space which govern the material world. He is likewise self-sustaining, or not dependent upon either the material or immaterial world for His existence. Rather, we are fully dependent upon Him for all things. Human beings are also not the result of evolutionary mutation or the descendants of animals, but rather are His direct offspring (24-26).

3.1.1. In re: to God as personal, sovereign and the only One = (24) “The God (not “a god” – indicating exclusivity as the Only God) who (not “it” – indicating personhood or conscious awareness as a personal being versus an impersonal force/power) made the world and everything in it, being Lord of heaven and earth...” (a reference to both God’s exclusivity and supreme sovereignty as rightful ruler and owner of all in the material and immaterial realms of existence – Deu 4:39, 10:14; Neh 9:6 w/Psa 103:19-22 w/1Ki 22:19; Psa 135:6, 148:13).

3.1.2. In re: God’s intentional and intelligent creation of both the material (time and space) universe and the immaterial world (of spirits) yet existing as uncreated, eternal, and therefore outside the laws of time and space which govern matter or the material world = (24) “The God who made the world (God did not watch/witness creation happening as though it was the act of another. Neither was He simply its catalyst. The phrase “who made” indicates God’s direct involvement in creation from beginning to end. IOW: God intentionally and intelligently created “the world” – referring here to both the material and immaterial realms of existence since according to Paul, this again includes both “heaven and earth”; Gen 1:1; Exo 20:11, 31:17; Isa 37:16; e.g. Heb 1:7 w/Psa 33:6) and everything in it...” (There is nothing in all that exists that is not the result of God’s creative action – including then all the laws affecting time and space. God is the first cause in the Law of Causality¹. Since God is the Creator of all that exists, or the first cause of all creation, He is neither the creation of man [i.e. “formed by the imagination or art of man” – 29] or a part of creation [i.e. pantheistic in nature]. Since the Law of Causality demands a primary cause or “unmoved mover” – i.e. a cause which possesses no previous cause, this means that God must also be uncreated, eternal, and therefore outside the laws of time and space which govern matter or the material world – Psa 90:2, 93:2²), **“(26)...having determined allotted periods and the boundaries of their [humans] dwelling place.”** (Another statement pointing to intelligent creation or design. Everything - even our life-spans and zip-codes were determined/planned by God

¹ “Everything that had a beginning had a cause – is the Law of Causality, which is the fundamental principle of science. Without the Law of Causality, science is impossible. In fact, Francis Bacon (the father of modern science) said, ‘True knowledge is knowledge by causes.’ In other words, science is the search for causes. That’s what scientists do- they try to discover what caused what. Even the great skeptic David Hume could not deny the Law of Causality. He wrote, ‘I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that something could arise without a cause. In fact to deny the Law of causality is to deny rationality. The very process of rational thinking requires us to put together thoughts (the causes) that result in conclusion (in effects). So if anyone ever tells you he doesn’t believe in the Law of Causality simply ask that person, ‘What *caused* you to come to that conclusion.’” – Dr. Frank Turek (*I Don’t Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*, p.75)

² Today, this is referred to as the Cosmological argument for the existence of God. The principle undergirding it however (i.e. an uncreated, eternal creator) has been a staple of philosophy and science for thousands of years (e.g. Aristotle - 4th cent. B.C.). Even the great scientist, Albert Einstein understood the need for a primary cause. At one time, he (like many scientists today) believed the universe itself to be eternal (or primary cause). To his irritation however, this all changed the moment he made his most famous discovery – the theory of General Relativity. In the words of Dr. Frank Turek, “It was 1916 and Albert Einstein didn’t like where his calculations were leading him. If his theory of General Relativity was true, it meant that the universe was not eternal but had a beginning. Einstein’s calculations indeed were revealing a definite beginning to all time, all matter, all space. This flew in the face of his belief that the universe was static and eternal. Einstein later called his discovery ‘irritating.’ He wanted the universe to be self-existent – not reliant on any outside cause – but the universe appeared to be one giant effect. In 1919, British cosmologist Arthur Eddington conducted an experiment during a solar eclipse which confirmed that General Relativity was indeed true- the universe wasn’t static but had a beginning. Like Einstein, Eddington wasn’t happy with the implications. He later wrote, ‘Philosophically, the notion of a beginning of the present order of nature is repugnant to me...I should like to find a genuine loophole.’ Meanwhile, Dutch astronomer Willem de Sitter had found that General Relativity required the universe to be expanding. And in 1927, the expanding universe was actually observed by astronomer Edwin Hubble. Looking through the 100-inch telescope at California’s Mount Wilson Observatory, Hubble discovered a ‘red shift’ in the light from every observable galaxy, which meant those galaxies were moving away from us. In other words, General Relativity was again confirmed- the universe appears to be expanding from a single point in the distant past. In 1929 Einstein made a pilgrimage to Mount Wilson to look through Hubble’s telescope for himself. What he saw was irrefutable. The observational evidence showed that the universe was indeed expanding as General Relativity had predicted. With his cosmological constant now completely crushed by the weight of evidence against it, Einstein could no longer support his wish for an eternal universe. Einstein [no] said he wanted ‘to now the God who created the world.’” (*I Don’t Have Enough Faith To Be An Atheist*, p.73-74). In other words, Einstein now knew that the primary cause, uncreated and eternal element of the universe existed outside of it in the person of God. Einstein would as a result, also conclude that, “Science without religion is lame.”

versus the product of randomness or chance. Life in all its complexity declares the glory of its intelligent Creator³; Psa 19:1-6 – This text is what today, apologists call “the Watchmaker argument”⁴).

3.1.3. In re: to God as self-sustaining, or not dependent upon the either the material or immaterial world for His existence = **(24) “The God who made the world and everything in it... does not live in temples made by man, (25) nor is He served by human hands as though He needed anything...** (In theology, this is called the aseity of God. He is independent of His creation in no need of us or this world in any respect – Exo 3:14 [“I AM WHO I AM” = I AM SELF-SUFFICIENT/EXISTING. The statement’s present tense form speaks also to God’s independence from time – or the material world]; Act 7:48-50; Isa 66:1-2”).

3.1.4. In re: to us being fully dependent upon God for all things as His direct offspring and not the result of evolutionary mutation or the descendant of animals = **(24) “The God who made the world and everything in it... does not live in temples made by man, (25) nor is He served by human hands as though He needed anything, since He Himself gives to all mankind life and breath and everything** (God is the Sustainer of all His creation, not simply mankind. Without Him, we perish – or cease to exist - Psa 104:10-30). **(26) And He made from one man every nation of mankind to live on all the face of the earth...**(Paul’s allusion is to the historical person of Adam from whom every human being is descended⁵. This coupled with the fact that Paul also mentions that we are “God’s offspring” [i.e. made in His image, 28-29] negates the fantasy of evolutionary anthropological origins/descent from animals⁶”).

Proof = Special Revelation (i.e. the Bible’s answer) **is confirmed by General Revelation** (e.g. Science and Philosophy: The Cosmological Argument or Law of Causality and the necessity of a primary cause/unmoved mover who is uncreated, eternal and outside time and space; The theory of General Relativity and evidence supporting the fact that the universe is not eternal but had a beginning; Intelligent Design as the conclusion to DNA complexity and the Watchmaker argument; Modern genetic studies such as the HapMap Project which reveals the DNA of all humans beings to be connected to a very small original population of human beings; Mathematical impossibility of evolution).

³ “Even though they cry that intelligent design is not science, some prominent atheists agree that the cause of biology might be an intelligent being. Due to the enormous amounts of information and the machine-like interconnectedness of biological systems, atheists such as Francis Crick, Fred Hoyle, Stephen Hawking, and even Richard Dawkins have suggested that aliens could be responsible for seeding our planet with life. The theory is called panspermia, meaning seeds everywhere. One prominent atheist was open to following the evidence beyond aliens all the way to God. Antony Flew was the most prolific atheist philosopher of the last century. But in 2004, after fifty years of writing in support of atheism, Flew announced he became a theist precisely because of the evidence provided by DNA. ‘What I think the DNA material has done,’ Flew said at a symposium at New York University, ‘is that it has shown, by the almost unbelievable complexity of the arrangements which are needed to produce life, that intelligence must have been involved in getting these extraordinarily diverse elements to work together.’ – Dr. Frank Turek (*Stealing From God*, p.72-73)

⁴ Speaking in regard to the Watchmaker argument, Dr. John Morris writes, “In the early 1800s, William Paley published a carefully argued paper entitled ‘Natural Theology,’ which developed a convincing case for the necessity of a Designer to produce the intricate design we see in living systems. He referred to human machines such as a watch, claiming we would never conclude, upon discovery of a watch, that it was the result of natural processes such as wind and rain. By observing the order of the organism, the purpose of each part, and the interdependence of the parts, one would never conclude that it happened by chance. This, I think, is a key Biblical argument for creation. In a strict sense, it is not a scientific argument, but it is an intuitive argument. In the debates in which I have participated, I always call attention to the design in living things. Perhaps the best example is a simple, single-celled organism. Although the simplest of all organisms, such a protozoan is very complex, comprised of scores of functioning parts, each performing a specific function and all working together for the good of the whole. Remove any one of these functioning parts, and the whole organism dies. There are, by some estimates, tens of thousands of enzyme reactions occurring within each cell, all necessary right from the start. Of course, almost all of this information comes from the wondrous DNA code, the precise arrangement of genes which directs all growth and function. Furthermore, each gene, each aspect of the cell is made up of complex protein molecules—specifically arranged chains of amino acids precisely placed for a particular purpose. To propose that a living, replicating cell arose without design from non-living matter is easily the weakest point of evolution theory—so weak that many famous scientists, who have worked for years to find a plausible way it might have happened (like Nobel Prize-winning geneticist, Dr. Francis Crick), have concluded that life evolved somewhere out in space where conditions are different from those here on Earth, because it evidently could not happen here. Today’s evolutionists ignore Paley’s argument for design in living systems, attributing such complexity to the workings of natural selection [i.e. accidentally through the random chance mutations of evolution]. Things are changing today, however, for the more science digs into the structure of living systems, the more the ‘machine’ analogy seems appropriate. When the workings of life were poorly known, science could rightly profess bewilderment, and claim that life is different. But now we can see something of how life works (not how it originated) and it bears rough resemblance to an intricate computer-driven machine, although far more complex. Experts feel that science has only begun to understand the machine-like workings of a cell. The analogy has been validated. Life is something like an amazingly well-designed machine, but much more complex than those designed by humans. Such evidence of design speaks eloquently for a Designer.”

⁵ The findings of modern genetic studies are consistent with the anthropological origins of the bible (i.e. two people – Adam and Eve). This consistency is seen in the fact that the human genome—for all its diversity—actually has far less diversity than would be expected if humanity did not share the same original parents. For instance, the International HapMap project found that the differences in DNA between any two humans is incredibly low (0.1 percent). Reflecting on this very low percentage, some scientists posited, “This proportion is low compared with those of many other species, from fruit flies to chimpanzees, reflecting the recent origins of our species from a small founding population” (“*Genome Variations*”, *Genome News Network*). Also stated was the fact that, “many places in which the human genome varies occur in only two versions”. This too is consistent with an original population of only two people.

⁶ “In 1996, Lehigh University biochemist Michael Behe published a book entitled ‘Darwin’s Black Box’ [Free Press], whose central theme is that every living cell is loaded with features and biochemical processes which are ‘irreducibly complex’--that is, they require the existence of numerous complex components, each essential for function. Thus, these features and processes cannot be explained by gradual Darwinian improvements, because until all the components are in place, these assemblages are completely useless, and thus provide no selective advantage. Behe spends over 100 pages describing some of these irreducibly complex biochemical systems in detail, then summarizes the results of an exhaustive search of the biochemical literature for Darwinian explanations. He concludes that while biochemistry texts often pay lip-service to the idea that natural selection of random mutations can explain everything in the cell, such claims are pure ‘bluster’, because ‘there is no publication in the scientific literature that describes how molecular evolution of any real, complex, biochemical system either did occur or even might have occurred.’ Behe’s book is primarily a challenge to this cornerstone of Darwinism at the microscopic level. Although we may not be familiar with the complex biochemical systems discussed in this book, I believe mathematicians are well qualified to appreciate the general ideas involved. And although an analogy is only an analogy, perhaps the best way to understand Behe’s argument is by comparing the development of the genetic code of life with the development of a computer program. Suppose an engineer attempts to design a structural analysis computer program, writing it in a machine language that is totally unknown to him. He simply types out random characters at his keyboard, and periodically runs tests on the program to recognize and select out chance improvements when they occur. The improvements are permanently incorporated into the program while the other changes are discarded. If our engineer continues this process of random changes and testing for a long enough time, could he eventually develop a sophisticated structural analysis program? (Of course, when intelligent humans decide what constitutes an ‘improvement’, this is really artificial selection, so the analogy is far too generous.) If a billion engineers were to type at the rate of one random character per second, there is virtually no chance that any one of them would, given the 4.5 billion year age of the Earth to work on it, accidentally duplicate a given 20-character improvement. Thus our engineer cannot count on making any major improvements through chance alone. But could he not perhaps make progress through the accumulation of very small improvements? The Darwinist would presumably say, yes, but to anyone who has had minimal programming experience this idea is equally implausible. Major improvements to a computer program often require the addition or modification of hundreds of interdependent lines, no one of which makes any sense, or results in any improvement, when added by itself. Even the smallest improvements usually require adding several new lines. It is conceivable that a programmer unable to look ahead more than 5 or 6 characters at a time might be able to make some very slight improvements to a computer program, but it is inconceivable [i.e. impossible] that he could design anything sophisticated without the ability to plan far ahead and to guide his changes toward that plan. The biologist studies the details of natural history, and when he looks at the similarities between two species of butterflies, he is understandably reluctant to attribute the small differences to the supernatural. But the mathematician or physicist is likely to take the broader view. I imagine visiting the Earth when it was young and returning now to find highways with automobiles on them, airports with jet airplanes, and tall buildings full of complicated equipment, such as televisions, telephones and computers. Then I imagine the construction of a gigantic computer model which starts with the initial conditions on Earth 4 billion years ago and tries to simulate the effects that the four known forces of physics (the gravitational, electromagnetic and strong and weak nuclear forces) would have on every atom and every subatomic particle on our planet (perhaps using random number generators to model quantum uncertainties!). If we ran such a simulation out to the present day, would it predict that the basic forces of Nature would reorganize the basic particles of Nature into libraries full of encyclopedias, science texts and novels, nuclear power plants, aircraft carriers with supersonic jets parked on deck, and computers connected to laser printers, CRTs and keyboards? If we graphically displayed the positions of the atoms at the end of the simulation, would we find that cars and trucks had formed, or that supercomputers had arisen? Certainly we would not, and I do not believe that adding sunlight to the model would help much. Clearly something [mathematically impossible] has happened here on our planet, with the origin and development of life, and especially with the development of human consciousness and creativity.” – Granville Sewell (“*A Mathematician’s View Of Evolution*”, *The Mathematical Intelligencer* 22, no. 4, University of El Paso, Texas, pp5-7)