TheForum – Straight answers to straight questions Delusions of God: On Science and Origins Handout

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Preacher: Mark Fossey

[0:00] Let me just introduce myself and explain what's happening today. Now, my name's Mark Fossey. I'm the Assistant Minister here at the church. If you're new here, you're very, very welcome. This is Grace Church. I know it's Rosendale School.

We're an Anglican church, and we meet here in this school week on week. We meet on 10.30s on Sunday mornings, and you'd always be welcome, whoever you are. And we're doing this series of talks thinking about atheism.

And my aim with these talks, really, is to make a rebuttal of atheism. I want to show that the atheistic worldview doesn't work, is not coherent. And we've looked at morality last time.

The talks on the internet, on the website, you'd be able to get a copy of that if you wanted to listen to it. And tonight we're looking at science and origins, and I know science is a hot topic. Now, I've been doing a fair bit of reading. I've been reading a lot of books.

I'm really quite sick of reading lots of books on it. The God Delusion, I think, is the famous one by Richard Dawkins. Richard Dawkins is possibly the foremost speaker for atheism.

[1:00] He's one of the so-called new atheists. There's actually four main guys that are the four horsemen of the apocalypse, or something, of the new atheists, they're called. And Richard Dawkins is possibly the foremost of them.

And, of course, himself is a scientist. And so if you were to watch or read about debates between Christians and atheists, and there are lots of them. You can look on YouTube. There's some very interesting ones on there.

Science often is the key topic on which the whole thing revolves around. Now, I don't know what you were thinking about in your discussion, but it does seem to me that many people think there is a huge conflict between science and Christianity.

Either going back to Galileo with, you know, the world is flat, and all the Christians think the world is flat, and Galileo and Copernicus showed the world is round, and we revolve around the sun and not around the earth, and the Christians were wrong there, or much later the kind of evolution type thing.

And there was the famous Scopes trial in America, I don't know if you've heard of this, where, you know, there was a kind of court case in America about whether they should be allowed to teach Darwinism in schools or creationism, and, you know, that Darwinism was banned, but there was this great victory in the courts, you know, that Darwinism could be taught.

[2:11] Funnily enough, now it's completely opposite way around, actually. But there is this kind of common view in the media and just a general perception that you're either into science or you're religious, and you could never be one or the other.

And, of course, that is a false view. There are lots and lots of Christians who are scientists. I, myself, have got two very, very good friends who I know, I remember them when they became Christians as adults.

They're both PhD scientists, and they're much brighter than I am in every way, and particularly in science. And so just watching them go through the process has just made me realise firsthand that you can be a Christian and also be someone who knows a lot about science.

In fact, stake your career and your academics and where you're going on science and be a Christian at the same time, and actually become convinced of Christianity whilst in that situation.

Now, in this session, I don't really want to spend that much time, actually, on evolution. I think evolution is the thing that we often think is the big fighting point. And, actually, I want to show you in this session that, actually, I think there are much, much bigger and more difficult problems than evolution.

[3:20] Personally, on evolution, I know Christians disagree on what they think about evolution. Some Christians would say evolution is a myth and it's all wrong, and that the world is 6,000 years old, and it was made in six 24-hour periods, taken from Genesis 1.

And other Christians would say, no, I think I'm convinced of evolution with various things that you see in science, and yet I think that's compatible with the God who made the world, albeit through evolution. So, you can have a variety of views.

So, actually, evolution, actually, in my personal view, is not the major sticking point. There are much bigger ones. It seems to me that, as a Christian, because I can be open-minded about evolution, it does mean, therefore, that my faith doesn't depend on the fact or non-fact of evolution.

If it's true, then God did it. Great. If it's not, then God didn't do it that way. It doesn't have a problem with my faith in God. However, evolution is very important if you're an atheist. In fact, it's the foundation of your house.

Imagine a huge Jenga block. You've seen giant Jenga. You know where you pull out the things? Evolution is the bottom block of the Jenga for an atheist worldview. And if you were to pull that out, the whole thing falls down.

[4:31] If I could show you right now evolution is wrong, well, then there's absolutely no doubt that there is a God, because there's no other way we can account for the way things are. So that's why, for atheists, evolution is a really hot topic.

It's very important for them, because for them it's the foundation. Now, for Christians, it's not the foundation. It's somewhere up here. I mean, if you pulled it out, it doesn't make a difference to your view of God. However, we do have Jenga blocks that are really important.

If you were to pull out the resurrection of Jesus, then the whole thing would come crashing down. So those would be different key issues for us. What I'd like to look at in this session is three other questions, which I think are bigger and prior in a sort of temporal sense to this idea of evolution.

I'll just show you on this sheet so you can see where we're going. The first one, I want to look at the origins of the universe, the very beginning. The second point, I want to look at the formation of the universe, not just the very beginning, but how the universe came into being.

And thirdly, on the back page, if you've folded your hand out, the origins of life. So actually, even before evolution, how life kick-started in the first place. And evolution would be the next big question, if you like, after that, which we won't really spend much time on.

[5:39] But please do ask me questions about that, or discuss that if you'd like to discuss that in your groups. Let me just say some ground rules before we get going. In trying to show that I think the atheist worldview doesn't cohere, is not sustainable, what I'm trying to show you, therefore, is the alternative, that there is a God.

Now, in the realms of science, when you're showing that there is a God, you're not really showing that the Christian God is the right God. You're just showing that either theism, that is the belief there is a God, versus atheism.

So if I was to be able to show you, and that's my aim today, to convince you that science points to the fact that there's a God, it doesn't tell me anything about who that God is. So if you were to find, you might find yourself, okay, I've proved the case, and atheism is wrong, where should I go?

You could go in any one number of different directions. You could become Muslim, you could become a Christian, a Jew, you could be a New Age, all sorts of different reasons. So this isn't really a proving Christianity, it's really more proving theism, that there is a God.

And I'd really encourage you, if you'd like to think more about Christianity, Christianity, and why Christianity is true, and there is strong evidence, scientific style evidence, for the realities of Jesus Christ, both in the Old Testament and in the New Testament, and parts of the Bible, then we do a course called Christianity Explored, which is advertised on the back of the sheet there.

[6:57] Please come and speak to me, or stick me an email on that there, on the email address, and ask me about that, because that is a great course, really looking at the evidence for Christianity particularly. Now when we're looking at this idea of whether there's a God, or not, theism and atheism, if we're using the tools of science to prove or disprove, the reality is, you can't be 100% sure.

If you could 100% prove, through scientific means that there is a God, or 100% disprove, well everyone in the world, apart from the most lunatic fringe, would be believers or non-believers.

What we're actually dealing here is with odds, with statistics, with probabilities. I don't know if any of you are gamblers, maybe not, but you understand the concept of gambling. If there's a horse race, and you put lots of money on a horse, that's the two to one favourite, you're likely to do maybe quite well.

If you put a lot of money on the 100 to one outsider, the chances are you'll lose your money. And so when you're putting your money, let me put it this way, as you put your life, your beliefs, your faith, on which horse?

On the theist horse, or the atheist horse? You're dealing with odds. Which is the one that's likely to win? Is this the favourite, or is it the rank outsider? And so what I guess I'm showing you, with the things that we're looking at, and there's a fair bit of, sort of mathematics, so you don't have to be a mathematical genius to understand this, you just have to know that a number with a lot of zeros is a big number, that when you have ridiculous odds, and my aim to show you is the very high odds, in fact, such ridiculous odds against atheism, that it's practically zero.

[8:40] Billions and billions and billions and trillions to one, versus theism, which I think is much, much more likely. That's the aim of this session, really. So we're looking at odds. We're looking at betting, if you like, in that sense.

So where should we put our money for our life? Where should we stake our faith? The first question, what we'll do is, I'll do the first two questions, this will take a little while, then we'll have a discussion, then I'll do the third one and wrap up in conclusion.

So please do hang in there with the first two questions. The first question is on the origin of the universe. How did something come from nothing? Now, this debate has gone on for literally thousands of years.

It's often called the cosmological argument in philosophy, or the argument from first cause. In a sense, the simplest form of the argument is this. If our physical universe is a universe of cause and effect, the reason this is here is because this made it, and the reason that is there is because that made it.

Everything has got a cause. You can keep going back and back and back, until you get to a point of a first cause. And that first cause, classic philosophy would say, is God.

[9:49] Now, for many centuries, the atheist knockdown to that argument was, but there has never been a first cause. Things have just gone on for infinity. So there was no first cause. Things have just always been.

That was always the classic atheist response. But in the last century, science has discredited that way of thinking, because now the majority view of science is that our universe was formed by a Big Bang.

Now, the problem with the Big Bang, therefore, and the cosmological argument, is the Big Bang is a first cause. There's a beginning. And if there's a beginning, how did it get there? Where did it come from?

What started the Big Bang? Where did the Big Bang come from? Where did the stuff from the Big Bang come from? Now, as a fundamental rule in science, physical things are things. There are something. And something cannot come from nothing.

You cannot go from nothing to something. So where did the something, whatever it is, that was before the Big Bang, that caused or formed the energies and particles that started the Big Bang, where did the something come from?

[10:54] Because it cannot come from nothing. So let me put it this way. Imagine the Big Bang started the universe, just for argument's sake. Like, and we say, yeah, but what caused the Big Bang?

Let me say, I could say, I know what caused the Big Bang. X started the Big Bang. But then, of course, you could say, well, what started X? And you could say, well, I know what started that. Y started X.

Well, then you say, okay, what caused Y? You see, the problem will keep going back and back and back and back until you get to a point which is, I don't know what you want to call that, omega point or something.

That must be the point at which it started, a first cause. There has to be a first cause by definition. So actually, somewhere along that chain of events of cause and effect, there has to be some sort of curious entity which in and of itself is uncaused.

Does that make sense? Because if there was something that was caused, then you'd say, okay, well, what caused it? So at some point in that chain of events, you've got to go back and you've got to find something that in and of itself never had the cause.

[12:00] I don't know, what would you call that thing? In science, there is, that doesn't exist because we haven't got to that point in science. But the theist would say, well, I know the answer to that.

That's God. God is by definition and always has been an uncaused being. Who created God? Well, he didn't. He's always there. That's in his nature.

He exists. His existence is his fundamental definition or category of who he is. Now, the common response to this that Richard Dawkins and others put, the atheist retort, if you like, is, well, yeah, but who made God?

And if you watch, you can watch debates on this online and often it just gets down to this ridiculous, yes, but who made God? And the fierce to desperately come again, but don't you see, God cannot be made.

God is inherently uncaused. He just is. He never was made. In fact, you need that thing somewhere along the chain because that is the first cause.

[13:03] And if God was made by X, then I could say, yeah, but what made X? And we keep going back. At some point, there has to be something which is uncaused and that is God.

Now, the reason that I think the atheists in these debates in which I've seen and read struggle with this concept is because of their atheism. You see, an atheist believes, imagine this room is the universe, okay?

The atheist believes that we live in a closed universe. There's nothing outside. There is no spiritual. There is no God. There are no angels. There are literally everything is physical and contained within the physical.

And so they can't conceive of what spiritual is like. They think spiritual equals physical or a different kind of physical and works according to the same kinds of physical laws of cause and effect.

But see, God isn't physical. God is spiritual. God is spirit. The Bible says God is spirit. And therefore, he doesn't have a cause. He doesn't have to have a cause because he's a different kind of thing to the things in our universe which science understands.

[14:06] So I think that's one reason that the atheists don't understand it. The second problem I think they struggle with is that the who made God argument misses the point of the first cause argument.

If something cannot come from nothing, then at some stage in that long regression of cause and effect, there must be something which has no cause. That's what I've been saying. Otherwise, what caused that thing?

So necessarily, there must be that thing which is uncaused and that, theists would say, is God. So that is the, if you like, the argument from first cause.

And I don't think science has got an answer to that. In fact, I would venture to say science will never have an answer to that because science, by definition, works with physical causes. And if you keep finding the solution, say if some genius works out where the Big Bang came from.

Brilliant! Front page news, awesome! Well, the next day's headlines will be, but what started that? And we'll keep going on. In fact, it will go on forever like that. It will never change.

[15:11] Because the first cause is God and God doesn't show himself in any sort of scientific experiment, if you like. God is outside of the universe and outside of time.

So we have, as atheists, a solution to the beginning of the universe which atheists will never have. Will never have. The second question that I want to look at which I think is just as devastating is how did the fine-tuned, life-sustaining universe come about?

Often not called the cosmological argument but the teleological, the teleological argument or the fine-tuning of the universe. See, the physics in our universe is set in a very finely tuned way.

a bit like the gravitational constant or the constant governing forces within atoms. There are various constants in various things in our universe. Some are massive and some are tiny.

But if these constants were changed in the slightest way, it would massively affect our universe such that life could not exist. So often it's described analytically like a series of dials and they're just finely tuned.

[16:19] And if one of those dials was just like a micrometer off, there would be no universe that could support life. If you're a scientist, you'll love this. If you're not, you might switch off in the next couple of moments.

I've got six things I've got there on the sheets on the right-hand side. These are taken from a book called Just Six Numbers, Deep Forces That Shape the Universe by a man called Martin Rees who himself is an atheist and a scientist.

And this book he's written just shows six of, and there are others, six of these constants, some massive, some small, that if they were slightly different, the universe wouldn't work. Let me just read this to you.

You can see it there. There's a slight typo in the first one. The first one is n, which is, the number is one times ten to the power of 36, that should read. So it's a huge number, one with 36 zeros after it.

And it's to do with the electrical forces between atoms and atomic force. If it was slightly smaller, then the universe would be short-lived. If it was slightly larger, then no creatures larger than insects would exist and there wouldn't be enough time for evolution.

[17:23] So there's the problem with atomic forces. I told you this is not that interesting. E epsilon equals 0.007. That's to do with the binding with the nuclei and atoms.

If it were 0.006 or 0.008, we would not exist. Omega measures the amount of material in our universe, telling us the relative importance of gravity and expansion energy in the universe.

If the ratio was slightly bigger, the universe would have collapsed long ago. If it was slightly smaller, no galaxies or stars would have formed. Very important. Lambda is a very, very small number.

It's a cosmic antigravity, he describes it as, which controls the expansion of the universe. Our universe is expanding at a certain rate. If it were different by one part in 1012, that is 0.01% different, the universe would have collapsed before life could be sustainable.

Q, which is a ratio of 1 to 100,000, represents the ratio of the fundamental energies which our universe depends on. If it was slightly smaller, the universe would be inert and structureless.

[18:26] If it was slightly larger, it would have created a violent place in which no stars or solar systems could exist because of the dominance of black holes. Finally, D3 is the number of dimensions we have, special dimensions.

You know there are many, many dimensions but most of them are suppressed apparently. So we have three dimensions. If there were two dimensions or four dimensions, life would not exist. And although time is often described as a fourth dimension, it works in a different way because it only goes in one direction and isn't the dimension that goes in all directions.

So, those are just six of the constants. Fractually different, slightly turned out and our universe would not exist and form life. Gerald Schroeder, who is a scientist, describes it nicely like this.

I think this is a helpful illustration. The quote is on your sheet there. The precision is as if one could throw a dart across the entire universe and hit a bullseye one millimetre in diameter on the other side.

His point is, for all of these dials to be in exactly the right place is such extraordinary luck.

[19:32] In terms of odds, it's basically zero. Science has helped us understand, modern science has helped us understand, that our universe is so extraordinarily finely tuned that the odds of it happening the way it is, is like throwing a dart across the universe and hitting a bullseye a millimetre wide.

Now, how do the atheists respond to this? Well, their response is, if the odds of this universe existing is infinitesimally small, well, what we need is to increase those odds, what we need is so many infinite number of universes, then perhaps there's one that's going to work and our universe is that.

So their theory is the multiverse theory. There isn't a universe, there are multi-universes. There is a multiverse. There are billions and billions and trillions and trillions of universes. And so if there's all these numbers of universes, then there's bound to be one that is finely tuned.

The odds are likely, aren't they? So that's the, and Stephen Hawking talks about this in his last book, The Grand Design. He describes it like a bubble machine. It's a very good illustration. You know when you're buying bubbles and some just burst quite quickly and they just don't make it?

But occasionally one just takes and it just grows and grows bigger and bigger and bigger. All of these billions and billions and billions of universes, they all have different laws of physics, different constants if you like. And most of them just die instantly or very quickly because those, they're not balanced right.

[20:58] The dials are off. But if the one that has the right dials is there, well of course that will just take and it will grow and grow and grow and grow and grow. And we just happen to be in one of those universes, one of those few.

So what do we say in response to the multiverse theory? Which is fairly popular but certainly not universal. Firstly, it is a theory.

There is literally zero scientific evidence for it. Not in physics and not even in mathematics. It's just an idea.

It's literally, frankly, it's science fiction not science fact at this stage. There are lots of people that go with it but there's no evidence for it. Not real evidence, not hardcore evidence.

Secondly, and I've got to be careful where I put this, look, I don't want to say I know a person's heart but I can't help but wondering if there might be either consciously or subconsciously an underlying reason why a multiverse theory exists.

[22:05] And it might well be for some because it makes me go oh it's okay this universe looks finely tuned and virtually impossible but maybe it isn't because of this multiverse theory that I've heard about and read about so I don't have to worry about a god.

I wonder if some think that way. Thirdly, it has been pointed out to me that even if they did somehow prove there was a multiverse say if they could prove it we still have to ask the question how did it get there?

I mean, if there's a bubble machine creating universes the obvious question is where did the bubble machine come from? And if the bubble machine is so amazingly complex that it can create universes it needs even more explanation than the universe does.

So wherever you go I find there's problems. Now Dawkins admits that physics has not got an answer. Do you know what he says? He says, look, 150 years ago we didn't know humanity came about but then Darwin came up and gave us an answer and I'm waiting for the physicist that's going to do that for us with a multiverse theory.

Now I'm sorry but that is blind faith. Okay? That is waiting for something that's waiting for a train that may never come. Okay? He would say that we as Christians he's got a thing called the God of the gaps theory.

[23:25] You fill gaps in science with God that's dumbness. Well, he's filling the gaps with science that doesn't exist. He's filling it with science fiction and that is exactly the same fallacy.

The problem is there are massive gaps in our understanding so we have to ask ourselves which theory fits best? Where do the betting odds put us?

When you look at the hard cold facts of science the odds of our universe existing as it does the odds of it existing by chance without a designer look they're basically zero.

They're so infinitesimally small it's zero. So why don't we take ten minutes and just think about that. What are the odds? What do you think about that?

There's a few questions you can look at there and discussion too or please do ask around your tables any questions you feel are relevant or pressing from anything I've said and we'll take ten or fifteen minutes at all.

[24:28] Can we come back together again please if that's okay? Sorry to cut into your discussions. I just want to do this last question and do a conclusion and there's more time to discuss afterwards.

I've been trying to do it in chronological time order so the first question is the very origins of the universe the second question is how the universe came into formation finely tuned.

The third question is about the origins of life. So imagine we have this finely tuned universe that exists and there's the Earth it's in the Goldilocks zone which is the perfect place for life to exist like most planets aren't and it's sitting there and it's been there around for 4.7 to 4.5 billion years and it's called for about a billion years and there's this prebiotic soup is the word they use it's the word they use you imagine I don't know what there is on the Earth at that point and at some point life sprung into existence now science is well developed there are arguments against evolution and you do need to look at some of the biological and geological evidences both for and against evolution so but even before evolution there's very little scientific understanding about how the very first life came into being and that's really really important famously there was an experiment in 1952 by a man called Stanley Miller in the United States which has kind of

I don't know some filtered into public folklore that there was a man and he did this experiment and he got the right solution just like it was in the first days and he zapped electricity through it enough times and life sprung into being and that's the answer to all of it now the problem with that experiment was the solution he used was completely wrong so it was nothing like that and it certainly would have been as concentrated as he made out so actually that experiment is well known to be a defunct solution but yet it's kind of filtered into the public consciousness so that's what many people think we now know that actually of course as biological science has progressed over the last century we know loads about the very basic cells which make up all living matter and we now know that science has shown us that the cells that make living matter are extraordinarily complex cells are I'm a layman and I'm going to put this in layman's terms which is the only way

I can put it think of cells as two components proteins and DNA think of the protein as the structure think of cells like a machine each have a function some do this some do that some carry blood some you know there are all sorts of different functions that living cells have but the DNA in it is like the computer it's like the information that tells the machine what to do you're this kind of machine you do this process this is how you replicate and make other cells so think of the DNA like the computer and the protein like the machine itself let's think about the complexity of each of the two of those and think what's the odds or the likelihood of a thing like that developing in some sort of prebiotic suit that was on the very early earth now a typical cell contains about 100 million proteins of about 20,000 different types and each protein has a specific function and they all are exactly in the right part so they work together much like a car you know there's all these different components that are put in exactly the right place so that the car works if you have the clutch where the radiator is and the radiator where the clutch is the car don't work it's got lots of complicated bits in it but it doesn't work and the same with the cell it's got hundreds of millions of proteins that need to be in exactly the right way for it to function and work each of the 100 million or so proteins itself is made up of several hundred amino acids and they all have to be in a particular order and they have to be of a particular type with a particular bond between them now in John Lennox books

[28:42] The God's Undertaker which I recommend if you know a bit about science and would like to look at this John Lennox books is a very good book for those who if you don't know much about science it will probably send you to sleep but if you like your science that's an excellent book with the arguments that I'm saying much much better from an expert he says this imagine a simple small protein much smaller than most that's just made up of 100 amino acids ok the odds of the right type of amino acid it has to be in L form rather than a D form apparently and apparently it's got to be joined with other amino acids of the right type with the right bond just the odds of one small amino acid existing and forming in exactly the right way are 1 times 10 to the 60 I've put it on your sheet there for those who are not mathematicians that number under the first point can you see that number that's what we're talking about now if you see a horse that's 100 to 1 my advice is don't put your money on it if you see a horse with those odds that horse has got no legs it's dead now that's just one amino acid a protein cell is made up of hundreds of millions of proteins sorry and hundreds of amino acids the odds of such a thing forming by chance are so astronomical that the odds are higher than the number of atoms there are in the universe by a long way then there's the DNA the computer you need the protein structure but you need the DNA as well now the DNA information is required to say what the machine does what the cell does and how it replicates now even if these astronomical numbers produced a single cell perhaps it just suddenly came about the odds came in the horse won it would die without DNA because it cannot replicate it doesn't have a function it doesn't do anything it's like a car without someone driving it but on its own if you had DNA without a cell it's like a computer without any functioning parts it's like a driver without a car it's not going to go anywhere you need both the

DNA and you need the fully functioning cell with all its proteins and amino acids you need both at the same time now DNA is a strand of four different types A, G, C and T they're called and you want to think of it analogously like a whole bunch of letters arranged together and if they're not arranged in exactly the right order it's gobbledygook but if they're all arranged in exactly the right order it might make a sentence so if you were to take a you watch countdown don't you put all those letters jubble together it means nothing but then you press the button and out comes the word for a simple small DNA strand of 100 letters getting the right information that is one of four different letters is four times four times four times four 100 times four to the power of 100 again the second point I've put that number on your sheet that's what four to the power of 100 is for a small DNA strand of 100 letters is again a number beyond which there are more than the number of atoms in the universe and that's just for a small

DNA strand the DNA of a basic E. coli bacteria is four million letters long not just 100 a DNA cell in a human being is three and a half billion letters long not just 100 100 now you might say okay well yeah the odds are extraordinary but there were so many years for these things to happen the odds are bound to happen I mean there were billions of years weren't there no they weren't for these things to exist we have fossils of the very first cells dating back to over three billion years ago now the earth has only been around for about four and a half billion years and for about the first billion it was cooling down so actually the number of years the window for this to happen it's almost as if as soon as life could have sprung into existence it did and there's scientific evidence for that with fossils in the rocks there are other problems I'm not a massive scientist but entropy basically teaches that in science things tend to decay rather than get better so say if you did have some amino acids that managed to get together and some DNA that managed to form against all ridiculous odds the odds of that thing becoming bigger and bigger and bigger are very little because entropy means things decay rather than things grow and get better and then more than that and this is important I think there's no evidence of evolution of the cell now look in science the way they teach it in school you can see how the theory of evolution works

I mean you look at the animal kingdom and you can see through bacteria through plants up through basic insects and smaller animals up to humans you can see a lot of the functions that are kind of basic eyes and basic ears and basic legs you can put together pictures of apes getting bigger and you can vaguely imagine and understand what kind of ballpark thing we're talking about there are sort of links in chains that you might argue are there in cells in the world there are no links in the chain there are fully formed living cells and there's non-living matter and there's nothing in between now given the extraordinary complexity of the living cell you'd expect somewhere in nature basic forms evolutionary links if you like but there's nothing nada it's as if somehow magically the cell appeared from nothing or maybe it did see the evidence in all of this and I think this is a very powerful argument and Lennox has lots of chapters on this do read it the evidence seems to me that to look at this and go oh yeah

I'm sure scientists will come up with an no the odds of this happening are ridiculous I mean it's laughable it's zero this is impossible this can't happen now Dawkins how do these guys respond to this now their theories on how life began are quite tedious and long and complex and I don't fully understand them myself and you can again read Lennox if you want to find out about them but essentially when you look at Dawkins explanations read his famous book The Selfish Gene for example when he's describing how things happened from the very beginning he uses stories how can he not I mean no one was there three billion years ago so when you read these accounts they're interesting they're very vivid they're brilliant stories but they're not science they're stories I can imagine it kind of happened kind of like this but they're illustrations there's no science there they've not done anything in a lab in fact the stuff they do in a lab is very tiny changes within animals nothing to do with cellular evolution so again we're back to the odds molecular biology has allowed us to understand the extraordinary complexity of living cells and the odds about them coming by blind processes are laughably small they're zero effectively fiercest would say there is an answer

[36:20] God did it they look designed and the reason there is apparent design as Dawkins likes to put is because there's actual design it actually happened that way that's what fierce would say so where would you put your money when I was at school and I did RE at school when I was a teenager I remember looking at the arguments for the existence of God and in those days we looked at debates and the big guy the big cheese of the day was not Richard Dawkins it was a man called Anthony Flew for about half a century and he's very famously he was the guy you wheeled out to make your key arguments this man Anthony Flew as an older guy in 2004 Anthony Flew amazingly changed his mind after being the Richard Dawkins for 50 years of his day he was the most extraordinary debate he's a very famous man he said I'm wrong there is a God he didn't become a Christian but he looked at the scientific evidence that was changing over those 50 years and he changed his mind there's a book you can read he's dead now actually but it's called there is a God and it outlines his case for why he thinks there is a

God imagine Richard Dawkins turning around tomorrow and going I've looked at the real evidence and I've realised I've got it wrong that's exactly what Anthony Flew did it's extraordinary the odds are massively stacked against atheism so let me finish with one last question why is it then the obvious question for me in my head and I struggle with this why is it that all scientists are not theists why is there quite a lot maybe even the majority of scientists who are stoatheists why is that now I don't have the answer to that two suggestions one is I think it might be because they just don't know these facts they're scientists in a particular key area and they're experts here but they just haven't looked at the broader picture and a lot of this actually is philosophy of science really and so they just don't know this stuff and I think that's a credible reason but there might be another reason I had a friend who I invited to this talk who couldn't make it and the reason he couldn't make it he was very honest with me he was candid he said to me the reason Mark

I don't want to come is because you might prove me wrong and I don't want you to this is what it says in the Bible I'm sure I haven't put this quote on your sheet but I'm reading from Romans chapter 1 and you can look this up yourself I'm reading from the ESV translation this is what the Bible says for what can be known about God is plain to people because God has shown it to them his invisible attributes the things you can't see about him namely his eternal power and his divine nature have been clearly perceived ever since the creation of the world in the very things that have been made in the world in science so those people are without excuse the Bible says for although they know there is a God they knew God they didn't honour him as God or give thanks to him but became futile in their thinking and their foolish hearts were darkened claiming to be wise they became fools and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and reptiles let me explain what that passage is saying that passage is effectively saying look ever since the very beginning you should look at the world and you should be able to see there's a God it's obvious and the fact is the more we know about science the more obvious it is actually not the other way around but the reason the Bible there is saying that people reject

God is not because the evidence is there it's because like my friend I think they just don't want their boat rocks it's very comforting to know there's a universe without a God because it means I can do what I want I can live how I want I'm free do you remember the advert on the buses the atheist bus campaign there's probably no God so just stop worrying go and enjoy yourself you don't have to worry if there's no God you're not accountable do what you fancy live how you like and I think my mate and I chat with him about this and he knows I'm saying this I think he represents a lot of people I think it's comfortable because you can do what you want do you know ironically many people think Christians are like children with an invisible friend you know an invisible friend for children they know they're not there but it's comforting to think he's there and it's a nice thing to have and I think a lot of my friends look at me as a Christian and think that's your God you know he's not there Mark but he's a comfort to you you know he helps you when things are hard you know where you're going when you die you know it's not true but it's comforting but you know what the irony is it's actually completely the other way around the atheist world view is a comfort blanket it's an invisible friend and I think when you really look at the evidence when you look at the odds it's not real there is a God now I know that's really hard for some to hear because actually when you look at the hard evidence the science it means if there's a God it means something about your life it's not just an abstract out there because it affects me and that's why it's difficult so if that's you or if you're listening on the table if you're here today please do send me an email or please come and speak to me because I'd love to chat to you

I know these things are hard we run these Christianity explored courses where we look at the evidence particularly for Christianity and Jesus and there is good evidence but I would want to encourage you please don't live a life in pretense I think my friend is going la la la la la I'm not listening and it's easier that way and I'd encourage you please look at where the evidence really goes where it really takes you don't live with an invisible friend but live according to what's real what's true what's scientific because that's right live in accordance with what's real now I'm going to finish there I've gone on much too long I apologise for that I've put a few more questions there in discussion three please feel free to chat those things through and I'd love to chat to you personally if you'd like to come and speak to me happy to hear do kam you and I'll sit