

DOES THE LAW OF GRAVITY CAUSE THE UNIVERSE TO MAKE ITSELF?

Stephen Hawking said the law of gravity causes the universe to make itself from nothing.

The following is a reply to Christian refutations of Hawking. The relevant refutations can be found in a book by John Lennox called God and Stephen Hawking. The relevant pages of this book will be referred to.

Believers in God say Hawking was only giving an opinion.

If it is an opinion then why do Hawking's explanations from physics about how things have come into being and why there is something instead of nothing proceed as if there were no God? Atheism runs right through his science in the sense that God is conspicuous by his absence.

Why is there a God rather than no God? Christians answer that God didn't make himself but he just is. He is just there. His existence then is a brute fact (ie it's a fact and we will never understand it any better) and there is no need to say any more.

So all one could say then to why is there something and not nothing could be that whatever exists is just a brute fact and there is no answer.

The Christians say the universe is not a brute fact for it is full of things that don't need to exist. Eg, what is the point of having all those empty galaxies? They think that brute facts need to be the reason for their own existence.

But all things could be the manifestation of a form of energy that is a brute fact and which is able to keep itself in existence. Imagine carbon was a brute fact. Creatures made of carbon could be done without but that does not mean the carbon can be done without.

The only thing that can be a brute fact is some kind of energy - an essence without any intelligence or anything. God cannot be a brute fact. If you can imagine a spirit with intelligence and consciousness you can imagine one without. That would be an essence like God but it would not be God.

There are simpler and more likely explanations for how things have come to be - apart from God.

What right has anybody who has not learned and thought as Hawking has done to say his findings are an opinion?

They say Hawking believes in the big bang which means he believes that the universe was created.

Lie. The big bang idea says that something exploded and became the universe. It is not a creation out of nothing because nothing cannot explode. Some Christians believe that there was something made from nothing that exploded and became the universe. This is absurd as having a non-existent wife. But at least they deny that the big bang in itself is not the same thing as creation.

Hawking has rejected an incorrect view of God. He doesn't know of the correct view thus his arguments do not refute the Christian God.

They note that Hawking said that there was no need "to invoke God to light the blue torch paper to set the universe going" (page 44). Christians say God did more than that and actually creates the universe anew every moment of time to keep it in constant existence. But they say he did start the universe. And Hawking only said that there was no need for a God to start it meaning there is no need for a God to keep the universe in being either. The Christians are exaggerating and distorting things to suit themselves.

Hawking never propounded a wrong idea of God. Even if he did, he got the doctrine that God creates out of nothing right. And it is that very basic doctrine he rejects as absurd and incorrect. Hawking's understanding of God is actually beside the point. What matters is his understanding that creation means something being made out of nothing. Christians and their damn red herrings!

They say that Hawking is contradicting himself for he once wrote of a theory of everything that clues us into the "mind of God."

But he never defined what he meant by God. For many Pantheists and for Einstein, nature was God. Being was God. They thought of God at most as an impersonal mind or intelligence. Hawking could be following that thinking. It is very devious of Christians to make the uninformed think that the mind of God refers to the Christian concept and version of God.

Hawking says there was a law of gravity so he is showing despite himself that God exists for only law makers make laws and if there is a law of gravity then there is a God to make that law.

Christians themselves believe that there are laws in eternity that God did not make. As God did not make himself it follows that he did not create the law that God exists and cannot go out of existence. Eternity is timelessness. Both atheists and believers have to concede that there are eternal laws which means that laws do not necessarily imply a lawgiver or lawmaker. If a lawmaker cannot be a lawmaker unless laws allow him to be. But who made those laws? And who is the lawmaker of these laws? And who is the lawmaker that set up the laws that allow him to make laws? It goes on and on ad infinitum. If there is no lawmaker or God, and suppose there is nothing at all. It follows that the law that a non-existent man cannot become an accountant is still true. It is still law.

And atheists and believers have to concede that the answer to, "Why these laws and not others?" at least with regard to some laws is simply that they are just there and that is that.

Christians say there is no intellectual problem with the idea of an entity that has never had a cause. It's just there. They say that God, and only God, is this being. It follows then that if there is a God you could speak of a law that there is to be a God. God didn't make that law for he didn't make himself. You can't make yourself for you need to exist before yourself to make yourself.

No matter what you do, you cannot avoid the idea that there are laws that are independent of God. For example, if there was nothing at all, it would be law that nothing exists.

Laws do not imply that there needs to be a maker of those laws. Laws are not necessarily rules set up by anyone. We use the word law to describe the way things are. It is a metaphor we use to describe what happens with regularity. If rain falls regularly in October and in no other month we use the figure of speech that it is law that it happens in October. Instead of law, physicists should use the term "observed regularity".

Even if nothing at all existed, it would be law that 1 apple and 1 apple make 2 apples. Such law does not need to be made. It just is. There doesn't have to be an agent to make it. Law does not do anything. It just is. It is not an agent. That is the reply to Christians who claim that atheists are saying that laws make all things and if they do then there must be a God to make the laws!

Lennox argues that if laws of gravity made all things then there must have been someone to make the laws. A computer is able to make laws. If a man designs a computer and it does things he never intended then the computer is making these laws not him. The view that there must be a person to make laws is nonsense.

Are the "laws" of nature actually something? Perhaps they are deductive principles put together. Maybe they are descriptions of what to expect rather than things. The laws have no objective existence. Hawking then is mad to suggest that laws that aren't real but just a figure of speech can create.

By stating that the law of gravity made all things, Hawking meant that gravity made all things. That's all. It would have been clearer had he written that because gravity is a brute fact, it leads to the conditions for the universe to appear from nothing. Better to do that than to talk in terms of laws. The problem is with the wording used not the meaning.

Hawking says that the universe seems to be fine-tuned and designed. He states that this "design" is entirely natural and there is no need to surmise that there must be a designer God because there is an infinity of universes. This view says that there are so many universes that by pure chance one would appear designed though it is not. This is the concept of the multiverse.

The multiverse cannot be verified. Physics can only show that it is possibly true. The theory of the multiverse states that there are 10⁵⁰⁰ universes which explains seeming design in this universe. This is based on the notion that if there are enough universes chances are one will come out all organised but just by chance. The theory makes out that the seeming design we see is a coincidence.

Christians say that instead of developing the multiverse theory it is better to suppose that there is a designer God who made this universe and there is no need to assume that any other universe exists. They think the multiverse is too complicated and it's better to stick to simpler theories. But this ignores the fact that nobody can prove it is really possible for the supernatural to exist. In other words, nobody can prove it is possible for the God with magic powers to exist. God cannot be proven to

be coherent. The multiverse theory makes sense logically and mathematically. Choose the theory with the less magic in it.

Max Tegmark author of *Our Mathematical Universe: My Quest for the Ultimate Nature of Reality* Tegmark, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2014) says that the multiverse model solves some terrible problems in the Big Bang Theory and helps science predict phenomena. For him, the number of events is countless so it stands to reason that unlikely things have to happen sometime. The sheer luck that leads to you and be being here and alive proves that! For him, the you that exists in another universe is not you but just a person very like you. Thus the idea that there may be several mes may be wrong. But not all thinkers suppose that it is wrong. The objection is that the usefulness of the multiverse cannot beat verification and testing. True but that is problem not an objection. It seems the multiverse model contradicts probability for it means in the parallel universe by pure chance the history played out exactly is it did here but there may have only been a minor difference that does not even register Perhaps a grain of sand a millimeter away from where it is in ours.

The Christians say the multiverse does not rule out the possibility that there is a God (page 49, *God and Stephen Hawking*). It does not rule out there being a tooth fairy either. It is a theory about how randomness works - it is not related to God at all.

Scholars in the Church have claimed that if there are multiple universes then some could be paradise and we could go there or they could be an eternal Hell. But the multiple universes if they exist just exist so you can still end up in a Hell universe despite doing nothing wrong.

Hawking says the reason there is something rather than nothing is because there is something. That is not an answer.

What he meant was that the reason there is something rather than nothing is because there is something that came about by spontaneous creation.

If you are asked why is there something rather than nothing and you reply, "Because there is!" then are you trying to pass off a non-answer as an answer? Not necessarily. To answer, that way is to indicate that, "I don't know and all that I can say is that there is something." That is far from dishonest. Indeed it is laudable.

What about the idea that God can use spontaneous creation to produce the universe?

If God uses this method to make all things then it is clear then that creation does not prove the existence of God. Creation being spontaneous means that whether a personal agent called God is involved or not this being is not necessary.

If we say that nothing happens spontaneously or by chance then we are saying that all things are controlled by fate or destiny. If that is true, then why bother gambling? Why speak of taking chances? Or risks? We wouldn't enjoy life if we didn't believe that the forces of chance existed. If we believe in God then we have to want to believe in a God who refuses to control everything - a God who lets things happen randomly. He makes the powers that cause things to happen by chance. If God can do that then creation can be random and spontaneous too.

A God that can't set up things to run by themselves is not perfect for us. Reason says things can be left to chance. If God is unable to set this up then he is not all-powerful. It would mean we don't really have free will for free will implies the power to be independent of God if one so chooses.

To teach the concept of God when it undermines free will is far more serious than to deny free will on the basis that there is no evidence for it like Hawking would. Its a stronger denial. It shows that Hawking's views are a bit more palatable for the general public than the religious views.

If creation is spontaneous it might be caused by God or not. A God who sets up spontaneous creation is a God who hides himself. It would mean we can never tell from creation if he exists or not. It cannot count as evidence for God.

Hawking stated that we have no direct perception of anything in the universe.

The book *God and Stephen Hawking* states that when we look at a tree we see an image of it fed to our brains. Our senses do not give us direct perception or knowledge (page 61). It says we use memory and reason in addition to the sense perceptions to be able to tell that what we sense is there. What the book does not tell us is that if miracles happen and if God exists then the supernatural exists then all this is undermined.

Suppose you see a tree. If we accept that nature will not change we can assume that the tree we see is not a vision or a miracle image but is there. But once we start thinking nature can be overridden by the supernatural we feel less sure and mentally become less sure.

Belief in the supernatural increases our scepticism. It is a pity we have to have a level of scepticism at all - and so to embrace belief in the supernatural turns it from a pity into a disgrace.

Page 65 speaks of the subjective element in science and states that the independent observer who is free from all prejudices and preconceived ideas does not exist.

So whatever we believe, that belief is not based solely on evidence. We believe and accept things partly because we are biased and want them to be true. It follows then that to believe that a good God inflicts suffering on people is evil. The more better off you are the worse it is. The belief merits revulsion.

Hawking would say that M theory made gravity and gravity made the universe out of nothing but we know a theory cannot make anything!

The religionists are just making a caricature of Hawking. Believers in the theory of evolution do not believe that the theory made life progress as it has but that the theory describes the process. Hawking is not saying that M theory makes anything. What he is saying that M theory describes how things can come to be. He is not saying its proven but that it is a possible and or believable model.

Page 43 mentions with approval the point made by Wittgenstein when he said that it is wrong to hold that the laws of nature explain the world and the universe to us when all they do is to describe the regularity and structure of the world and universe. For example, to say that the sun rises in the east is to describe something that happens regularly. Nobody can explain exactly how it happens because nobody can understand even a small grain of sand. You can't know how to make it from nothing or exactly what it is. Again, Lennox wants to refute Hawking for allegedly teaching that laws make things. We have dealt with that accusation and exposed it for the falsehood it is.

Hawking is saying that the universe was made from nothing and he contradicts this by saying that it came out of gravity.

He is saying that the universe and gravity are two separate things and gravity made the universe from nothing. Christians say that God made the universe and it is separate from him. If so why can't gravity do the same?

Hawking rejects free will. Thus he declares himself to be a machine. So why should we believe in his book if it is the product of a machine?

Why should we drink of the stream when no intelligent force made the stream but blind forces put it there?

What is wrong with the idea that our beliefs about the world and ourselves work and who cares what mechanism causes them?

Free will does not necessarily mean we will be able to learn about the universe. People seem to think that if you don't have free will then you are a machine and your learning is a delusion for what you think you know comes from programming. But even if you have free will your intellect could still be programmed. Why? Because the faculty of free will uses the intellect but is a distinct power. So the doctrine of free will makes no improvement.

The power to learn while being programmed is a response to us being part of a universe. You are not above the universe but are in it. If we had free will to rise above our intellect that would be grounds for suspecting our intellect. Free will not only makes no improvement but bans us from trusting our thinking.

If you have free will but if you can't feel hot or cold then you will never learn about them. See the point? Our knowledge doesn't mean that we need free will to have knowledge.

We refuse then to care how we get our knowledge and settle for saying we have it and that is all there is to it. Christianity opposes this view because it implies that we have it independent of God. It implies that God is not God for us for we are independent of God and indeed need to be. Atheism is the true upholder of human dignity.

Hawking says miracles don't happen yet he believes in the multiverse theory which alleges that there are universe in which anything can happen including water transmuting into wine (page 92, 93).

He does not. There could be another universe just slightly different from this one. Perhaps there is an infinitesimally small difference in time and neither universe can be told apart. The multiverse idea does not require that we think there is such a thing as a universe where water can turn into wine.

Hawking needs to be reminded that as a scientist, he should neither affirm the existence of God or deny it. This is because

science cannot show if God exists or not.

This is really saying that science can do without belief in God! It would be an admission that there is no evidence for God. God by definition is not just the maker of all but the reason anything matters. All things only matter for the source matters. Most atheists would be happy enough with that claim that God is irrelevant in science! The rule is really saying, "Science must not disprove the likelihood of the existence of God." Science has proven that suffering exists. If suffering contradicts the existence of a good God then science has disproved God. It is unscientific to declare certain ideas too sacred for examination. It is also saying, "Science must not prove the existence of God or that it is likely that he does exist." That is not a scientific attitude either.

FINALLY - Nobody can match Hawking's mind so nobody should be saying he is wrong. If you need a supernatural cause for all things then why can't some form of gravity be supernatural? Maybe its different from today's gravity?