

# *THINK THEISM*

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at Texas A&M

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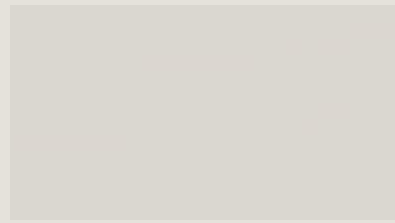
Search: “Think Theism” in your podcast  
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**THINK  
THEISM**

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# Does the Universe Prove God?

*Cosmological Arguments for the Existence of God*

	General Theism	Christian Specific
Positive (i.e. making the case)	Reasons why God exists	Reasons why Christianity is true
Defensive (i.e. responding to objections)	Responses to arguments for atheism	Responses to arguments against Christianity

	General Theism	Christian Specific
<b>Positive</b> (i.e. making the case)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Arguments for God's Existence</b></li> <li>• <b>Cosmological</b></li> <li>• Teleological</li> <li>• Moral Argument</li> <li>• Ontological Argument</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New Testament Textual Transmission</li> <li>• Historical Argument for the Resurrection</li> <li>• Reliability of the Bible</li> <li>• Uniqueness of Jesus</li> <li>• Undesigned Coincidences</li> </ul>
<b>Defensive</b> (i.e. responding to objections)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Problem of Evil</li> <li>• Divine Hiddenness</li> <li>• Incoherence of theism</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Science vs Faith (e.g. Evolution)</li> <li>• Historical Errors in the Bible</li> <li>• Scientific Errors in the Bible</li> <li>• Contradictions in the Bible</li> <li>• Moral Objections to Biblical Stories</li> <li>• Religious Pluralism vs Particularism</li> </ul>

# The Structure of Classical Apologetics

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# Roadmap

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1

## Cosmological Arguments

The general framework and characteristics of Cosmological Arguments and some historical examples.

2

## Kalam Cosmological Argument: Background

From Al Ghazali to the Big Bang to Modern Day, this is an especially popular formulation of the argument.

3

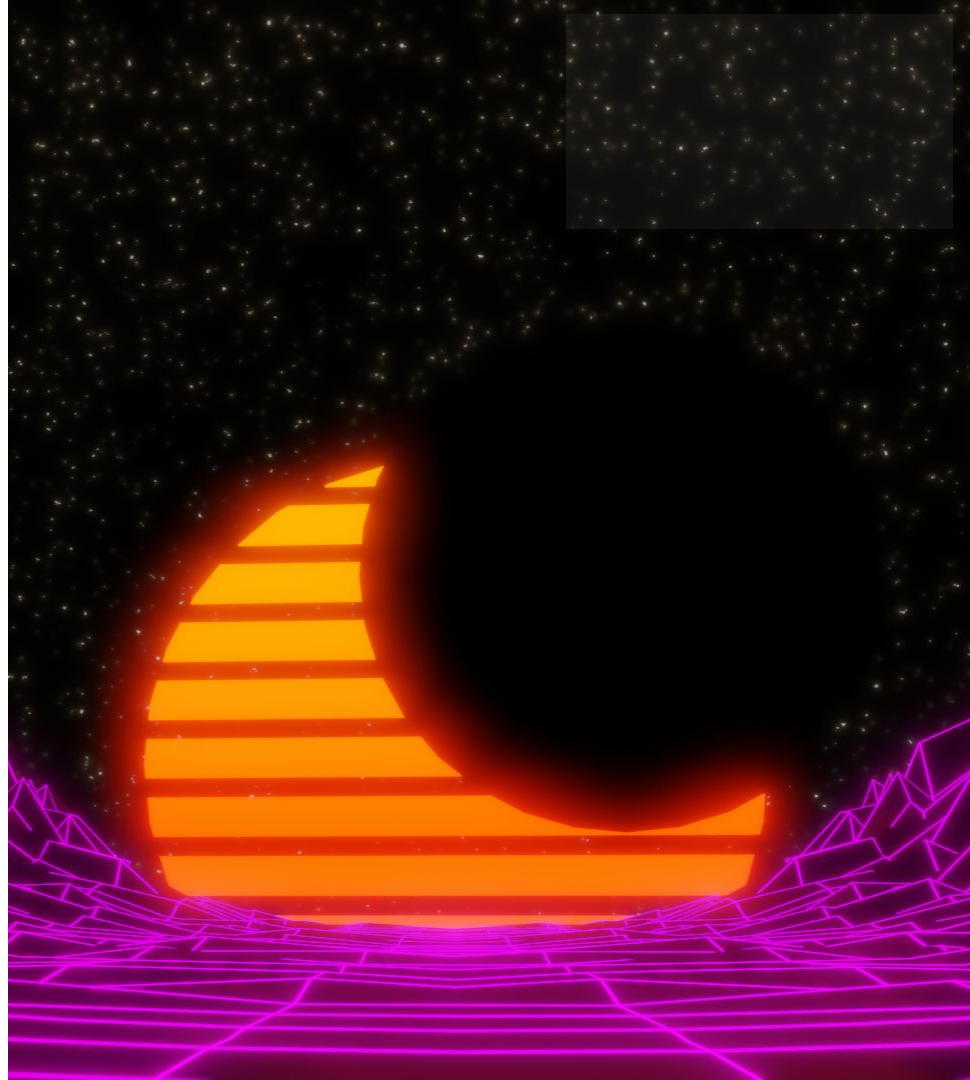
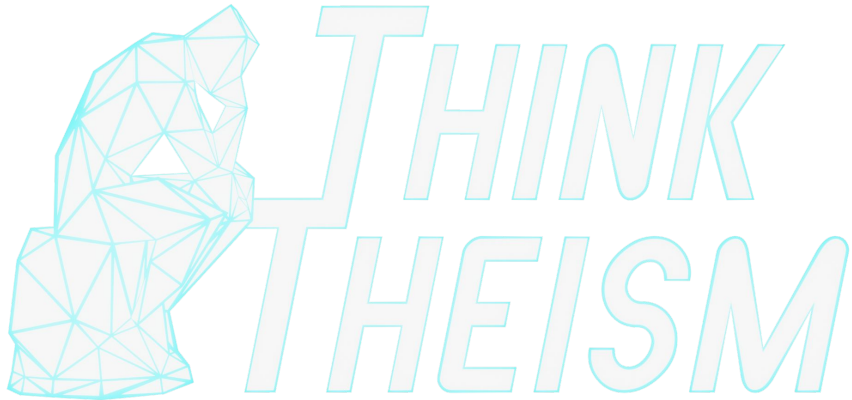
## Kalam Cosmological Argument: Discussion

Digging into the premises to see if they are compatible with modern Cosmology - the science of the Universe.



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# What are Cosmological Arguments?



# Methodology: How Should Carol Respond?

Science shows that the universe was generated through natural processes billions of years ago; No God needed. And since the Bible teaches a young earth, it must be wrong!

Alvin the Atheist



???

Carol the Christian



"In your hearts honor Christ the Lord as holy, always **being prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you**; yet do it with gentleness and respect" - 1 Pt. 3:15

# Option 1

Science shows that the universe was generated through natural processes billions of years ago; No God needed. And since the Bible teaches a young earth, it must be wrong!

Alvin the Atheist



The Bible does teach a young earth, but, radiometric dating is wrong, and there is a lot of other scientific evidence for a young earth, but since all scientists are evolutionists, they ignore the evidence.

Carol the Christian

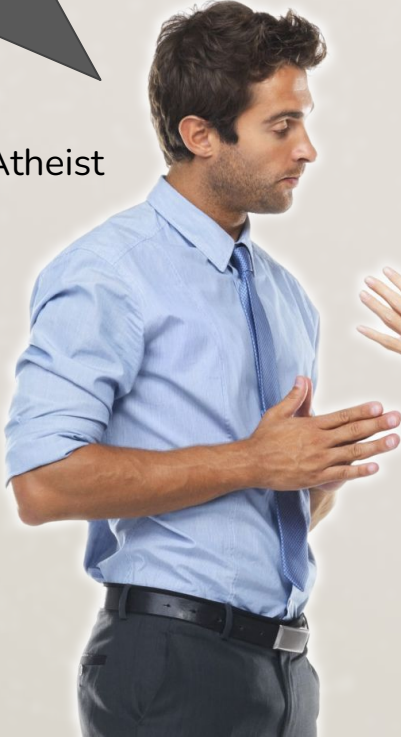
## Some problems with this approach:

1. Carol has accepted Alvin's claim that Christianity cannot be true if the universe is old
2. Carol has made some dubious scientific claims
3. Carol has impugned the integrity of millions of scientists (many of whom happen to be Theists and even Christians!)
4. Carol has equated cosmology with biology, and/or misused the term evolution

# Option 2

Science shows that the universe was generated through natural processes billions of years ago; No God needed. And since the Bible teaches a young earth, it must be wrong!

Alvin the Atheist



Actually, the evidence for the beginning of the universe is one of the greatest reasons to believe that God exists! For most of history, philosophers and scientists believed the universe was eternal, but in the last 100 years, we have learned that the universe began to exist! In the beginning God created...

Carol the Christian



**Regardless of what you think about the age of the universe, if you grant the truth of modern cosmology (if only for the sake of argument), you will have the beginnings of a strong argument for God's existence**



The  
Cosmological  
Argument from  
Plato  
to Leibniz



William Lane Craig

Library of Philosophy and Religion  
General Editor: John Hick

## Resource #1

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William Lane Craig is the popularizer of the so-called “Kalam” cosmological argument. Since the publication of his work, there has been great increase in interest in the argument.

The book here on the left is his introduction to the history of cosmological arguments, and will be our first resource of the day.



# General Cosmological Arguments

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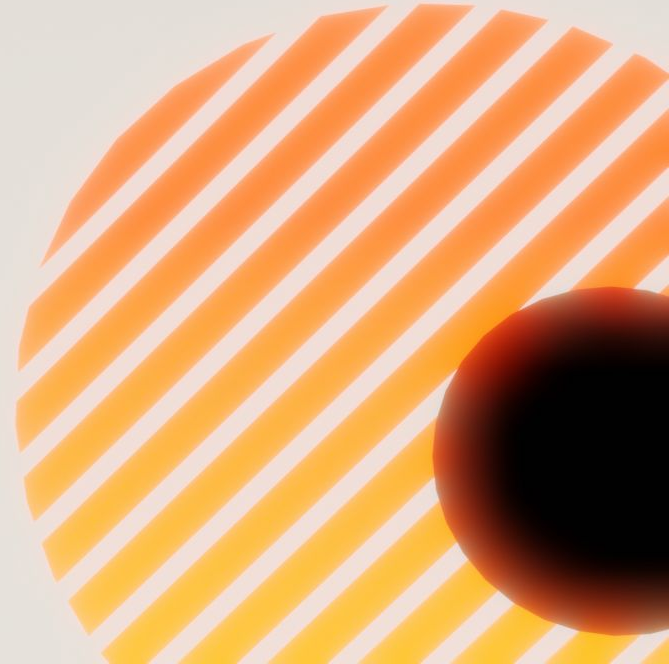
**Definition:** “an *a posteriori* argument for a cause or reason of the universe” [1]

In cosmological arguments, we infer the existence of God from facts concerning the:

- *causation,*
- *explanation,*
- *change,*
- *motion,*
- *contingency,*
- *dependency, or*
- *finitude*



**of the UNIVERSE.**



# Cosmological Arguments Throughout History [1]

Plato  
**The Self-Moved Mover**

Aristotle  
**The Unmoved Mover**

Locke  
?



Berkeley  
?

Suarez  
?

Spinoza  
?

Bonaventure  
?

Duns Scotus  
?

Anselm  
?

Al Farabi  
**Argument from Contingency**

Ibn Sina (Avicenna)  
**Argument from Contingency**

Ibn Rushd (Averroes)  
?

Thomas Aquinas  
**Second Way**

Gottfried Leibniz  
**Argument from Contingency**

Alexander Pruss  
**Weak Principle of Sufficient Reason**

John Philoponus  
**First Cause**

Al Kindii  
**Kalam Cosmological**

Al Ghazali  
**Kalam Cosmological**

Saadia ben Joseph  
?

William Lane Craig  
**Kalam Cosmological**

Richard Swinburne  
**Inductive Cosmological Argument**

Maimonides  
**Multiple**

Thomas Aquinas  
**Third Way**

Thomas Aquinas  
**First Way**



# Classifications of Cosmological Arguments

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- **Inductive vs. Deductive**
  - **Types of Deductive (WLC)**
    1. **Thomistic:** impossibility of essential ordered infinite regress
    2. **Kalam:** impossibility of infinite regress of past events
    3. **Contingency:** Principle of Sufficient Reason
- **Temporal vs. Atemporal**
  - **Temporal:** Kalam
  - **Atemporal:** Thomistic, Contingency



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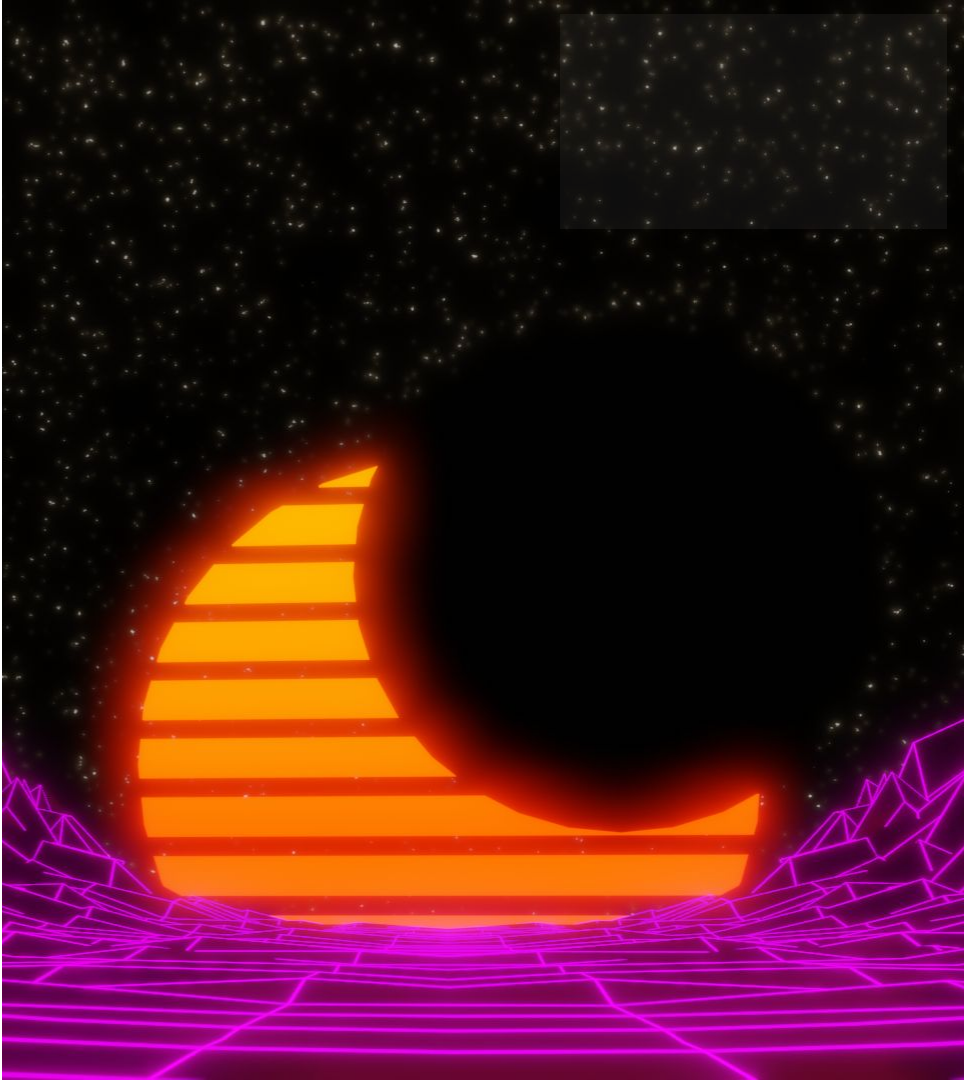
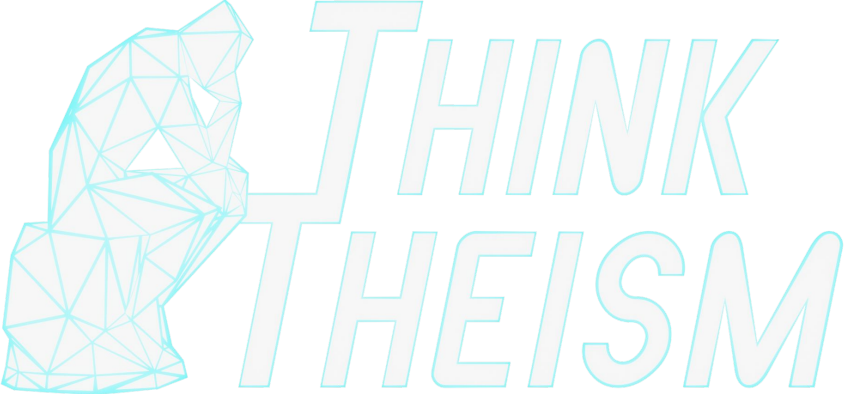
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Digging into the premises to see if they are compatible with modern Cosmology - the science of the Universe.



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# Background





# Classifications of Cosmological Arguments

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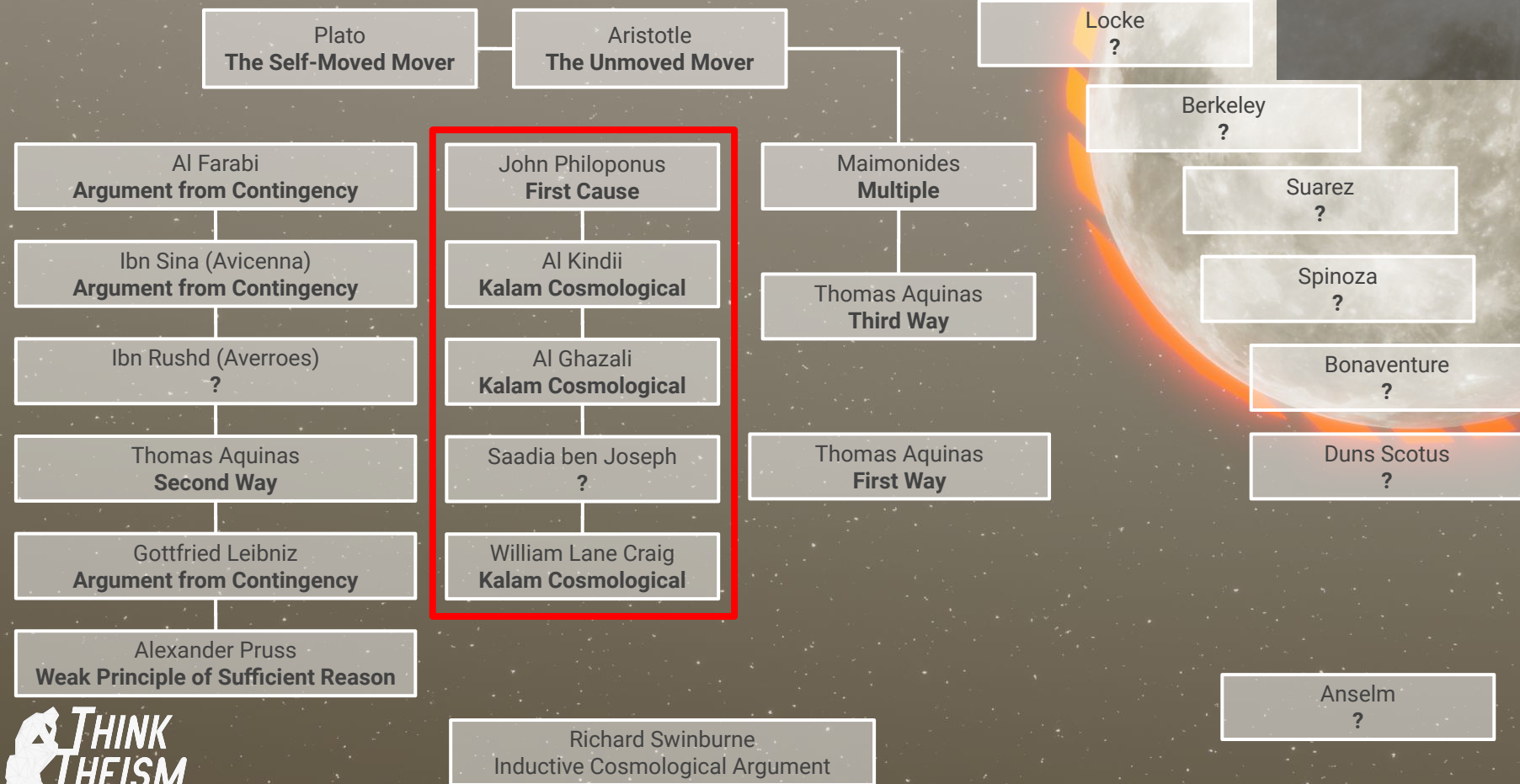


# Classifications of Cosmological Arguments

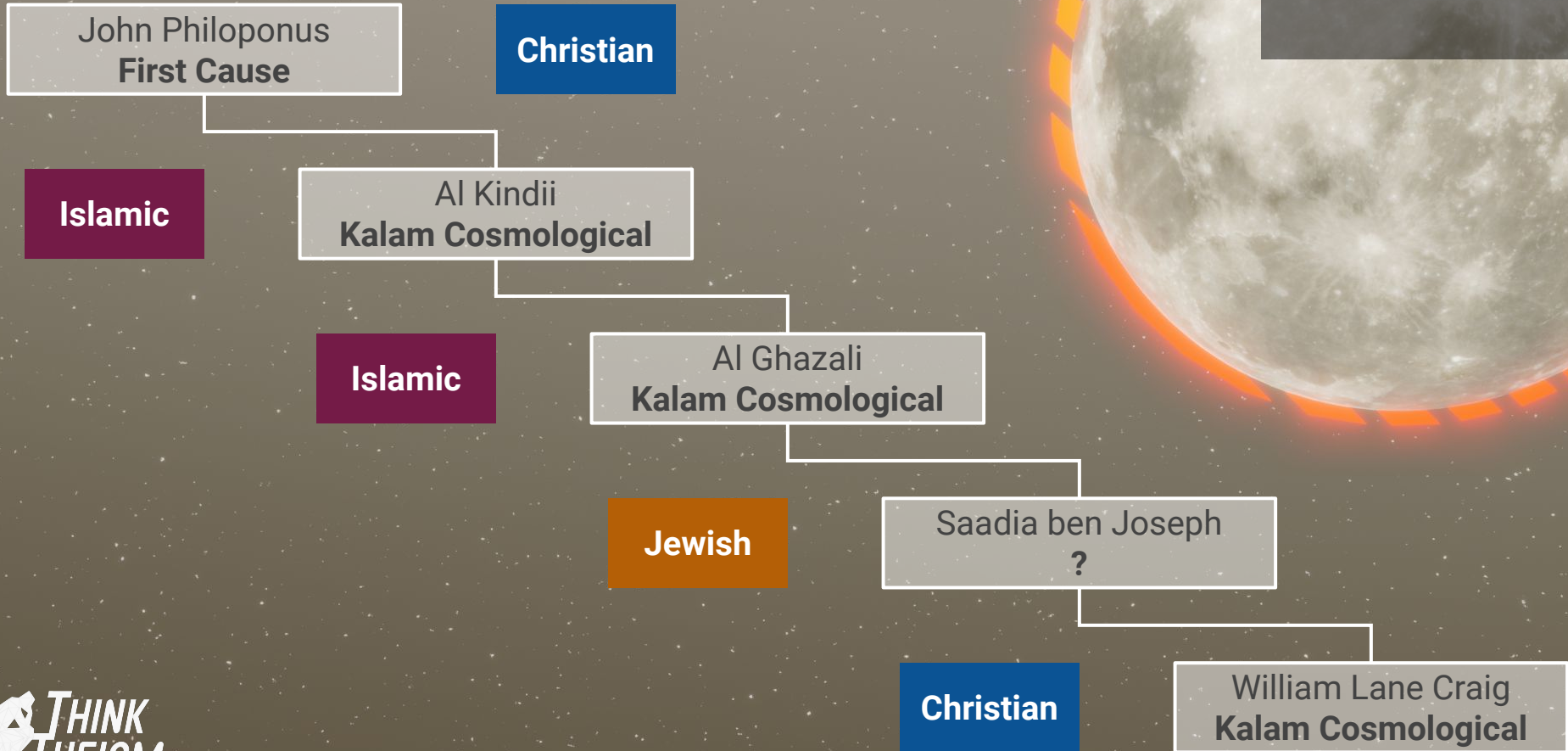
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# Cosmological Arguments Throughout History [1]



# Why is it called Kalam?



# Option 2

Science shows that the universe was generated through natural processes billions of years ago; No God needed. And since the Bible teaches a young earth, it must be wrong!

Alvin the Atheist



Actually, the evidence for the beginning of the universe is one of the greatest reasons to believe that God exists! For most of history, philosophers and scientists believed the universe was eternal, but in the last 100 years, we have learned that the universe began to exist! In the beginning God created...

Carol the Christian



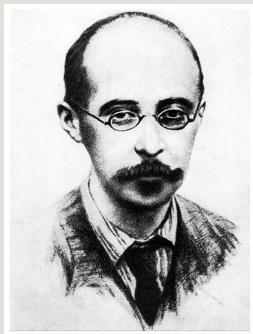
**COSMOLOGY** provides evidence for the beginning of the universe



# The universe is not past infinite

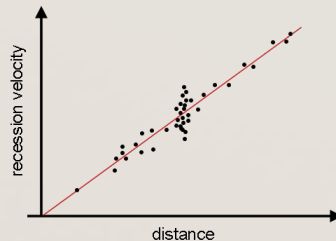
**Alexander Friedmann and Georges Lemaître**

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**Redshift & Hubble's Law**

Edwin Hubble discovers the redshift of distant galaxies is related to their distance, what is known as Hubble's law



**COBE Spacecraft**

Launched to precisely measure the CMBR, and determine variations from different points in the sky.



1922

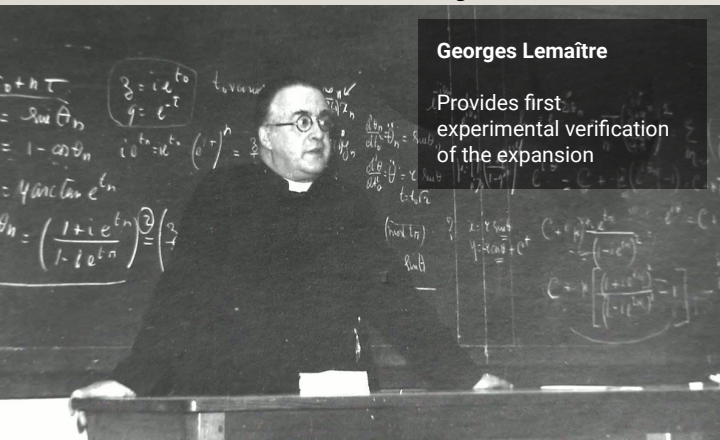
1927

1929

1964

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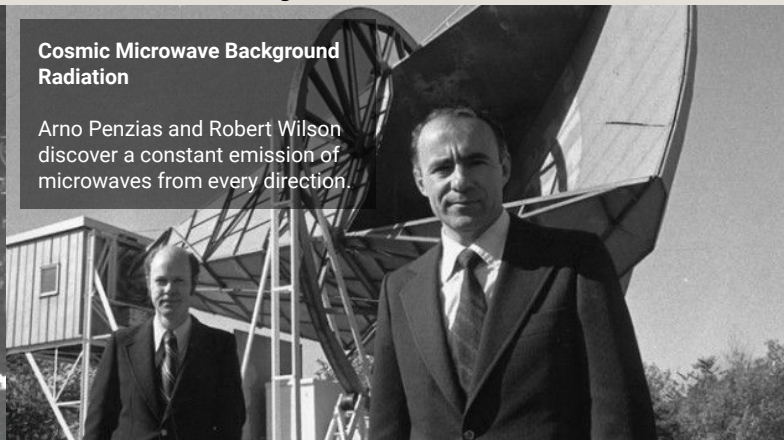


**Georges Lemaître**

Provides first experimental verification of the expansion

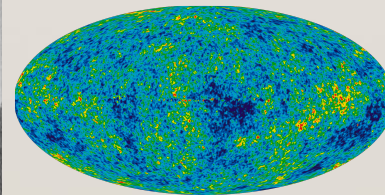
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Arno Penzias and Robert Wilson discover a constant emission of microwaves from every direction.



**WMAP Survey**

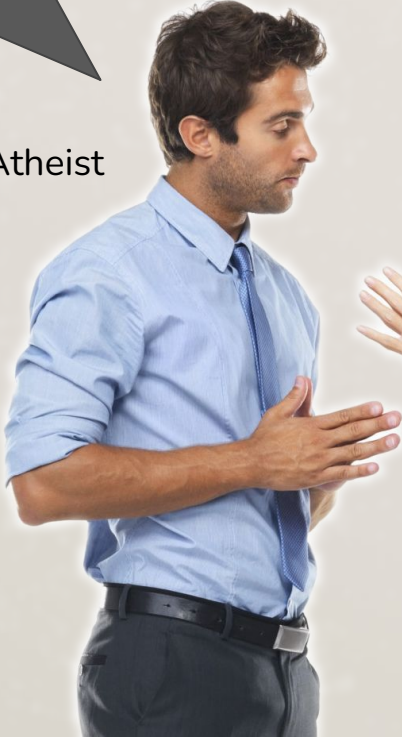
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**COSMOLOGY** provides evidence for the beginning of the universe...

**Does that mean it was created by God?**

**How can we make this a formal argument?**



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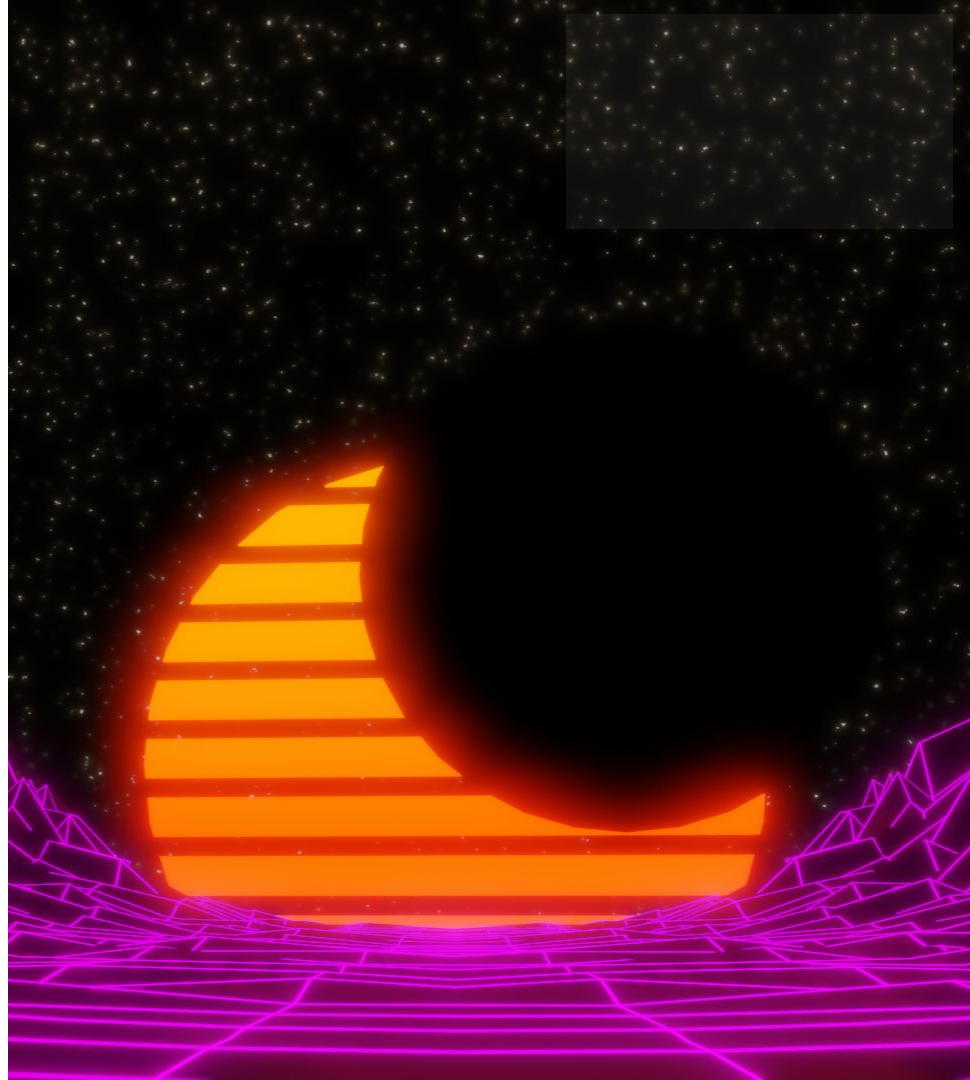
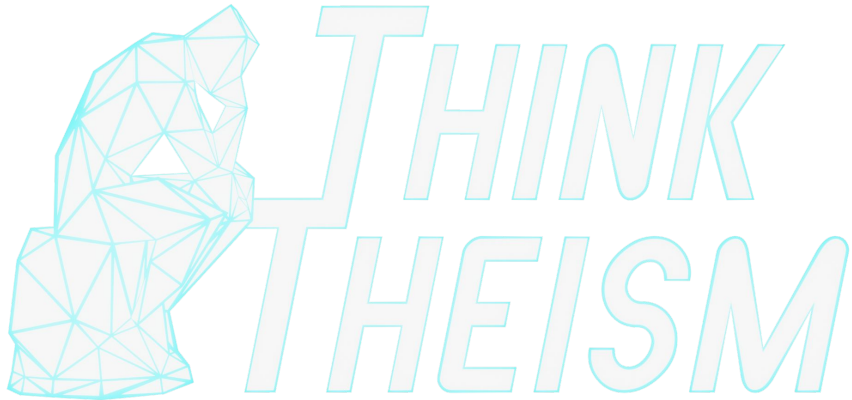
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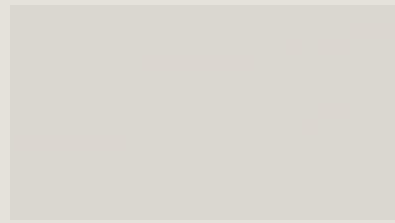
THINK  
THEISM

# Argument and Discussion



# Kalam Cosmological Argument

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We can form a simple deductive argument:

1. **Everything that begins to exist has a cause**
2. **The universe began to exist**
3. Therefore **the universe has a cause**

## 2. Did the universe begin to exist?

---

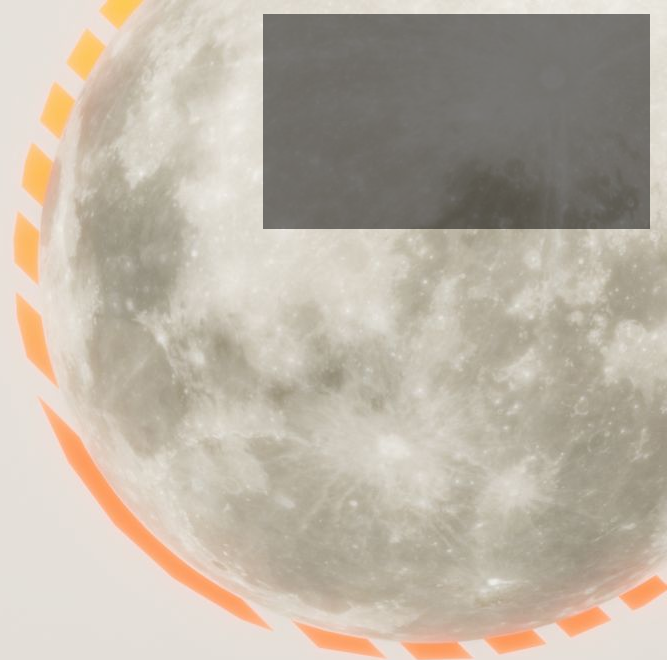
There are two categories of reasons for believing that the universe began to exist

### 1. Philosophical arguments

- a. Arguments against infinite regress of past events
  - i. Arguments against the existence of actual infinite numbers of existing things
  - ii. Arguments against forming an actual infinite collection by successive addition

### 2. Scientific Evidences

- a. Evidence supporting the Big Bang model

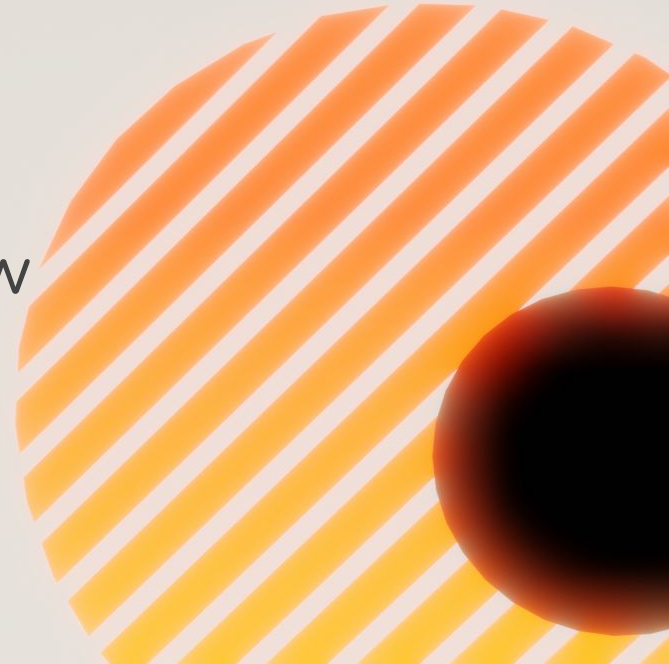


## 2. Did the universe begin to exist?

---

Is the universe infinitely Old?

- If it were, that would mean that the past has an **infinite number of past “moments” of time**
- Defenses of this premise have frequently used arguments that show **the absurdities that result from having infinite collections of things**



# What is infinity?

---

There are two senses of the word infinity:

1. A potential infinite  $\infty$
2. An actual infinite  $\square \square$

These are different: a potential infinite grows without bound, but an actual infinite is fully formed and has infinitely many members



# Can an actual infinity of past events exist?

The grim reaper paradox:

- Imagine that there are an infinite number of Grim Reapers™ and that you are an everlasting being that can only be killed by a Grim Reaper™.
- For each day of the infinite past and future, there is a Grim Reaper™ who is assigned to kill you.
- No matter what day it they Grim Reaper™ from the day before would have killed you.

Q: Which Grim Reaper™ killed you?

A: NONE!!!!



# Can an actual infinity of past events exist?

The grim reaper paradox:

1. For any given day, the Grim Reaper™ will find you already killed by a previous Grim Reaper™, thus no Grim Reaper™ could have killed you.
2. Yet, you are dead, killed presumably by a Grim Reaper™

**CONTRADICTION!!!**



# Can an actual infinity of past events exist?

**Q:** What is it about the Grim Reaper™ paradox that results in a contradiction?

**A:** The infinite regress into the past!!

Thus, an infinite regress into the past creates contradictions and cannot exist in the real world

**CONTRADICTION!!!**



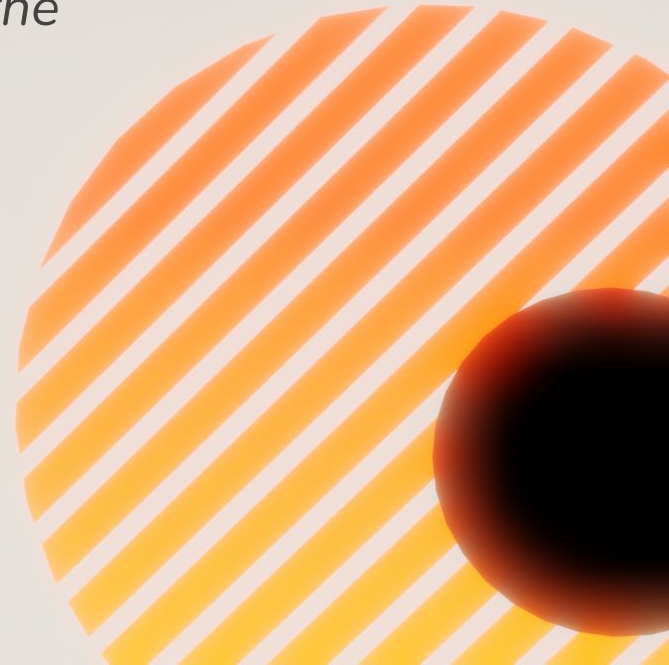
## 2. Did the universe begin to exist?

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Contemporary cosmology claims an absolute beginning to space and time at the Big Bang

*We “can no longer hide behind a past-eternal universe. There is no escape, [we] have to face the problem of a cosmic beginning”*

*~Alexander Vilenkin*

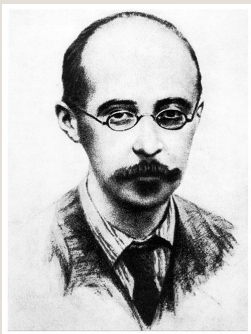




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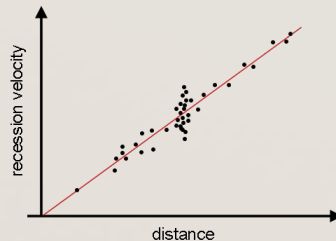
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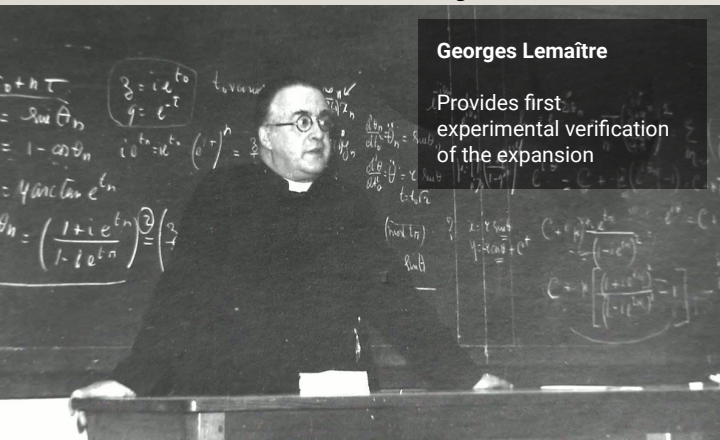
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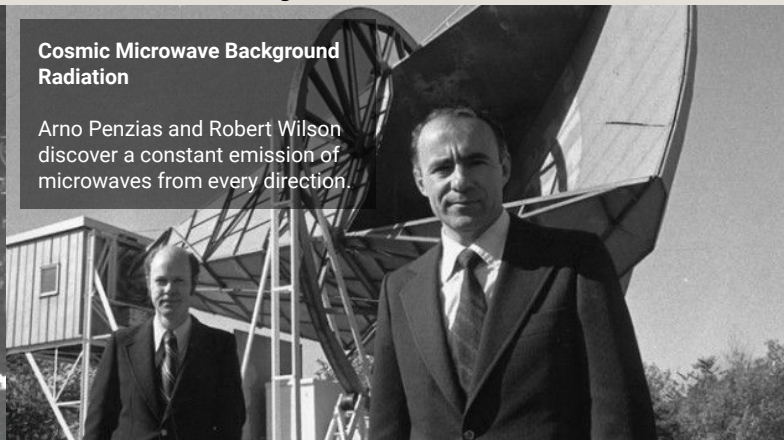


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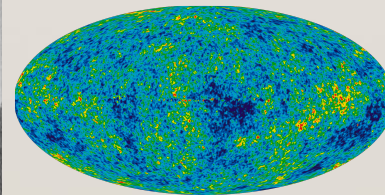
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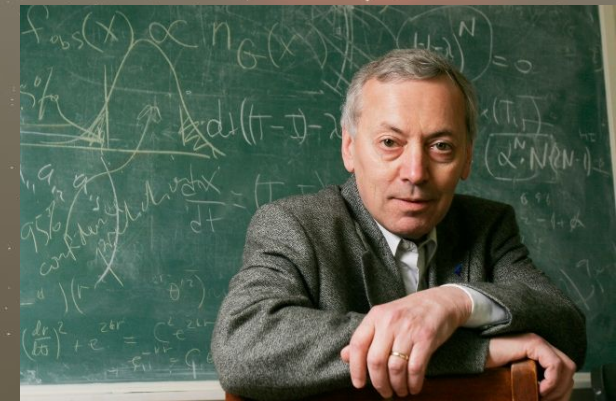
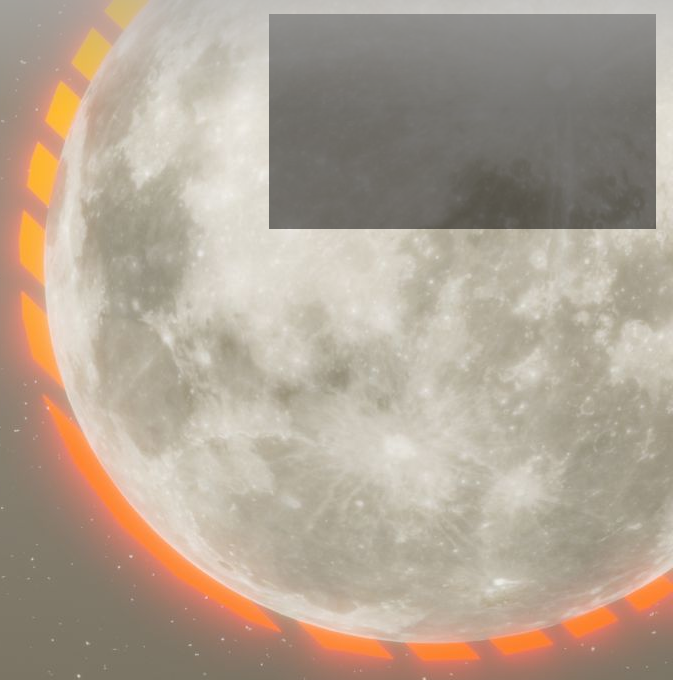


# Even the Multiverse Began to Exist

**BVG Theorem:** Any universe that has, on average, been expanding throughout its history, cannot be past infinite.

This is true for basically any classical spacetime, but may not hold true for quantum theories of gravity.

This means that oscillating models, multiverse models, and others cannot be past infinite.

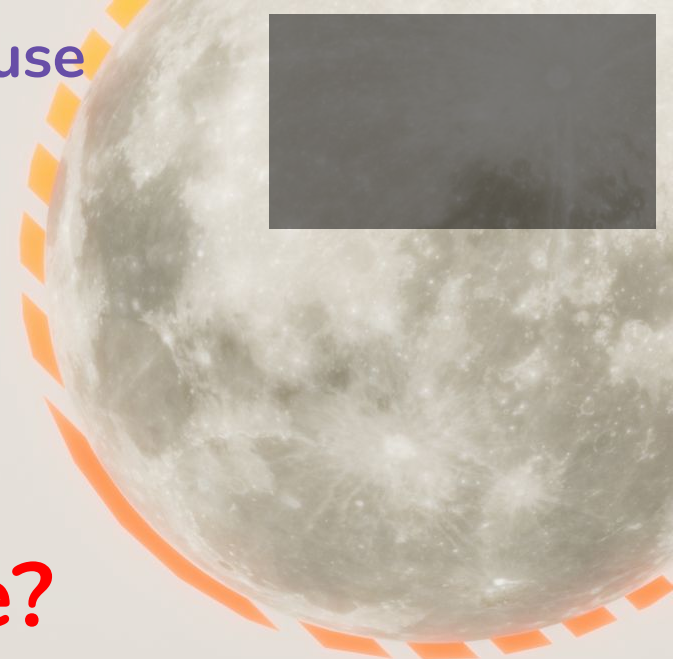




1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause

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Can things come into being  
without a **cause?**

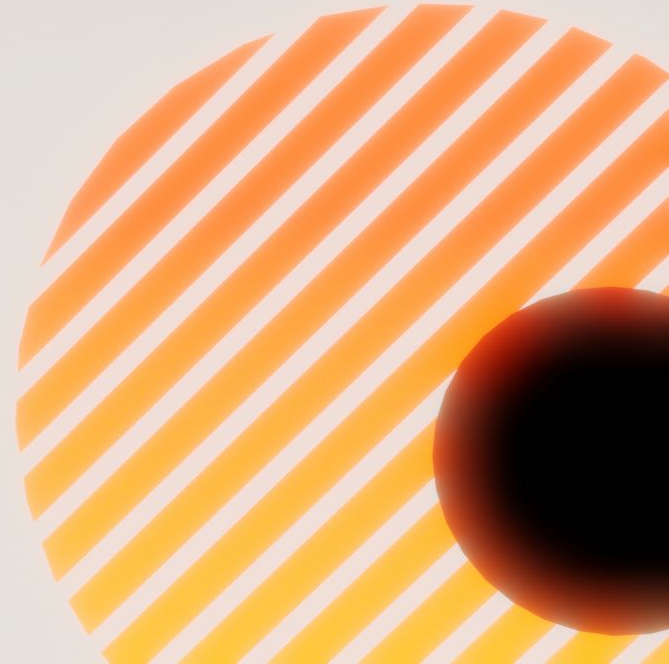


# 1. Everything that begins to exist has a cause

---

Coming into existence from nothing is worse than magic!

If things can pop into existence uncaused, out of nothing, why don't we see it happening all the time?

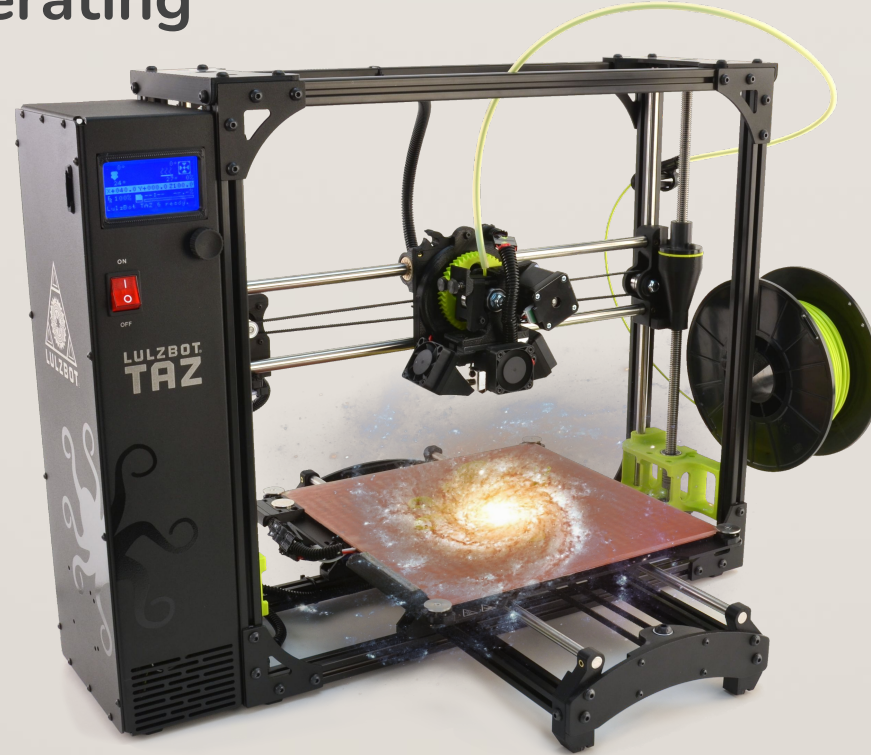


# 1. Therefore **the universe** has a cause

---

What does this mean?

Could the cause be a universe generating machine?



# Conclusion

- The universe began to exist
- That beginning demands a cause!
- Whatever caused the universe must be powerful, immaterial, and personal





## Resource #2

# Reasonable Faith



*Christian Truth  
and Apologetics*

THIRD EDITION

WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

Copyrighted Material

William Lane Craig is the popularizer of the so-called “Kalam” cosmological argument. Since the publication of his work, there has been great increase in interest in the argument.

The book on the left is an intermediate level introduction to a variety of arguments, including the Kalam Cosmological Argument



## Resource #3

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THE BLACKWELL COMPANION TO  
**NATURAL  
THEOLOGY**

EDITED BY  
William Lane Craig and J. P. Moreland



William Lane Craig is the popularizer of the so-called “Kalam” cosmological argument. Since the publication of his work, there has been great increase in interest in the argument.

This book contains advanced discussions of many arguments, including the Kalam Cosmological Argument



## Resource #4

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The

***KALĀM***

**Cosmological  
Argument**

WILLIAM LANE CRAIG

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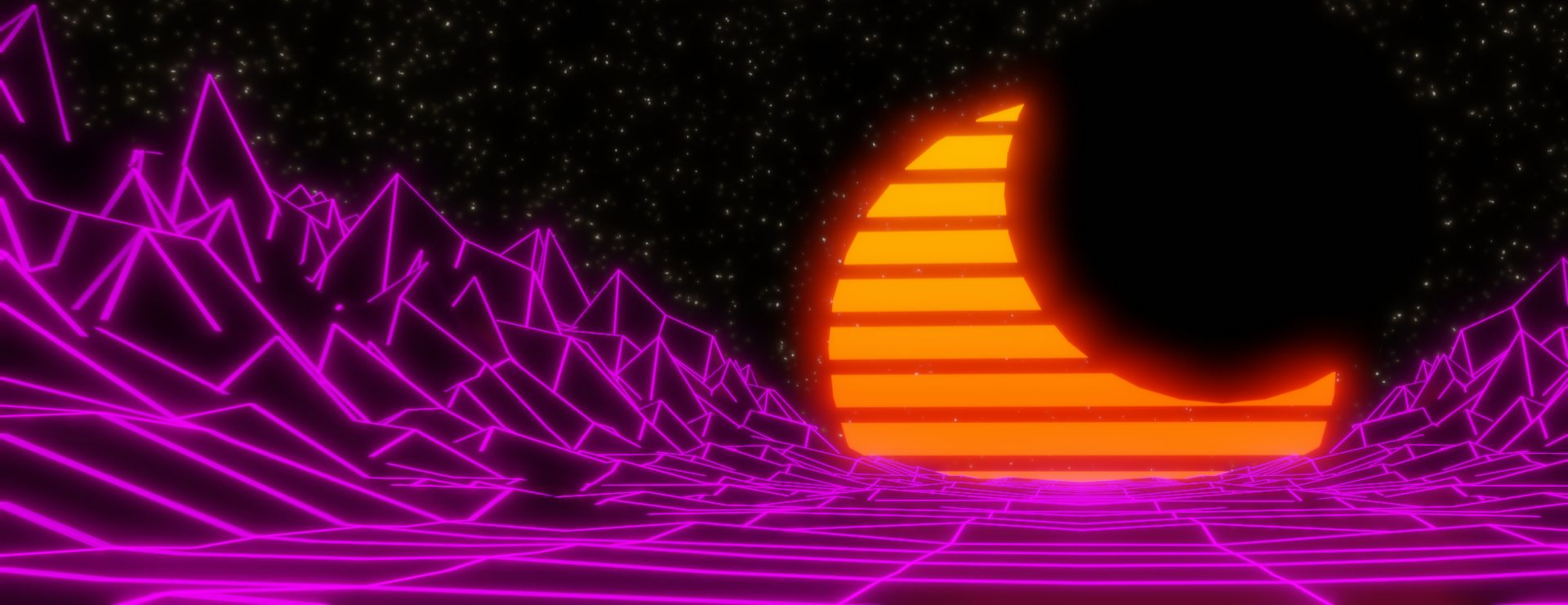
This book contains an extensive advanced discussion of the Kalam Cosmological Argument

# Resources for Non-readers

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1. [Dr. Craig Videos](#) on YouTube
  - a. Kalam Cosmological Argument playlist
2. Defenders Podcast

# Appendix



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# Plato: A Self-Moved Mover



 **THINK  
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**Ath:** Someone says to me, 'O stranger, are all things at rest and nothing in motion, or is the exact opposite of this true, or are somethings in motion and others at rest?'-To this I shall reply that some things are in motion and others at rest... there is a motion able to move other things, but never to move itself;-that is one kind; and there is another kind which can always move itself as well as other things... that is also one of the many kinds of motion... when one thing changes another, and that another, of such will there be any primary changing element? How can a thing which is moved by another ever be the beginning of change? Impossible. But when the self-moved changes other, and that again other, and thus thousands upon tens of thousands of bodies are set in motion, must not the beginning of all this motion be the beginning of the self-moved moving itself? If all this

# Plato: An Argument From Motion

1. Some things are in motion.
2. There are two kinds of motion: communicated motion and self-motion.
3. Communicated motion implies self-motion because:
  - a. Things in motion imply a self-mover as their source of motion because otherwise there would be no starting point for the motion
    - i. because things moved by another imply a prior mover.
  - b. If all things were at rest, only self-motion could arise directly from such a state
    - i. because a thing moved by another implies the presence of another moving thing.
    - ii. But this contradicts the hypothesis.
4. Therefore, the source of all motion is self-motion, or soul.
5. Soul is the source of astronomical motion because:
  - a. The heavens are in motion.
  - b. Soul is the source of all motion.
6. There is a plurality of souls because:
  - a. There must be at least one to cause good motions.
  - b. There must be at least one to cause bad motions.
7. The soul that moves the universe is the best soul because:
  - a. The motions of the heavens are good, being regular and orderly like those of the mind.
8. There are many souls, or gods, because:
  - a. Each heavenly body is a source of self-motion.

---

# Aristotle: The Unmoved Mover



1. Everything in motion must be moved by something.
2. If it is not self-moved it is moved by another.
3. Nothing can be self-moved. \*
4. The series of things moved by another cannot go on to infinity; there must be a first mover. \*

\*Premise 3 and the conclusion have additional arguments supporting them which we will not discuss here



---

# Aristotle: The Unmoved Mover



1. Everything that is in motion is being moved by something.
2. This something is itself either in motion or not in motion.
3. If it is in motion, then it is either self-moved or moved by another.
4. The members of a series of things each being moved by another must ultimately be in motion only by reference to a self-moved thing.
5. The members of the whole series of self-movers and things moved by another must be in motion only by reference to an unmoved mover.
6. This first mover must be utterly unmoved and eternal because:
  - a. motion itself is continuous and eternal.

---

# John Philoponus:



- A. Proofs of the generation of the universe from the finiteness of the power contained within it:
  - a. The heavens are composed of matter and form. Consequently they are not self-sufficient, and what is not self-sufficient does not have infinite power
  - b. The nature of matter is such that matter cannot retain any form indefinitely. Therefore, nothing composed of matter and form can be indestructible
  - c. The heavens are composite. Whatever is composite contains the grounds of its dissolution and therefore does not contain infinite power
  - d. Any mass can be divided into minimal particles, and those particles can be shown to have finite power

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# John Philoponus:



- B. Proofs of the generation of the universe from the impossibility of eternal motion:
- If the universe were eternal, the generation of any object in the sublunar world would be preceded by an infinite series of generations. But an infinite cannot be traversed. Therefore, if the universe were eternal, none of the objects presently existing in the sublunar world could ever have been generated
  - The eternity of the universe would imply an infinite number of past motions that is continually being increased. But an infinite cannot be added to
  - The number of the revolutions of the heavenly bodies are multiples of one another, and therefore eternity would imply infinite numbers of past motions in varying multiples. But infinite numbers cannot be multiplied

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# Al Farabi:



1. Contingent beings begin to exist.
2. Anything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence.
3. This cause is contingent or not.
4. A series of contingent beings each caused by another cannot be infinite or circular.
5. Therefore, the series of contingent beings must end in a cause that is self-existent and first.

# Ibn Sina (Avicenna)

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## 1. Definitions:

- a. Every being has either has or hasn't a reason for its existence.
- b. A being which has a reason for its existence is contingent, both before it exists and after it exists
  - i. Because its actually coming to exist does not remove the contingent nature of its existence.
- c. A being which has no reason for its existence is necessary.

## 2. Every being is either contingent or necessary.

## 3. If it is necessary, then a necessary being exists.

## 4. If it is contingent, then a necessary being exists because:

- a. A contingent being cannot come into existence without a reason.
- b. If this reason is also contingent, then there is a series of contingent beings linked together.
- c. Such a series cannot be infinite.
  - i. because then there would be no being at all
    1. because the being in question could come into existence only if it were preceded by an infinite succession of beings, which is absurd.
- d. Therefore, the series must terminate in a necessary being.

## 5. Therefore, a necessary being exists.



# Al Ghazali: Kalam Cosmological Argument

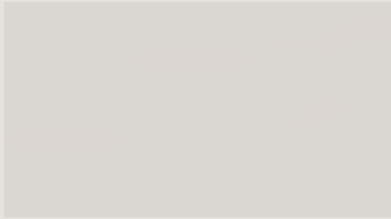
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1. Everything that begins to exist requires a cause for its origin.
2. The world began to exist.
  - a. There are temporal phenomena in the world.
  - b. These are preceded by other temporal phenomena.
  - c. The series of temporal phenomena cannot regress infinitely.
    - i. An actually existing infinite series involves various absurdities.
  - d. Therefore, the series of temporal phenomena must have had a beginning.
3. Therefore, the world has a cause for its origin: its Creator.



# Ibn Rushd (Averroes): Contingency

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1. Possible beings must be caused.
2. There cannot be an infinite series of possible beings each caused by another because:
  - a. In an infinite series there is no cause.
  - b. So the possible being would be uncaused.
  - c. But this contradicts (1): Possible beings must be caused.
3. Therefore, the series must end in a necessary cause, which is either caused or uncaused.
4. There cannot be an infinite series of caused necessary causes because:
  - a. in an infinite regress there is no cause.
  - b. So caused necessary causes would not be caused.
  - c. But this is self-contradictory.
5. Therefore, the series must end in an uncaused necessary cause, which is the necessary being.

# Saadia ben Joseph

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1. It is impossible to mentally regress through time to reach the beginning of time because:

- a. the infinite cannot be traversed,
- b. and time is, ex hypothesi, infinite.

2. It is impossible for existence to progress through time to reach the present moment because:

- a. existence must traverse exactly the same series that our thoughts traversed,
- b. but the traversal of such a series has been shown to be impossible.



3. Therefore, we do not now exist, which is absurd.

# Maimonides

1. Many things exist because:
  - a. we perceive them with the senses.
2. There are three alternatives: all things are without beginning and end, all things have beginning and end, or some things have beginning and end.
3. It is impossible that all things are without beginning and end because:
  - a. we clearly perceive objects that come into and pass out of existence.
4. It is impossible that all things have beginning and end because:
  - a. then all things might cease to exist,
  - b. and whatever is said to be possible of a whole class of things must actually happen.
  - c. Therefore, everything would cease to exist.
  - d. But then nothing would exist now
    - i. because there would be no being to cause things to exist.
  - e. But this is not true
    - i. because we perceive existing things,
    - ii. and we ourselves exist.
5. Therefore, there must be an eternal, indestructible being, whose existence is real, not merely possible.
6. This being is necessary on its own account or on account of some external force.
7. If it is necessary on account of some external force, then it would be necessary because of that force, though it would be possible in itself.
8. The external force, therefore, is the absolutely necessary being, the source of the existence of all things.