PROOFS FOR GOD

LIBBY: Wow, these videos. "Atheist destroys belief in God with foolproof logic," and, "Christian annihilates atheism with one simple question."

KAI: Welcome to YouTube, Libby.

LIBBY: They should know it's not that simple. I'll just go into the comments and show them their mistake.

KAI: Wait, no, Libby, don't ...

CATHOLIC CENTRAL OPENING TITLES

LIBBY: Welcome to Catholic Central. I'm Libby.

KAI: And I'm Kai.

LIBBY: Since you're watching an online video about religion, you've probably seen some people say that believing in God is just as irrational as belief in unicorns, Flying Spaghetti Monsters, or licorice that doesn't taste horrible.

KAI: You may have also heard some Christians claim that there is irrefutable proof that God does exist.

LIBBY: So what's the Catholic view on this? Can you use facts, logic and reason to talk about God's existence? Or is it all just a bunch of spiritual woo-hoo?

KAI: Ever since the dawn of history, human beings have wondered what our place is in the universe, and most have had a sense deep down that there's some higher power.

LIBBY: Even though there's been a lot of disagreement over what that higher power might be like.

KAI: Starting with Greeks like Aristotle, philosophers realized that using reason, humans could gain greater insight into this mystery.

LIBBY: Our episode on faith and reason goes into more depth, but basically reason is our ability to think, interpret, understand and make judgments.

KAI: To Catholics, Jesus shared the deepest truths about existence as recorded in the Bible.

LIBBY: But these revelations in Scripture aren't the only way of knowing.

KAI: Reason is an essential tool for getting fuller insight into ourselves and the universe.

LIBBY: So let's break out of the stereotypes about blind faith and look at a few key ways that reason can support belief in God. The logic of causation, the laws of physics, and human experience.

KAI: One: causation. In the 13th Century, Catholic thinker St. Thomas Aquinas created an intellectual revolution by applying the philosophical tools of ancient Greece to Christian spirituality. He proposed five ways of arguing for the existence of God.

LIBBY: They're sometimes called proofs, but they're not like mathematical proofs; they're just different lines of reasoning.

KAI: Right. These arguments are a little too deep to cover properly here, but their most influential ideas are the logical arguments from motion and causation, which basically boil down to this …

LIBBY: Everything in the universe has a cause, like a toddler asking, "OK, but why? OK, but why? OK, but why? OK, but why?" The point is, you can always go back one more step. You exist because of your parents; they exist because of their ancestors.

KAI: Science traces this chain all the way back to evolution, the formation of the Earth, and the forging of chemical elements in the hearts of exploding stars. Ah, the first love story. A love story between hydrogen and everything else born of hydrogen. Right? It was hydrogen was the only thing, and then it turned ... something like that?

LIBBY: Moving on. Most physicists believe that all the matter in our visible universe exploded outward from a single point during the Big Bang.

KAI: But what caused the Big Bang?

LIBBY: Eventually there needs to be something that wasn't caused by something else that set everything else in motion.

KAI: This, as Aquinas says, we understand as God.

LIBBY: Second: in order for us to exist at all, not only did evolution need to follow a very precise path, but the laws of physics themselves couldn't be much different from what they are. Professor Johnson?

SCIENTIST KAI:

Current science says that there are 38 kinds of elementary particles, which interact according to four fundamental forces. Even very slight changes to these would prevent our solar system from forming in the first place.

SCIENTIST LIBBY:

For example, one second after the Big Bang, if the gravitational pull hadn't been balanced to within one part in a quadrillion, the known universe would have quickly collapsed back onto itself.

SCIENTIST KAI:

If the pull had been just a tiny bit weaker, matter would've never clumped together to form stars and planets.

SCIENTIST LIBBY:

The same problems would have happened if the density one instant after the Big Bang hadn't been tuned to within 60 decimal places. According to physicist Roger Penrose, for the universe to produce orderly matter instead of chaotic soup, it would have needed very low entropy or disorderliness just after the Big Bang.

SCIENTIST KAI:

Only one in 10 to the 10 to the 123 possible universes would've had low enough initial entropy. That's 10 followed by vastly more zeros than there are atoms in the known universe.

KAI: And any one these factors being out of place would prevent life.

LIBBY: None of this irrefutably proves the existence of God, but these discoveries through our scientific reason show that a life-supporting universe coming into being by pure chance would be a mind-boggling coincidence.

KAI: Astronomer Hugh Ross compared it to the possibility of a Boeing 747 aircraft being completely assembled as a result of a tornado striking a junkyard.

LIBBY: Catholics see an intelligence behind all of this, and that, to quote Aquinas again, we understand as God.

KAI: Third: human experience. Reason also allows us to reflect on our own experiences of the world in search of truth.

LIBBY: When we experience beauty, feel love or ponder our own existence, most people would say we're transcending a purely physical understanding of the world.

KAI: But let's say you don't believe that. Maybe you believe that 100% of the experience of love is just an illusion explained by hormones and electricity in our brain … you cynic.

LIBBY: Neuroscientists can describe the electricity in our brains and analyze our hormones, but they can't explain why humans have the capacity and desire for the transcendent.

KAI: The non-material part of ourselves that connects us to the transcendent is what Catholics would call the soul, which has its source in God.

LIBBY: Ultimately, a certain leap of faith is still required. Reason can point our minds toward God, but the heart must also seek Him.

KAI: The Catholic view of God is a sort of tension between two understandings.

LIBBY: On the one hand, we are humbled by the vast and transcendent mystery of it all. And that's OK, because, on the other hand, we believe that God made us in his image and knows us and loves us more personally than we can imagine.

KAI: Psalm 139 says to God, "You formed my inmost being, you knit me in my mother's womb, and your eyes saw me unformed. In your book all are written down; my days were shaped before one came to be."

LIBBY: You know, God did not really need to create the universe, let alone us ridiculous humans. We litter; we make licorice; we can't even, like, care about each other.

KAI: But the fact that God did create us and created the universe reveals God's desire to share Himself with us.

LIBBY: So practically speaking, what does it mean to believe in God? In the Catholic worldview, it means living with gratitude that everything you are and have comes from God.

KAI: And it means recognizing the inherent dignity of all human beings made in God's image.

LIBBY: Today, we looked at three ways that reason can lead us toward belief in God: the logic of causation, the laws of physics, and human experience.

KAI: They don't settle the debate, but they can bring us closer to understanding, despite whatever you see online.

LIBBY: Except for this.

KAI: Obviously. For Catholic Central, I'm Kai.

LIBBY: And I'm Libby. If you like this, be sure to hit like and subscribe.

KAI: And leave us lots of pleasant, non-combative comments below.

LIBBY: Thanks, in advance.

CATHOLIC CENTRAL CLOSING CREDITS

KAI: Let's build more junkyards in Tornado Alley and just see.

LIBBY: And see if we can get a 747.

KAI: A 747. That's my business plan, is I'm going to start an airplane company.

LIBBY: It is foolproof.

KAI: Foolproof.

LIBBY: Foolproof.

KAI: I'll be printing my own money basically.

LIBBY: It's going to be so easy.

KAI: You want a plane? We're just waiting. We're just waiting, tornado season's right around the corner.

LIBBY: So easy.

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