

Neighborly Apologetics

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Faith & Reason

Is Christianity a Leap of Faith?

(Thumbnail Sketch from Del Tackett's Webinar, [January 7, 2025](#))

Most of us have heard the charge. A neighbor, a coworker, or even a family member says that Christianity is a leap of faith—something that requires you to suspend your rational mind. Belief in God, in Jesus as Savior, and in miracles is dismissed as irrational, the leftover fairy tales of a pre-scientific age. In an age of science and reason, we're told, such ideas have been discarded.

William Provine, a Cornell professor who debated Christian thinkers, put the charge in especially clear terms. Modern evolutionary biology, he argued, tells us there are no gods, no purpose, no life after death, no ultimate foundation for ethics, and no free will. The problem with Christianity, he said, is that you have to set your rational mind aside. Naturalism and materialism, by contrast, fit a rational mind.

Del Tackett's recent Neighborly Apologetics webinar on faith and reason took that charge seriously—and answered it. The goal was not academic debate for its own sake, but readiness for ordinary conversation with the neighbor across the street. When Mrs. Smith or Mr. Jones says faith is illogical, how do we respond?

The starting point is the character of God Himself. God is rational and logical. He created a universe that follows rational patterns and human beings with minds capable of reason. From the “if you eat... if you do not” of Eden to the blessings and curses set before Israel, God's Word is filled with logical structure. He does not act on whim. All truth flows from His nature.

Tackett then traced how the current scientific paradigm became wedded to the philosophy of naturalism. In earlier eras a scientist such as Johannes Kepler could say the chief aim of science was to discover the rational order and harmony imposed by God. Today the “cosmic cube” of matter and energy is treated as a closed system. Every conclusion must point to a natural cause. Anything that points beyond the box—God, design, miracles, free will—is labeled unscientific.

Against this backdrop Tackett offered a simple series of observations. First, order exists. Everywhere we look—from the cell and the inner ear to DNA, planetary systems, and deep space—we find exquisite, intricate order. Random forces do not produce order; by definition, if they begin to produce patterns they are no longer random. Therefore order implies an ordering cause. We use this reasoning every day: we pick up an arrowhead rather than an ordinary rock, we stand before the pyramids or Stonehenge and infer craftsmen, we distinguish elk rubs on an aspen from carved initials, and we recognize an SOS written in the sand as a deliberate signal. Science itself does the same thing. The SETI program searches for order amid cosmic noise and would

conclude intelligence if it found it. The accelerating expansion of the universe and the persistence of spiral galaxies lead scientists to posit dark energy and dark matter rather than accept pure chance.

Second, because this order fills the entire cosmos, the ordering force must be transcendent—not merely local. Third, the order we see is not simple repetition. It consists of systems, relationships, and communication: systems of systems in the human body, the exquisitely coordinated blood-clotting cascade, topoisomerases that locate, open, and read specific DNA sequences, animals that communicate. A relational, communicative order points to a relational, communicative cause. It is therefore reasonable to expect that such a force would want to relate to and communicate with us—and to get the communication right. The most extensive claim that this has already happened is the Bible. Examining that communication reveals a personal being who created the universe, desires relationship with man, and made an extraordinary sacrifice to make that relationship possible. The decisive historical bridge is the empty tomb: Jesus is who He claimed to be.

Nothing in this chain is a leap of faith or a suspension of reason. It is the same logical process science uses when it infers unseen forces from observed order. The biblical Christian worldview is rational. The stronger candidates for irrationality are the claims that order comes from non-order, life from non-life, information from noise, and that there is no free will, no ultimate foundation for ethics, and no ultimate purpose.

Hebrews 11 and Romans 1 confirm the point. Faith is assurance grounded in what God has shown, and the invisible attributes of God have been clearly perceived in the things that have been made, leaving people without excuse. Yet faith itself remains the gift of God. Logic can remove the charge of irrationality; only God can open the eyes and soften the heart. That is why conversations with neighbors must be preceded, accompanied, and followed by prayer.

The next time someone tells you that Christianity is just a leap of faith, you need not be silent or defensive. Order exists. Order requires a cause. That cause is personal and communicative. And the empty tomb stands as the historical claim that He has spoken and acted. We have not suspended reason. We have followed it—and found that it leads us to the God who says, “Come, let us reason together.”

This article draws from Dr. Del Tackett’s Neighborly Apologetics webinar “Faith and Reason” (January 7, 2025). Recommended further reading: William Lane Craig’s Reasonable Faith, Ronald Nash’s Faith and Reason, and Gregory Koukl’s The Story of Reality.

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Is Christianity a Leap of Faith?

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Many neighbors say Christianity is a leap of faith—an irrational set of fairy tales that requires suspending the rational mind. Cornell biologist William Provine put the charge plainly: there are no gods, no purpose, no life after death, no ultimate ethics, and no free will. Christianity, he argued, forces you to set reason aside.

Del Tackett's Neighborly Apologetics webinar answered that charge for ordinary conversation. The starting point is God's character. God is rational and logical. He created a universe that follows rational patterns and human beings with minds capable of reason. His Word is filled with logical structure, and He does not act on whim.

Today science is often wedded to naturalism—the closed “cosmic cube” in which every conclusion must point to a natural cause. Earlier scientists such as Kepler could still speak of discovering the order imposed by God. That door is now largely closed.

Against this, Tackett offered a simple line of reasoning. Order exists everywhere—from the cell and DNA to planetary systems and deep space. Random forces do not produce order; by definition, if they begin to produce patterns they are no longer random. Therefore order implies an ordering cause. We use this reasoning daily with arrowheads, pyramids, Stonehenge, or an SOS in the sand. Science does the same: SETI searches for order amid noise, and unexplained cosmic features are attributed to dark energy or dark matter rather than chance.

Because this order fills the cosmos, the cause must be transcendent. Because the order consists of systems, relationships, and communication, the cause must be relational and communicative. It is reasonable to expect such a cause to communicate with us. The most extensive claim that this has happened is the Bible, which reveals a personal God who desires relationship and made it possible through an extraordinary sacrifice. The decisive historical bridge is the empty tomb.

Nothing here is a leap of faith. It is the same logic science uses to infer unseen forces. The Christian worldview is rational. The stronger candidates for irrationality are the claims that order comes from non-order, life from non-life, and that there is no free will or ultimate purpose. Logic can remove the charge of irrationality; only God opens the eyes and softens the heart. That is why neighborly conversations must be surrounded by prayer.

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