

God of the Gaps?



Ever heard of Zeus, Apollo, or Thor?

Ancient cultures often had an interesting approach to explaining the world around them. For instance, they did not understand where thunder and lightning came from. It was very mysterious. They imagined it was caused by a powerful, supernatural being, perhaps as a result of their rage and anger. Zeus was the name the Greeks gave to the “god of lightning and thunder.” The Germanic version of the “thunder god” was Thor. Ancient peoples imagined other gods and associated them with other things or phenomena. For example, Poseidon (brother of Zeus) was the Greek god of the seas and earthquakes, among other things. Ares (son of Zeus) was the Greek god of war and violence.

In a sense, anytime these ancients could not explain something, they attributed it to a mythical god. This typical association is where the phrase “god of the gaps” comes from. Anytime there’s a gap in your knowledge, just invoke a god or gods and move on. It can justifiably be stated that this approach would significantly hinder or squelch scientific exploration and research.

Skeptics and atheists often accuse Christians of invoking “god of the gaps” arguments when defending our worldview. They believe that when we see something so complex we can’t figure out how it could have developed on its own, over time, we just say, “Well, that’s proof that God did it!”

So, is it true that Christians use “god of the gaps” reasoning to defend our beliefs? Not hardly, so let’s look at what’s really happening. (Side Note: Some Christians might use this approach but are wrongly doing so.)

Christians do not look at the world around them from a neutral standpoint and then conclude that because things are so complex, they must have been created by God. On the contrary, Christians DO NOT look at the world around them from a NEUTRAL standpoint. However, we do recognize the extreme complexity of many things to be evidence of purposeful design.

The difference I am highlighting in the last few sentences is that we DON’T come at this from a *neutral* standpoint. Alright, why not? Because it’s not like we have no idea one way or the other whether God exists and that He supernaturally created things. We are told very clearly in Scripture that God created everything:

For in six days the Lord made heaven and earth, the sea, and all that is in them, and rested on the seventh day (Exodus 20:11).

Ah, Lord God! It is you who have made the heavens and the earth by your great power and by your outstretched arm! Nothing is too hard for you (Jeremiah 32:17).

Question of the Month

In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was in the beginning with God. All things were made through him, and without him was not any thing made that was made (John 1:1-3).

See also: Colossians 1:16, Hebrews 1:1-2, Isaiah 45:12

Also, apart from the written Word of God, there is evidence in nature clearly testifying to supernatural creation. In fact, we are told the evidence is so strong that we will be held accountable for seeing it, and anyone who denies a Creator will be without excuse when they stand before God:

For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse (Romans 1:19-20).

So, Christians start with the belief that God created life and the entire universe because God Himself has revealed it to us through the physical world around us, and He has also given us His written Word, telling us this directly.

An informed Christian believes God created everything, including laws of science that guide the vast majority of what we observe today. When I place a glass of water in the freezer, and an hour later I see that the water has transformed from a liquid into a solid (ice), I do not think God miraculously caused that phase change. The water was just responding in accordance with laws God established from the very beginning. My freezer operates involving something called Boyle's Gas Law. I have to skip the details to keep this article relatively brief. The critical point is this. Boyle's Gas Law does a great job of explaining the OPERATION of a refrigerator. However, it is completely incapable of explaining the ORIGIN of a refrigerator. You can change temperatures by compressing and decompressing gases (Boyle's Gas Law), but you can't CREATE a refrigerator simply through that same process!

The laws of science seem to do a pretty good job of explaining how much of the world around us OPERATES, but they cannot account for how the world around us ORIGINATED! And where did these laws come from in the first place? That's an additional topic for some other time.

Christians don't just lazily invoke God whenever they can't figure something out. We fully expect there will be numerous things that can't be accounted for by undirected natural processes occurring over any amount of time, even millions and billions of years.

If we are so easily capable of detecting design in everyday objects, such as a hammer, a car, and a cell phone, doesn't it make sense that we should be able to detect design in the living world, especially when its complexities blow away anything we have created ourselves? If we, as fairly smart human beings, can create some pretty impressive things, what do you think God, who is infinitely intelligent, could create?

Question of the Month

In reality, it is the skeptic who invokes the “god of the gaps,” except theirs would be called “time of the gaps” or “future discoveries of the gaps.” What do I mean by that? You probably can figure it out. They often say something like:

“Well, it may seem impossible given our current, short-lived experience, but if you have millions of years, anything is possible.” (That’s not actually true. Time doesn’t do ANYTHING. Only events that occur during that time can DO something. Don’t focus on the time; tell us about the specific events that will produce what you refer to.)

“Well, we don’t have an answer now, but some day we will figure it out.” (This is exercising “faith” that one day they may have the solution. And you know what, maybe they will, in certain areas. The point is, if you want to be scientific, which is what they want to restrict everyone to, you must come up with a response referencing what we know and see NOW, not what you HOPE to see in the unknown future.)

Instead of a “god of the gaps,” Christians believe in “THE God of THE Gap.” We created a GAP (an infinite gap) between ourselves and God when we sinned (and continue to sin). He (God) bridged that gap through His Son (Jesus Christ). Have you taken advantage of that freely given Bridge, or are you still trying to “bridge the gap” on your own?

If you have any questions about this or any other issue, please don’t hesitate to [contact us!](#)