

Discussion Questions for Stephen Meyer's Article, "The Return of the God Hypothesis"

These questions are especially suitable for: Small group discussions, or as part of a larger adult Sunday School class on science and faith or intelligent design.

The article referenced here by Stephen Meyer is available for free download at <http://www.discovery.org/a/642>. The discussion questions can also be used in conjunction with the DVDs *The Case for a Creator* (available at <http://astore.amazon.com/discoveryinsti06/detail/B000ION2HG>) and *Where Does the Evidence Lead* (available at <http://astore.amazon.com/discoveryinsti06/detail/B00024E6AE>)?

1. (a) Define and describe the two classical arguments for God's existence discussed by Meyer. (b) How did each argument fall into disrepute by the end of the nineteenth century? (pp. 1-6)
2. Meyer argues that "taken jointly, general relativity and the Big Bang theory provide a scientific description of what Christian theologians have long described in doctrinal terms as *creatio ex nihilo*—creation out of nothing." In what ways does Meyer think general relativity and the Big Bang support creation out of nothing? Do you agree or disagree? Why? (pp. 6-8) (*Note: If you are using these questions for a group discussion, you might show the segment on "The Evidence of Cosmology" from The Case for a Creator DVD before you discuss this question.*)
3. What is "anthropic fine-tuning" and how does it provide evidence of intelligent design of the universe according to Meyer? Do you agree or disagree? Why? (pp. 8-13) (*Note: If you are using these questions for a group discussion, you might show the segments on "The Evidence of Physics" and "The Evidence of Astronomy" from The Case for a Creator DVD before you discuss this question.*)
4. If someone insists to you that "science has shown God is a delusion" or "science undermines religion," how might the evidence Meyer discusses from physics, cosmology, and astronomy help you answer the person?
5. Describe and discuss the evidence for design in biology from (a) **molecular machines**; (b) **complex specificity of cellular components**; (c) **sequence specificity and information in DNA**. Are you convinced by this evidence? Why or why not? (pp. 14-19) (*Note: If you are using these questions for a group discussion, you might show the segments on "Molecule and Mousetraps" and "The Language of Life" from the Where Does the Evidence Lead? DVD before you discuss this question.*)
6. (a) Distinguish between deductive and abductive arguments. (b) Can abductive arguments be valid? How? (pp. 20-23)

7. (a) What is an “inference to the best explanation” (IBE)? (b) Why does Meyer advocate IBE as a productive way of reasoning, especially in the area of faith and science? (c) Why does Meyer think IBE provides a way to avoid “faith in faith alone on the one hand, or a return to strict rationalism, on the other”? (pp. 23-24)

8. (a) What is Meyer’s argument that theism can be an inference to the best explanation? Do you agree or disagree with Meyer? Why? (b) Why does Meyer think that deism is not a sufficient explanation for the evidence of design found in nature? Do you agree or disagree? (pp. 24-27)

9. (a) Does Meyer claim that his argument for theism *proves* the existence of God? Why or why not? (b) If Meyer’s argument does not “prove” God’s existence, what *does* it do? (p. 27)

10. (a) How have theologians such as Ernan McMullin responded to the new scientific evidence that seems to support theism? Do they think modern science can provide support for theistic beliefs? (p. 20) (b) Why do you think some theologians are so reticent to claim that science supports belief in God? Do you think their concerns are valid? Why or why not? (c) What is Meyer’s view? How does he go further than theologians such as McMullin? (d) What is *your* view?

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