

Site Assumptions

Look up at the stars on a clear night. There are myriads of them, and that is true no matter where in the world you are standing. Our nearest star is the Sun, which is about 93,000,000 miles away. Light from the Sun takes about eight minutes to reach us. That thought is staggering when we realise that light travels at about 186,000 miles per second, *i.e.* about seven times round the world in one second!

Our next nearest star is Alpha Centauri which is about 25 million million miles away - that is 25 followed by twelve noughts. Light from Alpha Centauri, travelling at its fantastic speed, takes over four years to reach us. Sizes relating to the universe are surely beyond our understanding, being attuned as it is to our immediate environment. We become lost when there are too many noughts.

Now look the other way. We know some things are too small to see, but just as we have developed telescopes to help us look at the big, so we have developed microscopes and other instruments to help us look at the small. Here also, sizes soon become beyond our comprehension.

Try to think of something this size: a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a millimetre. (*Hint:* Start at the millimetre and work back.) If you can think of this you have a rough picture of the size of an atom. If you want to imagine the diameter of a proton or neutron in the atom's nucleus, all you have to do is to take a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of a tenth of the distance across the atom. And the best of luck!

We can only conclude that the universe is too big and the atomic world too small for

our everyday imaginations.

Look now at the world around you. Can you begin to understand its complexity? The delicate balance of nature, the climate and the fascinating inter-relationships of the laws of physics. To take an example, water becomes denser as the temperature drops. At about 0°C under normal conditions it freezes and becomes ice which, being less dense than water, floats. But when is water most dense under normal conditions? The answer is about 4°C, so water at this temperature sinks to the bottom of a pond. Colder water and ice rise nearer to, or are found at, the pond's surface. Just think what that means for any fish in the pond!

Looking big, looking small and looking around, what do you make of it all? Some folk think it all happened by chance. I wonder how deeply they have thought about fundamental issues. For me, the more I look, the more I see the handiwork of an immense intelligence. Unless the pond mentioned above freezes entirely, fish still have water in which to swim. Is it just by chance? Observing how well all things fit together, I can only assume that the universe and everything in it was created. If this is so, as I personally believe to be the case, we need a name in order to be able to refer to this all-transcending intelligence, the creator of all things. I hope you won't mind if we use the name "God".

Hence, my first assumption:

God created the universe and all that is within it.

It follows that we, too, have been created by God. This surely gives us a profound interest in God's creation. Why, we dare to wonder, did God create the cosmos, including ourselves?

This is a big question. It hardly seems likely that all things were created just because God had nothing better to do. A being capable of such immense creativity surely has an underlying purpose. Is it likely that such omnipotence, having accomplished so much, should turn away from creation and play no further part in it? Such a thought seems so improbable to me that I can give it no credence. Instead, I pose the question, "What was God's motive in creation?" to which the answer that comes readily to mind is that it was, and is, God's intention to interrelate with the universe.

How, then, can we have knowledge of God's purposes? I feel fairly confident that the answer is that we can have no knowledge, unless it is revealed to us by God. The God of creation, wishing to share with the human race, would find it but a simple matter to provide mankind with an authoritative revelation. This, I believe, is exactly what happened when God inspired the writing of religious texts, and oversaw the selection of those which should be included in the body of scripture we know as The Bible.

Thus we come to my second assumption:

The Bible is God's authoritative revelation to mankind.

These two assumptions are crucial to Christianity. Without them, you could have no confidence in God or in the Christian faith.

What do you make of them?

I cannot prove them to you, but don't you agree that the truth of these assumptions is not only possible, but probable? Having spent a lifetime putting them to the test and finding them trustworthy and dependable at

all times, it is unlikely that my own confidence in them can be shaken now, if challenged.

From a practical point of view, if you cannot go along with these assumptions because you oppose them, it is unlikely that the rest of this site will be of any benefit to you. If you know them to be true and are here out of interest, I hope you will enjoy PleaseAskWhy. If, however, you are uncertain about the truth of these two assumptions, but you have an open and enquiring mind, then you may well find other thoughts on this site to be helpful. May God bless you as you explore and evaluate the ideas and thoughts presented through this website.