



# Theophilus' Quest: Discovery Stage One

Much about life is puzzling – especially the most important things such as our purpose in life and our relationships with others. How did we get here? Why are we here? Why do things often seem unclear or not as they ought to be? Putting the pieces together is seldom easy. Hopefully, joining Theo on his quest to explore the basics of Christianity will help you on your own journey in life ...

***Is God for real?***

My thoughts about God to begin with ...





# By accident or by design?

In modern times, there have been many arguments made both for and against the existence of God. Some are very technical, and some are very philosophical. Most are very confusing! The real issue, however, boils down to this one simple question:

**“Is our world (including you) purely an accident, or is it the product of intelligent and purposeful design?”**

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of His hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge (Psalm 19:1-2) . . . For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – His eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse (Romans 1:20)*



Isaac Newton believed in the existence of a Creator God and, predictably, it was a point of friction between him and some of his scientist peers. A story goes that Newton made and displayed on his desk a working model of our solar system where the planets revolved around the sun with the turn of a handle. When one of Newton’s fellow scientists spotted it for the first time, he wanted to compliment its creator. Newton said it had none. The friend became indignant, thinking he was being played for a fool. *“Of course somebody had to have made it – this sort of thing doesn’t just happen by chance!”* Newton smiled and noted that his friend would not accept that the toy model was without an intelligent maker, but had no trouble insisting that the real thing, being much more complex in design and function, had no intelligent maker – it simply *“happened by accident”!*



### What sort of gambler are you?

Most of us have thrown a dice. The odds of getting a six first throw is 1 in 6. The odds of getting another six on the second throw is 1 in 36; of getting another six on the third throw is 1 in 216; in four throws it is 1 in 1,296; in five throws – well, it is so unlikely [1 in 7,776] that we would probably be accused of cheating if we pulled it off!

Jumping out of an aeroplane at 3,000 metres without a parachute would be considered extremely foolish by most of us, even though it is estimated that a person has a 1 in 6,000,000 chance of survival.



A renowned scientist named DuNouy estimated that the chance formulation of a typical protein molecule (the basic building block of life) is in the order of 1 in  $2.02 \times 10^{231}$  with 231 zeros after it, or practically nil. Possible? Well, yes . . . *theoretically*. Likely? *Not very!*

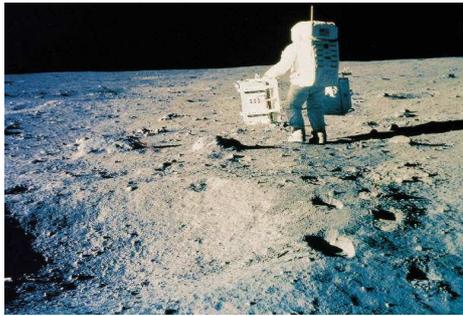


Remember, we're not getting side-tracked with discussion about "processes" here. This is not about macro evolution or any other theory attempting to explain how life may or may not have developed over time since the beginning (all of which may be interesting, but it has little to do with the issue of God's existence). Our question is much bigger than that: Where did the world (matter) and life come from in the first place? We know the world exists. We know nothing comes from nothing. How do we explain its existence?

Based upon reality and your own experiences of life, which would seem to be the more reasonable explanation for the existence of our world ... of life ... of you and me?

- **It is purposefully and intelligently made and sustained**
- **It arose out of nothing without cause and continues to function by chance**

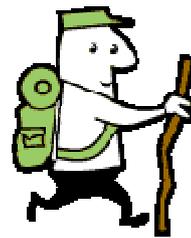
*It's not "rocket science", it's just plain old common sense!*



**OK. The universe couldn't have *just happened* ... but where did God come from?**

**That's a good question!**

**And the answer is simple: God always has been and always will be! This may seem to be a convenient assertion at first (if all else fails, invent a God to fill the gaps!) but you need to stay with Theo to explore that thought a little further ...**



(the following concepts are adapted from Edwin A. Abbott's story, "Flatland")



# Welcome to Flatland!

**Imagine that we live in a two dimensional world. We know and experience width and height, but we know nothing of depth (a third dimension). We are limited to two dimensions, existing on a perfectly flat plane represented by the drawings on a piece of paper . . . use your imagination!**

**Welcome to Flatland.**

**Now imagine that a person from the “outside” three dimensional world wants to communicate with us in Flatland. After all, he made our two dimensional world and drew us in the first place. He created us for a purpose and he cares about us!**

**Although we couldn’t prove it empirically (i.e. with our physical senses) most of us in Flatland had suspected a “maker’s” existence because we know from our own experience that things like paper and drawings don’t just happen by chance. But we could not see or touch him because he is not part of our piece of paper. He is not “of” our flat world like we are. He is “beyond” it. If he wants to communicate with us (and if we are to know much about him other than the fact of his existence and great power) he must take the first step.**

**Now Imagine that the artist pictured above (having width and height *and* depth) is the three dimensional creator of Flatland.**





# Welcome to Flatland!

**When the artist tries to explain himself to us Flatlanders, our limitations (knowing and experiencing only two dimensions) make it very difficult for us to even imagine the reality of a third dimension, much less understand a three dimensional person!**

**The nearest we Flatlanders can come to (very imperfectly) understanding the three dimensional artist is to conceive of a flat drawing with the appearance of depth with light and shade ... a concept which is beyond a Flatlander's experience and can only be imagined theoretically.**

**What if the artist were to actually touch our Flatland?**

**When he touched our paper, his work would appear as if materialising out of nothing: a super-natural miracle! He could actually manipulate material reality as we know it. This person would have qualities and abilities beyond anything we had ever experienced or even thought possible.**





# God is ...

**Because of our own limitations, God will always be impossible for us to fully comprehend** (for example, the mystery of the Godhead – *one God in three distinct persons: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit* – might be hard for us to get our minds around, but it shouldn't surprise us that God is mysterious to us in many ways. If He wasn't, He wouldn't be God!) **But the Flatland illustration may help us appreciate some things about Him:**

**God created our world but He is not part of it, nor is He limited by it. God is Spirit, not physical. He is not floating around in “outer space” somewhere** (those first Russian Cosmonauts in space who declared God didn't exist because they didn't see Him “up there” had it quite wrong) **God cares about His creation and He can “touch” and enter our world, but He “lives” outside the universe and everything in it. God exists on a different level or dimension beyond the physical universe He made!**

**Even if our physical universe and everything in it were to dissolve into nothing, God would still exist – God cannot die! He is without beginning or end because these concepts are related to “time” – a physical dimension that God transcends.**

**God is anywhere and everywhere at once because “space” is another physical dimension that God transcends. God sees and knows everything because everything occurs in His presence – just as the artist could witness all that ever happened anywhere and everywhere on the piece of paper that is Flatland.**

*“Can anyone hide in secret places so that I cannot see him?” declared the Lord. ‘Do I not fill heaven and earth?’*  
(Jeremiah 23:23-24)



# God is ...

**God is powerful. The One who created and sustains the universe and everything in it is more powerful than we could imagine – just as the capability of the artist far exceeded anything that was known, or that was naturally possible, on Flatland. God is super-natural!**

*“I am the Lord, the God of all mankind. Is anything too hard for me?”*  
(Jeremiah 32:27)

**God is . . . He made our world and He is awesome!**

*We're nearly done. Just one more point to ponder ...*

In our busy everyday lives it is easy to be distracted and not think about God and those things that are spiritual and unseen. But it seems that virtually everybody has those quiet moments that sneak up on us when we ask ourselves, “Why am I here?”, “Isn't there more to life?”, “Who am I, really?”



Why the lack of peace, sometimes to the point of despair and suicide, even among those who “have it all” – the sense that something is still missing and that life is not “real” or truly worthwhile without it?



# What about *your* quiet moments?

*We are all made by God, created by Him in His own image ... therefore the truth about God is known . . . instinctively. God has put this knowledge in our hearts . . . God gives all people life and breath and everything else . . . that we would seek Him and perhaps reach out for Him and find Him, though He is not far from any one of us. For in Him we live and move and exist. As one poet says, 'We are His offspring!'*

(Genesis 1:26-27; Romans 1:18-32; Acts 17:23-31)

**Pascal said: "There is a God shaped vacuum in the heart of every person"**

**Augustine put it this way: "Our hearts are restless until they find rest in God"**

**Oh yes, many of us try to fill the gap and overcome the restlessness with stuff like prestige, pleasure, drugs, possessions, etc. But these can never do the job. They eventually leave us even more dissatisfied and frustrated ... often actually hurting or breaking us and others in the process!**

Is there a god shaped vacuum in your heart? Are you restless and longing for peace?

Why do you think humans are concerned about morality and religion and concepts like justice and love?

Can you really make sense of life if the world and you and I are not purposefully created by an intelligent Higher Power ... a God whose image is stamped upon our very being? A "Father" from whom we have wandered and in whose "home" we truly belong?

