

Did the Universe REALLY Have a Beginning? Unpacking the “Battle for the Big Bang” with Dr. Stephen C. Meyer

(June 16, 2026)

FRANK:

Ladies and gentlemen, there's a bit of a controversy stirring about the beginning of the universe. Did the universe really have a beginning? We've been saying for many years that most scientists agree it did. Is that really true? What is the scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning?

What is the philosophical evidence that the universe had a beginning? And how many different scientific theories are there of the history of our universe? Well there's nobody better to have on regarding that question than the great Dr. Stephen C. Meyer.

Here he is, ladies and gentlemen, all the way from an underground bunker somewhere in the, in the People's Republic of Seattle, well, near Seattle anyway. Steve, the movie, The Story of Everything hit the big screen.

We talked about it a week or a month or two ago. Now it's actually out on Amazon Prime, which is a great place to see it now. And it traffics in one of the arguments for the existence of God that you bring up, the beginning of the universe. So let's start right there. What is the scientific evidence the universe had a beginning? Just an overview.

STEPHEN:

Yeah, many lines of evidence. The biggest, the most decisive or initial piece of evidence was the evidence that the galaxies are expanding outward in a roughly spherically symmetric way, outward from our galaxy.

And this was a consequence of the analysis of the light coming from distant galaxies, often known as the red shift evidence, that the wavelengths of the light coming from the distant



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galaxies are stretched out and they move in the electromagnetic spectrum towards the red end of the spectrum indicating longer wavelengths.

If an object is moving away from you, the sound or light waves coming off of it will be stretched out. And in the case of light, the light will look redder than it should otherwise look. This was first discovered in the 19 teens and 20s. It's almost 100-year-old evidence.

But this shifted people, eventually from the idea that the universe was static and had always been, to the idea that it was expanding outward from a beginning point. In the 1960s, there was additional evidence that was very decisive.

There had been another way of trying to explain the expansion of the universe called the Steady State theory. It was the idea that, yes, the universe is expanding outward now, but it's always been expanding and it's getting bigger now, but it's always been getting bigger. And as it expands, matter pops into existence.

Because this was an idea of Fred Hoyle and Herman Bondi, Thomas Gold. And the idea was that they posited that the universe must have a constant density. And so, as it expands, new matter would be constantly being created to maintain the density of the overall, the matter density of the overall universe.

FRANK:

What ultimately killed the Steady State theory?

STEPHEN:

Well, the Steady State idea was eventually killed by the discovery of something called the cosmic background radiation. It was something that was expected if in fact there had been an initial hot, dense state coming out of an initial creation event.

In other words, it was expected on the Big Bang theory, but not on the Steady State theory. The Steady State theory said there was never a time when all the matter in the universe was concentrated into one hot, dense point. Matter in the Steady State view was being constantly created in little boop, boop, boop, little bits as the universe expanded and stretched out.

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And so this, this was discovered in the mid 1960s. And then, there have been a series of other empirical discoveries from observational astronomy about the ages of galaxies, about variations in the background radiation that have progressively confirmed this hot Big Bang model, which implies the universe had a beginning and has been expanding outward ever since.

There were also developments in theoretical physics that reinforced this idea. Something called the singularity theorems of Hawking, Penrose and Ellis, and even more decisively, something called the, Bord Vilenkin theorem or Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theorem, that showed also that the universe had a beginning, based not on general relativity, as the singularity theorems were, but rather based on special relativity and more generally on what's called the kinematics of the universe.

FRANK:

In fact, we may get into that a little bit later. But the idea that the universe had a beginning, even Hawking admitted, he said almost everyone now believes that the universe and time itself had a beginning at the Big Bang. And of course Einstein's theory of General Relativity seemed to show that as well.

But there are people out there that are trying to get around that and trying to say no, it didn't really have a beginning. One of them is Sir Roger Penrose. And you've been interacting a little bit on what he has said in recent times. First of all, who is Sir Roger Penrose?

STEPHEN:

Well, Penrose is one of the great physicists of the 20th and 21st century. He was one of Stephen Hawking's PhD thesis advisors. He was extremely impressed with Hawking's first presentation of the Singularity theorem in his PhD thesis.

And then later he and Hawking worked together to develop the mathematics to put that theorem on even more rigorous footing. But he's a towering figure in physics, longtime professor at the University of Oxford.

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He's won a Nobel Prize, and yes, he has a new model of the origin of the universe that accommodates the Big Bang. In fact, all of the new models, these infinite universe cosmologies, acknowledge that there was a Big Bang.

But what they typically attempt to do is suggest that it was just one bang among many bangs, in sort of either a cyclical kind of cosmology where you have an expansion, contraction, expansion, contraction phases. Or Penrose has a very interesting way in which he has the universe expanding outward from the Big Bang to a point of maximum entropy where you have a kind of very diffuse cold, dark, universe with high entropy.

All of the matter and energy are so diffused that they're not organized in any way that would enable them to do work. And then he has a way of what he calls rescaling the universe, which is actually I think, and I think many physicists think a kind of mathematical sleight of hand where he is able to treat the big universe that has very little energy available to do work in a highly disordered, highly entropic state. He's unable to treat it as a very small universe with lots of energy available to do work and available for another expansion phase. And then he repeats that process ad infinitum.

FRANK:

In fact, you've criticized that particular viewpoint, by saying that there's some fine-tuning going on here that is unexplained if there is no mind behind the universe. And maybe it might be appropriate now to play a clip. In fact, maybe you could set this clip up for us, Steve. It begins with a gentleman, Phil Halpern. What's his name?

STEPHEN:

Halpert. He and I had a debate about all these new models of the origin. He has a book that he's co-written with a cosmologist, Professor F. Shorty, explicating these many new models that the title is Battle for the Big Bang. So you can see from the title that people accept the Big Bang.

But what they're trying to do is the Steady State model did in the mid 20th century was accommodate the evidence for the expansion of the universe now outward from a beginning point but then try to incorporate that beginning into some kind of larger schema of an infinite number of expansions or expansions and contractions depending on the model.

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And so, Penrose's model acknowledges that our universe is expanding outward from the beginning. But then he rescales the universe, treats big as if it's very small, treats energetically diffuse as if it's very energetically concentrated, and then posits a re-expansion of the universe in just the right way to ensure that you get galaxies.

And the just the right way is the key phrase there because that indicates something that the physicists often overlook, which is their own fine-tuning of their models, which would imply the need for extensive unexplained fine-tuning in the universe itself if their models were to be true.

FRANK:

Now there are many problems with this that we'll unpack after the clip. But this starts with Phil Halpern you said his name is, correct?

STEPHEN:

Halper, H-A-L-P-E-R. Yes.

FRANK:

Okay. He talks about you and fine-tuning. Then I believe there's a section of this clip where you're talking to Sean McDowell. And then Roger Penrose sort of denies there's any fine-tuning going on in his model. And he even somehow says his famous calculation where he said that—

STEPHEN:

Initial entropy or the initial arrangement of matter and energy at the beginning of the universe, which is he calculated that to be exquisitely fine-tuned, 1 part in 10 to the 10 to the 123, a hyper exponential improbability associated with the fine-tuning at the beginning of the universe.

FRANK:

So if Penrose calculated that the odds that we would have this high ordered state at the beginning was so remote... In fact, let me give you an idea of how remote this was. And for those of you that don't know, the updated version of I Don't have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist is coming out in October.

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And here's what we say in the updated version, just to set this clip up. Sir Roger Penrose, an agnostic on religious matters, is a mathematician and Nobel laureate in physics. He calculated how likely our universe was to have, by chance, the high degree of order it had at the beginning.

His answer? This is what Steve just mentioned. One chance in 10 to the 10, raised to the 123rd power. So it's 10 raised to the 10th power, raised to the 123rd power. And here is what Lewis and Barnes said.

Lewis is an atheist, Barnes is a Christian. They wrote a book on fine-tuning. Here's what they said about that number. That's quite a big number. If you wrote a zero on every single particle in the known universe, you would still fall a long way short of writing down all the digits in that number.

In fact, you would need roughly 10 to the 43rd universes worth of particles just to write that number down. So if Penrose is right about that, that's just an unbelievably designed beginning. And what does he say about it? Let's play the clip and then we'll get Dr. Meyer to comment on it. Here we go.

VIDEO:

So the final claim we're going to look at is the fine-tuning of the constant nature. And Stephen Meyer is not alone in quoting Roger Penrose on this topic. But yet again, it's more of a misquote.

[Stephen]:

The fine-tuning of the initial conditions of the universe, what's called initial entropy fine-tuning has been calculated by Sir Roger Penrose, the great Oxford physicist. One chance in ten raised to the tenth power, raised to the 123rd power.

[Host]:

Up so accurate, as to get it to write. So 10 to the 10 to the 123. So therefore, this is sort of evidence of a designer. [Penrose]: Well, I used to play a joke with that by having a picture of the deity with a little pin, trying to find this little point in the phase space of possible universes.

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And that was a joke, not to be taken seriously, that somehow a creator was doing this. That was not the view I held at all. This is a joke. Okay, what do I really believe? I really believe that we need better physics to tell you what happens there. It's not chosen randomly out of all the possible universes.

It's just telling you that's wrong. It's the wrong picture. You have a picture which tells you it's natural the way that the universe began. And the conformal cyclic cosmology model that I have is trying to make it look natural. It's the continuation of the remote future of a previous eon.

It's certainly not in the physics that we had then. You have to have an improved physics to get this to work. Sure, you need some good reason from physics why this universe happened to have all these gravitational degrees of freedom not present in the early state.

So you need a theory for that. You don't need to say a creator did it, somehow got rid of all the randomness somehow by creating it for some reason to create humans or something.

FRANK:

Steve, the beginning was either random or it was designed. There's no other option.

STEPHEN:

The interesting thing there is the applied philosophical naturalism, the presumption of philosophical naturalism statement. But it's very problematic. Before the beginning of the universe, there was no physics to do the explaining of that fine-tuning.

Now what he wants to say is that he's got this infinite number of cycles where you can have this massive expansion outward from our beginning to a place of now maximum entropy. That is a place where the universe, the matter and energy in this cold, dark universe, what they call the heat death of the universe, which is where our universe is heading according to physics, modern physics.

He wants to say that highly diffuse, highly disordered universe, where there's no energy available left to do work, can be suddenly treated as if it's very small. Then he gets a new cycle.

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But the way he treats it as something that's very small is something... It's a mathematical sleight of hand that he uses. It's called conformal geometry. He says that in a conformally invariant system, you can change the length without changing the angular relationships to different things.

Think of an isosceles triangle where a big one and a small one have the same angular relationships. And he's saying, well, if we get rid of all the mass in our universe, we no longer have a way of measuring, measuring length. And he invokes two dubious ideas about how to get rid of the mass.

And then he says, okay, now we have a system that can be treated as conformally invariant. And then he makes the unjustified claim that because it's conformally invariant, it has no mass, there's no way of measuring length. We can treat the big universe that we have at the end of our cosmic expansion cycle as if it were very small.

But that's a confusion of epistemology and ontology. You don't change the size of something simply because you can no longer measure it, or that you've chosen to measure it in different units.

It would be a little like saying that, hiking to the top of the Himalayan mountains is very difficult because it's 31,000 ft tall, those mountains, or the top one. But we're going to rescale it. Instead of measuring in feet, we're going to measure it in mountaineering units and say it's just one mountaineering unit from here to the top of Mount Everest.

So now it's no problem. It's just one unit. Okay? You're not changing Mount Everest by changing the way you measure it. And so then that's the second move he makes, which is also really quite dubious. But then once he's done that, he says, well, now we can treat the universe as it's very small and in small places, in smaller volumes, wavelengths become smaller.

Smaller wavelengths correspond to more energy. And now we've got a small universe with a great deal of energy available to do work. And then he introduces more fine-tuning, actually, and he's unaware of it. And that is that he then says that, once you've got that small universe

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with energy available to do work, he posits that there's a field that can highly energetic field that will create massive particles called aero bonds.

And that he posits that just the right number of aero bonds with just the right collective mass... Notice my emphasis on the words just the right. That's fine-tuning. Just the right number of aero bands with just the right number of mass will be created such that they will balance the outward push of the ongoing cosmological constant in just the right way to ensure that we get galaxy formation.

So that's an input of additional fine-tuning even in this model that he thinks is eliminating the need to explain the original fine-tuning of the highly ordered initial arrangement of matter, the low entropy initial state of the universe.

He doesn't explain his original amazing degree of fine-tuning. He introduces new fine-tuning. And by positing some kind of prior physics before the beginning of the universe, that betrays this commitment to naturalism that says that of course there was an infinite universe, but his infinite universe model doesn't work.

And on the finite universe that we have, as best we can tell, a beginning, there's no physics before the initial conditions of the universe. That's the very thing that physics can't explain. That's a precondition of being able to apply laws of nature. You have to know what the initial conditions are.

And so you don't explain the initial conditions of the universe by some prior law to the existence of the universe when there's nothing before the universe itself. And his model that attempts to get rid of the beginning doesn't work for multiple reasons. One of which is that he has to introduce yet new fine-tuning.

FRANK:

You know, it almost seems like he's trying to argue for Aristotle's unmoved mover without referring to a mind. It seems like he's trying to say that if the universe is eternal, we don't have any need for some outside intelligence to even keep it going. When in reality—

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STEPHEN:

[unintelligible] saying that Frank, if you can get rid of the idea of a beginning, then you don't need to think about what beyond the universe might have caused it to come into existence. So you eliminate the need to consider an external creator. And I think it's interesting, the derision in his voice when he begins to talk about this.

It's not really an argument that he's making. He's trying to cast it as a sort of a silly childish idea. But the problem is, if the universe had a beginning, and as best we can tell, it did from multiple lines of evidence. And one of the points that Bruce Gordon and I and others have been making is that the attempt to circumvent the evidence for a beginning, always comes at a huge cost to philosophical naturalism.

And one of the most obvious costs is the need to introduce new fine-tuning in all these universe generating, sorry, infinite universe, infinite universe models. So they invariably make the fine-tuning problem worse.

And therefore provide additional support for the theistic hypothesis, which they're trying desperately to avoid. So, I don't think any of this works. And there's a proliferation of these models now. This new book, *Battle for the Beginning*...

FRANK:

Battle for the Big Bang?

STEPHEN:

Battle for the Big Bang by Halper and F. Shorty does a wonderful job of exposition of describing the models. But the point that I made in my debate with Halper, is that these models come at a huge cost epistemically.

You can always model your way out of any evidence in science. If you go back to the whole geocentric, heliocentric idea or debate, you know, is the universe, or is the sun at the center or is the Earth at the center of the solar system? The Earth at the center people invented these epicycles.

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So you had the most straightforward way of interpreting the astronomical data about orbits was that they were moving in, you know, Kepler showed that they were moving in a roughly elliptical way. But if you want to keep, around the sun, but if you want to keep the Earth at the center, if you keep adding enough cycles within cycles within cycles within cycles, you could save that idea.

In fact, Tim McGrew has shown that you can, even with enough epicycles, you can portray, you can model the orbits of the planets as conforming to perfect squares. But the problem with that, it's the epistemic cost, the number of things you need to postulate that are themselves improbable or implausible.

And you end up adding all this, add all these ad hoc hypotheses to the interpretation of the evidence. And that's what's going on with these infinite universe models. They're very baroque. They add an invariably new theoretical entities that are unnecessary on the standard Big Bang model of there having been a beginning.

And they invariably add a huge amount of fine-tuning, which itself is a kind of measure of how much the models need to be gerrymandered to fit with, with the evidence.

FRANK:

Steve, we know that at least it seems that today never would have gotten here if there were an infinite number of days before today. So time had a beginning, which comports with the evidence. According to Einstein, space, time and matter are correlative. They came into existence together out of nothing. And if time had a beginning, whatever created time must be timeless. Can't we say the same thing about cycles? Because here's what Dr. Penrose is saying about cycles.

There's an infinite number of cycles in the history of the universe. A bang, it goes diffused, and somehow, he brings it all together. There's another bang, it goes diffused, somehow, they come back all together, another bang. We would never have gotten to this cycle if there were an infinite number of cycles before us. What am I missing here?

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STEPHEN:

Well, that's a, you know, kind of philosophical argument against actual infinities. And Bill Craig makes that very effectively. There's some developments in physics that reinforce that in an interesting way. Let's talk about the singularity theorems because this is where the, this is what opens the door to this, this approach of, proposing these infinite universe.

FRANK:

Explain singularity before you go on so people know.

STEPHEN:

This is where I'll give you a little background on the debate.

FRANK:

All right.

STEPHEN:

So mid-60s, Hawking's doing his PhD thesis. He's, you know, the whole amazing story of his diagnosis with ALS and really his historic decision to press on, which he does.

He has this amazing career. Mid 60s, he's thinking about black hole physics. Black holes are these places where the density of matter is so concentrated that not even light can get out. In Einstein's theory of gravitation, general relativity, massive bodies create or generate a curvature of space.

They cause space to curve around the massive bodies. And in a black hole, space is so tightly curved that not even light can get out. Hawking begins to think about that in light of the new evidence at that time. He's in the 60s.

It's been since the 20s, we've been realizing that the universe is expanding outward in the forward direction of time, that matter is getting more and more diffuse. In the reverse direction of time, therefore, it's getting more concentrated. In the reverse direction of time, if matter is getting more concentrated, then space is getting more tightly curved.

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And if you keep going back and back and back, you back extrapolate to earlier points in the expansion, then matter is going to get more and more densely concentrated, the space is going to get more and more tightly curved, and eventually you'll get to a limiting case where you can't go back any further, where the matter is so densely concentrated, the spatial curvature goes to an infinite.

And at that point the laws of physics would break down, and that would mark a beginning. And in the book *The Large Scale Structure of Space Time* in 1972 that Hawking wrote with George Ellis, they say this effectively marks the creation of the universe.

They also note even in the 70s, that there's a slight little loophole, if you will, that you could invoke. And that is that once you get within, and they use the figure at that time, 10 to the minus 33rd of a centimeter, you get to, a place where the quantum effects would be so small that quantum effects would begin to predominate.

And that point, we don't really know how gravity would work. We don't know that we could continue to invoke Einsteinian gravity where masses are causing spatial curvature. So they say, well, so we can't get to an absolute singularity in this back extrapolation, but we get to, something that's for all intents and purposes, as good as a singularity, an absolute beginning point.

So in other words, everything's pointing back to the beginning. We're unsure of exactly how gravity would have worked in that tiny smidgen of space time. That's now called the Planck volume. The Planck time in which the quantum mechanical effects would come to predominate would be 10 to the minus 43rd of a second after the beginning of the universe.

In the film, I said, to say that's a blink of the eye is a huge exaggeration. What some physicists have been, what they then developed is a model of how gravity would have worked, called Quantum gravity, Quantum cosmology.

We don't really have a full model of how gravity would have worked, but there's a mathematical equation that kind of depicts that. And what I've shown in *Return of the God*

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Hypothesis is that those quantum cosmological models themselves have theistic implications. They end up depicting the universe as existing within that Planck volume, as a superposition of possible states. So they end up depicting it as a set of mathematical possibilities that's represented by something called the universal wave function. And to get that universal wave function in which our universe is included, you have to solve another big hairy equation prior to that.

And you can only do that by imposing arbitrary restrictions on the mathematical degrees of freedom. In other words, you have to fine-tune the mathematical apparatus, you have to input information into it to get the output you want that would allow you to portray our universe as a consequence of all this Quantum cosmological mathematical structures.

So you've got initial fine-tuning, and you've got this weird thing in which now you've got matter, space, time and energy coming out of a mathematical reality. But math is conceptual. Mathematical equations exist in minds. And one of the inventors of Quantum cosmology, Alexander Valinkin, has said, well, before matter, space, time and energy, what were these equations written on?

Mathematics is the realm of the mind. Are we then saying that, that a mind predates the universe? So the Quantum cosmological attempt to get around the loophole that's created in the singularity theorems, at the very beginning results in a theistic conclusion, I think, and have argued.

But in addition to that, if you would just imagine that inside that tiny Planck volume, where you can't be sure you can go all the way back to the beginning, Valinkin, with a colleague, Mathani, has shown that that Quantum mechanical state is unstable. And if you go back far enough in time, at a certain point, it's going to fluctuate in a way that will cause the universe to expand.

And so if that's the case, if the universe had been in that existing that tiny volume inside the Planck volume and had been existing in that infinitely into the past, then the universe should have already been expanding outward from an infinite time ago.

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But since we don't live in a universe that's been, we know that we have a finite expansion, however long that little tail might have been. And since the physics shows that you're going to have that at some point in the finite past you'll have a fluctuation that will cause an expansion, it's not credible to think that you would have an infinitely long tail. So again, you're back to a beginning, even acknowledging the limitation on the singularity proof.

FRANK:

In fact, let me add one thing to this, Steve, because we have this in the update to I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist. And I'm quoting here from Alexander Vilenkin, whom Dr. Meyer has just referenced.

He is an agnostic when it comes to religious matters, but he's a cosmologist. And the theorem that Steve had mentioned before is called the Bord Guth Valinkin Theorem. It came out in about 2003 and it basically showed that any universe in an expansion state like ours has to have a beginning regardless of what happened before Planck time.

And this is what I think Sir Roger Penrose is trying to, he's trying to say we don't know what happened before Planck time. So let's just assume that maybe there was still a natural state behind it.

STEPHEN:

Yeah, actually just a fine point there.

FRANK:

Go ahead.

STEPHEN:

[Unintelligibly] doesn't really make much of the before Planck time possibility. Hawking does that with his Quantum cosmological models.

FRANK:

Oh, it's Hawking. Okay.

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STEPHEN:

And Valinkin does as well. But it's interesting when you look at the technical papers that both Vilenkin and Hawking wrote, not Hawking's popular book *A Brief History of Time*, they both still concede, they both presuppose a singularity.

But you're right, the Borde Guth Vilenkin theorem, is based not on general relativity, but it's based on special relativity and what's called the kinematics of the universe. In other words, it's not subject to the inside Planck time loophole. And they show that any universe that's on average expanding, whether it's on average expanding through a series of cycles or just in one cycle, is going to have a beginning. And so this is a very, a very powerful result.

FRANK:

Yeah, and here's what Vilenkin said about it. Here's the quote that we have in *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist*. He says the remarkable thing about our theorem is its sweeping generality. We made no assumptions about the material content of the universe.

We did not even assume that gravity is described by Einstein's equation. So if Einstein's gravity requires some modification, our conclusion will still hold. The conclusion is that past eternal inflation without a beginning is impossible, unquote.

And this is why in his book he said this is a problem for cosmologists because essentially the problem is nature had a beginning. If nature had a beginning, whatever caused nature can't be made of nature, can't be physics.

As Sir Roger Penrose said, it's got to be something beyond nature, something we would call supernatural, something at least spaceless, timeless, immaterial, and intelligent to fine-tune all this stuff.

STEPHEN:

Yeah, I think that's the best explanation. I don't say that the beginning of the universe proves a beginning or proves a creator.

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But I think the postulation of a creator best explains the evidence that we have of a beginning and of its fine-tuning. I also acknowledge that there are, you can model your way out of the conclusion that there was a beginning. But the models are not motivated by the evidence.

Both the evidence that we have and the results from theoretical physics, both the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin theory and the Hawking, Penrose, Ellis's singularity theorems, they at least strongly point to a beginning. In the case of singularity theorems, I think they strongly point to a beginning.

I think the BGV theorem, I think establishes a beginning beyond reasonable doubt. There are ways to try to circumvent. You can invent models that get—

FRANK:

Invent, keyword invent.

STEPHEN:

You can invent models that evade the requirement of a universe that is on average expanding. But those models invariably end up, producing another problem which is called heat death. And they move to maximum entropy.

And that suggests that if we were living in an infinitely old universe, then that maximum entropy state should have arisen a long time ago and we should be seeing, we should be in a maximum entropy. We should already be in a state of heat death if the universe had been here for an infinitely long time. We aren't in a state of heat death, therefore the universe wasn't here an infinitely long time ago.

So there's this kind of catch 22 with bouncing universe models. You can get around one of the conditions, you can get around the condition that triggers the Borde-Guth-Vilenkin conclusion, but only by fine-tuning your model in another way that implies a beginning for a different reason, namely, we're not in a heat death.

And so, and we should be on the way that the universe is being modeled in this other direction. So you've got these continual catch 22s that arise for the attempts to model an infinite universe

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cosmology. And the big one that we've noticed in all of these is that the physicist always has to introduce new fine-tuning to make the models work.

That just underscores the strength of the fine-tuning design argument, or rather it reinforces it on other grounds. And so, it's a kind of pick your poison problem for naturalists. Either you've got a strong argument for the existence of God based on the beginning, or if you want to try to model your way out of that, you've got an even stronger reason to accept the existence of God because of the additional fine-tuning you're introducing in your cosmological modeling.

FRANK:

Steve, I know you have to go because you have other interviews. The Story of Everything is now on Prime. It covers some of what we talked about today. The three great arguments that you point out in your book Return of the God Hypothesis that are causing people to say maybe there is a God out there. The creation of the universe, fine-tuning in the universe, and of course, the incredible intricacy of the code we find in life and other intricacies.

STEPHEN:

Yeah, the intricate digital and nanotechnology that we find in living cells that, looks to be the product of a master programmer, master engineer for the living state.

FRANK:

Okay, for those who haven't heard of The Story of Everything, the movie, it's on Prime right now.

STEPHEN:

It's on Amazon Prime right now. You can learn more about it at the website, TheStoryOfEverything.film. TheStoryofEverything.film or look for it on Amazon Prime.

FRANK:

Yeah, this is, it's an amazing film. I was able to see it and now you can see it in the comfort of your own living room or on your computer. TheStoryOfEverything.film, check it out. It covers some of what we talked about today, but much more actually.

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And it's extremely well done, beautifully, filmed, and images, and models and everything that shows you those three great discoveries that are having people return to the God hypothesis. One last question, Steve.

With regard to Dr. Penrose, who's an esteemed physicist, well worth listening to and trying to understand. How are other physicists responding to his claim that we're in this cyclical kind of universe? Are they agreeing with it? What are they saying?

STEPHEN:

There's been a lot of critique of his formal cyclic cosmology from other physicists. Most of them simply don't buy the conformal rescaling move that he makes to make the big universe look small. He invokes some physics that's exotic, that has no basis in the standard model particle physics, to try to get our current universe to get rid of its mass.

And then this era bond producing field, that has been my critique that the era bond producing field has to be finely tuned. And that just I think puts you right into the teeth of another theistic argument. And yet he obviously does not regard the idea of an external creator as at all plausible.

But that really seems to be an expression of a philosophical pre-commitment rather than a real evaluation of what the evidence is saying about the need for such an external creator to explain the fine-tuning of the universe.

FRANK:

We're going to put some links in the show notes so if you want to get into the technical details you can. Steve had an interview with Sean McDowell where he got more technical. We'll put that in there if you want to see it. We'll put a link to The Return of the God Hypothesis.

We'll also put a link to the film. But I know Steve, you gotta go. Thank you for being on the show. I'm gonna have some more comments about this right after Steve leaves. So we'll be back in just a minute.

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It's always great having the great Stephen C. Meyer on. But let me ask you a question. How do you know who is right? Is it Stephen C. Meyer or is it Sir Roger Penrose on this question of a beginning of the universe? Or is it Albert Einstein, who would agree more with Meyer or Roger Penrose?

How do you know? I'm going to cover that in just a minute. Before I do, I want to point out that we've just launched the campaign about our new book called *The War on Reality: Recovering Truth in a World that Celebrates Lies*.

And if you pre-order this book, by the way, who's we? Me and Mrs. Phoenix Hayes, who's quite brilliant by the way, and is also funny. So while this book is covering very serious topics like the murder of my friend Charlie Kirk, in fact the book is dedicated to him.

We started this book prior to the murder, but it took on a new form after the murder, including what happened that day. That's chapter one. And then we get into so many topics regarding *The War on Reality*.

It is serious. But we've got a lot of levity in here as well just to keep you engaged and to have some fun. Because when you're reading about the absurdity of what some people believe, it can be very depressing. In fact, when it's pulling down Western civilization, you can get depressed.

But we try and have at least some fun with it. So this book is not only very practical, but it's also a fun read. And if you order this book, you pre-order a physical copy of it, we're going to send you chapter 10, which is one of my favorite chapters.

It deals with Marxism. Is everybody oppressed now? We're going to send you that right now. And you're also going to be part of a live Q&A with Phoenix and myself via Zoom or some similar platform the week of its release.

It's being released September 8th, but the reason we need pre-orders is because it drives up interest on Amazon and these other sites, which means more people will see it, which means

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more people will get it, which means more people will be equipped to fight for reality rather than against reality.

And there are so many great topics in this book. We cover all sorts of topics regarding the family, regarding Marxism, regarding transgenderism, regarding marriage, regarding sexuality, regarding AI.

Also, should Christians be involved in politics? We cover all that in *The War on Reality*. So I highly encourage you to get it. Thank you for helping us out by pre-ordering it. It makes all the difference in the world to the launch of a book when there's a lot of pre-order.

So go to thewaronreality.com, thewaronreality.com, the WarOnReality.com and you will see the details there. And you can order the book and then get the free chapter if you pre-order the book and be on that list to be on that live Q & A with Phoenix and myself.

All right, let me now go back to what Steve and I were talking about. And I asked the question just a minute ago, how do you know who is right? Is it Meyer or Penrose? Is it Einstein or Penrose? How do you-- Is it Hugh Ross or Penrose? Well, let me say something I've said before.

Science doesn't say anything. Scientists do. In other words, all data needs to be gathered, and all data needs to be interpreted. And who does that? Scientists do that. Science is not a philosophy free zone.

Science requires philosophy. It requires you to interpret the data and come to a conclusion. Now, you notice what Steve said earlier in the show. He said that Dr. Penrose is assuming you have to find a natural cause for everything, including the creation of the universe.

Well, that's a philosophical presupposition. How do you know that every cause has to be natural? Because if space, time, and matter literally did come into existence from nothing, from no space, time, or matter, in other words, there was no nature.

Nature itself had a beginning. Then by definition, whatever created nature must be beyond nature. In other words, something must be super nature. Well, that's what we mean by

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supernatural. You know, Superman means beyond the man. Supernatural means beyond the natural.

So at least if Meyer is right, if Einstein is right, if most physicists today agree, and most of them do, not all, but most of them do agree, the universe had a beginning, that space, time, and matter had a beginning, if that really is the case, it would seem to me anyway that the cause has to be beyond space, time, and matter.

It has to be at least spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, to create the universe out of nothing, personal in order to choose to create. Because to go from a state of nothingness to a state of creation, someone had to make a choice. And only persons can make choices.

And the cause would also have to be intelligent to have a mind to make a choice. And so, as you know, I always ask audiences, when you think about a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, intelligent cause, who do you think of? Well, God. Yeah, but how do you know it's the Christian God, Frank? We don't.

Not from just this one argument. This could be Allah or some other theistic or deistic God who brought the universe into existence. Something beyond space, time, and matter. But if it is really true, and there's evidence for this, as you know, that Jesus really did predict and accomplish his own resurrection from the dead, then he would be God.

And then we could go back to this argument and say that the same being that walked out of the tomb 1900, and let's see, what-- What year would this be? Ninety-three years ago, 1,993 years ago. The same being that walked out of the tomb 1,993 years ago is the same being in whose divine nature created the universe out of nothing.

That's what the evidence shows. I think we can show that beyond a reasonable doubt. Not beyond all doubt, but beyond a reasonable doubt. Now, let me go back to the fact that Dr. Penrose assumes naturalism for science.

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You've got to find a natural cause. Although personally, he's not really a materialist. How do I know? Because back in about 2019, Dr. William Lane Craig had a discussion with the great Sir Roger Penrose on the Justin Brierley show, Unbelievable.

And I'll put a link to the show notes or in the show notes to that discussion or at least Dr. Craig's rendition or a podcast about the discussion. You can go further if you want. And Dr. Penrose was trying to figure out an integration of what he knew to exist, and the integration of these three M's, the mental, the material, and the mathematical.

In other words, why does the mental exist, the material exist, and the mathematical exist, and why do those three exist together? What could explain, what cause could explain those three together? And Dr. Craig is saying theism can explain that, that there is a mental, there's a material and there's a mathematical.

Now, Dr. Penrose knows that there's a mental, material, and mathematical. That's why he's struggling to try and figure out what could have caused this. But it does not appear that he's open to saying that a mind is behind all this, that mental is primary and the mind created the material, and impose the mathematical on the material.

That's why you can explain this universe in mathematical terms. I mean, you could draw equations on a chalkboard that correspond to how the universe really works outside of that laboratory.

Why is that? Why can I use my three pound material brain and the mathematics that appear to be structured, baked right into reality to explain how things work outside of my skull? Dr. Craig, I think rightfully was saying theism, best explains that.

Now we could add a couple of other M's to this. Not just the mental, material, and mathematical, but what about the moral and the meaningful? Why is there objective morality? Why does life have meaning if it has meaning at all?

And theism would best explain that as well. It would explain the mental, the material, the mathematical, the moral, and the meaningful. Now if you think about this, and Dr. Lennox, Dr.

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John Lennox has pointed this out. By the way, I'm reading his autobiography, excellent autobiography, right now we're going to have him on the show hopefully soon to talk about that. In any event, Lennox has pointed this out. There's really, at the end of the day, there's only two worldviews. At the end of the day, if you just boil it all down, here's the bottom line.

Either the material gave rise to the mental, or the mental gave rise to the material. In other words, what's primary? Material or mental? I think the evidence shows it's the mental. First of all, material appears to have been created.

Secondly, material appears to be composed, and if it's composed, it's composed by a composer. You can't go on an infinite regress of composers. Ultimately, you're going to get back to an uncomposed composer, a spaceless, timeless, immaterial, personal mind that's intelligent that created the material.

So it appears that ultimate reality is the mental that gave rise to the material, not the other way around. Of course, that's what theism believes. In fact, let's give an illustration. I'm sitting in a house right now.

What is the cause of the house that I'm in right now? Why does it exist at all? Well, it's got at least three aspects to it. It's got the mental. There's a plan to this house. It's got the material, the wood, the nails, the concrete, that kind of thing.

But it also has the mathematical. It has height, width, and depth. It's structured in such a way so it will stand up and give us shelter. But what is the primary? The primary is not the mathematical. The primary is not the material. The primary is the mental.

Because without the mental, we wouldn't have a house. It couldn't get started in other words. The material doesn't put itself together, and it certainly doesn't put itself together in a mathematical way. That's one of the issues with Dr. Penrose's theories with regard to an almost a cyclical kind of history for the universe, is the fact that the universe runs down. It's ultimately going to go to heat death.

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And he has no way of getting the second law of thermodynamics to reverse itself and bring everything back together. The world is going toward disorder, not order, ultimately. That's why scientists say that ultimately, we're going to go to heat death. In fact, Dr. Stephen Meyer even pointed that out earlier in the program.

Well, why is that a problem? Well, the problem is, is because we know that if things go to order, then there usually is a mind behind it, right? Like nature will take a building and turn it, turn it into a pile of bricks. But nature will never take a pile of bricks and turn it into a building. In other words, in order to get a building, you need the mental first, to take the mental plan and impose it on the material in a mathematical way.

So you get a building, one that'll stand up and give you proper shelter. You know, you need all three to build a house. You need the plan, the mind. You need the material, the physical aspects of the house, but you also need the mathematical.

You need to make sure that it's structured right in dimensions. For some reason, it appears Dr. Penrose doesn't appear to be open to the mental as the origin of the universe. But if he was, he would see that the mental is the primary foundation of all that exists. It created the material. I would argue that God's nature is the ground of the mathematical as well as the logical, as well as the moral.

That his nature, his immaterial nature, is mind. It's math, it's logic, in addition to the moral aspects like justice and love. He's the ground of all that exists. And you can't go on an infinite regress of causes.

You ultimately have to get back to an uncaused first cause, a cause whose existence equals his essence. God just, his nature is to exist. That's why in the scriptures, God calls himself the great I Am, not I was, not I am becoming, the I Am. He just exists. His nature is to exist. He is the ground of everything else that exists. He's a mind, a disembodied mind. He's the mind behind the universe, the mind that created material.

You know, when we build a house, we don't create the material out of nothing. We have pre-existing material. But God, when he created the universe, he created it out of nothing. So he

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created the material, imposed the mathematical to give us the fine-tuning. And of course he imposed natural laws, created and imposed natural laws.

That's another issue with the atheistic view. They want to explain everything by natural laws. The problem is laws come from lawgivers. And what I mentioned earlier in the program with regard to Aristotle, we didn't get a chance to unpack. But Aristotle's point, is that even if somebody like Penrose is right, because Aristotle didn't believe the universe had a beginning, he thought it was eternal.

But even if that's true, even if somebody like Penrose is right that the universe didn't have a beginning, that doesn't get rid of the need for a mind behind the universe. Because the laws that govern the universe are laws, and they're consistent and persistent, and do the same thing over and over again, directing the universe toward an end, toward a goal.

Like, an example might be why does an acorn, if it's properly nourished, always go in the direction of becoming an oak tree? Why doesn't become an elm tree, or a birch tree, or a seahorse? Because it's programmed to become an oak tree. Well, who programmed it?

And why does it continue to go in that direction? I mean, does an acorn have a mind of its own? Is it sitting in the ground going, I wonder how I'm going to become an oak tree? No, but it reliably goes in a direction. If it doesn't have a mind of its own, but it reliably goes in a direction, there must be an external mind directing it toward an end.

That's what Aristotle called the unmoved mover. Thomas Aquinas came along in the 1200s A.D. and he said, this is going to be my fifth way to argue for God, that all of nature is going in a direction. If that's the case, there must be a mind directing it. It's called final causality.

It's going toward an end, a direction. Things inside the universe are going toward a direction. They must be directed by a mind outside of itself, including the natural laws that govern it. So even if Dr. Penrose was right that his cyclical kind of history of the universe actually worked, it would still require a mind.

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You don't get rid of that. And Steve is saying that it requires an infusion of information at these points where he takes a disordered state and he brings it to an ordered state for the next cycle of the universe. That requires a mind.

So you don't even get rid of the need for God, even if Penrose is right. So you've got to interpret this data using the best evidence you have and using the philosophical principles that you know about it, the laws of logic and the principle of uniformity that says that causes in the past are like causes we observe in the present.

That say, things don't pop into existence out of nothing without a cause, that there's always a mind behind something like a code, which we find in life. If that's the case and you want to figure out what happened in the past, you apply that principle of uniformity to say, yep, causes in the past are like those in the present.

So if something requires a mind today, it had to require a mind yesterday. If you can't use the principle of uniformity, which is a philosophical presupposition that's based on observation, then you can't even know what happened in the past. The past could have been created five minutes ago and we wouldn't know it. There's no way of disproving that, by the way. It just seems odd that we're in—

We're not in the Matrix, ladies and gentlemen. The point here is, though, ladies and gentlemen, the evidence that we have does point to a beginning of the universe, the space time continuum. And that would imply a cause who is spaceless, timeless, immaterial, powerful, personal, and intelligent at a minimum.

And even if that's not true, you still need a mind to order and direct the current universe we're in. You still don't get rid of the need for a being like God. So if you want to go further, we're going to put a bunch of notes in the show notes so you can dive into this material further and make up your own mind, your own mind on this.

You're not just a molecular machine. You're not just a moist robot. How do you explain [the] mind? How do you explain consciousness? More evidence for a being outside of ourselves. You

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know what? You know why we have a mind? Because our mind is made in the image of the great mind. That's the best explanation.

Because causes can't arise higher, or I should say effects can't arise higher than their cause. You might as well say that water is going to flow uphill. No, no, no, no. If we have this mind, our mind must be created by a greater cause, a greater mind. That's what the evidence shows. So that's what we're going to go with. All right, friends, great being with you. We'll see you here next time. God bless.

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