

# Which Came First? Essay

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Which came first, the chicken or the egg? This age-old question, which has baffled many philosophers, is also known as a causality dilemma. For the ancient philosophers, this quandary birthed thoughts of where life and the universe began. In St. Anselm's Proslogium, he presents what at first seems to be a nearly identical question, but in actuality is not a causality dilemma. While the chicken or the egg causality dilemma possesses many murky areas, St. Anselm's query encompasses a clearly defined answer. Recurrently, Anselm states that belief must come before understanding. He declares, "For I do not seek to understand that I may believe, but I believe in order to understand. For this also I believe, - that unless I believed, I should not understand." Thus, the question arises: Which comes first, belief or understanding? While many agree with the stance that Anselm takes of *credo ut intelligam* and *fides quaerens intellectum*, others have valid objections. Yet, profound significance rests within this question; for from this question springs a plethora of others. For example, can one have blind [faith](#) in Christ? Can the concept of [God](#) be explained through reason? Or is He ineffable? If God can be defined by steps and propositions, does one lose the element of faith? As one delves deeper into this question, one will discover that faith indeed comes before understanding. Therefore, belief must come before understanding, for faith is a pre-requisite to reason. What incentive does one have to understand, if he does not first believe? One must

possess a small seed of conviction in God before he can comprehend the fullness of God; it is imperative to understanding. Some protest that one has no motivation towards belief if he does not u...

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... others told her. She faithfully waited and finally came to understand the reasons behind [Odysseus](#)' ten year delay. Sometimes, understanding does not immediately occur after belief. For instance, when one puts his trust in Christ, he will learn incrementally who God is discover more about His great nature. One continues to learn and comprehend more and more over time after he has put his faith in God. As Anselm continues to expound on his argument on the existence of God, the answer is evident. Faith must come before understanding for if it did not, what incentive is there to reason?

#### Works Cited

St. Anselm, Proslogium Pg.53, Chapter 1  
I believe that I may understand  
Faith seeking understanding  
The Bible 2 Tim. 2:13 English Standard Version  
St. Anselm, Proslogium Pg. 53, Ch. 2  
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