



A P O L O G E T I C S

201

Week 2

The Existence of God

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The Existence of God

Psalm 19:1-2 “The heavens declare the glory of God,
and the sky above proclaims his handiwork.
Day to day pours out speech,
and night to night reveals knowledge.”

Three Main Arguments

1. The Moral Argument
2. The Cosmological Argument
3. The Teleological Argument (“Fine Tuning”)
 - Argument is not a fight or quarrel
 - True philosopher doesn’t use arguments for the sake of arguing but for the sake of truth
 - We use arguments all the time in our lives
 - Why Philosophy?

“To be ignorant and simple now--not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground--would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason because bad philosophy needs to be answered.” - CS Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (pg 50)

A Christian should be able to give a *logos* (reason) for belief in the *theos* (God) of the Bible and this is where philosophy is helpful (1 Peter 3:15).

The goal of an argument is not to prove absolute certainty which leads to skepticism but to try and show what is most probable/plausible and makes the most sense when looking at all options.

Structure of a basic argument:

1. All men are immortal (premise - statement)
2. Socrates is a man (premise - statement)
3. Therefore, Socrates is immortal (conclusion)

Each week of this course is like a strand in a rope. The more strands you have the stronger the rope. Each strand can hold on its own but when they come together it becomes more air tight. The same applies to the three arguments for existence of God. When used together they give you strong foundation.

The Moral Argument

Romans 2:14-15

For when Gentiles, who do not have the law, by nature do what the law requires, they are a law to themselves, even though they do not have the law. They show that the work of the law is written on their hearts, while their conscience also bears witness, and their conflicting thoughts accuse or even excuse them.

What is the basis of our values?

- Social Conventions
- Personal Preference
- Evolution
- God

The Argument

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist
2. Objective moral values and duties do exist
3. Therefore, God exists

I. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist

- Moral value refers to the worth of a person or action, whether it is good or bad.
- Moral Duty refers to our obligation to act in a certain way, whether that action is right or wrong. What you ought or ought not do.
- **Objective** - independent of people's opinions. It means independent of human opinion. For example, the laws of nature hold whether we acknowledge them or not.
- **Subjective** - dependent on people's opinions, dependent on human opinion. "This coffee tastes good", which is personal relative statement.
- To say there are objective moral values is to say something is good or bad no matter what people think about it.
- To say there are objective moral duties is to say that certain actions are right or wrong for us regardless of what people think.
- Premise 1 asserts that if there is no God then moral values and duties are not objective in that sense.
- Why think that humans have moral worth if God doesn't exist?
- With naturalism moral values don't exist because science is morally neutral, values are just illusions.
- On naturalistic framework, moral values are just by-product biological evolution and social conditioning.

"If men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can be no doubt our un-married females would, like the worker bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering" (Darwin "The descent of man" Volume 1 pg 74)

- Traditionally moral duties were thought to have come from 10 commandments but if there is no God what is basis for any objective moral duties.
- According to atheists humans are just animals and animals have no moral obligations to other animals. When a lion kills a zebra, it kills the zebra but it does not murder the zebra. When a great white shark forcibly copulates with female it forces her but it does not rape her. There is no moral dimension to these actions.
- According to naturalism (atheism), rape and incest may not have been socially adventitious in the past so through years it has just become taboo but does nothing to show that rape and incest are actually wrong
- If there is no moral law giver then there are no objective moral laws that we must obey.
- The question IS NOT “must we believe in God to live moral lives?”. It’s not “Can we recognize objective moral values and duties without believing in God?” Rather question is “If God does not exist, do objective moral values and duties exist?”. The question is not the necessity of the belief in God for objective morality but about the necessity of the existence of God for objective morality.
- Belief in God is not necessary for objective morality, God is.

The Euthyphro Dilemma

- Named after character from one of Platos dialogues.
- Is something good because God wills it? Or does God will something because it is good?
- If you say God wills something to be good because it is good, then good is independent of God, which contradicts premise 1.
- Gods own nature is the standard of goodness, and His 10 commandments are an expression of His nature.
- Moral duties are determined by a just God:
 - Is something good because God wills it? Then the good is arbitrary.
 - Does God will something because it is good? Then it is a moral value independent of God.
 - **Solution:** God wills something because He is good.

Atheistic Moral Platonism - Moral Values Simply Exist

- Plato thought that THE GOOD just existed on its own
- Objective moral values exist but they are not grounded in God.
- **Response:** Justice and Mercy just exist? No Basis for moral obligations (duties)..Blind evolution improbable.

Humanism: Whatever contributes to human flourishing is good

- Humanism is the view that man is the measure of all things. Man takes the place of God as the anchor of moral values, and moral duties are determined by what makes humans flourish.
- **Response:** Its arbitrary. Why think inflicting harm on someone else is wrong? Very implausible. Humanism is stubborn moral faith.

2. Objective moral values and duties DO exist

- Moral Experience.
- Questions to ask Moral relativist:
 - What they think of the Hindu practice of suttee (burning widows alive on funeral pyres of their husbands), or ancient Chinese custom of crippling women for life by tightly binding their feet from childhood to resemble lotus blossoms?
 - What about moral atrocities committed in the name of religion: The crusades, or the inquisition, Salem witch trials?
 - Is it alright for Catholic priests to sexually abuse little boys and for the church to try and cover it up?"
 - What about love and tolerance? Are those just subjective?
- **Sociobiological objections** (aren't these values just ingrained in us through evolution)
 - Commits genetic fallacy - attempts to invalidate a view by showing how a person came to believe the view

3. Therefore, God Exists.

The Cosmological Argument

Assumes that something exists and argues from the existence of the thing to the First Cause or a Sufficient reason for cosmos. Its roots are in Plato and Aristotle then developed further by Christian, Islamic and Jewish thinkers.

There are two major arguments combined to compose argument.

Two major influences on First Argument

Al-Ghazali (1058-1111) - was a major influence on Thomas Aquinas

- The kalam cosmological argument - originated by early Christian thinkers to rebut Aristotle's doctrine of the eternity of the universe and developed by medieval Islamic theologians
- Every being which begins has a cause for its beginning; now the world is a being which begins; therefore, it possesses a cause for its beginning.
- **1 premise** - everything that begins to exist did so at a certain point in time. But prior to things existence, all moments are alike, must be some cause that determines that thing comes to existence at that specific moment rather than sooner or later.
- **2 premise** - The universe began to exist. Impossible to be infinite regress of events in time, in other words impossible that series of past events should be beginning less. The series of past events come to an end in the present but the infinite cannot come to an end. It is impossible to to cross the infinite to get to today. Today could never arrive which is absurd because we are here.

Thomas Aquinas (1225 - 1274)

- Based on impossibility of infinite regress of simultaneously operating causes.
- Seeks a First Cause.
- 3 way Aquinas tried to prove existence of God:
 1. Proof from Unmoved Mover based on motion
 - Everything that is in motion is moved by something else
 - This cannot go on for infinity. There is a first cause.
 - There must be a first cause of motion in every causal series
 - The Unmoved Mover who is the First Cause of all motion is God
 2. Prove existence of first cause by causation in the world
 - Nothing is self-caused. It would have to bestow existence upon itself, which is impossible
 - Everything that is caused is therefore caused by something else. These are causes of existence in this case and not causes of motion.
 - These causal reasons cannot go on forever
 - God is the First Cause of everything else.
 3. Necessary and Contingent Beings
 - Absolute Necessary being based on the existence of contingent beings.
 - *Contingent beings* - beings that are possible but come and go. They are not necessary but contingent. If they were necessary they would always exist.
 - Aquinas believed there were many necessary being: the heavenly bodies, angels, even matter (A mormon view) itself.
 - There must be a First Being which is absolutely necessary in itself
 - God is Being itself subsisting (*ipsum esse subsistens*)
 - God is pure being and source of being to everything else

The Argument

1. Whatever begins to exist has a cause
2. The universe began to exist
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause

I. Whatever begins to exist has a cause

- Something cannot come into being from nothing.
- Things just popping into existence uncaused from nothing is like magic and not should not be taken seriously.
- Premise confirmed in our experience and atheists who are scientific naturalists will accept this premise.
- To the atheists it makes more sense for them to say the universe was uncaused and came form nothing than to believe God created universe out of nothing (*ex nihilo*).
- DOES NOT say that God began to exist.
- God is timeless.
- God existing outside of time and space before the universe existed.

- Does not state a mere physical law which are valid for things within the universe, it is not a physical principle. It is a metaphysical principle. Being cannot come from non-being; something cannot come into existence uncaused from nothing. The principle applies TO ALL reality.

2. The universe began to exist

• Philosophical Arguments

- The impossibility of an actually infinite number of things.
- An actually infinite number of things cannot exist.
- A beginning less series of events in time entails an actually infinite number of things.

• Scientific Arguments

- The expansion of the universe.
- Astronomy and astrophysics.
- Prior to 1920s many scientists thought universe stationary and eternal.
- The standard Big Bang Theory disproves the eternality of the universe. Major breakthrough in the 1920's

Skeptics may ask who caused God?

- This is a category fallacy.
- God is a necessary being which means he is uncaused.
- So this question could be worded "Who caused God who by definition is uncaused?".
- Category fallacy to ask about the cause of something that by definition is uncausable.
- God is the First Cause. Fallacy to ask "What caused the First Cause?" If something caused First Cause it would no longer be the First Cause.
- What about another idea of God? A finite god? one that itself needs a cause? This then is irrelevant and its their problem because that is a different concept of who God is. This questions is not one needing answer because its not the God we are trying to prove exists.

3. Therefore, the universe has a cause

Major influence on Second Argument

G.W.F. Leibniz (1646-1716)

- Doesn't argue for existence of an Uncaused Cause, but for existence of a Sufficient Reason for the universe.
- "Why is there something rather than nothing?". Why does anything at all exist?
- Nothing happens without a sufficient reason.
- The reason for the universe existence must be found outside of the universe, in a being whose sufficient reason is self contained.
- The sufficient reason for all things is God, whose own existence is to be explained only by reference to Himself. (God is a metaphysically necessary being).

The Argument

1. Anything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in the necessity of its own nature or in an external cause (this is metaphysical).
2. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, that explanation is God.
3. The universe exists.
4. Therefore, the universe has an explanation of its existence (from 1,3).
5. Therefore, the explanation of the existence of the universe is God (from 2, 4).

1. Principle of Sufficient Reason

- There are necessary beings which exist of own nature and have no external cause, and contingent beings whose existence is accounted for by casual factors outside themselves.
- Numbers, sets, and mathematical objects necessary things according most philosophers.
- People, planets and stars examples of contingent things.
- God is necessary being.
- Objections about universe being empty not causing anything are begging the question in favor of atheism because it is being assumed that the universe is all there is. They are denying non-physical states of affairs.

2. Explanation of the Universe

- Seems like very bold assertion. But its logically equivalent to typical atheist response that universe simply exists as brute contingent thing. Atheists since there is no God it is false that everything has explanation for its existence.
- If atheism is true, then the universe has no explanation of its existence, atheists are also affirming the logically equivalent claim:
 - A. If the universe has an explanation of its existence, then atheism is not true, that is to say, that God exists.
- Atheists are implicitly committed to this premise.
- The universe by definition includes all of physical reality. So cause of universe must transcend space and time so cannot be physical or material. (Before universe existed there was no physical material matter since the universe includes all of material matter, therefore the cause of universe is non material).
- There are only two things that can fall under the non material description that transcends space and time: an abstract object (like a number), or else a mind (a soul, a self). But abstract objects don't stand in casual relations. The #7 does not cause anything.
- If universe has explanation of existence it is a transcendent, unembodied Mind which created universe. Traditionally people call this "God".

- **God** - uncaused, beginningless, changeless, immaterial, timeless, spaceless, and enormously powerful cause of universe.

3. The Universe Exists

- This is stating the obvious that there is a universe.

4. (4-5) Premises follow from the first three

Further Notes:

The contingency of the universe

Atheist or agnostic will say for premise 1 that the universe exists in its own nature and not from external cause. In other words the universe exists necessarily. This is bold suggestion that atheists are not eager to embrace. We have a strong sense of the universes contingency. Easy to conceive of nonexistence of any and all of the objects we observe in the world.

Principle of Sufficient Reason Again

Atheist objection could be that while there are no beings that exist necessarily, but that necessarily some contingent beings exist because it is impossible for nothing to exist.

The Teleological Argument

Romans 1:18-23

For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who by their unrighteousness suppress the truth. For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. For his invisible attributes, namely, his eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly perceived, ever since the creation of the world, in the things that have been made. So they are without excuse. For although they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools, and exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man and birds and animals and creeping things.

Plato said there are two things that lead men to God - The existence of the soul and the order of the universe. Plato concluded that there must be a "best soul" who is the "Father and maker of all".

Aristotle was astounded by the skies and stars above him and concluded that the cause was divine intelligence. In his *Metaphysics* he argued that there must be a first uncaused cause which is God who is the source of the order in the universe.

Astronomers stunned by how exact conditions had to have been for big bang to work. This has come to be known as the "fine tuning" of the universe for life.

“At this moment it seems as though science will never be able to raise the curtain on the mystery of creation. For the scientist who has lived by his faith in the power of reason, the story ends like a bad dream. He has scaled the mountains of ignorance; he is about to conquer the highest peak; as he pulls himself over the final rock, he is greeted by a band of theologians who have been sitting there for centuries.”

— Robert Jastrow (Former NASA scientist)

Definition of “fine tuning”

- All the constants and quantities have to fall into such a narrow range of values to permit life to exist in the universe to be life permitting. This is the “fine tuning”.
- Range of life permitting values for life permitting universe is extremely narrow.
- If even one of the constants or quantities were off by just a hair the balance required for life to exist would be altered and it would be life prohibiting.
- The weak force one of the four fundamental forces of nature it operates in nucleus of an atom - so finely tuned that alteration of even 10 to the 100th would have prevented life permitting universe.
- Cosmological constant which drives the acceleration of the universes expansion if altered even by 10 to the 120th would prevent life in universe.
- **Life permitting** means anything that can take in food, extract energy and adapt to their environment.

The Argument

1. The fine-tuning of the universe is due to either physical necessity, chance, or design
2. It is not due to physical necessity or chance
3. Therefore, it is due to design

1. Due to either Physical necessity, chance, or design

- This is unobjectionable.

2. Physical necessity and chance?

• Physical Necessity

- This would require us to say that a life-prohibiting universe is physically impossible.
- It DOES seem possible. If universe had done this...if entropy had been slightly different or little adjustments would have prevented biological life. Taking a very radical line. Burden of proof really on the objector who uses this.
- There is no evidence that a life-permitting universe is necessary.
- Some unsupportable theoretical ideas: (TOE) “theory of everything”., string theory (M-theory). Just showing a range of possibilities but not evidence actually exist of these other universes.

• Chance

- Its just an accident that all constants and quantities fell into the life-permitting range. We just lucked out but the chances of this are so remote that it is unreasonable.
- There are vastly more life-prohibiting universes in local area of possible universes that life-permitting
- Some will use lottery illustration.

Is an explanation needed?

Some say explanation not needed because if life permitting not exist we would not be here to ask the question. This is the **anthropic principle** (We can observe only those values of the fundamental constants and quantities that are compatible with our existence). This reason is fallacious. Does nothing to eliminate need of explanation.

Many world hypothesis

This is where current debate lies. Our universe is but one member of a world ensemble or “multiverse” of randomly ordered universes, preferably infinite in number.

But the multiverse itself requires fine tuning. If this hypothesis is to be valid the mechanism itself that generates the many worlds had better not be fine tuned itself!

Sort of a backhanded compliment to design hypothesis: Otherwise, sober scientists would not be flocking to adopt so speculative and extravagant view as many worlds hypothesis unless they felt compelled to. Once you start speculating about multiple worlds you have now crossed from naturalism into metaphysics. The many world hypothesis is no more scientific and no less metaphysical than the design hypothesis. The many worlds is beyond science.

John Polkinhorne - *“multiple worlds is metaphysical hypothesis running as pseudo science.”*

The fine tuning and design arguments use less assumptions than the alternatives which according to Occam’s razor is the hypothesis we should go with.

Occam’s razor - States among competing hypothesis, the one with the fewest assumptions should be selected. One should proceed to simpler theories until simplicity can be traded for greater explanatory power. The simplest available theory need not be most accurate.

Why should we think a world ensemble exists? Its just speculation but by contrast through the cosmological argument we can reasonably show the Designer of the cosmos.

Roger Penrose (English mathematical physicist at Oxford) - the odds of our universes initial low entropy conditions existing by chance alone are one out of $10^{10^{123}}$. The odds of our solar systems suddenly forming by random collision of particles is one out of $10^{10^{60}}$. This figure is, in Penrose words, utter “chicken feed” in comparison to the first figure.

Evolution would say it would take billions of years to get to our complexity, but the multiple universe shows younger sun rather than an older sun that evolution would have to posit.

3. Therefore, it is due to design?

This is logically valid argument whose conclusion follows necessarily from the two premises:

1. **Physical necessity:** The constants and quantities must have the values they do
2. **Chance:** The constants and quantities have the values they do simply by accident
3. **Design:** The constants and quantities were designed to have the values they do

Resources:

- “On Guard” by William Lane Craig - <http://amzn.com/B005SJ19VM>
- “Reasonable Faith” by William Lane Craig - <http://amzn.com/B001CDZZ7W>
- “Philosophical Foundations for a Christian World view” by JP Moreland and William Lane Craig - <http://amzn.com/B002W5GQ3G>
- “Love your God with all Your Mind: The Role of Reason in the Life of the Soul” by JP Moreland - <http://amzn.com/1576830160>

