

Evidence for existence & nature of God

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Introduction

Every religious and philosophical worldview has its own foundation upon which its entire belief system holds together. Christianity is built upon the foundation that the existence of God is a reality. If it could be proven that God does not exist, then Christianity would be false and its entire belief system would crumble. If it can be shown that God does exist, then we would need to know something about His general nature to see if it corresponds with the Christian theistic God as revealed in scripture. Natural theology studies the existence and nature of God based on what we know about nature. It does not delve into any supernatural revelation such as the Bible. I believe that it can be demonstrated both philosophically and scientifically that God is not only the cause for the beginning of the universe, but that He is also the continuing cause for its existence today. This paper will examine the following arguments for the existence of God: The cosmological argument, the teleological argument, and the moral argument. I will then conclude from these arguments what we are able to know about the metaphysical attributes of God based on natural reason.

The Cosmological Argument

The first proposal to consider is known as the kalam argument. This argument which was developed by medieval theologians goes like this:

- (1.) Everything that has a beginning must be caused by something else.
- (2.) The universe had a beginning; therefore,
- (3.) the universe had to be caused by something else.

The first premise deals with the law of causality which states that whenever there is an effect, there is a cause. This premise asserts that something can never be produced or caused by nothing. since nothing has no existence or power to produce anything at all. Some may argue that the universe is eternal and therefore does not need a cause. However, there are both scientific and philosophical evidences to support a finite and not an eternal universe. First, science supports a universe that has a beginning. Philosopher and apologist William Lane Craig explains iAccording to the second law of

thermodynamics, processes taking place in a closed system always tend toward equilibrium. This law states that the amount of usable energy in our closed system universe is decreasing and that it will eventually be completely used up. The fact that the universe is still running proves that it cannot be eternal since it would have already reached a state of equilibrium and burned out somewhere in eternity past.

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Other grounds that support a beginning for the universe is the big bang principle. This states that the universe was birthed by a gigantic explosion somewhere in the remote past. Astronomer Robert Jastrow explains that we live in an expanding universe in which all the galaxies around us are moving apart from us and one another at enormous speeds. The universe is blowing up before our eyes, as if we are witnessing the aftermath of a gigantic explosion. This theory is also supported by the discovery of the radiation echo from the initial explosion. Jastrow writes, "No explanation other than the Big Bang has been found for the fireball radiation." He concludes, "The instant in which the cosmic bomb exploded marked the birth of the universe."

The kalam argument also gives philosophical reason why the universe cannot have an infinite past. It demonstrates that there cannot be an infinite number of moments in time before today because time is not dimensionless or abstract, but rather it is real and uses up actual moments. If there were an infinite number of moments before today, then today would have never come. Since today has come, it can be proven that there was a beginning point in time and therefore the universe had a beginning. Since every effect requires a cause, and the universe is one giant effect, it follows that there must be a cause of the universe that does not require a cause for itself. Otherwise, the universe would have an infinite regress of causal events and that would be impossible. Hence, God as an eternal, infinite Being is the first foundation cause of the entire finite universe. He is the necessary Being who exists outside of and independent of all time, space and matter.

However, someone may argue that there can be an infinite number of abstract mathematical points between two end positions of a line. Apologist Dr. Norman Geisler discusses the difference between an abstract infinite series and a concrete infinite series: "Now as we know, while there are an infinite number of abstract mathematical points between two bookends, nevertheless, we cannot get an infinite number of books between them, no matter how thin the pages are. So while abstract, mathematical infinite series are possible, actual, concrete infinite series are not. Since time, space and matter are real things, then we must evaluate them as being concrete and not abstract."

While the kalam argument points to the necessity of God's existence at the origin of the universe, another argument (the vertical argument) declares that God's existence is currently necessary in order for contingent things to exist today. Something is contingent if it is possible for it not to exist. This argument is expressed in the following way: Every part of the universe is contingent. Since every part is contingent, then the whole universe is contingent because the whole universe is not greater than the sum of its parts.

The universe therefore does not have to exist. However, the universe does exist, and consequently, it must be dependent on a Being who must necessarily exist. Something that is necessary must be holding together all of the parts of the universe which are contingent. Therefore, this Being must be all powerful since He holds all of the contingent parts of the universe together.

The Teleological Argument

The Teleological argument for the existence of God examines the apparent design of the universe and infers that there must be an intelligent designer behind its intricately woven patterns. Eighteenth-century philosopher William Paley gave us the classic watchmaker

analogy. Philosopher Alvin Plantinga comments, iPaley goes on to claim that the universe resembles a watch in that it gives the appearance of having been designed to accomplish certain purposes; so, he says,

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we must conclude that the universe actually was designed by a very powerful and wise being . We know through experience that whenever there is complex design that it is the result of an intelligent designer. No person would ever seriously suggest that the presidential faces that appear on Mount Rushmore are the product of erosion by natural sources such as wind and rain. Could anyone with a rational mind believe that the Empire State Building is the result of anything but the intelligent mind of an architect? These are examples of things that have specified complexity. This type of complexity is never brought into existence merely by natural laws but requires an intelligent being to produce it. It is also observed that the more intricate the design, the greater the intelligence that is required to design it. Geisler writes, iAnd the amount of complex information in a simple one-celled animal is greater than that found in Websteris Unabridged Dictionary . Could anyone conclude that the specified complexity of the letter sequencing found in Websteris Dictionary is the result of an explosion that took place in a print shop millions of years ago? Yet many would suggest that the entire universe is simply the product of random processes without the involvement of an intelligent designer. Science has never once observed this type of effect, yet many accept it as scientific fact. To illustrate the enormous amount of specified complexity in the human brain alone, agnostic astromer Carl Sagan wrote: iThe information content of the human brain expressed in bits is probably comparable to the total number of connections among the neurons-about a hundred trillion, 10 to 14th , bits. If written out in English, say, that information would fill some twenty million volumes, as many as in the world.is largest libraries. The equivalent of twenty million books is inside the head of every one of us. The brain is a very big place in a very small space . If a relatively simple object such as Mount Rushmore requires an intelligent designer, how much more would the enormous complexity of the human brain require a designer of extraordinary intelligence.

In addition to the observation of intelligent design within the universe, the anthropic principle states that the universe would have had to have been fine-tuned from the very beginning of its existence in order for life to eventually emerge. Astrophysicist Hugh Ross expounds, if the mass of the universe were slightly smaller, no helium would be generated during the cooling of the big bang. Without helium, stars cannot produce the heavy elements necessary for life O lfit were any smaller (or longer.), not even one planet like the earth would be possible. Another example relates to the oxygen composition of the atmosphere. iOxygen comprises 21 percent of the atmosphere. If it were 25 percent, fires would erupt, if 15 percent, human beings would suffocate. In summary, The anthropic principle confirms the teleological argument through updated scientific knowledge and asserts that specified complexity was required from the very genus of the universe. In short, this provides scientific evidence for, iln the beginning God created the heavens and the earthi.(Gen. 1:1 KJV).

The Moral Law Argument

The moral law argument is based on the fact that human beings consciously know that certain behaviors are morally right while other behaviors are morally wrong. The argument states that moral laws imply a moral law giver. Since we know that there are objective moral laws, then there must be a moral law giver. A moral law is not something that people necessarily do, but it is something that people absolutely ought to do. Philosopher C. S.

Lewis explains, "What is the sense in saying the enemy were in the wrong unless Right is a real thing which the Nazis at bottom line knew as well as we did and ought to have practised? If there is no universal objective law to which all men should conform, then it would be impossible to declare that Hitler was morally wrong. Some critics object by stating that morality is only relative, perspectival, and

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not a universal reality. C. S. Lewis responds, "Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you will find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break a promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining 'tis not fair' before you can say Jack Robinson. If one were to make the statement, 'My children behave better now than they used to,' then he automatically assumes an outside objective standard by which his children's behavior can be measured. Since it is self-evident that there are universal moral laws, then there must be a moral law giver who reigns over the universe and the conscience of man." God.

The Nature of God

The examination of the previous arguments for the existence of God lead us to an understanding of the very nature of God. The following key attributes of God are known by natural reason:

Self-existence: The cosmological arguments (kalam and vertical) prove that God must be the first foundational cause and the continuing cause for the universe since every finite, contingent thing needs a cause for its existence. Therefore, God must be an infinite, noncontingent, uncaused cause of the universe. Hence, He is self-existent, having no cause for Himself and depending on nothing for His continued existence. This attribute of God corresponds to the God of the Bible who declared to Moses, "I AM THAT I AM" (Ex. 3: 14 KJV). In the book of Revelation, God describes Himself: "I am the Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, saith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty" (Rev. 1:8 KJV). Geisler expounds, "God is Pure actuality, with no potentiality in his being whatsoever. Whatever has potentiality (potency) needs to be actualized or effected by another. And since God is the ultimate Cause, there is nothing beyond him to actualize any potential (i.e., ability) he may have."

Simple and Indivisible: Since God is pure existence and has no potentiality, then it follows that he has no composition or parts in which there can be division. This is because things can only be distinguished from one another by their different qualities or potentialities. Therefore, He is pure and simple and exists as one God who is infinite in nature. It would be impossible to have more than one pure actuality since they would be exactly the same and would lack distinction. If they were different, then one of them would lack a perfect characteristic which would disqualify them as God. This proof excludes the gods of

Polytheism and affirms the God of the Bible who reveals Himself as One. *illear, 0 Israel: The Lord our God is one Lordi (Duet. 6:4 KJV).*

Immutable: Since God is pure actuality and has no potentiality, then it follows that He does not have the potential to change. With God as the ultimate Being, then there is no characteristic that could be added to His person to make Him more perfect. This leads us to conclude that the gods of Mormonism and process theology are false since they promote the concept that God changes and progresses in nature. However, it does validate the God of the Bible who declares, *iFor I am the Lord, I change noti(Mal. 3:6 KJV).*

Omnipotent: A God who created the entire universe ex-nihilo and who continues to hold every contingent part of the universe together must be an all powerful Being. Since God is an infinite being, then any attribute that He does possess, He possesses it to an infinite degree. Consequently, God is an all powerful being who can do anything that is not a contradiction in terms or contrary to His nature. For example, God cannot create round triangles, tell a lie, change in His character, or cease to exist. The prophet

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Jeremiah echoes these very concepts, *iAh Lord God! Behold, thou hast made the heaven and the earth by thy great power and stretch out arm, and there is nothing too hard for theei(Jer. 32: 17 KJV)*

Omniscient: The teleological argument reveals the vast knowledge of God since He is the grand designer of the universe. A Being who designed such intricate complexities must be all knowing and all wise. Secondly, since man as a finite creature possesses rational knowledge, then an infinite God must have infinite knowledge because it is only logical that an effect cannot be greater than its cause. God cannot give to man that which He does not possess Himself God who exists outside of time, space and matter knows all things, even occurrences before they actually take place. The scripture parallels this perfectly as God is declared to possess unlimited knowledge. *IDost thou know the balancing of the clouds, the wonderous works of him which is perfect in knowledge?i (Job 37: 16 KJV)*

Omnipresent: God is infinite and therefore He is not limited by time, space or matter. He is pure actuality and therefore has no potentiality to be somewhere that He currently is not. Consequently, God transcends all of time and space as He is fully present throughout the entire universe. The psalmist declared this beautifully, *iWhither shall I go from thy spirit? Or whither shall I flee from thy presence? Ifl ascend up into heaven, thou art there: ifl make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there.i (Psa. 139:7,8 KJV)*

Incorporeal: Since God is an infinite Being who is transcendent over time, space and matter, then it corresponds that He is an immaterial being. Matter always has physical limitations, while God has no physical limitations. A time-space being is always a material being. As demonstrated in the cosmological argument, all of time, space and matter are finite as they had a beginning. God, as a necessary Being, not only created time, space and matter, but He also transcends all of time, space and matter. Consequently, God as a simple, infinite Being has no body or corporeal parts, and He exists eternally as a Spirit. This refutes the Mormon teaching that God is an exalted man. It also proves the biblical teaching that God is a Spirit. As Jesus stated, *iGod is a Spirit: and they that worship him must worship him in spirit and in truthi. (John 4:24 KJV)*

Personal: Given that man is a finite personal being, then it is apparent that God is also a personal Being but to an infinite degree. We come to this logical conclusion as we recognize that an effect cannot be greater than its cause. Also, many of the characteristics that are associated with personhood are seen in

the creator as we reflect upon nature. First, God has to be intelligent since we observe this through the order and the intricate design in the universe. Philosopher Robert Clark gives us further evidence of God's personal attributes, if the Power co-ordinated nature with a view to events that still lay in the future, He must, presumably, have had a desire to do so and He must certainly have known the meaning of what we call motives. This evidence rejects the impersonal God of pantheism and affirms the personal God of the Bible which declares, iWith him is wisdom

and strength, he hath counsel and understandingi. (Job 12:13 KJV)

Moral: The moral argument reveals that behind the evidential moral law in the universe, there must be a moral law giver. God, as a perfect and infinite Being, must be a perfectly moral deity. iAnd the Lord passed by before him, and proclaimed, The Lord, The Lord God, merciful and gracious, longsuffering, and abundant in goodness and truthi. (Ex. 34:6 KJV)

Conclusion

By examining nature, we find abundant proof for the existence of God and fundamental truths regarding His very nature. As an eternal, necessary Being who created the universe, God is self-existent, indivisible, immutable, omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, incorporeal, personal, and morally perfect.

This verifies that the God who is understood through nature, is the same God who is revealed to us through the Bible. With such an abundance of evidence, then why do so many people refuse to believe in the existence of God? The Bible gives us the answer, iFor the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold the truth in unrighteousness; Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse: because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkenedi.(Romans 1:18-21 KJV)

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