

THE RATIONAL PROOFS OR EVIDENCES FOR THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

We are theists in that we believe in the existence of a real, Personal, living God. What that practically means is we are not atheists who do not believe in the existence of God, and we are not agnostics who don't know whether or not there is a God.

Faith is that which you believe or trust. **What makes one's faith stable and solid are facts and truth.** When it comes to God, people believe all kinds of things. Some base what they believe on how they feel. Some base what they believe on their own experience. Some base what they believe on their own reason. People have the right to believe or not believe anything they want when it comes to God.

But what all must admit is when it comes to any belief about God, it is a faith-based system. In other words, the fact that we believe in the existence of a Personal God is our belief system. An atheist has a belief system that says he doesn't believe and an agnostic has a belief system that says he doesn't know what to believe.

Now most who hold to their belief system think they are right. But logistically speaking, all cannot be right. **The belief that is viably and provably right means the other beliefs are unfeasibly and improvably wrong.** The belief that is true means the other beliefs are false.

So the big question is who is right and who is wrong? Which faith system is true? Which faith system is logical? Which faith system is rational? Which faith system is viable? Which faith system is provable? Which faith system can you back up with facts?

We believe there is only one faith system that the logical and rational evidence will support and that is theism. God is real. God does really exist. God is a living God. God is a personal God. To prove this we offer five rational proofs or evidences.

Before we begin this, it is important to realize that the existence of God may be unequivocally established by reason. Every mind that is after rational, objective evidence will conclude this. **But we also acknowledge that even though the existence of God may be believed by man's reason, God may not be accurately known without His Revelation.**

Someone could look at the evidence and conclude there is the existence of God and never really know God. To actually know God, one would need more than just the objective evidence of His existence.

When it comes to the existence of God, there are five main rational arguments or rational proofs and logical evidences that have helped establish truth for centuries. (I am going to follow the order that we teach in our Theology Proper Doctrine Class and notes):

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Rational Evidence or Proof of God's Existence #1 - The Ontological Proof.

The word “ontological” comes from the Greek word “ontos” which is the word “being,” “individual” and “existence.” It comes from the verb that has to do with living being or living existence.

The Ontological Argument says humans exist as real human living beings and most of those living beings believe that God does exist; therefore the very idea that He does exist proves He does actually exist.

All people are able to conceive of the idea of the existence of a Perfect God that does exist and this very idea of the existence of a Perfect God proves He does exist. The first to actually call this argument the Ontological Argument was Anselm (A.D. 1033-1109). The first philosopher to actually develop the argument was Immanuel Kant (A.D. 1724-1804).

This evidence is developed in the following way:

- 1) Can you conceive in your mind that there could be a standard of absolute perfection?
The obvious answer is yes.
- 2) Can you conceive in your mind that there could be a Being who is absolutely perfect?
Again the answer is yes.
- 3) Can we conceive in our mind that there could be a God who is absolutely perfect?
The answer is yes.
- 4) Would we admit in our mind that we are not absolutely perfect and we are not infinite?
The answer is yes.
- 5) If we are not absolutely perfect, where do we get the idea that a God could exist who is absolutely perfect? How is it possible for finite, imperfect people to conceive of an infinite and absolutely perfect God?
- 6) The very idea proves a Perfect God does exist or we could not even have the idea.

The syllogism for this argument looks like this:

- 1) Man is capable of having the idea of the existence of a Perfect God.
- 2) Ideas are rooted in realities.
- 3) The existence of a Perfect God is a reality.

Now there is some Biblical support for this argument in Romans 1:19. But we certainly want to be careful in making our faith solely on this one philosophical argument.

It is possible for a human being to conceive of things that are non-realities. Science fiction books and movies come up with ideas that are not reality. For example, it is possible for us to conceive of a green monster who looks like a blob of jello, who rolls through the streets of a city killing people. Just because one may conceive it, does not mean it is true. Although green is a real color and jello is a real food and things do roll through city streets and people are killed. We could clearly show that the conception here is logically incoherent. Science fiction has some basis or root form of reality. Truth is ideas and concepts are rooted in some form of reality.

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Taken with the other four arguments, the Ontological proof does lend itself to solid evidence for the existence of God. Anselm said this argument actually proves an atheist is a fool. He reasoned that since an atheist denies God, it proves he has the idea of God in his mind. Since the atheist desires to say there is no God, where did he even get the idea that he needs to deny him? His idea actually proves God does, in fact, truly and really exist.

To actually refute the idea of the existence of an infinitely perfect God, you must prove the idea is logically incoherent. Since one cannot prove that, it proves the actual existence of God.

Rational Evidence or Proof of God's Existence #2 - The Cosmological Proof.

This proof says that every effect has a beginning and has an adequate cause for the beginning. Since the world is an effect, it has a beginning and it must have an adequate cause or creator, which proves the existence of God.

This is a very scientific argument because all science is based on cause and effect. For example, in physics, Newton's first law of motion says—an object will remain in its state of rest or uniform motion until acted upon by force. In simple terms—the effect of movement must have a beginning cause for the movement.

The Greek word “cosmos” is the word for world or earth. It is from this Greek word that this Cosmological proof gets its title.

When it comes to the cosmological argument, there are two phases of it:

- 1) Phase #1 - The world is an effect and must have a Beginner and Creator, who is God.
- 2) Phase #2 - The world is a continual effect and must have a Sustainer, who is God.

Everything which has a beginning must have a sufficient cause and therefore the world, which has a beginning, must have God as its cause. The Greek philosophers Plato (B.C. 428-348) and Aristotle (B.C. 384-372) believed the existence of the world proves the existence of an Eternal Being. The Cosmological argument is a very strong argument for the existence of God.

It is interesting that David Hume (A.D. 1711-1776), the atheistic Scottish philosopher, admitted, “I never asserted so absurd a proposition as that anything might arise without a cause” (*The Letters of David Hume*, 1:187).

A syllogism for this argument is this:

- 1) Every effect has a beginning and must have an adequate cause for the beginning.
 Whatever has begun must have a cause. Whatever exists cannot exist without a cause.
- 2) The world is an effect.
- 3) The world must have a cause or creator that is great enough to account for its existence.
- 4) Therefore, the existence of the world proves God is a reality.

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According to Romans 1:20 this argument is very sound and Biblically accurate. Every person, by looking at creation and by looking at the world, is able to recognize the existence of God, who has stupendous Divine power. The proof centers on answering the question of “How did the world get here?” “Who or What caused it?”

Many contemporary “scholars” do admit the world or earth had a beginning. Some of them try to explain the beginning as the result of a Big Bang or Massive Explosion. But this is not scientifically possible. We are able to test explosions at all levels and nothing is beautifully created by an explosion. Explosions do not create beauty, they destroy it.

When we combine the Cosmological Argument with the other arguments, the only logical explanation for the cause of such an amazing effect as the world is God.

Rational Evidence or Proof of God’s Existence #3 - The Teleological Proof.

This is a very strong argument or proof. This proof is an extension of the cosmological proof. The basic idea behind this proof is that since the world is intricately designed, this demands an intricate designer capable of designing such intricacies.

In other words, the world is filled with intricate life and intelligence, which demands a Designer capable of creating intricate life and intelligence. Everything that has been intricately designed must have an intricate designer; therefore this proves God’s existence.

The most famous illustration of this, which I have used, which Mr. Miles used and which Dr. Chafer and other theologians used, was derived from William Paley (A.D. 1743-1805). He was the first to use the watchmaker analogy. His analogy was every watch is intricately designed and has a maker capable of designing it. Watches demand a watchmaker; buildings demand an architect, paintings demand an artist.

He concluded that the universe is far more intricately designed than any watch. This demands an intricate designer or Maker, who must be God. The greater the design, the greater the designer.

Charles Hodge, the Princeton theologian of the 1800’s, lists many examples of intricate design:

- 1) Single organ of the body.
- 2) One organ of the body as it relates to another organ of the body.
- 3) Various abilities and distinctions between animals. One illustration given of this is that beavers are able to make dams and some creator had to program them with that ability.
- 4) A world that is specifically designed in which humans may live.

The syllogism of this proof is this:

- 1) Intricate design always demands an intricate designer in anything. (House, Computer)
- 2) The world and everything in it demonstrates intricate design.
- 3) A great designer must exist who is capable of designing such an intricate world.
- 4) This designer is and can only be God.

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Dr. Norman Geisler brings out a significant point about this argument when he says the greater the design, the greater must be the designer.

You could sit 1,000 monkeys at a typewriter for thousands of years and never will they be able to produce Hamlet. But Shakespeare did it on the first try. Someone greater than monkeys or Shakespeare had to design the intelligence required to produce it (*Systematic Theology*, Vol. 1, p. 31).

Another great evidence for the teleological proof for God comes from the universe that has been specifically fine-tuned and designed for human beings. Oxygen comprises 21 percent of the atmosphere. If the level were at 25 percent, fires would erupt. If the level were at only 15 percent, humans would suffocate. “If the gravitational force were altered by merely one part in ten to the fortieth power (ten followed by fourth zeroes), the sun would not exist and the moon would crash into the earth or veer off into space” (*Ibid.*, p. 34).

There is a former atheistic astronomer whose name is Alan Sandage. Here is what he concluded: “The world is too complicated in all of its parts to be due to chance alone. I am convinced that the existence of life on earth with all its order in each of its organisms is simply too well put together....The more one learns of biochemistry, the more unbelievable it becomes unless there is some kind of organizing principle—an architect for believers....(Alan Sandage, “SRRB” in T. 54).

Rational Proof or Evidence of God’s Existence #4 - The Anthropological Proof.

This proof is really an extension of the teleological proof. Some call this proof the Moral Argument Proof. This proof says that man was created with an ability to think, feel and make moral choices. These are abilities which are not possessed by matter or material things. This immaterial ability which resides within man proves the existence of a Creator capable of designing this unique ability in man.

It has often been observed that even if one could account for some natural development of the material part of man (which cannot be done because of its intricate design), one cannot account for the immaterial part of man which gives him a unique ability to think, feel and make moral choices. The only explanation for this is the existence of a powerful God, who is capable of imparting these qualities to the human being.

Dr. Paul Enns writes concerning the anthropological proof: “Contrary to the secular humanist who sees man simply as a biological being, the Biblicist sees man as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). The image of God in man is spiritual and not physical (cf. Eph. 4:24; Col. 3:10). Man is not simply a physical being, but also a moral being with a conscience, intellect, emotion, and will. Chafer states: ‘There are philosophical and moral features in man’s constitution which may be traced back to find their origin in God. ...A blind force...could never produce a man with intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and inherent belief in a Creator’” (*The Moody Handbook of Theology*, p. 184).

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The syllogism for this proof looks like this:

- 1) Man has the ability to think, feel and make moral choices.
- 2) These abilities do not reside in everything.
- 3) Someone who possesses the same qualities and abilities is responsible for giving them to man.
- 4) This someone must be God.

In Romans 2:14-15, we learn that God has created man with the ability to reason and make moral choices. God has written His moral compass and law within the heart of every human. The evidence of the existence of this moral law within man is strong.

For example, we often hear people say the world is getting better or worse. How would a human suspect that unless they are gauging that by some moral standard? Most in the world will acknowledge that Adolph Hitler was evil in what he did to the Jews. How do we determine he did evil without a moral standard? Why do we think murder is wrong? Why do we think stealing is wrong? Why do we think rape is wrong? Why do we think racism is wrong? We think these things are wrong because as humans we have a moral compass. Where did we get that compass? That moral standard comes from someone and that someone is God.

C. S. Lewis used a syllogism that was this:

- 1) Moral law requires a moral law giver.
- 2) There is objective moral law.
- 3) Therefore, there is an objective Moral Lawgiver.

Dr. Charles Ryrie wrote: “The several facets of man and all of them together demand some explanation as to their origin and argue for the existence of a being who is moral and intelligent and living who could have produced man. Evolution cannot produce soul, conscience, or religious instincts. Lifeless idols do not generate living offspring” (*Basic Theology*, p. 32).

Rational Proof or Evidence of God’s Existence #5 - The Historical Proof.

There are many things in history that must lead to the logical conviction of God’s existence. Such things as the existence of the Bible, archeological discoveries, which coincide with the Bible, precisely fulfilled amazing prophecies (Dan. 8:20-21; Micah 5:2), Jesus Christ (His person and work) and transformed lives of those who have a relationship with God. All of these things demand a historical explanation. The syllogism is as follows:

- 1) Certain things exist in history which point to God—Bible, Jesus Christ, archeology, prophecy.
- 2) Historical realities must have a real, adequate cause.
- 3) The real adequate cause of things that point to God must be God.
- 4) God alone is the source and cause of historical realities that point to Him.

These rational proofs are logical and conclusive. They prove God exists. He is the One who caused all of these things. He alone is the uncaused cause of everything (Ps. 90:2; 93:2; Jer. 10:10-16).