

Lesson 2

Part Two – Theology Proper - Beginning at the Beginning

- I. Introduction to the One True God
 - a. Arguments for the existence of God
 - i. The ***Scriptural*** Argument

Throughout Scripture we are presented with the argument that God has always existed. What are we told in the first verse of the Bible? “*In the beginning, God...*” The Bible begins with the grand presupposition that the existence of God should simply be taken for granted. You’ll notice as well that, rather than arguing for God having a beginning, how does He refer to Himself? **Exodus 3**. Moses encounters the burning bush from which God calls him and tells him that He is aware of the cries of His people in Egypt and He commissions Moses to go to Pharaoh as His mouthpiece and to ultimately lead the children of Israel out of Egypt. When Moses asks, “Who shall I say sent me?” how does God respond? He says, “I AM WHO I AM...Say this to the people of Israel, ‘I AM has sent me to you.’” What does this mean? By this, God declares Himself to be the self-existent God. As Gill puts it:

This signifies the real being of God, his self-existence, and that he is the Being of beings; as also it denotes his eternity and immutability, and his constancy and faithfulness in fulfilling his promises, for it includes all time, past, present, and to come; and the sense is, not only I am what I am at present, but I am what I have been, and I am what I shall be, and shall be what I am.

The Scriptural argument for the existence of God then is simply this: God has always existed and will always exist as the sovereign creator and Lord of all.

- ii. The ***Cosmological*** Argument

The cosmological argument is based on a three step process. Evidence is presented, examined, and a conclusion is drawn from the evidence. The term “*cosmological*” comes from the Greek word “*cosmos*,” meaning “*world*.” This argument is based on the fact that a cosmos, or world, exists and, because something cannot come from nothing, there must be an original cause that serves as the reason for its existence.

If you look at the wristwatch on your arm, the fact that it exists suggests that someone, somewhere and at some time made the watch. The cosmological argument says that every effect must have a cause.

When we look at the universe in which we live and everything around us, we MUST assume that it was created, right? What is the alternative? The alternative is we must say a) that everything has simply always existed or b) it spontaneously came to be without any cause whatsoever. This is the argument that most confounds even the most astute scientists. One of the bedrock principles in scientific observation is that there cannot be an effect or result without “*causal agency*.” The next time someone challenges you with the “*primal soup*” or “*big bang*” theory (or both), just ask them where it all came from to begin with!

Scripturally speaking, we know precisely where it all came from. Theologians often use the Latin phrase “*ex nihilo*” to refer to God’s having created everything from nothing. God didn’t make the universe from preexisting “*stuff*.” He started with nothing. Now, people have asked me to prove this from Scripture but Scripture really doesn’t say this explicitly, it’s only implied. Having said that, however, it’s an iron-clad, fool proof implication nonetheless. I refer you back to the Scriptural argument we just discussed. If God, who alone is infinite and eternal, did in fact use “*stuff*” to create everything, where did the stuff come from? He would have had to create it to begin with!

iii. The ***Teleological*** Argument

The word “*teleological*” comes from the Greek “*telos*” meaning “*end*.” We can define the teleological argument as follows: Order and useful arrangement in a system imply intelligence and purpose in the organizing cause. The universe in which we live is characterized by order and useful arrangement; therefore the universe has an intelligent and free cause. The world everywhere evidences intelligence, purpose, harmony; there must be a master architect behind all of this evidence. To assume otherwise is to look at all of the order in the universe and maintain that it all happened by accident or coincidence. Similar to the cosmological argument we just discussed, this is akin to someone looking at a computer, observing its functionality, and ascribing its existence to mere chance! Think about this... Our sun is 93,000,000 miles from earth. It is this precise distance which allows for an adequate climate on earth to support life. The moon, on the other hand, is 240,000 miles away and, because of that precise distance, it is able to keep the ocean’s tides at the proper level. The earth tilts slightly on its axis and allows the seasons to take place precisely when they should in order to support the earth’s plant life and, in turn, our own.

To say that this all happened by chance is akin to saying that you could go to Home Depot and buy a truckload of lumber, nails, windows, roofing material, concrete, whatever goes into the building of a home, put it all in a big pile in your yard, and use dynamite to blow it all up. What are the odds that after the explosion you'd see a perfectly constructed home? Those are FAR BETTER odds than the universe coming into being by coincidence. Again, it takes far LESS faith to believe that a sovereign God created everything than it does to adopt the scientific view of not only how everything came into being but how intricately designed and useful it all is.

Here's a key to distinguishing between the cosmological argument from the teleological: the former speaks of the mere existence of things while the latter speaks of its orderly and useful arrangement.

From a Scriptural perspective, we see support for the teleological argument. **Psalm 8:3-4** is a great example. The Psalmist writes:

"When I consider your heavens, the work of your fingers, the moon and the stars, which you have set in place, what is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him?"

Psalm 19:1-4 is another good example:

"The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge. There is no speech or language where their voice is not heard. Their voice goes out into all the earth, their words to the ends of the world."

So, the teleological argument says that not only did God create everything, the fact that it has order and usefulness, adds further proof that He, as an orderly God, did so.

Discussion: What do we see in our world that supports the teleological argument for the existence of God?

iv. The **Anthropological** Argument –

The word "*anthropological*" comes from the Greek word "*anthropos*" which means "*man*." Contrary to the secular humanist who sees man merely as a biological being, the biblicalist (using **Genesis 1:26-28** as a proof text) sees man as created in the image of God. In other words, proof for God's existence lies in the fact that we share His communicable attributes. We are moral beings with a conscience, intellect, emotions, and a will.

As Lewis Sperry Chafer said, *“There are philosophical and moral features in man’s constitution which may be traced back and find their origin in God... A blind force... could never produce a man with intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and an inherent belief in a Creator.”*

v. The **Moral** Argument –

Closely related to the anthropological argument is the moral argument. Some people actually combine the two but others separate it because it actually narrows the focus to the fact that man has an innate or in-born sense of right and wrong, a sense of morality that is not shared with any of the other creatures. Where does this morality come from? Where does the sense of justice come from? If man is only a biological or physical being, why does he have a sense of moral obligation? Evolutionists have long wrestled with these questions because the evolutionary model is simply not able to answer them. As Christians, however, we understand these things as having come from God. Look at **Romans 2:14-15** and we’ll see that even Gentiles who have had no revelation of and no exposure to the law have an inner, moral witness placed there by God. Paul writes:

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 on that day when, according to my gospel, God judges the secrets of men by Christ Jesus.

Once again, the questions unanswerable by the brightest scientific minds on planet earth are quickly and easily answered in Scripture. You may be wondering why it’s important to know about these arguments for the existence of God. This is why. We need to be able to give an answer to those who ask!

vi. The **Ontological** Argument –

The word *ontological* comes from the Greek present participle “*ontos*” which means “*being*” or “*existence*.” The ontological argument is actually known as an abstract philosophical argument. It begins with an assumption and then attempts to prove that assumption. This argument reasons thusly: “If man could conceive of a Perfect God who does not exist, then he could conceive of someone greater than God himself which is impossible. Therefore, God exists.” This argument rests on the fact that all men have an awareness of God. Because the concept of God is universal, God must have placed the idea within man. Few theologians actually affirm the usefulness of this argument but I felt we needed to cover it because it is made by some.

b. Why only one God?

As we'll see throughout our study of this section, God's attributes of self-existence and impeccability alone make it impossible for there to be any other. Besides, God Himself declares that He is the only One. Look at:

- Exodus 8:10
- Exodus 15:11
- Deuteronomy 4:35
- Deuteronomy 4:39
- 2 Samuel 7:22
- Psalm 86:8-10
- Jeremiah 10:6-7
- Isaiah 40:18
- Isaiah 40:25
- Isaiah 43:10-11
- Isaiah 44:6-8
- Isaiah 45:5-7
- Isaiah 45:18-19
- Isaiah 45:21-22
- Isaiah 46:5
- Isaiah 46:9-10

For Further Study:

1. Define the following anti-Theistic theories:

a. **Atheism**

Atheists believe that there is no God. Notice I said "Atheists believe that there is no God" and not "Atheists do not believe that there is a God." What's the difference? The difference is that Atheists DO believe in something. It's just that they worship the god of humanism versus the sovereign God of the universe. There are actually three types of atheist:

- i. The **practical** atheist – lives as if there is no God
- ii. The **dogmatic** atheist – openly repudiates God

- iii. The **virtual** atheist – denies a personal God, thereby denying The One True God.

b. **Agnosticism**

The agnostic is one who lacks knowledge of God and maintains that we cannot know that God exists. Agnostics are proponents of pragmatism; their belief in something has to be scientifically verifiable and, because (as they maintain) God is not scientifically verifiable, they leave Him out of all discussion.

c. **Evolution**

Evolution is an antisupernatural approach to life and its origin. It begins with the premise that there is no God and then seeks to explain life apart from any involvement by God.

d. **Polytheism**

The belief in many gods. Many ancient societies were polytheistic.

e. **Pantheism**

Pantheism is the belief that everything is God and God is everything. In other words, all matter and energy is God and God is all matter and energy. Many involved in the conservationist or preservationist movement are avowed pantheists. We can't cut down trees because to do so would be to literally do harm to God Himself who IS the tree.

f. **Deism**

Deists, like their virtual atheist counterparts, believe that there is no personal God with whom we can relate. They maintain that an impersonal God created the world and everything in it and then left man alone in his created world. In other words, He "*wound up the clock and has left it to wind down.*"