

I. Many good arguments can be made for God's existence based on natural theology

A. The Kalam Cosmological argument: God is required as a cause of the universe coming into being

1. **The argument:** Everything that begins to exist has a cause of its existence. The universe began to exist. Therefore, the universe has a cause of its existence

2. Possible objections and responses

- Objection: the universe is eternal. Response: not according to philosophy or modern cosmology
- Objection: the universe is self-caused. Response: This statement requires being to come from non-being
- Objection: timeless causes are meaningless. Response: Causes can be simultaneous with their effects.

B. The Cosmological argument: God is required to cause the universe

1. **The argument:** Everything that exists has an explanation of its existence, either in its own nature or in an external cause. The universe exists. Therefore, the universe has an explanation of its existence

2. Possible objections and responses

- Objection: the universe is necessary. Response: what about the universe is necessary? Everything?
- Objection: the explanation of the universe is not necessarily God. Response: Atheist often argue that if atheism is true, then the universe does not have an explanation. But then if the universe has an explanation, it follows that atheism is false.

C. The teleological argument: the apparent design of the universe requires a Designer

1. **The argument:** There is apparent design at nearly all levels of the universe, from the fundamental constants of physics, to our planet, to the complexity of biological organisms. Actual design implies the existence of a Designer. The apparent design is actual design. Therefore, the universe has a Designer.

2. Possible objections and responses

- Objection: evolution shows that the apparent design of organisms is not actual design. Response:
 - Speciation (among other issues) is still an unsolved problem in evolution.
 - Evolution does nothing to address the problem of biogenesis (the origin of the first life form)
 - Evolution does nothing to address the apparent design of the fundamental constants or our planet
- Objection: A multiverse explains why the apparent design is not actual design. Response:
 - All multiverse theories are currently speculative and empirically unsubstantiated
 - An infinite number of undetectable parallel universes is at least as (if not far more) implausible than the existence of a Designer

E. The argument from morality: the existence of objective moral values and obligations requires God's existence

1. **The argument:** If God does not exist, then objective moral values and obligations do not exist. Objective moral values and obligations do exist. Therefore, God exists

2. An objective moral value is a statement that is true independent of human beings. An objective moral obligation is one that is binding irrespective of our personal goal or preferences.

3. Objections and responses

- Objection: Moral values are grounded in an immaterial realm of Forms. Response: Forms cannot ground moral obligations
- Objection: Moral values are Brute Facts that require no grounding. Response: are there any other facts that require no grounding in reality? Additionally, moral obligations are not propositional statements, so it is unclear whether they can even be called "facts."
- Objection: Moral values and obligations can be grounded in the natural world. Response: Good luck. Many attempts have been made, none clearly successful, many obviously not.
- Objection: Moral values and obligations do not exist. Responses:
 - The vast majority of people who say that they believe this, don't actually believe this.

2) No one lives as if this were the case. For instance, ask someone to consider whether they would take an “amorality pill” that would remove all of their negative moral emotions like guilt, conscience, and empathy while leaving their capacity for happiness intact. If they would not take the pill, why not?

F. The argument from the moral goodness of truth: any objective value or obligation to pursue the truth requires God’s existence

1. The question: is pursuing the truth good or obligatory?
2. The responses:
 - a. No. But then why do you care if religion is true or false? Shouldn’t you believe it if it makes you happy?
 - b. No, but other things like human flourishing or social stability are good and false beliefs inhibits these. But that is demonstrably false. There is no reason to that social stability would be maximized by the truth as opposed to a noble lie. Moreover, individual happiness can be demonstrably improved by false beliefs.
 - c. Yes. But what grounds our obligation to believe the truth? See Point E.

G. These are good arguments, but can be made more effective through several tactics

1. Distinguish between evidence and proof
2. Apply the Victorian scientist test: what would a 19th century scientist think about modern observations
3. These arguments should not be approached as intellectual exercises. Argue with the gospel in view

II. Only Scripture gives us detailed and fully reliable information about what God is like

A. In the absence of special self-revelation from God, we have no reliable means of information about him

1. General revelation in nature is true, but is unreliable and not detailed
2. Spiritual intuition is unreliable and is often contradictory
 - a. Many people throughout history have behaved in ways we now consider morally reprehensible. How do we know that our current moral intuitions are reliable apart from some transcendent standard
 - b. Mystical experiences are interpreted in a variety of mutually contradictory ways
 - c. Our own spiritual and moral intuition has often changed over the course of our lives

B. Special revelation from God would be inherently reliable, given its source

1. If God is the standard of all truth, then his self-revelation would be necessarily true
2. If God is the standard of moral goodness, then his revealed moral character would be necessarily good
3. If God is omnipotent, then he could make his self-revelation comprehensible to us

C. Our belief in the role and perspicuity of Scripture is important to understand

1. Affirming that the Bible is true does not mean that there are no other sources of truth
2. Affirming that the Bible is clear in its main points does not mean that it is clear at all points
3. Affirming that the Bible is inerrant does not mean that our interpretation of the Bible is inerrant
4. Our view of the Bible ought to be hierarchical
 - a. Inspiration – The Bible is inspired by God
 - b. Authority – The Bible is authoritative
 - c. Infallibility – The Bible is true in all it affirms on matters of faith and practice
 - d. Inerrancy – The Bible is true in all it affirms

D. Our belief in the inspiration, authority, infallibility and inerrancy of Scripture derives from Jesus

1. I believe Jesus is God and I am his disciple
2. Jesus believed the Bible is inerrant
3. Therefore, the Bible is inerrant

Discussion questions:

1. How does one respond to the claim that “One day science will answer these questions”?
2. Is there a naturalistic grounding for moral values and obligations?
3. Isn’t the Bible obviously a man-made document?