

The existence of god



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The Existence of God The existence of God has been questioned, pondered, sought out and studied for hundreds, no, thousands of years since the beginning of time. “ Does God exist?” “ What do certain philosophers have to say about the existence of God?” “ What do Christianity and Atheism have to say?” “ What about those who say they have experienced God?” “ If He does exist, what is He like?”

“ Why does He allow bad things to happen?” “ Why does He not make Himself visible to us?” “ What about those who say they have experienced God?” “ Can the existence of God be proven?” These are only a small handful of questions that have been asked by many different people. To undoubtedly prove, or, even disprove, the existence of God would ultimately change almost every religion in some small way or another. But, is it possible?

Thomas Aquinas, a well-known Italian Dominican priest, philosopher and theologian, believed that God exists. “[He] wanted us to reason our way to God”, to proving or believing His existence (Class Notes). In fact, he had five arguments for the existence of God.

The first is known as the “ Argument from Motion”: “ Our senses prove that some things are in motion. Things move when potential motion becomes actual motion. Only an actual motion can convert a potential motion into an actual motion. Nothing can be at once in both actuality and potentially in the same respect.

Therefore, nothing can move itself. Therefore, each thing in motion is moved by something else. The sequence of motion cannot extend ad infinitum. Therefore, it is necessary to arrive at a first mover, put in motion by no

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other; and this everyone understands to be God.” (Gracyk) The problem with this argument is that it commits the fallacy of begging the question. In other words, the conclusion appears in the premises (Class Notes).

The second is known as the “Cosmological Argument”: “There are things that are caused. Nothing can be the cause of itself. An infinite regress of causes is impossible. Therefore, there must be an uncaused first cause. The word ‘God’ means uncaused first cause. Therefore, God exists” (Class Notes). There are two problems with this argument: 1) the word “God” means more than uncaused first cause.

It also means infinitely many other things such as perfectly loving, omniscient, omnipresent, omnipotent, etc. Aquinas fails to address these descriptions in his argument. 2) How do we know an infinite regress of causes is impossible? (Class Notes)

A supporter of Aquinas, known as William Craig, argues for Aquinas’ third premise in the “Cosmological Argument”. It is known as “Hilbert’s Hotel” and goes like this, “Assume an actual infinite is possible. It would be possible to build a hotel with infinitely many rooms. It would also be possible for all the rooms to be full.

Suppose twenty people check out of the hotel. Now there are twenty fewer people in the hotel. However, infinity minus twenty is still infinity, so there is the same number of people in the hotel. Premises five and six contradict each other. Therefore, an actual infinite is impossible.” (Class Notes)

The third is called “Argument from Possibility and Necessity”, a reductio argument: “We find in nature things that are possible to be and not to be,

that come into being and go out of being i. e., contingent beings. Assume that every being is a contingent being. For each contingent being, there is a time it does not exist.

Therefore, it is impossible for these always to exist. Therefore, there could have been a time when no things existed. Therefore, at that time there would have been nothing to bring the currently existing contingent beings into existence. Therefore, nothing would be in existence now. We have reached an absurd result from assuming that every being is a contingent being. Therefore, not every being is a contingent being.

Therefore, some being exists of its own necessity, and does not receive its existence from another being, but rather causes them. This all men speak of as God." (Gracyk) The fourth argument is known as the "Argument from Gradation of Being": "There is a gradation to be found in things: some are better or worse than others. Predications of degree require reference to the 'uttermost' case (e. g., a thing is said to be hotter according as it more nearly resembles that which is hottest).

The maximum in any genus is the cause of all in that genus. Therefore, there must also be something which is to all beings the cause of their being, goodness, and every other perfection; and this we call God." (Gracyk) The issue with this argument is more so a negative contribution than it is an objection.

A blogger named, Homar Murillo, on blogspot. com explains it best, "In this argument, Saint Aquinas attributed all positive absolutes to God as the standard for all things. But it can also be logically possible that God is the absolute perfection of evil. For instance, if there are degrees of cruelty, then <https://assignbuster.com/the-existence-of-god-essay-samples/>

God must be the cruelest being. If there are degrees of insanity, then God must be the perfectly insane being.

Hence, the so-called standard of 'perfection' can be applied to both good traits and bad traits simply because these traits have gradations or degrees of perfection." (Murillo) The fifth and final argument from Aquinas is called the "Argument from Design": "We see that natural bodies work toward some goal, and do not do so by chance. Most natural things lack knowledge. But, as an arrow reaches its target because it is directed by an archer, what lacks intelligence achieves goals by being directed by something intelligent.

Therefore, some intelligent being exists by whom all natural things are directed to their end; and this being we call God." (Gracyk) The problem with this argument is that it commits the fallacy of false analogy. It is based on unconvincing comparisons.

A philosopher named, William Paley, came up with a teleological argument known as the watchmaker analogy, which resembles Aquinas' "Argument from Design": "Human artifacts are the product of intelligent design. The universe resembles human artifacts. The universe is vastly more complex than human artifacts.

Therefore, the universe is probably the product of a vastly more intelligent designer" (Class Notes). A philosopher named, David Hume, had four objections to Paley's teleological argument: "You cannot argue from parts to a whole. The universe and human artifacts are too different to compare. It is anthropomorphic, that is, placing human characteristics onto something else. The universe is too flawed for a perfect creator to have made it" (Class Notes).

Saint Anselm of Canterbury also attempted to prove the existence of God through his "Ontological Argument": "Assume that the Greatest Conceivable Being (GCB) exists in the mind alone and not in reality. Existence in reality is greater than existence in the mind alone. It is possible that the GCB could exist in reality. In such a case the GCB would be greater than the GCB.

This is a contradiction. Therefore, the GCB exists in reality, not just in the mind alone." (Class Notes) Immanuel Kant, a German philosopher, had an objection to this argument in that Anselm tried to prove the existence of God with the properties of God. Where Anselm slipped is in premise three when he uses the existence of God as a property of God to prove God exists. Thereby, committing the fallacy of begging the question (Class Notes).

"What about Christians and Atheists? What do they have to say?" Aside from the obvious that Christians believe in the existence of God, and atheists staunchly dedicate their lives to proving that God does not exist, why do they believe what they do?

What proof or reasoning do they have to say, "He does exist" or "He does not exist"? Atheists go out of their way to either prove God does not exist or to get others to believe that He does not exist. A website that I found, called, godisimaginary.com (GII), has fifty so-called "proofs" that God does not exist. Although, some come across as understandable, they are irrational and cannot be one hundred percent proven correct and legitimate.

Because there are so many, I will only give two of their "proofs" that God is imaginary and does not exist. Their first "proof" is called, "Try Praying". In this "proof", they try to disprove God by quoting Scripture. For example, in <https://assignbuster.com/the-existence-of-god-essay-samples/>

Matthew 7: 7 Jesus states, " Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you" (NIV; BibleGateway).

By using this verse they say that if you were to pray for God to completely cure cancer from the world, it would not be done. Therefore, Jesus was lying. God is supposed to be perfectly good. Therefore, God cannot lie. Jesus is supposed to be God.

Therefore, either God is not perfectly good or He does not exist. The problem with this " proof" is that they try to deny the existence of God completely by coming up with one supposed flaw of Jesus and God. A Christian's response to this would be that, first of all, it is very dangerous to base a whole topic off one verse from the Bible. You need other verses from the Bible to balance out the topic.

A key thing is that Scripture never contradicts Scripture. If anything, it compliments or backs up other Scripture. A reason why people do not receive what they ask for is because it is not in God's timing. That does not mean He does not want cancer completely gone, but He has given us the resources and the knowledge to research and find the cure for cancer. He is not magical genie, granting every wish. We have to do our part.

A good Scripture to back this up is Ecclesiastes 8: 6, " For there is a time and a way for everything, although man's trouble lies heavy on him" (ESV; BibleGateway). The Christian viewpoint of this is that God allows people to go through certain difficulties in life not just to test their faith, but more so to strengthen them and, sometimes, to even humble them. God does not cause bad things to happen to others.

He allows them to happen. A prime example is Job from the Bible. God boasted to Satan that Job was “ blameless and upright, a man who [feared] God and [shunned] evil” (NIV; BibleGateway). Satan said that Job was only that way because God richly blessed him. Satan wanted to test Job to cause him to curse God. God said OK, just do not kill him. Satan did his worst. In merely one day, Job lost all his property, his livestock, and his children.

Later on, Satan inflicted skin sores on Job. Eventually, his wife tried to turn him against God, and his friends turned against him. In the end, Job never cursed God (Holy Bible; BibleGateway). God Himself did not inflict these tragedies on Job.

He only allowed Satan to attack Job. Well, if that is the case, and He is also all loving and perfectly good, then He would be capable of ridding of evil and would want to rid of evil. Epicurus, an ancient Greek philosopher, came up with an argument that challenged this known as, “ Argument from Evil”: “ If God exists, then God is perfectly good and all powerful.

A person is morally obligated to stop evil if it is within their power to do so. Since God is supposed to be perfectly good, He would want to stop evil. Since God is supposed to be all-powerful, God could stop evil. Evil exists. Therefore, either God is not all-powerful, or God is not perfectly good. Therefore, God does not exist.” (Class Notes) Augustine, a Father of the Church, responded to Epicurus with his “ Free Will Defense”: “ It is possible that God created people to love and be loved. One cannot truly love without freely choosing to love.

One cannot freely choose to love without free will. Therefore, God had to create people with free will. Once people have free will, it is possible that

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they will choose to do evil. People have chosen to do evil. Therefore, it is possible for a perfectly good and all-powerful God to exist in a world with evil." (Class Notes)

Another "proof" they have is called, "Examine Jesus' Resurrection". In this "proof" they talk about the hundreds of people that saw Jesus after He died and before He ascended to Heaven (ESV; BibleGateway). Using this Scripture,

1 Corinthians 15: 3-6, they try to reason that Jesus appeared to these people because they needed visual proof that He had risen from the dead. Because this is so, then Jesus is obligated to appear to us because we need visual confirmation. Because Jesus owes it to us to appear physically before us, then when we follow Matthew 7: 7 and pray for Him to appear before us, He should visibly transfigure into our presence. People have prayed for Jesus to do this. This has not happened (As far as actual proof goes).

Therefore, God/Jesus does not exist. The Christian response to this "proof" would be the Scripture from James 4: 3 which states, "When you ask, you do not receive, because you ask with wrong motives, that you may spend what you get on your pleasures" (NIV) Clearly, if atheists are praying to Jesus for Him to appear physically before them, it is out of arrogance, selfishness, and ignorance. For one thing, Jesus owes you nothing.

You have no proof or valid reason to claim that He does. If Jesus was and is God, if everything He said and did was completely true, if He truly died for your sins and rose from the dead, ascending to Heaven, and if the Bible is one hundred percent truth, then you actually owe Him everything.

Does God truly exist? Scientifically, there is no way to prove one hundred percent that He exists. The proof that Christians have is Creation (the nature and universe that God has created), Conscience (the knowledge of good and evil, and then the Holy Spirit once we accept Him into our hearts), and Conduct (the Bible; God's Love Letter to us). Christians also have their experiences of God, but, according to the famous atheist, Richard Dawkins, they are hallucinating (YouTube).

But, there is no way to prove that either. The bottom line is, regardless of what stance you take, there is absolutely no way to prove it one hundred percent. It is just not possible. I could list multiple handfuls more of different arguments trying to prove either the existence or nonexistence of God. They may be logical, but, again, they do not prove or disprove His existence. No matter which way you turn, it is a leap of faith, as Soren Kierkegaard would put it.

The only way we will fully and completely know the truth is after death. The best way to put it is Pascal's Wager, "Suppose you are right. Suppose there is no God. Then, when I die as a believer, I have lost nothing. I just die, as a man that devoted his life to love and morals. But if you, as a non-believer, are wrong and I am right, you have to spend an eternity in hell. See, I have nothing to lose, but you have everything to lose" (GII).

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