

### Session 3: Does God really exist?

Romans 1:20 – For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature— have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that people are without excuse.

Psalms 19:1 – The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.

Sometimes the first question asked by a skeptic deals with the existence of God Himself. To this question, thinkers have offered a wide array of arguments for the existence of God. These arguments shouldn’t be understood as “proof.” They also shouldn’t be understood as being sufficient in pointing to the Christian God. But they are very effective when properly explained and understood in making the belief in God reasonable. These arguments typically begin from general revelation. In other words, they begin with facts generally available to all people.

Some of the most commonly made arguments for the existence of God:

1. The Ontological Argument: This argument for God’s existence was first articulated by Anselm of Canterbury in the 1100s. Ontology is the study of being.

- a. Mankind has an idea of a maximally great being.
- b. Existence is a necessary part of being maximally great.
- c. A maximally great being exists, since the very concept of being maximally great requires existence.

2. The Cosmological Argument: The cosmological argument is an argument of God which takes the existence of the universe as its starting point. It assumes that something (the universe) exists and argues from its existence to the existence of a First Cause or a Sufficient Reason of the cosmos.

- a. Whatever begins to exist has a cause.
- b. The universe began to exist.
- c. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

3. The Teleological (Design) Argument: The teleological argument for the existence of God takes as its starting point the purposive (teleological) character of the universe. The argument is often termed “the argument from design.”

- a. Specified complexity confers design.

- b. Design implies an intelligent designer.
- c. The universe exhibits specified complexity.
- d. Therefore, the universe exhibits design.
- e. Therefore, the universe has been designed by an intelligent designer.
- f. We call the intelligent designer of the universe God.

4. The Moral Argument: The moral argument takes as its starting point the existence of moral values and duties and argues for the existence of God as the only possible source for this shared morality.

- a. If God does not exist, objective moral values and duties do not exist.
- b. Objective moral values and duties exist.
- c. Therefore, God exists.

5. The Spiritual Longing Argument:

a. Every natural, innate desire in us corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire.

i. C.S. Lewis: "A man's physical hunger does not prove that man will get any bread; he may die of starvation on a raft in the Atlantic. But surely a man's hunger does prove that he comes of a race which repairs its body by eating and inhabits a world where eatable substances exist. In the same way, though I do not believe (I wish I did) that my desire for Paradise proves that I shall enjoy it, I think it a pretty good indication that such a thing exists and that some men will. A man may love a woman and not win her; but it would be very odd if the phenomenon called "falling in love" occurred in a sexless world."

b. But there exists in us a desire which nothing in time, nothing on earth, no creature can satisfy.

i. Augustine: You have made us for you, and our heart is restless until it finds its rest in you.

ii. Pascal: There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus.

iii. N.T. Wright illustrates this well: There are “echoes of Eden” that live on in each one of us. We deeply long for things which are ultimately unattainable in this world. He lists four such things: justice, spirituality, community, and beauty. These exist as pointers to a reality that we were ultimately made for. Naturalism cannot account for these super physical longings in the human heart.

c. Therefore, there must exist something more than time, earth, and creatures, which can satisfy that desire.

i. Pascal again: What else does this longing and helplessness proclaim, but that there was once in each person a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? We try to fill this in vain with everything around us, seeking in things that are not there the help we cannot find in those that are there. Yet nobody can change things, because this infinite abyss can only be filled with something that is infinite and unchanging—in other words, by God himself. God alone is our true good.

ii. Ecc. 3:11 – He has also set eternity in the human heart; yet no one can fathom what God has done from beginning to end.

6. You may want to watch the following short videos for a more complete treatment of these arguments:

- a. Ontological argument: [youtube.com/watch?v=RQPRqHZRP68](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RQPRqHZRP68)
- b. Cosmological argument: [youtube.com/watch?v=6CulBuMCLg0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6CulBuMCLg0)
- c. Teleological argument: [youtube.com/watch?v=UplilaC4kRA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UplilaC4kRA)
- d. Moral argument: [youtube.com/watch?v=OxiAikEk2vU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxiAikEk2vU)
- e. You may also find a summary of some of these arguments here: [peterkreeft.com/featuredwriting](http://peterkreeft.com/featuredwriting)

7. Questions:

- a. Which of these arguments do you find the most satisfying? Why?
- b. How would you express any of these arguments in a way that the average skeptic would understand?
- c. What further questions do you have about any of these arguments?