

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD

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There is a great deal of debate around the existence of God. Atheists do not believe that a God of any type exists. As a result, they posit that the universe is the sum of matter, chance, and time. Polytheists believe that any number of gods exists, all of whom play some role in creating and sustaining the world as we know it. Pantheists believe that all things in the universe are one with God. Monotheists believe that there is only one God, but even those religions that fall into this group disagree on the name and nature of God. All of these differences may make the work of identifying and characterizing God seem like a daunting task, but no matter how difficult of an endeavor it is, each individual must do the work of discovering and deciding what they believe about God. A person's life will be governed most by what he or she believes about God. "God is like the sun, you cannot look at it, but without it you cannot look at anything else¹." People in objection to the former statement may say that they see clearly, but a clear delusion serves no one. It is not unfair to call those people deluded if they maintain a false belief concerning the person of God despite the existence of evidence to the contrary. God does exist; furthermore, God exists independent of creation as the source of morality and His existence is necessary for a coherent worldview.

The existence of the invisible God is continually proven by things in the visible world. Many great thinkers of the past and present have done extensive work boiling down the arguments for God's existence into simple terms. An example of one of those past great thinkers is Thomas Aquinas. Aquinas posited at least five distinct arguments for the existence of God. One of those arguments is *The Argument from Motion*. A simple rendering of the argument is that there are objects in motion. Our senses give us this information. Only something moving can

1 Zacharias, Ravi. *The Answer of God*. July 08, 2016. <https://www.rzim.org/listen/just-a-thought/the-answer-of-god> (accessed December 19, 2018).

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move something that is not moving. The chain of movers cannot be eternally old; that is, there cannot be an endless chain of movers that is both temporal and eternal. Therefore, there must be a first mover who is not dependent upon another body for its movement. This first mover would be God². All people know this concept to be true. If a person, inside of a structure, saw a tree outside suddenly start to bend and then sway, that person would not logically conclude that the tree felt the need to stretch. Instead, a person using logic would assume that a wind strong enough to move the tree just blew by. Again, if a ball came rolling into the view of a person sitting in an office, that person could not logically conclude that the ball was tired of the view where it was originally. A person using logic would conclude that someone or something moved the ball, and that movement resulted in it rolling into their line of sight. One can extrapolate this argument on a cosmic level. Planets move because of the gravitational pull of their star. Stars move mostly because of the gravitational pull of their galaxies. Galaxies move because of the expansion of the universe. Why does the universe expand? Some would say the big bang started the expansion of the universe. What caused the explosion of the big bang? The answer to that question would be the first mover or God.

Opponents of this argument might suggest that there is a contradiction in one of its premises. They claim that God must also be subject to the rules that govern what Aquinas calls potential and actual motion³. The opponents, however, falter in that their assumption is rooted in

2 Gracyk, Theodore. *St. Thomas Aquinas: The Existence of God can be Proved in Five Ways*. 2016. http://web.mnstate.edu/gracyk/courses/web%20publishing/aquinasfiveways_argumentanalysis.htm (accessed December 19, 2018).

3 Archie, Lee C. "Philosophy of Religion." *Philosophy Lander* . June 26, 2006. <https://philosophy.lander.edu/intro/motion.shtml> (accessed December 19, 2018).

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error. They assume that when Aquinas says first mover or God, he is referring to a being that is not superior in all ways. They liken Aquinas' God to something like humanity with limitations similar to those of a mere mortal. This god is not the God that Aquinas was suggesting. His first mover would not be dependent upon another body for its movement. To articulate that another way, the first mover would be atemporal meaning it would not be subject to spacetime. This is not some far fetched sci-fi concoction. The theory of the beginning of space and time is largely agreed upon by scientist. According to the Kalam or Cosmological argument for God's existence, anything that has a beginning also has a cause. It then follows that the effect cannot be necessary. If the effect were necessary then it would precede the cause; however, the cause can be necessary, and in the case of creation the cause is necessary. Plainly stated, God's existence, and thereby His actions, are not dependent upon spacetime. Any objections to Aquinas' argument must hold this God in mind. Therefore, there can be no question about the existence of God. A first mover who supersedes time and space is necessary for a universe with a beginning.

God exists, but it is not enough to simply say that God exists. God exists necessarily, and independent from creation. This statement would be rejected by any person who holds a pantheistic worldview. Pantheist, for the most part, believe that God is indistinct from the universe⁴. They believe in the eternality of God and they ascribe that attribute to the universe. Pantheists will run into a few problems if they try to construct a coherent defense of their faith. One major issue for Pantheism is that science has proven that the universe had a beginning. By studying universal expansion and microwaves scientists were able to determine that the universe most likely began as a singularity. These scientists realized that the implication of positing a beginning to the universe would be that something, or someone, had to cause it to begin. With

4 Mithani, Audrey, and Alexander Vilenkin. *Did the Universe Have a Beginning*. Medford: Cornell University, 2012.

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unveiled bias, they began to work on theories that would allow the universe to have an eternal past; however, a study conducted at Cornell University used mathematics to prove that, while the universe could go on forever into the future, it is not possible for the universe to be eternally old. If the universe has a beginning, and God is eternal, having no beginning or end, then God cannot be indistinct from the universe. God must be distinct from the universe and necessary; which means, He is the all-sufficient uncaused cause. He has no need for anyone or anything to create Him and yet, He creates and sustains all. Even the laws of the universe are dependent upon the existence of this God.

Morality is one of those laws that is dependent upon the existence of a being who supersedes humanity. God's existence gives us the ability to formulate absolutes. Without God, humanity becomes the source of understanding and meaning. Truth then becomes subject to the opinions of individuals. If one were to follow that logic, no individual would be able to declare anything thing to be absolutely true; this includes morality or ethical behavior. In order for someone to declare anything to be absolute, there would need to be, in existence, a law that is unalterable. It is unlikely that such a law can exist without there being in existence one who created it. It then follows that a law giver or creator exists. This being is God.

One may argue that morality is evolved. If this is true then morality is reduced to a construct of human consensus. It would then be a mere matter of preference. This worldview begins to collapse on itself when scrutinized. Consider a society where the majority of the population consists of murderers, rapists, thieves, and all other sorts of criminals. Based on the belief of those who subscribe to subjective morality, the moral system of the aforementioned society would be based upon the opinion of the criminalistic majority.

Others may say that even if God determined what morality is it would still be subjective. This is true in theory, but the subjectivity of an absolute is absolute. A monarch has the ability and right to determine the laws in his kingdom. God would be a monarch to all monarchs,

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thereby, having the right to determine the laws of the universe. The Christian perspective on morality is that it emanates from God reflecting His character and good nature. This stance, by the way, is not dependent upon some supra-God objective standard. Divine conceptualism allows for abstracta that is both essential to God and created by God⁵. Simply put, divine conceptualism is the belief that abstract objects are actually the thoughts of God. Properties would fall into the category of abstract objects. In the framework of divine conceptualism, God could be as He is without exemplifying properties. A worldview that posits any form of morality other than absolute morality, dependent upon a moral law giver, is going to fall shy of being coherent.

God is a necessary part of a worldview that is coherent. All worldviews serve the purpose of giving people a framework by which to live. This framework must supply answers for what many philosophers call life's four major questions. These questions deal with origin, meaning, morality, and destiny; and they are "How did I get here", "Why am I here", "How should I live while I am here", and "Where do I go when I leave here". All worldviews should have answers for this set of questions, and most do. However, answers alone are not enough. These answers must be coherent; that is, they must not be contradictive in any way and they should in theory correspond with what we know to be true in life. The Judeo-Christian worldview can supply answers for these questions in such a manner. The primary reason for this is they posit a God who is self-sufficient, loving, and good. This is unique even amongst monotheistic religions.

Debates about the existence and nature of God may never cease. There are many questions that are extremely difficult to answer. There is also a lot of division of the topic, and even those that agree on many things find it difficult to agree on all things. This is not proof contrary to the existence of God. God does exist necessarily. God is distinct from all creation, He

5 Craig, William, L. *Reasonable Faith*. February 07, 2016. https://www.reasonablefaith.org/writings/question-answer/questions-about-god-and-abstract-objects#_ednref1 (accessed January 5, 2019).

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is self-sufficient, and He provides humanity with coherence for life. No one knows all that there is to know, but there is enough information and research for all to agree on the existence of God.

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