

THEOLOGY PROPER (6)

QUESTEQN #5- What are the five rational proofs for the existence of God?

This particular field of study is sometimes referred to as the Naturalistic Theistic Arguments for the existence of God or the Philosophical Arguments for the existence of God. All of these titles refer to the same thing.

Before we examine these proofs, it needs to be clearly stated that certainly the existence of God can be established by reason. As we have previously demonstrated, God has put within every mind a reasonable knowledge of Himself. However, God cannot be accurately known just through man's reason, but there must be Divine revelation. Man's reason is far inferior to God's revelation. If a choice ever must be made between man's reason and God's revelation, God's revelation must be accepted, for it far surpasses the thoughts and concepts of men.

When it comes to the subject of the existence of God, there have been five main philosophical arguments used throughout history which have caused many to logically and rationally conclude God must exist:

(Rational Proof #1)- The Ontological Proof

This proof basically says God must exist because most of humanity believes He does exist. Since man is able to conceive of the idea of a Perfect Deity, a Perfect Deity must truly exist. God must exist because of the very idea of a God who does exist. This proof operates something like this: Can we conceive of Infinite Perfection? Yes! Can we conceive of an Infinite Being who is Perfect? Yes! Can we conceive of a Perfect God? Yes! Since we are imperfect and finite, from whom does this idea originate? Where does this concept come from? God must exist or else finite, imperfect people could not conceive of that which is Infinite and Perfect. If we were to put this into a logic syllogism, the Ontological proof looks like this:

- A. Man has an idea of a perfect God.
- B. Ideas are rooted in realities.
- C. Therefore, God is a reality.

There certainly is: some Biblical support for this in Romans 1, for God has placed within every human being the knowledge and intuition of His existence. However, we must always be careful in making the syllogistic thought process and concepts of any finite, sinful human the foundation for what we believe. For example, it is possible for a human being to conceive of a green monster who looks like a blob of jello who rolls through the streets of a city killing people. Obviously, just because this is an actual idea does not mean it is true. **All ideas are not rooted in realities.** If on the other hand, we accept this proof in light of the other four, the Ontological argument does lend itself to giving solid evidence for the existence of God. Anselm, a brilliant theologian of the 11th century, said this argument proves an atheist is a fool. He reasoned that since an atheist denies God, it proves he has the idea of God in his mind. Since the atheist desires say there is no God; where did he get the idea of any God? His idea actually proves God does truly exist.

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(Rational Proof #2)- The Cosmological proof.

This proof basically says every effect must have an adequate cause and since the world is a monumental effect, it must have a monumental cause or creator, which can only logically be explained and established by the actual existence of God. This is a very scientific argument because all of science is based on cause and effect. For example, in physics Newton's first law of motion says- an object will remain in its state of rest or uniform motion until acted upon by force. In simple terms- the effect of movement must have a cause for the movement.

Everything which has a beginning must have a sufficient cause and therefore the world which has a beginning, must have God as its cause. Even Plato and Aristotle believed that the existence of the world proves the existence of an Eternal Being. A syllogism for this proof looks like this:

- A. Every effect must have an adequate cause. Whatever has begun must have a cause.
- B. The world is an effect.
- C. The world must have a cause or creator great enough to account for its existence.
- D. Therefore, the world proves God is a reality.

According to Romans 1, this argument is Biblically sound. Every person, by looking at creation, is able to recognize the existence of a Divine Power. This proof centers on answering the question, "How did the world get here?" "What caused it?" Although the answer to this question has been theorized in several ways, such as a massive explosion, this cosmological proof, combined with the other proofs does demand that one who rationally reasons will logically accept the truth of the existence of God.

(Rational Proof #3)- The Teleological Proof.

This proof is actually an extension of the cosmological proof. The basic argument is since the world is intricately designed, this demands an intricate designer who is capable of designing such intricacies. In other words, the world is filled with intricate life and intelligence which demands a Designer capable of creating intricate life and intelligence. Everything that has been intricately designed must have an intricate designer, therefore God's existence is proved.

Dr. Charles Hodge lists many examples of intricate design: 1) Single organ of the Body; 2) One organ of the body as it relates to another organ of the body; 3) Various distinct instincts in animals; 4) World designed for man to live in, just to name a few. The syllogism of the teleological argument looks like this:

- A. Intricate design always requires an intricate designer. (i.e. house requires designer and builder and cannot possibly be produced by an explosion.)
- B. The world everywhere demonstrates intricate design.
- C. A designer must exist who is capable of designing such an intricate world
- D. This designer only can be and must be God.

There is Biblical support for this: Ps. 139: 13-16; 94:9; Heb.3:4; Ps. 104. This teleological argument is very strong and does prove the existence of God.

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Everything that has ever been designed demands that a designer exist who has the intelligence and the power to create whatever has been designed. When a person honestly looks at this world and its life, that person is forced to come face-to-face with the reality of the existence of God. What cannot be denied by any person is that this world and its life are intricately designed and whoever designed all of this had a knowledge and a power far beyond that which was designed. The only logical explanation is the existence of God. He, and He alone, is the only being capable of designing such remarkable and intricately designed things

(Rational Proof #4)- The Anthropological Proof.

This proof is really an extension of the teleological proof. It basically says that man was created with an ability to think, feel and make moral choices, abilities which are not possessed by matter or material things. This immaterial ability which resides within man, proves the existence of a Creator who is capable of designing this unique ability within man. It has often been observed that even if one could account for some natural development of the material part of man (which cannot be done because of its intricate design), one cannot account for the immaterial part of man which gives him a unique ability to think, feel and choose. The only explanation for this is the existence of a powerful God, who is capable of imparting these qualities to, the human being.

Dr. Paul Enns writes concerning the anthropological proof: "Contrary to the secular humanist who sees man simply as a biological being, the Biblicist sees man as created in the image of God (Gen. 1:26-28). The image of God in man is spiritual, not physical (cf. Eph4:24; Col.3:10). Man is not simply a physical being, but also a moral being with a conscience, intellect, emotion, and will. Chafer states: "There are philosophical and moral features in man's constitution which may be traced back to find their origin in God. ...A blind force...could never produce a man with intellect, sensibility, will, conscience, and inherent belief in a Creator." (The Moody Handbook of Theology, p. 184)

The syllogism of the anthropological proof looks like this:

- A. Man has the ability to think, feel and make choices.
- B. These abilities do not reside in everything, such as matter.
- C. Someone who possesses the same qualities and abilities is responsible for giving them to man.
- D. This Someone must be God.

Again the truth of Romans 1 is evidenced. God has created man with the ability to reason and make moral choices (i.e. Rom.2:14). Even those who hold that the world was caused by some "cosmic explosion" have real difficulty with this argument because they realize that life demands a life source capable of imparting the qualities of life that a particular existence has. A being with an ability to think demands a creator with the ability to think. A being with the ability to love and hate, demands a creator with the same qualities. A being with the ability to make moral choices demands a creator who not only possesses the same ability, but also knowledge of what is morally right. All of this leads to the obvious conclusion that God does exist.

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Dr. Charles Ryrie wrote: "The several facets of man and all of them together demand some explanation as to their origin and argue for the existence of a being who is moral and intelligent and living who could have produced man. Material, inanimate, or unconscious forces could hardly have produced man. Evolution cannot produce soul, conscience, or religious instincts. Lifeless idols do not generate living offspring." (Charles Ryrie, Basic Theology, p.32)

(Rational Proof #5)- The Historical Proof.

This argument demands that there are many things in history that must lead to the logical conviction of God's existence. Such things as the existence of the Bible, archeological discoveries which coincide with the Bible, fulfilled prophecies and Jesus Christ(His Person and Work) and transformed lives of those who have been converted, all demand an historical explanation. The only logical explanation for these things is the existence of God, otherwise these would not exist in history. The syllogism of the historical proof looks like this:

- A. Certain things exist in history which point to the existence of God.
(i.e. Bible, Jesus Christ, archeological discovery, fulfilled prophecy)
- B. All historical existences must have an adequate cause.
- C. The adequate cause of things proven in history which relate to God must be God.
- D. God must exist for He alone can only be the cause of these historical realities.

If we combine this proof with all the others, the logical evidence is overwhelming. The **only** rational conclusion that is even logical philosophically is the one that admits, God does exist. God is the only Person capable of causing these things for He and He alone is the only uncaused cause, who has no beginning nor ending, who was the beginning and cause of everything (Ps.90:2; 93:2; Jer.10: 10-16).

QUESTION #6- What are the various "faith systems" connected to God?

It is very important to realize that any concept of God is a faith concept, meaning whatever a person believes about God comes down to a matter of faith. All systems are faith systems and all concepts of God are due to one's beliefs and one's faith. For example if a person says we believe in the existence of God- it is faith that believes this. If a person says we do not believe in the existence of God- it is faith that believes that. Anything and everything connected to God is a matter of faith. Now basically there are six faith systems that exist when it comes to believing things about God:

Faith System #1- Theism.

This is the faith system that believes in the existence of a personal God. Dr. Chafer writes: "The etymology of the word theism would give it a wide range of application, but in common usage it has come to mean belief in God, and incorporates a system of beliefs which constitutes a philosophy restricted, indeed: somewhat to those findings and conclusions which human reason suggests." (Vol 1, p. 137)