

The Creation Account and the Fall of Humanity

Reasons for the Existence of God

Introduction

- The Bible states the fact of creation: “In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth” (Gen 1:1)
- God speaks creatively eight times: “And God said, ‘Let there be light, and there was light’” (Gen 1:3; cf. 6, 9, 11, 14, 20, 24, 26)
- By using speech as a metaphor, the biblical writer indicates that creation is a divine and rational activity
- Assuming the existence of God, the Bible does not seek to defend that claim

Introduction

- Does God exist? Are there good reasons to believe that God exists?
- Today, we will present five reasons why theism or creationism is still more plausible than atheism
- **Disclaimer #1**: The reasons for faith in this presentation are limited to intellectual arguments. The personal, spiritual, and emotional aspects of why people object to Christianity are reserved for another time
- **Disclaimer #2**: The arguments do not seek to prove the existence of God. Rather, they show that faith in God is reasonable

God Makes Sense of the Origin of the Universe

- Where did the universe come from?
- Atheists (and some religious others) typically say that the universe is eternal with no beginning
- That means the number of past events in the history of the universe is infinite
- Most Christians scholars argue that the existence of an actual infinite number of things is self-contradictory, because the series of past events cannot go back forever in an infinite regress

God Makes Sense of the Origin of the Universe

- “Suppose that before you, the reader, reached this page in your reading of the present book you had first to read the one before it, and so on, going all the way back to the first page. Since the book has a first page, your coming to this page requires that you first read only a finite number of pages. More pages could be added to the front of this book to lengthen the time it would take for you to get to this page. Let us suppose that you are a better than average reader and that it takes only two minutes for you to read each page; and let us suppose that you read continuously until you get to this page. Then, if there are only ten pages to complete before this page, it will take you twenty minutes to get to this page in your reading. How long will it take you if you must first read twenty pages, or fifty pages, or a hundred pages, or ten thousand pages? I’ll let you do the math. The important thing to notice is that in every case there is always only a finite amount of time it will take. When will you get to this page if you must first read 200,000 pages? In about 66,667 hours! That’s a long but finite amount of time. But suppose we now add an infinity of pages to the front of this book. When will you get to this page if you must first read all of those pages? Answer: never. So if you find yourself reading this page after completing all the pages before it, you know you’ve read only a finite number of pages” (R. Douglas Geivett, “The Kalam Cosmological Argument,” in *To Everyone An Answer*, ed. Francis Beckwith, p. 65).

God Makes Sense of the Origin of the Universe

- Astrophysical evidence indicates that the universe began to exist in a great explosion called the “Big Bang” around 15 billion years ago
- The Big Bang model requires that the universe began to exist and was created out of nothing
- Thus, there is no valid reason to believe that the universe is eternal
- There has to be a **first cause**

God Makes Sense of Fine-Tuning for Intelligent Life

- In the last 40 years, scientists have discovered that the existence of intelligent life depends on a complex and delicate balance of initial conditions given in the Big Bang
- The existence of life is balanced on a knife's edge. It seems more probable that a **life-prohibiting** universe rather than a **life-permitting** universe like ours should exist
- Stephen Hawking estimated that if the rate of universe's expansion one second after the Big Bang had been smaller by even one part in a hundred thousand million million, the universe would have collapsed into a fireball

God Makes Sense of Fine-Tuning for Intelligent Life

- Physicist PCW Davies has calculated that in order to be suitable for later star formation (without which planets could not exist) the relevant initial conditions must be fine-tuned to a precision of one followed by a thousand billion billion zeroes
- There are three possibilities for explaining the presence of a fine-tuned universe: **natural selection**, **chance**, or **design**

God Makes Sense of Objective Moral Values

- If God does not exist, then objective moral values do not exist
- Objective moral values refer to those values which are valid and binding whether anybody believes in them or not (e.g., the Holocaust was objectively wrong)
- Friedrich Nietzsche, the 19th century atheist, rightly understood the death of God meant the destruction of all meaning and value in life
- Others, like Michael Ruse, argue that morality is a **biological adaptation** no less than our hands and feet. Morality is just an aid to survival and reproduction and any deeper meaning is illusory
- Atheist Bertrand Russell claim that ethics arises from the **pressure of the community on the individual**

God Makes Sense of Objective Moral Values

- Man does not always instinctively feel the desires, which are useful to his herd. The herd has invented devices for causing the individual's interest to be in harmony with that of the herd
- If we follow the arguments of Russell and Ruse, there is no reason to think that in the absence of God, the herd morality evolved by humans is objective
- If there is no God, then what's so special about human beings?
- On the atheistic view, there is no absolute right and wrong that imposes itself on our conscience (e.g., raping someone)

God Makes Sense of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

- The historical Jesus of Nazareth claimed to be God, which was why the Jewish authorities instigated his crucifixion on the charge of blasphemy
- The historicity of Jesus can be established by several facts
- **One**, Jesus was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in a tomb
- Given the understandable hostility in the early Christian movement toward the Jewish leaders, Joseph Arimathea, as a member of the Jewish high court that condemned Jesus, is unlikely to be a Christian invention
- Jesus' burial is attested by Christian documents as early as AD 36, which was used by Mark for the earliest gospel account (AD 55)

God Makes Sense of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

- **Two**, Jesus' empty tomb was discovered by a group of women followers
- Given that the testimony of women was regarded as unreliable that they were not allowed to serve as witnesses in a Jewish court of law, the fact that it is women, rather than men, who are the chief witnesses to the empty tomb is best explained by the historical facticity of the Bible
- **Three**, on multiple occasions, various individuals and groups of people witnessed Jesus' post-resurrection appearances:
- ⁵ and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. ⁶ After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. ⁷ Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, ⁸ and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born (1 Cor 15:5-8)

God Makes Sense of the Life, Death, and Resurrection of Jesus

- **Four**, the original disciples suddenly experienced life transformations following Jesus' post-resurrection appearances that they were willing to die for the truth of that belief
- NT Wright, a prominent NT scholar concludes: "That is why, as a historian, I cannot explain the rise of early Christianity unless Jesus rose, leaving an empty tomb behind him"

God Can Be Immediately Known and Experienced

- People can come to know God's existence apart from arguments simply by immediately experiencing him
- Philosophers call these experiences as “properly basic beliefs”—i.e., they are not based on some other beliefs
- Rather, they are part of the foundation of a person's system of beliefs, because humans are created in the image of God, and we can discern him in nature and in our conscience
- Religious others can claim to know their beliefs in a properly basic way
- While religious people may *know* that his/her belief is true, it is quite another question to *show* the truth of their respective beliefs

Conclusion

- This presentation has attempted to show the truth of the Christian faith by appealing to philosophy, science, ethics, and history
- The presentation advances a **cumulative approach** to defend the Christian faith
- The origin of the universe has to have a “first cause” (i.e., the Big Bang)
- The fine-tuned nature of the universe strongly suggests an intelligent designer (i.e., God) as the first cause
- Because objective moral values exist, therefore God also exists as the lawgiver
- The historical Jesus points to the truth of his death, burial, and resurrection