

## Theology Proper

The fundamental doctrine (teaching/assumption) of theology is that there is a God, because if this is not true there can be no science of God or words about God. The first *purpose* of theology, then, is to set forward the reasons for believing that God exists and is the true object of our dependence and worship.

God was under no obligation to tell us about Himself.

The Bible declares two things about God. One: that he is incomprehensible. By knowledge the natural man knew not God (1Cor. 1:21). Yet, at the same time, the Bible claims that God can be known. Both of these truths, although seemingly paradoxical, are affirmed in the Scriptures.

Job 11:7-10 and Isaiah 40:18-31 say that he is incomprehensible. (Ps. 145:3, 147:5, 1Cor. 2:10-12, Rom. 11:33, Isa. 55:9)

Yet John 14:7, John 17:3, and 1John 5:20 say that we can know him. (Jer. 9:23-24, Heb. 8:11, 1John 2:13)

It is plain then, since natural men do not know God, the only way to truly know Him is if He reveals Himself to His people. The most common methodology by which He reveals Himself is through His word.

We can know Him truly (thru His revelation of Himself) but not exhaustively. (We *know* Him, not just facts about Him.)

### Forms of arguments for the existence of God.

No human/natural argument or proof can convince a person that God exists. In the end, only God can convince you. However, He has not left Himself without plenty of evidence.

God exists based on the evidence. The purpose, order, and design we observe in the world and in the universe calls for a designer.

Romans 1:18-23 (general revelation)

This argument for the existence of God is known as the *teleological argument*.

A teleological argument for the existence of God -- also called an argument from design or physicotheological proof -- is based on apparent design and purpose in nature, beyond the scope of any such human activity. Arguably, one can infer the existence of a designer given this premise. It is best represented by William Paley's natural theology in 1802 where he uses the illustration of a watch demanding a watchmaker. (Or, Mt. Rushmore)

The *cosmological argument* says that there must be a first cause of the present existence of living beings. Basically, since some limited, changing beings exist and since their existence is limited and changing it must be caused by another. In other words the potentiality for existence can only be actualized by some existence beyond it. And if there cannot be an infinite regression of causes of being there must be a first cause. This first cause must be infinite, necessary, eternal, simple, unchangeable, and one. That description is only satisfied by the God of the Bible.

The existence of man also argues for the existence of God. How can man, a moral, intelligent, and living being be explained apart from a moral, intelligent, and living creator/God? This is known as the *anthropological argument*.

The *ontological argument* is an argument based on the study of "being." Basically it asks the question: how can the idea of God exist if God himself did not first exist? Or, if we can conceive of the greatest possible being, then He must exist, otherwise He wouldn't be the greatest.

The *moral argument* states that the universal sense of moral obligation must have originated from somewhere. If we are merely random collections of atoms and evolutionary processes, then where did the sense of morality come from?

The Bible is evidence and nature is evidence.

Nature can only reveal a "general revelation." Not everyone will understand this revelation, but God has communicated through various avenues of general revelation.

The Bible reveals:

Psalm 19:1 – his glory and his power in creating the universe.

Romans 1:20 – his supremacy and divine nature.

Acts 14:17 – his providential control of nature.

Matthew 5:45 – his goodness.

Acts 17:28 his living existence.

Acts 17:29 – his intelligence.

The fool has said in his heart, there is no God. Ps. 53:1, Psalm 10:1-6

Matthew 11:27 (God must reveal Himself)