

Apologetic Notes

By Steve Lee

The Existence of God

I. **Existential Argument**

A. Introduction

1. Focuses on humanity's longing, desires for purpose and meaning
 - a. This argument does not show that God exists or the truth of Christianity
 - b. Lays out the alternatives clearly
 - c. If there is a God, life is meaningful; but if there is no God, then life is futile
2. An apologetic for the existence of God based on "the human predicament"
3. Human predicament – if there is no God than mans absurd life is without ultimate significance, values, or purpose

This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
This is the way the world ends
Not with a bang but a whimper.
-T. S. Eliot, "The Hollow Men"

B. Assessment

1. Blaise Pascal (1623-1662)
 - a. French Mathematician, Physicist - "God-shaped vacuum" in our heart
 - 1) Pensees
 - a) Planned to write a major defense of Christianity, but died at age 39 leaving 100s of notes for this work
 - b) Enigma of Man – Great/Miserable
 - 2) Pascal's Wager – If someone feels are the arguments for or against God are inconclusive, then consider:

	God exists	God does not exist
Believe in God	Gain everything	Lose nothing
Not believe in God	Lose everything	Gain nothing

As I know not whence I come, so I know not whither I go. I only know that on leaving this world I fall for ever into nothingness or into the hands of a wrathful God, without knowing to which of these two states I shall be everlastingly consigned.
-Pascal, *Pensees*

2. Francis Schaffer (1912-1984)
 - 3) Drafted a Christian apologetics based on the "modern predicament" of humanity (in *How Could We Then Live?*)
 - 4) If there is no God, there is no absolute truth. If there is no truth, then man's endeavor degenerate into absurdity.
 - 5) Demonstrates the modern predicament through the "Theater of the Absurd" (high culture)
 - a) Modern Art: DeChamp's Nude Descending Staircase
 - b) Modern Plays: Beckett Breath, Waiting for Godot
 - c) Modern Music: John Cage
3. Human Predicament
 - b. Crux – If there is no God, that means life is absurd – humanity is without ultimate significance, values, or purpose
 - c. Significance (meaning)
 - 1) If each person passes out of existence, then it doesn't matter if you lived at all
 - 2) The influence we will have on others will also pass out of existence Thus, life is insignificant, meaningless
 - 3) Examples: Beckett, Breath, Waiting for Godot; No Exit, Sartre; Camus, The Strangers
 - d. Value (morality)
 - 1) If everyone has the same fate (death), it doesn't matter if you lived as a saint or sinner
 - 2) If there's no God, then no standard for an objective right and wrong
 - 3) One cannot condemn, war, murder, incest, rape, torture of innocent babies
 - 4) Examples: Dostoevsky, Brothers of Karamazov; Hitler's Actions
 - e. Purpose (destiny)
 - 1) If man's destiny is death (non-existence), then life is pointless; all humanity will pass out of existence, without hope or purpose
 - 2) No God, then humanity is a biological accident
 - 3) Examples: H.G. Wells, The Time Machine; Douglas Adams, The Restaurant at the End of the Universe; Eccl. 3:19-20; Nietzsche – parable of the madman
2. Practical Application
 - a. Lays out dilemma in a dramatic way – it cuts to ones existential nature and need
 - b. Pushs the Atheist/Agnostic to their logical conclusions
 - c. Works for literature, fine arts, film, humanities
 - d. When one sees the predicament they are in they will see why the gospel is important and may be compelled by these considerations alone to giver their live to God and Christ.

Man finally knows he is alone in the indifferent immensity of the universe.
-Jacques Monod: French bio-chemist in *Chance and Necessity*

II. Cosmological Argument

A. Introduction

1. Name: “cosmos” – “world”
2. Inferring the existence of God from the existence of the world through cause and effect
3. The roots of the argument are found in Plato and Aristotle; developed by Medieval, Islamic, Jewish, and Christians

B. Assessment – The Kalam Cosmological Argument

1. “Kalam” means speech from Islamic school of thought and thinker Al-Ghazali
2. Formal: P1: Whatever begins to exist has a cause.

P2: The universe began to exist.

Conclusion: So, the universe has a cause.

* Key: One must defend each premise – the premises of the argument must be more plausible (likely) than their denials

3. Defend P1: “Whatever begins to exist has a cause.”

- a. Intuitively true or self-evident
- b. Axiom: Out of nothing, nothing comes.
- c. Are there any examples of the premises denial: “whatever begins to exist does **not** have a cause” – No.
- d. Therefore, the first premise seems entirely more plausible than its denial.

4. Defend the Second Premise: “The Universe Began to Exist”

- a. Impossibility of actual infinite number of past events

- 1) If the universe never had a beginning, then the number of past events of the universe is infinite.
- 2) Mathematicians recognize the idea of an actual infinite is an impossibility, and leads to self contradictions
- 3) Hilbert’s Hotel
- 4) Since past events are not ideas, but are real, the number of past events must be finite.
- 5) So the series of past events can’t go back forever, rather the universe must have begun to exist.

The infinite is nowhere to be found in reality. It neither exists in nature, nor provides a legitimate basis for rational thought . . . the role that remains for the infinite to play is solely that of an idea.

-mathematician David Hilbert

- b. Astronomy and Astrophysics

The Big Bang theory requires the creation of the universe from nothing. This is because as one goes back in time he reaches a point at which the universe was “shrunk down to nothing at all.”

-Fred Hoyle,
Cambridge astronomer

- (1) Astrophysical evidence indicated that the universe began to exist in a great explosion called the Big Bang around 15 billion years ago. (1929 – Edwin Hubble and red shift of galaxies; 1980 – COBE Research Satellite and cosmic background radiation)
 - (a) Physical space and time were created in that event, as well as all the matter and energy of the universe
 - (b) The Big Bang model requires that the universe had a beginning and was created out of nothing
- (2) The big bang implies that the universe has a beginning and was created out of nothing

The beginning seems to present insuperable difficulties unless we agree to look on it as frankly supernatural.

-Sir Arthur Eddington, eminent scientist

- c. Based on both philosophical and scientific evidence, one is justified in accepting P2 (the universe began to exist)
 - 1) Impossibility of an actual infinite number of past events
 - 2) Astrophysical and astronomical evidence-Big Bang

5. Defending “Therefore the universe has a cause.”

- a. From P1 and P2 it follows logically that the universe has a cause
- b. This means that the universe was brought into existence by something which is greater than and beyond it
- c. What is the nature of this first cause
 - 1) *Uncaused* (b/c infinite regress of causes is impossible)
 - 2) *Timeless* therefore *Changeless* (b/c it created time)
 - 3) *Immaterial* (b/c it created all matter and space)

Similar to the attributes of **God**

6. Objections

- a. If everything has cause, what about God?

- 1) Misconstrue of P1
 - a) It was stated “Everything that beings to exist has a cause”
 - b) God didn’t begin to exist

- b. If God existed for an infinite amount of time then the same argument against an infinite duration of past events applies to God as well

- 1) Theists do not hold to the view that God has existed for infinite amount of time
- 2) God is timeless (God existed in undifferentiated amount of time)
- 3) Since there is no time that God has subject to, an infinite regress of past events does not apply to God

C. Practical Application

1. How could I possibly share this in an evangelistic contact?
2. Exercise common sense

3. Advice: Start simple and go deeper as they have questions
 - a. Simple Example: “Everything we see has a cause, and those causes have causes, and those causes have causes, and so on. But, this can’t go back forever, there had to be a beginning, and a first cause which started the whole thing, this is God.”
 - b. Deeper Example: “If God created the universe, where did God come from? Our reply would be that God didn’t come from anywhere; he is eternal and has always existed, so he doesn’t need a cause. But he has not always existed, it had a beginning, where did the universe come from?”
 - c. Deeper Example: “When one talks with a person, who has a deeper understanding of these issues, then of course one must go deeper.”

III. Teleological (Design) Argument

A. Intro

1. *Teleos* (Greek) – end, aim, goal, purpose
2. Argues from the improbability of something as complex as the universe coming about by chance, thus it must be designed
3. William Paley – analogy of the watch

B. Assessment – new design arguments

1. Old design arguments tended to focus on biological sciences and analogy which were almost swept away:
 - a. David Hume’s critic in Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion
 - b. Evolution seemed to explain complexity through natural selection, variation in species, and self-replication
2. New design argument focuses on the physical sciences and the mathematics of probability instead of biology and analogy
3. Focus on the “fine-tuning” of the universe in the fields of astronomy, physics, and chemistry instead of biology
4. Summary: The existence of life like ours depends upon a complex and delicate balance which must be fine tuned to such a degree that is literally incomprehensible and incalculable.

5. Formal Argument

Premise 1: The fine tuning of the universe is either due to design or chance.

Premise 2: It is highly improbable that it resulted from chance.

Conclusion: Thus it is highly probable that it resulted from design.

Key – Provide evidence or reasons to show that it is more probable that the universe is fine tuned and thus designed instead of being derived by chance

Robert Jastrow, former head of NASA’s Goddard Institute of Space Studies, has called this [design argument] the most powerful evidence for the existence of God ever to come out of science.

6. Evidences for the universe’s fine-tuning for life

- a. The last 30-35 years scientists have discovered that the existence of life depends on a complex and delicate balance of conditions
- b. Over 50 cosmic constants that are required for life to emerge; <http://www.reasons.org> (70+ constants)
- c. All of these constants for life must have certain value that falls within a very narrow range if life is to be possible
 - 1) Expansion rate of the universe – higher/lower than one part in hundred thousand million million, life impossible
 - 2) Strong or weak nuclear force – changed by only one part in a ten followed by a hundred zeros, life impossible
 - 3) Others: amount of usable energy in universe, the difference in mass between protons and neutrons, ratios of the fundamental forces of nature, and the proportion of matter to antimatter- must be balanced to a mathematically infinitesimal degree for any life to be possible

7. One should conclude that the evidence for fine-tuning of life in the universe is designed not chance.

8. Objections

- a. Anthropic Principle – We should not be surprised that the universe met all these conditions for life because if it didn’t we wouldn’t be here to observe them. In short, this fine-tuning of the universe is pure chance
 - 1) Counter analogy – Madman kidnaps you, straps to machine that shuffles up to 10 decks at a time, will draw one card from each deck, must get 10 aces of spades to live (if not it blows up), by chance? Doubtful, you would think that the decks are shuffling machine was rigged (i.e. intelligently designed to deal all the aces of spades).
 - 2) Second counter analogy – facing firing squad, 100 sharp shooters, blindfold you and you hear the guns go off and your not dead, all 100 missed by accident? Doubtful, you would think they were ordered to miss (i.e. ID)

Today, the concrete data point strongly in the direction of the God hypothesis. . . . Those who wish to oppose it have no testable theory to marshal, only speculations about unseen universes spun from fertile scientific imagination. . . . Ironically, the picture of the universe bequeathed to us by the most advanced twentieth-century science is close in spirit to the vision presented in the Book of Genesis than anything offered by science since Copernicus.

-Patrick Glynn, in *God: The Evidence*, director & scholar-in-residence at George Washington University Institute for Communitarian Policy Studies

IV. Moral Argument

A. Introduction

1. “Right and wrong as clue to the meaning of the universe.” C.S. Lewis (Mere Christianity)
2. If there is a moral “law”, then there is a moral lawgiver.
3. Society, culture, and individuals are inadequate sources for morality
4. Humanity largely holds to objective moral law. Question: “Where did these objective moral laws come from?”
5. “Objective” moral values mean there are binding whether anyone believes them or not

B. Assessment

1. The issue is not: "Must we believe in God in order to live moral lives?" No
2. The issue is: "If God not exist, do objective moral values exist?"
3. Formal Presentation:
Premise 1: If God does not exist, then object moral values do not exist.
Premise 2: Objective moral values do exist.
Conclusion: Therefore God exists.
Key - defend the idea that morality is objective and that society and individuals are inadequate sources for them

If. . .there are. . .objective values, they make the existence of a god more probable than it would have been without them. Thus we have. . .a defensible argument from morality to the existence of god.
-late J.L. Mackie Oxford, one of the most influential atheists of 20th century

4. Defending: Moral values are objective
 - a. In order to avoid God's existence Mackie and other atheists deny that objective moral values exist.
 - b. Friedrich Nietzsche, the greatest atheist of the 19th century who proclaimed the death of God, understood that the death of God meant the destruction of all meaning and value in life.
 - c. On the atheistic view, some action, say rape, may not be socially advantageous and has become socially taboo.
 - d. That does not prove that rape is morally wrong, if you can escape the social consequences, there's nothing really *wrong* with raping someone, thus without God there is no absolute right and wrong which imposes itself on us
 - e. The fact is rape really is wrong if you believe it or not or get caught or not and we all know it. Actions like rape, torture, child abuse aren't just socially unacceptable, they're abominations.
 - f. Ethical relativists – right and wrong are subjective
 - 1) "What is right for you, might not be right for me."
 - 2) Hold that ethics are determined by a society or individual
 - 3) Critique:
 - a) If society determines ethics, then the Nazis were right in their society in killing 6 million Jews.
 - b) If individuals determines ethics, then individuals could determine that rape, murder, etc. are morally right.
 - g. Conclude: it seems evident that moral values are objective which cannot exist without God, thus God must exist.
5. Defending: There must be a law giver
 - a. An objective moral value tells us what ought to be done or not done
 - b. Obligation – Duty
 - c. Only a person/mind/authority can give a sense of obligation.
 - d. Example: With a law you have an obligation. Government gives the law, which gives it a sense of obligation.
 - e. That the must be a law giver of morality which breeds the sense of obligation.

The man who says it is morally acceptable to rape little children is just as mistaken as the man who says $2+2=5$.
-Michael Ruse, philosopher of science and atheist at University of Guelph

C. Conclusion/Practical Application

1. Begin by appealing to human intuition of absolute right and wrong.
2. Ask what grounds or it's the source for this obligation.
3. Societies are individuals are inadequate sources.
4. The only source can be God

V. Ontological Argument

A. Introduction

1. Attempts to prove the God's existence by the concept of God (definition)
2. Hotly debated today

B. Historical Background

1. Anselm (1033-1109)
 - a. Wanted an argument that proved God's existence and that he had all the superlative attributes
 - b. "God is that which no greater can be conceived."
 - 1) In other words, God is the greatest conceivable being
 - 2) True by definition, for if we could conceive or anything greater then that would be God.
 - 3) It is greater to exist in reality, then merely in the mind.
2. Descartes
 - a. He uses the idea of perfection
 - b. Premise 1: If something is perfect, it must exist.
Premise 2: God (definition) is perfect.
Conclusion: Thus, God must exist.

Reliability of the Bible

Unity of the Bible:

- 1500 Year Span
- 40± Authors
- 3 languages (Hebrew, Greek, Aramaic)
- 3 continents
- Hundreds of subjects
- 1 consistent, non-contradictory
- Theme: “God’s redemption of mankind.”

I. Manuscripts

A. Accuracy of documents

1. Reported – was it reported accurately?
2. Transmitted - were the documents transmitted accurately?

B. **Bibliographical Test**- How many manuscripts and the time span between original and manuscripts

1. Manuscript – Hand written copy of the original or of another manuscript
2. Autograph – Original document
3. Textual Criticism – Art and science of manuscript evidence
4. Criteria for deciding between manuscripts
 - a. Is the manuscript reading in harmony with other manuscripts?
 - b. How old is the manuscript in question?
 - c. Are there reasons to suspect changes?
 - d. What is the physical condition of the manuscript?
 - e. What appears to be the overall accuracy of the manuscript?
 - f. Are some variations in the manuscript explained by scribal error?
 - g. Can we recognize an obvious motivation for why an easier reading might be substituted for a harder to understand one?
5. New Testament Manuscript Evidence – comparing NT textual preservation with other ancient documents:

<u>Document</u>	<u># of Manuscripts</u>	<u>Date Written</u>	<u>Earliest Copy</u>	<u>Time Span</u>	<u>Accuracy</u>
New Testament	over 5,000	50-90 AD	120 AD	30 years	99+%
<i>Homer’s Iliad</i>	643	800 BC	----	?	95%
Caesar’s <i>Gallic Wars</i>	10	50 BC	900 AD	950 years	---
Thucydides <i>History</i>	9	450 BC	1300 AD	1750 years	---

C. **Eyewitness (Internal) Test** - Credentials of the authors

1. Considers the credentials and credibility of the N.T. authors
2. Bible
 - a. II Peter 1:16 – disciples were eyewitnesses of Jesus and did not follow cleverly invented stories
 - b. Luke 1:1-3 – gathered eyewitness testimony and carefully investigated everything
3. Possibility of falsification
 - a. If the New Testament was falsified, would the authors report and include embarrassing details?
 - b. Ex. – Peter’s denial of Christ, all disciples fled in fear after Christ’s death, women discovered empty tomb
4. Variations of the Gospel Stories
 - a. Walking on water story:

Mark 6:51-emphasis hardship b/c writing to persecuted Christians in Rome under Nero to encourage them.	versus	Matthew 14:33-emphasizes the positive side of the disciples faith.
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 - b. Variations attest to the N.T. accuracy in what they reported
 - c. If the gospels were fabricated and conspired they would be exactly the same (which is an indication of conspiracy)
 - d. The stories differ slightly (perspective, focus) which attest to the truth of what is being reported.
5. Question of Bias
 - a. Skeptics claim that the authors were biased in promoting their view point, thus is unreliable historically.
 - b. Two responses
 - 1) Ad Hominem
 - 2) The sword cuts both ways (self-refuting)

D. **External Test** - Looks at text outside the Bible for confirmation or contradiction

1. Do outside sources confirm the New Testament?
2. The Bible refers to historical events, how do other (secular) historical accounts match up to these events

3. Josephus (A.D. 37-100) Jewish Antiquities
 - a. Jewish historian
 - b. Confirms gospel accounts
 - 1) Life of Christ
 - 2) Execution of John the Baptist
 - 3) Summarizes the message of John the Baptist
 - 4) Confirms the narratives of gospels and acts
4. Cornelius Tacitus (A.D. c. 55-117)
 - a. Roman historian
 - b. Names Jesus as the founder of Christianity
5. Pliny the Younger (c. A.D. 112)
 - a. Roman governor – writes a letter to emperor
 - b. How he kills the Christians and gets them “to curse Christ, which a genuine Christian would not do.”
6. Other Historians
 - a. Lucian, Greek Satirist (2nd Century)
 - b. Suetonius, Roman Historian (c. A.D. 120)
 - c. Thallus, Historian of Samaria (A.D. 52)
7. Combining all secular testimony (outside of N.T.) we get the following picture:
 - a. Jesus was crucified by Pontius Pilate at Passover time
 - b. Believed by disciples that Jesus rose on the third day
 - c. Church leaders charged Christ with sorcery
 - d. Christianity could not be contained, spread into Roman
 - e. Nero and other Roman rulers persecuted Christians
 - f. Early Christians denied polytheism, live dedicated lives according to Jesus’ teaching, and worshiped Christ
8. Conclusion – This picture (secular historical accounts) are congruent with the N.T. accounts

“On the basis of . . . non-Christian sources, it is possible to draw the following conclusion about Jesus: ‘Jesus was executed in Judaea during the period of Pontius and Tiberius (Tacitus), the movement spread into Rome (Tacitus), Jesus claimed to be God and would depart and return (Eliezer), his followers worshipped him as god (Pliny), he was called “the Christ” (Josephus), his followers were called “Christians” (Tacitus, Pliny), they were numerous in Bithynia and Rome (Tacitus, Pliny), it was a world-wide movement (Eliezer), and his brother was James (Josephus).’ While this evidence is not extensive, it is noteworthy that it does not in any way conflict with, but rather confirms, the historical information in the New Testament.”

-Paul Barnett, 10 years the Master of Robert Menzies College, Macquarie University, bishop of North Sydney in Australia

II. Archaeology

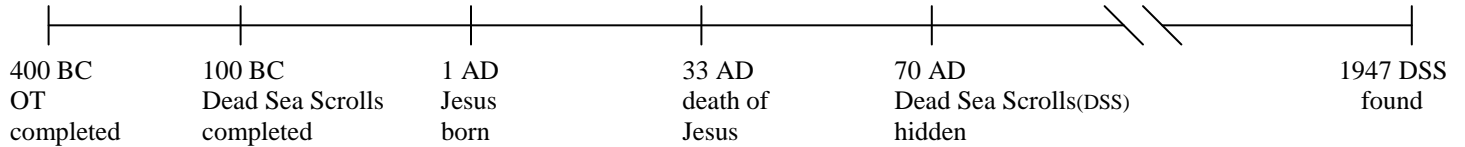
- A. Considers the findings of archaeology of the 1st century: do they confirm or deny the eyewitness stories (N.T. accounts)
- B. Limits of archaeology
 1. Can not:
 - a. Confirm the teaching (actions) of Jesus
 - b. Confirm spiritual truths
 2. Can:
 - a. Confirm historical sites, certain events, rules or reigns
 - b. Increase confidence on reported events
- C. Luke’s account
 1. Luke 3:1
 - a. Names Lysanias as the tetrarch of Abilene at AD 27
 - b. For years scholars questioned Luke for this point because Lysanias was a ruler of Chalcis 50 years earlier
 - c. Archeology recently found an inscription from Tiberius which names Lysanias as tetrarch just as Luke had written
 - d. It turns out that there were two Lysanias
 2. Archeologist have confirmed Luke’s references to thirty-two countries, fifty-four cities, nine islands, and have not found a single mistake
 3. If Luke was painstakingly accurate in his historical writing, then it follows that he was accurate in reporting more important matters
- D. Pool Bethesda – John 5:1-15
 1. John’s account details the pool with five porticoes
 2. Skeptics cited this as an example of John’s inaccuracy because no such place had been found it
 3. Recently, the pool of Bethesda has been excavated, which shows that there were five porticoes as John described
 4. Other discoveries supporting John
 - a. The Siloam – John 9:7
 - b. Jacobs Well – John 4:12
 - c. Stone Pavement near the Jaffa gate where Jesus appeared before Pilot – John 19:13
- E. John McRay
 1. Professor of N.T. and archeology at Wheaton College
 2. Studied at Hebrew University, École Biblique et Archeologique Francaise in Jerusalem, Vanderbilt University (Divinity School), University of Chicago. Wrote: Archaeology and the New Testament. Written in: Bulletin of the Near East Archaeology Society. Former Research Associate and Trustee of the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeology. Former trustee American Schools of Oriental Research. Current trustee of Near East Archaeological Society. Member of editorial boards of Archaeology in the Biblical World and Bulletin for Biblical Research. Supervised excavations at Caesarea, Sepphoris, and Herodium (All in Israel)

3. Quotes:
 - a. "Archaeology has not produced anything that is unequivocally a contradiction to the Bible."
 - b. "There is no question that the credibility of the New Testament is enhanced." – This was in response to the question, "Does archaeology affirm or undermine the New Testament when it checks out the details in those accounts?"

III. Prophecy and Statistics

A. Prophecy

1. The Jewish Scriptures (Old Testament) contains several dozen predictions about a coming messiah, as well as prophecies concerning cities that could not be known or predicted by chance or common sense.
2. The predictions of the Bible were once used against the reliability of the Bible
 - a. Critics argued that the prophecies were written after the events to look as if they were being fulfilled
 - b. The many predictions of Christ were rendered more than a century before they occurred.



- c. Dead Sea Scrolls (found 1947) date from 100 BC or earlier which establish that the Old Testament prophecies were written before the life of Christ

3. Prophecies Concerning Cities:

- a. Tyre
 - 1) Phoenician City
 - 2) Ezekiel Predicts that its walls would be destroyed, and towers broken down (26:12). Many nations would oppose it (26:3) and its stones, timbers, and debris would be thrown into the water (26:12)
- b. Similar prophecies concerning:
 - 1) Sidon (Ezekiel 28:23; Isaiah 23, Jeremiah 27:3-6)
 - 2) Babylon (Jeremiah 50:13, 39; 51:26; Isaiah 13:20-21)

4. Objection – They were fulfilled by mere coincidence or accident

B. Statistics

1. Issue: Were the prophecies of the messiah in the Old Testament fulfilled by chance? Could someone else fit these prophecies as well, like multiple events fitting the prediction of Nostradamus?
2. Test case: the prophecies of a messiah. Over 300 references to the messiah
3. 61 major predictions like Isaiah 53:3-9,12
4. Other prophecies of the messiah: Descendent of Abraham, Isaac, Jacob; Born in Bethlehem; Crucified with criminals, Piercing of hands/feet, Soldiers gambling for his garments, Piercing of his side and no bones broken, Burial among rich, Riding into Jerusalem on donkey
5. Most of these prophecies were totally beyond the control of Jesus, which rules out that he deliberately fulfilled them to become the messiah.
6. Statistical probability of fulfillment by chance
 - a. Peter Stoner, wrote Science Speaks
 - 1) Reviewed by the American Scientific Affiliation and deemed the book dependable in its mathematical and scientific accuracy in utilizing the principles of probability
 - 2) Fulfilling eight prophecies by chance
 - a) The chance of 1 in 10^{17} . That's one in one hundred million billion
 - b) Illustration: 10^{17} silver dollars, in Texas, 2 feet deep, blind fold someone, mark one silver dollar, the person has one chance to pick the marked dollar
 - 3) Fulfilling 48 prophecies by chance
 - a) One in 10^{157} . That's one chance in a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion (13 trillions)
 - b) That number (10^{157}) is equal to the number of minuscule atoms in a trillion, trillion, trillion, trillion, billion universes the size of our universe

*But all the prophecies came true in Christ!!!

Jesus

I. **Claims of Christ**

A. Introduction

1. The center of any Christian apologetic focuses on Jesus
2. Did Jesus claim to be God? Prophet? Good Teacher? Who did Jesus claim to be?

B. Jesus' Trial

1. Mark 14:61-64
 - a. High Priest asks Jesus, "Are you the Christ, the Son of the Blessed?"
 - b. Jesus replied, "I am . . ." High priest tore his clothes, saying, "you have heard the blasphemy."
2. The actions of Christ were not on trial, but his identity
3. Jesus claimed deity for Himself in a way all His accusers would recognize

C. Other Claims

- a. Claimed to be equal with the Father - John 10:25-33; John 5:17,18
- b. "I Am" - John 8:58; "I Am" in Old Testament refers to God Himself

D. Indirect Claims

1. He forgave sins - Mark 2:5-7; Sins one commit against God, can only be forgiven by God
2. Claimed to be "life" - John 14:6 - Not that he knew but he was the "way" the "truth" and the "life"

E. Titles of Deity

1. YHWH

- a. Translated "LORD" (all caps) or "Jehovah"
- b. Yahweh. Meaning = The one and only deity, I am
- c. Jesus speaks of Himself as Jehovah (YHWH)
John 8:24,25,58; Matthew 16:16,17

One may forgive the injuries which others do to us; but the sins we commit against God only God himself can.
-John Stott, renowned bible scholar and theologian

2. Other Titles

- a. Son of God – Matthew 16:16,17
- b. Son of Man – Multiple verses

II. Who is Jesus? – The Alternatives

A. Introduction

1. Just because someone "claims" to be God would not make him God
2. Many say Jesus was not God, then who was he?

B. Jesus was a great moral or religious teacher

1. Proponents: Thomas Jefferson, Jesus Seminar
2. He was one of the greatest religious and moral teachers of all time, but he was not God
3. One must accord Jesus a place among other great teachers of wisdom such as Buddha, Mohammad, etc.
4. Rebuttal

a. Important Points

- 1) Jesus "teachings" resolved around himself
 - 2) Thus, when Jesus claimed to be God, he was making a claim about the very core of his teaching
- b. If Jesus was not God, then he was mistaken about something that was at the very core of his teaching
- 1) A great teacher could be mistaken about a marginal issue
 - 2) Being God or not can never be a marginal issue

Jesus' teaching was self-centered. -John Stott

C. The Alternatives – Quadralimma (4 L's)

1. There are four alternatives with regard to who Jesus was
 - a. Legend – There never was a Jesus who claimed to be God
 - b. Lunatic – Jesus thought that he was God, but he was wrong
 - c. Liar – Jesus deliberately deceived people
 - d. Lord – He was who he claimed to be

If Jesus consistently taught that he was God (and he did!), and if Jesus consistently taught that his identity was at the core of his teaching (and he did!), whatever else he might claim, he could not be a great teacher if he was wrong on this point.

2. **Legend**

- a. There never was a Jesus claiming to be God
- b. Such claims are legendary; written into the Gospels/New Testament, years, generations after Christ
- c. Writers, community "developed" the deity of Christ to meet their needs
- d. Proponents: John Dominant Crossan, Jesus Seminar, Liberal Christianity
- e. Rebuttal:
 - 1) Not enough time for legend to develop
 - 2) Timeline (Scholars say it takes at least 2 generation (80 yrs) for it to be possible for Legend to develop)
 - a) Jesus Died 33 A.D.
 - b) New Testament Completed 100 A.D.
 - c) 70 A.D. Fall of Jerusalem
 - (1) The Book of Luke and The Book of Acts written before this
 - (2) Also With Mark (around 49 A.D.)
 - d) Conclusion: No where near enough time for it to develop – with the book of Mark is only around 16 years)

-Winfried Corduan, professor of philosophy and religion at Taylor University

3. Lunatic

- a. If you met someone claimed to be God what would you say to them? – crazy
- b. If Jesus sincerely taught and thought he was God, but he was not, then he was suffering from mental illness
- c. Rebuttal: Aside from Jesus’ claims there is no evidence whatsoever for symptoms of mental illness
 - 1) Teach and act the way Christ did, so his life contradicts mental disorder
 - 2) Gary R. Collins Ph.D.
 - a) Educated at the University of Toronto and Purdue. Professor of Psychology. Has written over 150 Articles and 45 Books. The general editor of the 30 Volume, 12 Evidences for Christian Counseling
 - b) “All in all, I just don’t see any signs that Jesus was suffering from any known mental illness. He was much healthier than anyone else I know, including me!”

4. Liar

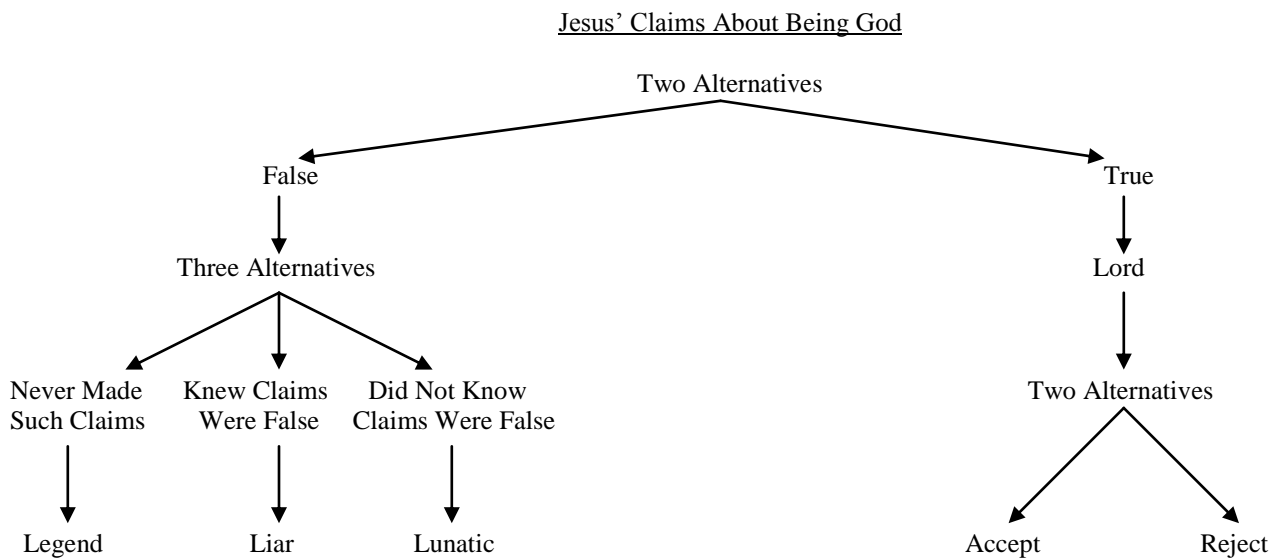
- a. Maybe Jesus deliberately deceived people
- b. If this is true, then Jesus is a hypocrite
- c. He couldn’t be one of the most profound moral teachers if he is lying.
- d. This interpretation is contrary to his teaching, life, miracles, prophecy, and his resurrection (which we’ll look at later)

5. Lord

- a. We’ve established that Jesus was not merely a great teacher, not mentally ill, not a liar, and not legendarily developed.
- b. The only option is: Jesus is God

I am trying here to prevent anyone saying the really foolish thing that people often say about him [Jesus]: ‘I’m ready to accept Jesus as a great moral teacher, but I don’t accept his claim to be God.’ That is the one thing we must not say. A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make you choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a mad man or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon; or you can fall at his feet and call him Lord and God. But let us not come up with any patronizing nonsense about his being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.

-C. S. Lewis



Resurrection

I. Importance of the Resurrection

- A. Cornerstone/foundation of Christianity
 - 1. I Corinthians 15:14
 - 2. Christianity stands or falls with the resurrection
- B. Vindicates/establishes Jesus' claims

II. Approach

- A. Not treating the New Testament as an inspired and therefore inerrant book, but simply as a collection of ordinary, Greek documents coming down to us out of the first century.
- B. Interest is not in defending the infallibility of the gospels.
- C. Interest lies in determining:
 - 1. First, what **facts** concerning the fate of Jesus can credibly be established on the basis of evidence (through the critical historical method)
 - 2. Second, what is the **best explanation** of those facts

III. Facts

- A. Establishing a historical fact:
 - 1. Fact/Event must be recorded in very early sources
 - 2. Fact/Event must be recorded in multiple independent sources
 - 3. Fact/Event must lack legendary development
 - 4. Fact/Event must have no other compelling and competing story
- B. There are at least four facts about the fate of Jesus which are widely accepted by New Testament historians today (not just conservative scholars, but the broad main stream of New Testament scholarship)
- C. **Fatal Torment**
 - 1. After Jesus died, he was buried by Joseph of Arimathea in his tomb
 - 2. Death
 - a. *Journal of the American Medical Association*. March 21, 1986 "On the physical death of Jesus"
 - 1) Concluded from the gospel accounts that Jesus certainly had died before he was removed from the cross.
 - 2) Roman soldiers were experts at death
 - 3. Tomb: The location of Jesus' tomb was well known because it was Joseph of Arimathea's tomb
 - 4. Reasons for its factuality
 - a. Jesus burial is attested in very old information handed by Paul to the church of Corinth
 - 1) I Cor. 15:3-5
 - 2) This saying contains Semitic expressions not of Paul's, thus he received it as an oral creed
 - 3) Dated to within five years of Jesus' crucifixion
 - b. Burial story is part of very old source material used by Mark
 - 1) Mark is the oldest gospel
 - 2) Mark is 42-47 A.D.
 - 3) This passage along with I Cor. 15 provides us with very early independent sources of Jesus' burial
 - c. Joseph of Arimathea is unlikely to be a Christian invention because he was a well-known member of the high-court
 - d. Burial story lacks any signs of legendary development
 - e. No other competing burial story

The burial story of Jesus in the tomb is "one of the earliest and best-attested facts about Jesus."

-late John A. T. Robinson
Cambridge University

D. **Empty Tomb**

- 5. Jesus' tomb was found empty
- 6. Reasons for its factuality
 - a. The old information transmitted by Paul implies the empty tomb
 - 1) The expression "he was buried" followed by the expression "he was raised" implies an empty tomb
 - 2) The expression "on the third day" probably is a reference to the day of the women's discovery of the empty tomb
 - b. The empty tomb story is also part of Mark's very old source material, thus providing very early, independent attestation of the fact of the empty tomb
 - c. The story is simple and lacks signs of legendary embellishment (compared to the so-called gospel of Peter)
 - d. Empty tomb discovered by women
 - 1) Mark 16:1-8
 - 2) If the empty tomb story were a lie then certainly it would have been men who discovered the empty tomb considering the status of women at that time
 - 3) Women occupied the low rung of the social ladder:
 - a) Rabbinic expression, "sooner let the words of law be burnt than delivered by women."
 - b) Rabbinic saying, "Happy is the man whose children are male, but woe to him whose children are female."

"By far most exegetes hold firmly to the reliability of the biblical statements concerning the empty tomb."

-Jacob Kremer, Austrian specialist on the resurrection

- 4) Testimony of women regarded as worthless in a court of law
- 5) In the light of these facts about women discovering the empty tomb leads plausibility to the truthfulness of the story
- e. The earliest known Jewish response to Jesus' resurrection presuppose the empty tomb
 - 1) Matthew 28:11-15
 - 2) What were the Jews saying in reaction to the disciples declaring that "he is risen from the dead!?" They said, "the disciples came and stole away his body."
 - 3) The earliest Jewish response is an attempt to explain away the missing body, thus we have evidence of the empty tomb from the very opponents of the Christian movement

E. Appearances of Christ

7. On multiple occasions and under various circumstances different individuals and groups of people experienced appearances of Jesus alive from the dead
8. Reasons for its factuality
 - a. Appearance narratives are very early and cannot be dismissed as legendary
 - 1) I Cor. 15:5-8 – very early source (within 5 years of crucifixion)
 - 2) Paul personally acquainted with people involved
 - b. Appearance narratives are multiple and from independent sources
 - 1) To Peter is attested by Luke and Paul
 - 2) To the twelve by Luke, John, and Paul
 - 3) To the women is attested by Matthew and John
 - 4) Appearances in Galilee are attested by Mark, Matthew, and John

Even the skeptical German New Testament critic Gerd Lüdemann (who does not believe in the resurrection) concludes, "It may be taken as historically certain that Peter and the disciples had experiences after Jesus' death in which Jesus appeared to them as the risen Christ."

F. Transformation of the Disciples

9. Disciples suddenly and sincerely came to believe that Jesus was risen from the dead despite every predisposition to the contrary
10. Reasons for its factuality
 - a. Consider the situation the disciples faced following Jesus' crucifixion
 - 1) Their leader was dead. Jewish messianic expectations included no idea of a messiah who would be executed as a criminal
 - 2) According to the Old Testament law, Jesus' execution exposed Him as a heretic, a man literally accursed by God (Deut 21:23)
 - 3) Jewish beliefs about the afterlife precluded anyone's rising from the dead before the general resurrection of the dead at the end of the world
 - b. Nevertheless the disciples suddenly came to believe so strongly that God had raised Jesus from the dead that they were willing to die for that belief

"Some sort of powerful, transformative experience is required to generate the sort of movement earliest Christianity was"
-Timothy Luke Johnson, New Testament scholar at Emory Univ.

G. In summary, there are four facts concerning the fate of Jesus which are agreed on by the majority of scholars: Jesus' burial by Joseph of

Arimathea, the discovery of his empty tomb, his post-mortem appearances, and the origin of the disciples' belief in his resurrection.

IV. The Best Explanation

A. What explanation best accounts for these four established facts?

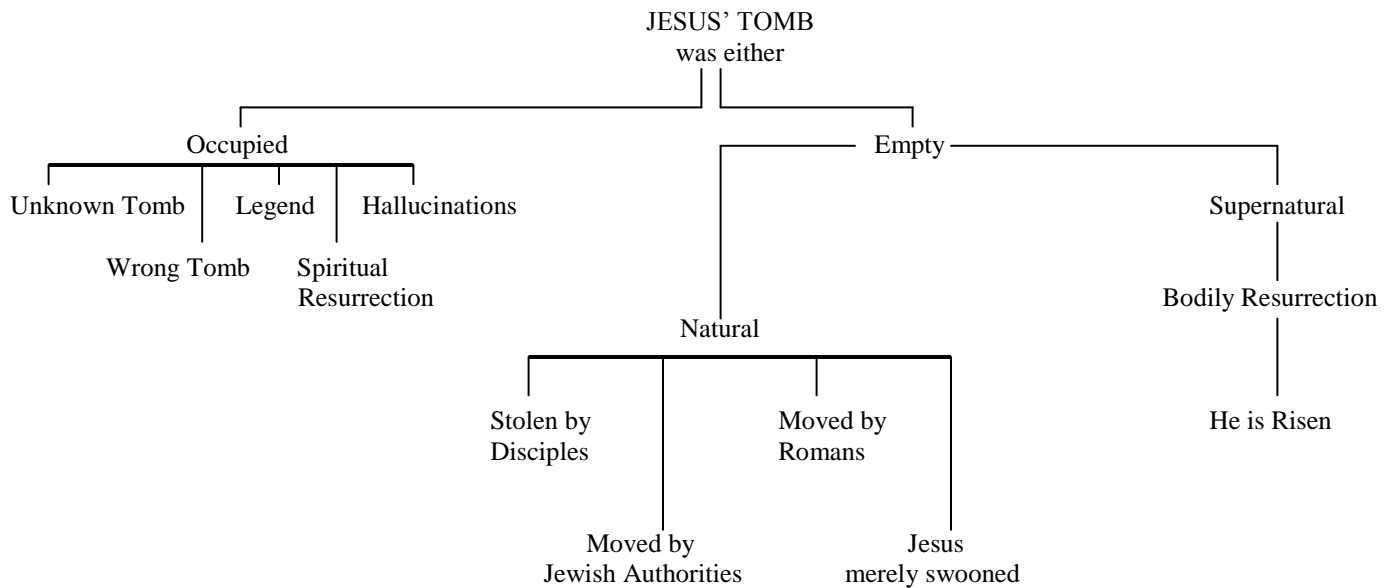
1. Historical facts can have multiple explanations, but what is the criteria for the "best explanation" of the facts:
 - a. Explanatory Scope: it must explain all the facts, not just one or some or the majority
 - b. Explanatory Power: it must explain each fact adequately, not just superficially or in an ad hoc manner

B. Explanations

1. Conspiracy Theory
 - a. This explanation asserts that the disciples stole the body of Jesus thus faking the resurrection
 - b. Rebuttal
 - 1) While this explains the empty tomb it does not explain the transformation of the disciples
 - 2) Why would they die for a lie
2. Swoon/Apparent Death Theory
 - a. Jesus was not completely dead, he revived in the tomb
 - b. Rebuttal
 - 1) Physically implausible, the extent of Jesus' tortures such that he could have survived the crucifixion and entombment.
 - 2) Religiously implausible, if Jesus had survived, his appearing half-dead and in desperate need of medical attention would not have evoked worship
3. Wrong Tomb
 - a. Women and disciples simply went to the wrong tomb
 - b. Rebuttal
 - 1) Only explains the appearances, but says nothing about the empty tomb
 - 2) Even the Jews knew the tomb was empty
4. Hallucinations

- a. Appearances can be explained away as mere hallucinations or visions.
- b. Rebuttal
 - 1) Only explains appearances, but says nothing about the empty tomb
 - 2) Hallucinations are individualistic and extremely subjective; hallucinations usually occur to individuals, not groups
- 5. Disciples lied
 - a. Jesus didn't rise from the dead, but disciples deceived people into believing it
 - b. Rebuttal
 - 1) Morally implausible: preached honestly though beliefs were based on a fabrication?
 - 2) Who would die for a lie, who would die knowing it was fake
 - 3) Jews could point to the occupied tomb if it was a lie
- 6. God raised Jesus from the dead
 - a. This is the only explanation that adequately and thoroughly explains all four facts established by New Testament scholarship and reasonable justification.

N. T. Wright, eminent British scholar of Oxford University concludes, "That is why, as a historian, I cannot explain the rise of Christianity, unless Jesus rose again, leaving an empty tomb behind Him."



The Concept of Miracles
Or
David Hume's Argument Against (And Why it is Totally Lame)

I. David Hume's Argument Against Miracles

A. Definition

1. Miracle – A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature
2. Laws of Nature – Firmly established by unalterable experience

B. Hume's Original Argument:

- (1) A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature. [*Hume's definition of a miracle*]
- (2) Firm and undeniable experience has established these laws
- (3) The proof (i.e., evidence) against miracles is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined. [*from (1) and (2)*]
- (4) A wise man proportions his beliefs to the evidence.
- (5) A wise man should not believe in miracles. [*from (3) and (4)*]

II. Reformulating the argument as Deductive and Inductive.

A. The Deductive Version of Hume's Argument:

- (6) Miracles violate the laws of nature. [*Hume's definition of a miracle*]
- (7) Uniform experience shows that the laws of nature are never violated.
[i.e., "Natural laws are unalterably uniform" or "Natural laws cannot be violated"]
- (8) Miracles cannot occur. [*from (6) and (7)*]

B. Objections

- a. This is question begging
- b. premise (7) is the **unproved** and **unsupported assumption** that miracles have never occurred
- c. Statement 2 assumes that miracles cannot occur

And to argue for the conclusion that miracles do not happen by assuming that miracles, under whatever description, don't happen is just to argue in a circle or beg the question. -Richard Purtill. "Miracles, What If They Happen?" in *Miracles*. Richard Swinburne, ed.

C. Hume's Inductive Argument

- (9) A miracle by definition is a rare occurrence.
- (10) Natural law is by definition a regular occurrence.
- (11) The evidence for a regular occurrence is always greater than for a rare occurrence.
- (12) The evidence will always be greater against miracles than for them (from Premise 1, 2, 3).
- (13) A wise person always bases his belief on the greater evidence.
- (14) A wise person should never believe in miracles.

D. Counter-Argument: The *Parallel Poker* Argument: Showing this is a Bad Argument

- (9*) A royal flush is by definition a rare occurrence.
- (10*) A pair is by definition a regular occurrence.
- (11) The evidence for a regular occurrence is always greater than a rare occurrence.
- (12*) The evidence will always be greater against a royal flush than for one.
- (13) A wise person always bases his belief on the greater evidence.
- (14*) A wise person should never believe in a royal flush.

E. What if someone was actually dealt a royal flush? Should they refuse to believe it? Of course not! Given a desire to win, that would be an *irrational* way to play poker. Something is very wrong with this argument. If one rejects the Poker Argument, then one must also reject Hume's Inductive Argument because these arguments are parallel all the every relevant ways.

F. Objections -- all of which are different reasons for rejecting premise (11).

1. The Argument Confuses the Idea of Adding Evidence with Weighing Evidence
 - a. People base their belief on facts, not just the odds
 - b. The evidence, at times, favors a rare occurrence over a regular occurrence, by "weighing" it
 - c. The problem seems to be in premise (11). Simply put, *premise (11) is false*.
 - d. The evidence for the regular occurrence is not always greater than that for the rare occurrence.
2. The argument confuses scientific evidence with historical evidence
 - a. Scientific evidence or nature law is repeatable while historical evidence is unrepeatable, unique
 - b. Unconditional acceptance of premise (11) threatens to destroy the entire academic field of history by making it irrational to believe that anything in history ever happened.
 - c. So if Premise (11) is necessarily true, then historical evidence is impossible
3. The argument destroys advancement in scientific knowledge
 - a. If "alleged" miracles cannot be accepted as true, because they are rare, then one cannot accept any event that is rare.

The Problem of Evil

Either God wants to abolish evil, and cannot; or he can, but does not want to; or he cannot and does not want to. If he wants to, but cannot, he is impotent. If he can, and he does not want to, he is wicked. But, if God both can and wants to abolish evil, then how comes evil in the world?

-Epicurus, philosopher

I. Definition/Categories/Forms

A. Definitions

1. Evil – A deviation from some absolute standard of good
2. Moral Evil – Evil that arises from human activity in which they can be held morally responsible
3. Natural Evil – Evils that arise from natural activity (examples: tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, natural disasters)

B. Categories

1. Academic, intellectual, philosophical problem of evil
 - a. Deals with the existence of evil in general
 - b. How can the existence of God be squared with the existence of evil?
2. Emotional, religious, existential problem of evil
 - a. Deals with a particular instance or occurrence of evil in someone's life
 - b. The sufferer is unable to reconcile what is happening in their life with the view of God's love and power

The fact of suffering undoubtedly constitutes the single greatest challenge to the Christian faith, and has been in every generation.

-John Stott, theologian

C. Forms

1. Logical (deductive) problem of evil
 - a. Assessing the claim that the traditional concept of God and the existence of evil are logically contradictory
 - b. Form:
Premise 1 – God is all-powerful
Premise 2 – God is all-good
Premise 3 – Evil exists
*This set is contradictory, inconsistent
2. Evidential (inductive) problem of evil
 - a. Evil offers strong evidence against God's existence
 - b. Evil's existence makes it unlikely that God exists

D. Explanations

1. Theodicy – Attempts to show just what reasons God allows evil (actual)
2. Defense – Attempts to show that God and evil are not logically contradictory (possibility)

II. The **Logical** Problem of Evil

A. Premise 1 – If God exists, then there can be no evil

Premise 2 – Evil exists

Conclusion – Therefore God does not exist

*Modus Tollens (Valid Form)

B. Analysis

1. Is Premise 1 a necessary truth?
 - a. If it is, this would mean that there is NO POSSIBLE WAY to fit those claims together
 - b. Strategy: Only thing theists must do is show some possible way for God and evil to exist (*It doesn't have to be true, only possible)
2. Free-will Defense (fwd)
 - a. Persons have free-will
 - b. It is not logically possible to have free will and no possibility of choosing evil
3. Soul-Building/Character Development
 - a. Evil helps (is necessary) for developing certain traits
 - b. Greater goods can only come about through evil
4. Natural evil defense
 - a. There might be non-human free spirits (Satan) who are responsible for natural evils
 - b. While unlikely, it does resolve the contradiction

Some philosophers have contended that the existence of evil is logically inconsistent with the existence of a theistic God. No one, I think, has succeeded in establishing such an extravagant claim.

-William Rowe,
one of the foremost
atheists of our day

C. Conclusion - The logical problem of evil is a complete and unqualified failure

III. The **Evidential** (Inductive) Problem of Evil

A. Atheists argue that there is evil in the world which seems to lack visible or apparent justification, and God would not allow unjustified evil

B. Form: Premise 1 – If God exists, then God would not allow unjustified evil.

Premise 2 – Apparently, there is some unjustified evil.

Conclusion – Apparently God does not exist.

*Modus Tollens (Valid Form)

*One may substitute “evidently” or “probably” for apparently

C. Analysis

1. Premise 2 is defended by the atheist as follows:

- a. Given the amount of evil in the world, certainly God could prevent some evil without preventing some greater good (example: freewill, soul building)

- b. No matter how hard we try we cannot think of any justification for all the evils in the world, so there probably is no justification
- 2. Compare the defense of Premise 2 with the following:
 - a. I don't see an elephant in the room, so there probably isn't one.
 - b. I don't see a flea in the room, so there probably isn't one.
- 3. The question to ask ourselves: "Is the defense of Premise 2 more like the elephant argument or the flea argument?"
 - a. If its like the elephant argument, then it is a good argument, but if it's like the flea argument than it it's a bad argument, but how we answer the question depends on how we answer the following question: "If God had a good reason, would we be at all likely to figure out what it is?"
 - b. To make the inductive argument stick, the atheist needs to show that the answer is to the atheist needs to show that the answer is yes, not just assume it!
 - c. It seems to me that the answer is no
 - 1) Reason why: Analogy – Father to child

D. Conclusion

- 1. The inductive problem of evil does provide evidence against God's existence, even if it is not a high probability it is evidence nonetheless.
- 2. If the inductive problem of evil was the only evidence we had to go on, then one would be justified in believing that God does probably not exist.
- 3. However, that is not the only evidence we have to go on. One has many arguments for God's existence (C.O.M.E.T.)

IV. Evil as Evidence for God

A. Evil can be used as evidence in favor of God

- 1. Someone who is outraged at evil presuppose that there really is a difference between good and evil
- 2. He is using a standard to judge good and evil
- 3. Where does this standard arise or come from: God

B. If there is no God, where do we get this standard for goodness (not: society, individuals, no standard)

V. Theodicies

A. Reasons for allowing evil

- 1. Actual (not just possible) reasons God would allow/permit evil
- 2. Moving philosophy to theology

B. Various reasons

1. Punitive/Punishment Principle

- a. God punishes for wrong doing
- b. Don't be embarrassed that God operates under such a system

2. Educational Principle

- a. We mature because of suffering
- b. Example: Corrie Tenboom – she learned from her suffering a influenced many people
- c. Analogy – Same sun that hardens clay also melts wax

3. Revelation Principle

- a. Evil and suffer at times gives us more insight or revelation of God
- b. Example: Hosea – God told him to marry prostitute to teach lesson

4. Redemptive Principle

- a. Sometimes we suffer to bring benefit to others
- b. Example: Jesus – he suffered on cross

5. Satanic Principle

- a. Sometimes Satan causes pain and suffering

6. Mystery Principle

- a. Some suffer we don't know the reason for
- b. Who knows why it happens it is unknown
- c. Example: Father and son relationship

7. Eschatological Principle

- a. We can be assured that at the end of everything God will set things right
- b. God will overcome pain and suffer
- c. All evil will be justly dealt with

Science and Religion

I. Compatibility

- A. Four models of understanding between science and religion
 - 1. Conflict – religion and science are in total conflict
 - a. Scientific naturalism and biblical literalism (real conflict)
 - b. Issues Creation vs. evolution, “Scientific creationism”, Galileo, cloning, Scopes “monkey” trial of 1925
 - 2. Independent – science and religion are totally separate in their own goal, or focus
 - a. Each field stick to their own business
 - b. Science asks “How” while Religion asks “Why”
 - 3. Dialogue – science and religion can interact in a dialogue fashion and help inform each other in a limited way
 - 4. Integration – science and religion can achieve a unified and comprehensive understanding of reality
 - a. Example: Natural theology – cosmological, teleological arguments for God

II. Historical Landmarks

A. The New Astronomy: Copernican and Gallileian controversies

- 1. *Key Features*
 - a. Old Geocentric (earth centered) - Model dominated ancient/medieval world
 - Ptolemy’s adaptation of Aristotle’s philosophy later endorsed by the Roman Catholic Church
 - b. This model failed to explain planetary motion
 - c. Difficulties relieved by Copernicus through heliocentric model (Kepler, Galileo)
 - d. Galileo mounted a defense of the heliocentric model
 - e. Galileo position condemned, house arrest last 8 years
 - f. Background: Thirty Years War and the Protestant Reformation; RCC reluctant to admit error in this issue which would open the door for the possibility of error on theological issues as well.
- 2. *Key Figures*
 - a. Copernicus (1473-1543) – Heliocentric
 - b. Kepler (1571-1630) – Elliptical orbits
 - c. Galileo (1564-1642) – Controversy (promoting the ideas)
- 3. *Religious Significance*
 - a. Challenged the tradition view that the earth stood at the center of the universe
 - b. Because of the reformation (which was resisted by Roman Catholic Church as a new innovation) to allow any change was to open the floodgates of Protestant dissent

B. The Mechanistic Universe: Newton and Deism

- 1. *Key Features*
 - a. Newtonian Principles (laws of motion) explained a vast range of observational data
 - b. Laws of motion led to the idea that the universe could be thought of as a great machine (mechanistic worldview)
 - c. Pre-Newton World
 - Physical motion a mystery (things falling, moon)
 - All universe was held together by God’s providence
 - d. Post-Newtonian World
 - Appeals to natural law
 - Natural explanations, explain motion, space...
 - No need to appeal to God
 - e. Led to purely naturalistic explanations of the universe
- 2. *Key Figures*
 - a. Isaac Newton (1642-1727)
- 3. *Religious Significance*
 - a. Laws of motion led to the elimination for the need of God at many levels
 - b. Universe seen as self governing
 - c. Deism develops using these laws

Major paradigm shift in understanding working of the universe:
from: God is intimately involved in the physical universe
to: God is not involved at all

C. Origin of Humanity – The Evolution Controversy

- 1. *Key Features*
 - a. “Natural Selection” – if variations in an organism are advantageous for its survival, then they are more likely to survive and will pass that variation to their offspring
 - b. “Evolution” – All species, even humans, all result for this long, complex process of natural selection
- 2. *Key Figures*
 - a. Charles Darwin (1809-1882)
- 3. *Religious Significance*
 - a. Darwinism challenged the Christian idea that all life owes its specific characteristics to God
 - b. Calls into question the universe and privileged position of humanity as apex of God’s creation

III. Myths and Assumptions in Science

A. Myths

1. Evolution disproves the existence of God
 - a. Evolution does not provide evidence against God's existence
 - b. Evolution and God are logically compatible
2. The church hindered the development of science
 - a. The church had little influence from the early years until 600-700 A.D.
 - b. After 600 A.D. until 1700's the church had strong influence and control
 - c. Question: When would science most likely be able to break the chains of religious bondage?
 - d. The church, historically, has encouraged science
 - e. Science arises during the 1600-1700's when the church was at its strongest which seems unlikely if it is hindering science
3. Scientism
 - a. Definition – The belief that only science leads to knowledge
 - b. Refutation – Apply the statement to itself - *Self-Refuting*

Alfred North Whitehead (1851-1947), famed mathematician and scientist, writes, "Christianity is the mother of science Christianity gave them the faith in the possibility of science...Robert Oppenheimer (1904-1967), stressed that all modern science was born out of the Christian world view.

B. Assumptions

1. The universe is orderly
 - a. This notion derives from Christianity
2. Repeatability of nature
3. The importance of telling the truth

IV. Intelligent Design

A. New movement

B. Context of science

1. When one does science today the assumption about reality is naturalism
2. Methodological naturalism – Exclude divine or supra natural causes or causes that are not natural

C. Intelligent design's purpose is to overcome this context of science

1. Research program
2. Detect design within nature

D. Detecting Design in Nature

1. Specified complexity
2. In other words, an improbable pattern
 - a. Example: SETI – Contact – Sequence of prime numbers

What is Intelligent Design?

"The theory of intelligent design holds that certain features of the universe and of living things are best explained by an intelligent cause, not an undirected process such as natural selection."

V. Four Views of Origins

A. Young Earth

1. Literal 6 day creation
2. Age = 6,000-10,000 years old
3. Appearance of Age
4. Flood geology

B. Old Earth

1. Age = 10-12 billion years old
2. God created through the Big Bang
3. Specific acts of creations: animals, life, humans

C. Theistic Evolution

1. Age = 10-12 billion years old
2. God used the process of evolution to bring about life

D. Naturalistic evolution

1. Age = 10-12 billion years old
2. Unguided natural process of life evolving
3. No God involved

VI. Problems with Evolution –F.A.C.E.

A. Fossil Record – The fossil record does not portray a slow process of evolution, but an explosion of life at Cambrian Period

B. Ape-Man – The "missing links" between ape and man have turned up as fakes, hoaxes, or misidentified

C. Chance – It is highly unlikely that life came about by chance

1 protein by chance = 1 in 10^{161}

239 proteins required for life by chance = 1 in $10^{119,874}$ (requires $10^{119,841}$ years – a lot older than 10-12 billion years)

D. Empirical Science – Current scientific laws attest against naturalistic evolution

1. Big Bang – Implies a beginning which carries religious implications
2. Entropy – Things go from order to disorder, this is contradictory to evolution in which things go from disorder to order

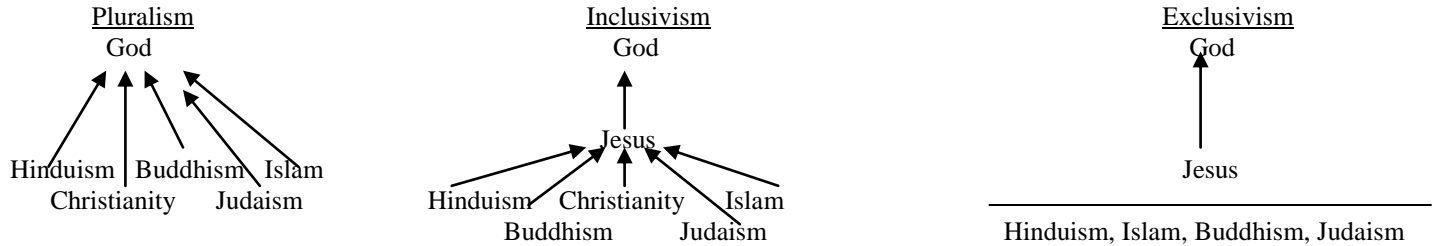
Pluralism, Inclusivism, and Exclusivism

Popular Form: “Is Jesus the only way to God?” or “What about those who never heard about Jesus?”

I. Definitions

- A. Pluralism – All religions lead to the same God
- B. Inclusivism – All who are saved, are saved by Christ, but conscious faith in him is not necessary – “Anonymous Christians”
- C. Exclusivism – All those who place their faith in Jesus are saved

II. Diagrams



III. Analysis

A. Pluralism

1. Assessment

- a. All religions are equally valid as ways to God
 - 1) Example: Mount Fuji – Just as there are many ways up the mountain, there are many ways to God.
 - 2) Elephant and the four blind men – different perspectives
- b. Pluralism and Christianity – Object to Christianities belief that it is the only way to God as arrogant and imperialistic

2. Critique/Weaknesses

- a. Teaching of different religions are contradictory
 - 1) Example 1: Many Gods (Hinduism) vs. one God (Theism)
 - 2) Example 2: Saved through works (Islam) vs. saved through faith (Christianity)
 - 3) Example 3: God is impersonal (Buddhism) vs. God is personal (Judaism/Christianity)
- b. Pluralism itself is “arrogant and imperialistic”
- c. How did the pluralist transcend their culture – If truth claims and religious claims are historically and culturally subjective, then what about the “truth” claims that all religious claims are historically and culturally subjective.

B. Inclusivism

1. Assessment

- a. Jesus is the only savior, but many are “included” (hence, inclusivism) in his salvation that never explicitly trusted him
- b. God accepts implicit faith, people responding to what they know is true (their religion, or nature, general revelation, creation, conscience)
- c. “Anonymous Christians”
- d. Although the beliefs of non-Christians religions are skewed or downright false, faithfulness & a Godly lifestyle provides salvation

2. Critique

- a. Contradictions in scripture: John 14:6; Acts 4:12, 10:43
- b. Why not “Anonymous Buddhists”
- c. Would Mohammed, Gandhi, & the Dalai Llama accept this kind of salvation?
- d. If persons can achieve salvation without knowing the Gospel, why support missions?
- e. What about religious traditions that are unlawful, unethical, cruel; does a person who is “faithful” in Aztec human sacrifices, Voodoo, Satanism, or the Hindu caste system going to receive “salvation” thru those traditions?

C. Exclusivism

1. Assessment

- a. All those who are place their faith in Jesus are saved
- b. Scripture: John 14:6; Acts 4:12, 10:43

2. Critique

- a. Seems arrogant & imperialistic
- b. It seems unjust for God to condemn a person who never had a chance to hear the Gospel
- c. Given that there are many exclusivist claims, to which faith ought we to adhere?

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