

The Existence of God

Question: Which task is most challenging?

- a) To prove that God exists; that there *is a God*?
- b) To prove that no God exists; that there *is no God*?

Responding to the question – some thoughts.

- To demonstrate that there is no God is impossible; it requires comprehensive knowledge gained only by an exhaustive search of all reality to validate that indeed no evidence can be found anywhere that might dispose one to believe that God exists.
- To demonstrate that there is a God can be expected to be easier, at least slightly so.

Argument #1 for the Existence of God

Logical Presuppositions – Part 1 (premises, foundations)

- If there is a reality, a cosmos, there must be a ‘source explanation’ for that reality.
- If there ever was a time when there was nothing, there could never be anything.
- If there never was SomeOne (an intelligent being) there could never be anything.
- There is a physical reality ... I know that I exist, and that I exist in a physical reality.
- Creation is the best known, even universally known, fact, a fact that begs for ‘source causal’ explanation.
- There must be SomeOne, the Creator, who is the Definer of ultimate truth.
- The Creator can only be known in truth if He purposes to reveal Himself.

Logical Presuppositions – Part 2

- No creature can act or think before it exists.
- No creature can create itself – a creature is dependent being.
- There must be a first cause for creation.
- Pre-existing life and intelligence are required for creation of the world.
- There must be an intelligent “SomeOne” who is the first cause of all things.
- The Creator must be the pre-existing (eternal), all-wise (omniscient), all-powerful (omnipotent), independent, and willful First-Cause being.
- There can be only one eternally self-existent, omniscient, omnipotent, independent, and willful being –the person we refer to by the name ‘God.’

Conclusion: The existence of reality requires the existence of an uncreated Creator of all things. Therefore, and by necessity, God exists!

A fundamental question: Has the Creator revealed Himself? If so, through what means?

Responding to the question – some preliminary thoughts.

- The existence of a revelation assumes (requires!) the pre-existence of a Revealer.
- The Revealer must be the Creator, and the existence of revelation presumes that the Creator has made creatures with innate and requisite capacities to know Him.
- The existence of a revelation is meaningful only if creatures exist who have capacities to receive information communicated from the Revealer.
- A ‘revealer’ who does not speak in understandable terms, is in fact no revealer.
- Revelation is only reliable if it is truth.

Responding to the question – framing an answer.

- ❑ God has spoken – in explicit and understandable terms.
- ❑ The person named ‘God’ (*Elohim*) is the Revealer.
- ❑ The Bible is God’s communication, His very revelation in human language.
- ❑ The Bible teaches in explicit and forceful terms that God exists.
- ❑ God, as He reveals Himself in the Bible, claims to be holy and to only speak truth.
- ❑ The Bible reveals God as the Creator of all things.
- ❑ The Bible reveals that man is a creature made in the image of God.
- ❑ Man, therefore, possesses capacity to know God.
- ❑ Man, therefore, has access to ultimate truth → through the Holy Scriptures.

Conclusion: There is a revelation. Therefore, a Revealer must exist.
 The Creator is the Revealer. The Creator is God.
 Therefore, God exists! And furthermore, truth exists!

Question: How can we know for certain that God exists?

Answer:

- By faith – by faith in the Creator.
- By faith in the truth communicated by the Creator.
- By studying the words of revelation – the communication of the Revealer.
- By studying creation – the very works of the Creator.
- By receiving the personal witness of the Creator to creatures made in His image.

“By faith we understand that the worlds were prepared by the word of God, so that what is seen was not made out of things which are visible.” *Heb. 11:3*

Note: Creation is the strongest argument for the existence of God. It is for this reason that the Scriptures make so much of the Creatorship of God, and of the glory of His creative handiwork.

- God appeals to His creative works to validate His existence. See *Job 38-40*.
- God appeals to His creative works to stimulate the required response from man – a proper worship of the Creator. See *Ps. 19:1-6; 104; 148*.
- Paul appeals to the creative work of God to argue for the existence of God.
 See *Acts 14:15-17; 17:24-29*.
- Paul appeals to the clear testimony of natural revelation to argue that every man is without excuse before God – before God who has wrath against all who suppress the obvious truth of His existence. See *Rom. 1:18-20*.

“But now ask the beasts, and let them teach you; and the birds of the heavens, and let them tell you. Or speak to the earth, and let it teach you; and let the fish of the sea declare to you.
 Who among all these does not know that the hand of the LORD has done this, in whose hand is the life of every living thing, and the breath of all mankind? ... With Him are wisdom and might; to Him belong counsel and understanding.” *Job 12:7-13*

Argument #2 for the Existence of God

There are basically two worldviews, two philosophies, regarding the issue of origins: **naturalism** and **supernaturalism**. A “worldview” is:

- a framework for comprehending, explaining and interpreting reality.
- a basis for defining reality – all that exists, both visible and invisible.
- the ‘big picture’ regarding the origin, meaning, purpose and functioning of all reality.

Perspective: An analysis of these opposing worldviews can be used (at least in the author’s opinion) to devise an argument for the existence of God.

Naturalism	Supernaturalism
<p><u>Assumption</u> (a faith-based premise): A Person named God exists? No! There is a Creator? No!</p> <p><u>Definition</u> Naturalism asserts that the origin, purpose, operation and destiny of all things are determined entirely by natural forces ... ‘nature-devised’ forces that are expressible as natural laws, even laws which have been in force for all time – and which will persist forever. Outcomes of these “mindlessly upheld” natural laws form both the cause for and the explanation of all observable reality.</p> <p><u>Implication</u> The fact that no eternally-existing person (God) exists implies that man is left to determine meaning and purpose, bases for truth, justice, values, etc., entirely from physical experience or intuition. There are no eternal and absolute bases for defining uniquely such ‘high level’ concepts or principles.</p> <p><u>Consequence</u> Man is left to “choose” or to “discover” entirely natural causes for comprehending, interpreting, and defining all reality. The discoverable ‘first causes’ are those inherent in the functioning of the physical world – causes that can be accessed exclusively by physical experience. The ‘discovered first causes’ can then be extended by means of ‘faith-based’ extrapolations and conjectures. This leads to a ‘purported truth’ – a ‘truth’ that is neither independent nor absolute, and ultimate meanings must be discovered and arrived at naturally over time.</p>	<p><u>Assumption</u> (a faith-based premise): A Person named God exists? Yes! There is a Creator? Yes!</p> <p><u>Definition</u> Supernaturalism asserts that there is an eternally-existing person, a person completely transcendent to creation, a Person named ‘God.’ It asserts that the power and creative genius of God are solely responsible for the existence of the entire cosmos and all that is in it. Furthermore, it asserts that this Person named God is sovereign over all reality.</p> <p><u>Implication</u> The existence of God, plus the Creatorship of God, implies that He alone determines the purpose of all things; He alone sustains the operation of all things through laws that He ordains and upholds; and He alone guides all things to a predetermined destiny – and that He does all this for His own purposes and according to principles that He establishes.</p> <p><u>Consequence</u> A transcendent ‘First Cause’ exists, a First Cause who is immeasurably and indescribably great in wisdom and power, and who exists in an independent and awesome reality that is completely separate and distinct from the physical world. Man is left to understand reality as He reveals it – both through direct communication and through discovery of natural laws that He has implemented and sustains. This leads to an ‘externally-provided truth’ – a ‘truth’ that is both independent and absolute. Ultimate truth is discovered and arrived at through supernaturally provided revelation and Creator-endowed gifts.</p>

Naturalism cont'd.

Basic Premises

1. God does not exist.
2. Revelation does not exist – aside from discoverable natural laws.
3. Truth about reality is only accessible through science.

Perspective of Naturalism

Science is:

- the laws that govern all of reality – nature, man, etc.; physical, psychological, etc., all of which arose spontaneously out of mindless matter over vast reaches of time.
- the basis for discovery and systematizing and application of principles and laws.

Implications implicit in Naturalism

Since there is no Creator, then

- ❑ science must be sovereign – natural laws must govern (determine) the origin, operation and destiny of all things.
- ❑ science must be eternal – natural laws must have governed from infinity past just as they govern all aspects of the present, and they will be valid and in force throughout the infinite future.
- ❑ scientists (the discoverers and interpreters of science) are ‘gods’ – they determine the meaning of reality; they set forth the principles underlying truth, justice, values, etc. (i.e., they are ‘gods’ serving under the omnipresent ‘god’ of science/natural law).
- ❑ since man is clearly fallible, and obviously has incomplete understanding of essentially all of reality, absolute truth does not and cannot exist.

Note

The foregoing statements are natural consequences of the pre-suppositional assertion that God does not exist; that is, they are at their very root ‘*faith-based*’ outcomes.

Editorial Comment.

The assertion of Naturalism that natural law has enduring validity is a pure and bold premise of faith. It is important to understand that both Naturalism and Supernaturalism are ‘*faith-based*’ worldviews. The fact of the matter is that no worldview of origins can escape beginning from a set of *faith-premises* – faith is an indispensable element in any worldview.

Supernaturalism cont'd.

Basic Premises

1. God exists.
2. Revelation is possible – if God speaks.
3. Truth about reality may be accessed through both revelation and science.

Perspective of Supernaturalism

If God exists but has not spoken, then:

- He cannot be known.
- absolute truth is inaccessible.
- all that can be known about creation must be discovered through naturalism.

Since God exists and has spoken, we have a source of information that derives:

- from One external to us and the cosmos.
- from One who is Definer of reality.
- from One who speaks authoritatively.
- from One who is omnisciently infallible.

Implications implicit in Supernaturalism

Since God exists, there is a Creator, and

- ❑ God is sovereign – not science nor the created realm.
- ❑ God is eternal – not science or creation.
- ❑ Scientists (the discoverers and interpreters of science) are creatures ... and at best just stewards of the Creator.
- ❑ man lives in relation to, and under obligation to, the Creator – man is a creature who is duty-bound to serve the Creator with fidelity and exercise a stewardship over God’s creation.
- ❑ natural laws are God-ordained principles by which He exercises His sovereignty over His creation.
- ❑ scientific investigation – the discovery and wise application of God-ordained and God-sustained laws of nature – is the duty of man as stewards of His creation.
- ❑ God, as the sovereign Creator, can elect to suspend (alt., over-rule) natural law at His discretion and for His own purposes – that is, miracles are possible when and where He chooses to display His power.

Since God exists and has spoken, there is a Person who is both Creator and Revealer, and, therefore:

- ❑ absolute truth exists and is accessible principally through His self-revelation in the record of Holy Scripture.

Naturalism cont'd.

Relevant Questions of Naturalism

- How do we know that natural law is stable? ... that it has enduring validity? ... that it has been continuously relevant throughout the unknown past and will continue to be so in the unknown future?
- What (*alt.*, Who) sustains natural law? And, why should natural law be sustained? That is, why is it not fickle/changeable?
- Since the laws of nature had no apparent origin, how can we know the span of their existence, or the duration of their fixity as they are presently understood?
- Does not the existence of “apparently” stable laws of nature imply the existence of a ‘Law-Enforcer?’ Even of a ‘Law-Giver and ‘Law-Sustainer?’ Why not?

Summary Comment.

Just as there must be a Giver and Enforcer of physical laws, even so there must be a Giver and Enforcer/Upholder of moral/spiritual laws. These are not separate and disconnected realities, the one being physical and the other being moral/spiritual. There is but one Creator of all things, and this necessary Personal Creator is the sole Law-Giver, Law-Enforcer, Law-Sustainer existing eternally, independently and transcendentally in awesome reality. He is sovereign over the entire cosmos and all that is in it, and directs all creation toward His own purposes and for His own pleasure and glory.

Supernaturalism cont'd.

A General Question.

Are the premises of Naturalism more valid, equally valid, or less valid than the premises that God exists and that God has spoken?

A personal answer.

The premises of Naturalism are less valid. Evidence for a Creator is ubiquitous and convincing to any objective and honest student. More significantly, however, the uniform and overwhelming testimony of Scripture speaks eloquently to the Divine origin of all things – physical and spiritual.

“The heavens *are telling* of the glory of God; and their expanse *is declaring* the work of His hands.” *Ps. 19:1*

“By the word of the LORD the heavens *were made*, and by the breath of His mouth all their host.” *Ps. 33:6*

“For since the creation of the world [God’s] invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, *have been clearly seen, being understood* through what has been made.” *Rom. 1:20*

“Worthy art Thou, our Lord and our God, to receive glory and honor and power; for *Thou didst create all things*, and because of Thy will they existed, and were created.” *Rev. 4:11*

The Conclusion of the Matter

- ❖ That creation exists is sufficient evidence that a Creator exists – the Person we call God.
- ❖ That we have a revelation is ample proof that a Revealer exists – the Person we call God.
- ❖ That God is both Creator and Revealer establishes decisively that God is the definer and sustainer of reality, and both ultimate and absolute truth exist – truth that is accessible primarily through specific revelation (the Word of God) and secondarily through nature (*alt.*, general revelation), the works of God in His creation and in the natural laws that He has ordained and sustains.
- ❖ That God has given man His self-revelation in both His Word and in fixed laws of nature that govern His creation speaks decisively and eloquently that He is knowable, and that He sincerely desires to be known in truth by those creatures He made in His own image.
- ❖ That God is both Law-Giver and Law-Sustainer establishes decisively that natural laws are but an expression of principles He has purposefully ordained for the functioning of His creation.

Scattered Supplementary Notes and Comments

“The universe minus God equals nothing.
God minus the universe equals God.”

Samuel Taylor Coleridge

The existence of the universe does not change God, nor does it add to who God is. He is ‘The Eternal Being One’ – He *was* before there *was anything* and He *does not* depend on creation in any way for His being or for the definition of His character. Everything that God is, or that defines the nature of God, is within Himself. Hence, even if there were no creation – no universe or cosmos – the being and existence of God would be wholly unaffected.

By contrast, the existence of God is absolutely essential for the existence of the universe. Without God, without the Being One who is The Creator, there can be no creation. Hence, if God is taken away (a hypothetical possibility proposed only for the sake of argument) there could be no creation (no universe/cosmos).

Revelation minus God equals no truth.
God minus revelation equals God.

Without revelation from God, there is no way for God to be known ... and if God cannot be known, no foundation for truth exists ... and without a foundation for truth, there can be no true understanding of reality and no true interpretative understanding of the origin, meaning, purpose, and destiny of reality.

As an important point of contrast, God is not obligated to reveal Himself to creatures He creates. Revelation does not make God exist. He exists independent of His revelation of truth. Revelation is, therefore, a gracious gift that God gives to creatures He has made, creatures to whom He chooses to communicate, and so in a wholly true communication.

We can conclude then that God desires, yea purposes, to be known by the creature He made in His image, and that He can be known truthfully in the measure of His revelation; in particular, that He is knowable as Creator, and that He can also be known as the Creator who is man’s only Redeemer.

Comment. The foregoing arguments show why the existence of a Person who is the Creator, and of a Person who is the Revealer who graciously gave to man an authoritative and infallible revelation, is so absolutely vital to the issue of origins ... even indispensably essential to the obtaining of a definition of reality, an understanding of reality, and a firm foundation for interpreting reality ... and so all in accordance with truth.