

FAITH PROGRAM

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DGM 102 - APOLOGETICS

READING BOOKLET

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Introduction to 'Apologetics'

I. The Word

- Greek root words: apo = "from"; logos = word, logic, reasoning
- The word for apologetics comes from the Greek word apologia, which is used in 1 Peter 3:15, and refers to giving a reason or reply for our faith.
- This word is a legal term that describes what a lawyer would do in defending his client. "Apologetics is offering each person evidence and reasons for the truth of Christianity."

II. Definition

- It is defined as "the branch of theology that is concerned with defending or proving the truth of Christian doctrines."
- An apologetic is a well-reasoned or thought out defense, or an answer of a position one holds or wants to defend or prove. In this case the cause is Christ.
- Apologetics is a subdivision of Christian theology.

III. Two Types of Apologetics

a. Defensive

- For it is only right for me to feel this way about you all, because I have you in my heart, since both in my imprisonment and in the defense and confirmation of the gospel, you all are partakers of grace with me (Philippians 1:7).

b. Offensive

- We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ (2Corinthians 10:5).

IV. Apologetics in the Scriptures

- Our Lord himself engaged in apologetical argument when he appealed to his miracles as proof that he was sent by the Father.
- "Believe me for the sake of the works themselves" (John 14:10)
- "It seemed good to me...to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the truth concerning the things of which you have been informed" (Luke 1:3-4).

V. References About Apologetics in the Scriptures

Acts 22:1 - "my defense"	Acts 25:16 - "make his defense"
I Cor 9:3 - "my defense"	II Cor 7:11 - "vindication"
Phil 1:7 - "defense of the gospel"	Phil 1:17 - "defense of the gospel"
II Tim 4:16 - "my first defense"	I Peter 3:15 - "ready to make a defense"
Luke 12:11 - "your defense"	Luke 21:14 - "not to defend yourselves"
Acts 19:33 - "make a defense"	Acts 24:10 - "make my defense"
Acts 25:8 - "his own defense"	Acts 26:1 - "make his defense"
Acts 26:2 - "make my defense"	Acts 26:24 - "in his defense"
Rom 2:15 - "defending them"	II Cor 12:17 - "defending ourselves"
Acts 9:22 - "proving Jesus is Christ"	Acts 17:2 - "reasoned from the Scriptures"
Acts 18:4 - "persuade Jews"	Acts 19:8,9 - "reasoning and persuading"
II Cor 10:5 - "destroying speculations"	I Peter 3:15 - "ready to make a defense"

VI. Why Study Apologetics?

a. God's Command

- "Always be ready to give a defense to everyone who asks you a reason for the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear" (1 Peter 3:15).
- St. Paul speaks of his mission as "defending and confirming the gospel." He adds in verse 17, "I am put here for the defense of the gospel."
- St. Paul makes Apologetics a requirement for church leaders. "holding fast the faithful word as he has been taught, that he may be able, by sound doctrine, both to exhort and convict those who contradict" (Titus 1:9).
- "And a servant of the Lord must not quarrel but be gentle to all, able to teach, patient, in humility correcting those who are in opposition, if God perhaps will grant them repentance, so that they may know the truth" (2 Tim 2:24,25).

b. Reason's Demand

- God calls upon his people to use reason (Is 1:18)
- To discern truth from error (1 John 4:6) and right from wrong (Heb 5:14).
- The ability to use reason is part of the image of God in man (Gen 1:26)
- Love the Lord with all your mind

c. The World at Hand

- C.S. Lewis says: "If all the world were Christian, it might not matter if all the world were uneducated. To be ignorant and -not to be able to meet the enemies on their own ground--would be to throw down our weapons, and to betray our uneducated brethren who have, under God, no defense but us against the intellectual attacks of the heathen. Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered" (C.S. Lewis, The Weight of Glory, 28).

d. Strengthening of Our Own Faith

- We are strengthened in knowing that our faith is founded on facts and truth.

VII. The Importance of Reason in Our Life of Faith

- The apostle Paul said in 1 Corinthians 15:14 that, "If Christ has not been raised, then our preaching is vain, your faith also is vain."
- Therefore, our faith is only as valid as the object in which it is placed. In other words, what makes faith have merit is the object of that faith.
- Evidence of truth should precede faith.
- No rational person steps in an elevator without some reason to believe it will hold him up.
- People deal in two dimensions of belief: belief that and belief in.
- Belief that gives the evidence and rational basis for confidence needed to establish belief in.
- Once belief that is established, one can place faith in it.

VIII. Words of Caution

- The task of apologetics is not to reason someone into the kingdom. Apologetics can never actually force someone to make a decision for Christ.
- Christ said in John 6:65, "No one can come to me unless it has been granted him from the father."
- The Holy Spirit must work in their heart to move them towards faith in Christ.
- Therefore, faith and reason must work hand in hand to effectively reach others for Christ.
- Apologetics can help someone to "believe that" Jesus is the Christ, but can never force one to "believe in" Him.
- We are lowering people's intellectual barriers so that the Holy Spirit can penetrate their heart.

IX. How do we do Apologetics

- With "meekness and gentleness" (1 Pet 3:15).
- People generally do not like to lose face when we confront them with Christ's true claims.
- As a result, we have to be very mindful of how we point out the inconsistencies in their worldview. We really need to come across like one beggar telling another beggar where to find bread.

X. Conclusion

- Our lives serve as a powerful apologetic to the truth of Christianity.
- We have probably heard the expression, "You may be the only Bible that someone ever reads."
- Joe Aldrich says that evangelism is like music. The words of the Gospel are like the lyrics, but your lifestyle is like the melody of the song. The melody enhances the words just as our lives enhance the message of the gospel.

In the same way, apologetics enhances the testimony of our lives, which is most likely what non-Christians will see first.

A Study in Christian Apologetics: What We Believe & Why

I. The Purpose of this study:

- To understand the culture, to influence it
- To Refute False Objections to Christianity (2 Cor 10:5)
- To share the message of the Gospel with others (Acts 17)

II. Today's Culture :

- For the past 20 years, we have experiencing the birth of a new age.
- It is a shift in paradigm, values, world-views and ways of life.
- The world awaiting our children is not the same world in which we grew up. The playing field has not only changed, but the entire game is different.
- This age has become a post-Christian and pluralistic age. Christianity has become nothing more than a troublesome oddity amidst diversity.
- "A major cause of our current crisis consists of a world view shift from a Christian understanding of reality to a post-Christian one" (J. P. Moreland, Love Your God with All Your Mind, p.21).
- Historians and sociologist call it the age of "Postmodernism"
- It is a world characterized by the rejection of moral absolutes, skepticism, and an religious pluralism.

- **The rejection of moral absolutes**
 - Sheryl Crow's song, Every Day is a Winding Road, sums up the world's philosophy of life with the words: "These are the days that anything goes."
 - We are quickly rejecting the moral values that make up the fabric of our society.
 - Cultural anthropologist Gene Veith points out that, "it is hard to proclaim the forgiveness of sins to people who believe that, since morality is relative, they have no sins to forgive."
 - "As we approach the twenty-first century, It doesn't take a rocket scientist to recognize that our entire culture is in trouble. We are staring down the barrel of a loaded gun and we can no longer afford to act like it is loaded with blanks" (J. P. Moreland, Love Your God with All Your Mind, p.21).

- **The skepticism of our society**

- We also live in a world that is becoming increasingly more skeptical about whether you and I can know anything as objectively true, especially religious truth.
- This skepticism is especially prevalent in the academic community.
- Part of understanding the times in which we live is to realize that people generally will not take what we say at face value as being true, especially if it is religious truth.
- There tends to be a modern attitude that if something cannot be proven as true through the scientific method of repeated observations, it must not be true, or there is no way to verify that in fact it is true.
- "If I was living at the time of Christ, I could make decisions about who Jesus is but it has been 2000 years, so we can not really make decisions like that any more" (College student).
- **Religious Pluralism**
 - All religions are essentially equal and teach equally valid truths
 - Promotes the notion of tolerance and unity
 - The claim to have discovered an absolute truth is no longer the ideal, but is rather the problem
 - Gene Edward Veith, in his book Postmodern Times, writes: "Today's universities, while devoted to cultivating truth, now argue that truth does not exist. This does not mean that the universities are closing their doors. Rather, the universities are redefining what learning is all about. Knowledge is no longer seen as absolute truth; rather, knowledge is seen in terms of rearranging information into new paradigms...Homosexuality is no longer considered a psychological problem; rather, homophobia is" (Postmodern Times, pp. 56-7).

III. **Our Role:**

- We need to also respond to the decreasing influence of the Christian faith on our culture – as well as the growing influence of our culture on our Christian faith.
- We need to ask ourselves:
- Where should we stand?
- Inside?
- Outside?
- Attempting to transform it?

The Problem of Evil

I. Introduction

- It has been said that the problem of evil constitutes perhaps "the most serious challenge to Biblical Christianity" (Ronald Nash, Faith and Reason).
- No doubt, the reality of pain, suffering, and evil in this world are issues that are hard to grapple with.
- How can a God—who Christians say is all-powerful and all-good—allow such evil to continue or, for that matter, to have started in the first place?
- This is an especially poignant question for 21st century Americans whose lives have been revolving on materialistically driven sense of happiness.
- In the following pages, with the grace of God, I will outline the challenge while presenting an expounded response to it.

II. The Reality of Evil

- In the United States, someone is murdered every 32.4 minutes, forcibly raped every 5.5 minutes, the victim of aggravated assault every 35.3 seconds, the victim of auto theft every 25.3 seconds and the victim of burglary every 14.7 seconds.
- Assuming that it will takes us one hour to discuss this topic in a youth meeting, by the time we finish we will have 2 murders, 11 rapes, 102 aggravated assaults, 142 auto thefts and 245 burglaries. And that's just in the US!!!
- No doubt, the reality of pain, suffering, and evil in this world are issues that are hard to deal with.

III. The Rock of Atheism

- Many atheists try to turn the existence of evil and suffering into an argument against the existence of God.
- The problem of evil is the problem of reconciling the existence of evil in the world with the existence of an omnipotent (all-powerful) and an Omnibenevolent (all-good) God.
- The popularity of this kind of argument has led Hans Küng (1976, p. 432) to call the problem of evil "The Rock of Atheism".

IV. Two Types of Evil

- Moral evil which results from the actions of free creatures:
- Violence, Lying, Greed, Dishonesty

- Natural evil which results from natural processes:
- Earthquakes, Floods, Famines, Disabilities: blindness, deafness

V. Two Aspects of the Problem of Evil

The logical / philosophical aspect

- This deals with those who challenge the possibility that a God exists who would allow such evil.
- In meeting this challenge we must utilize the tools of reason and evidence in "giving a reason for the hope within us" (I Pet 3:15).

The emotional / spiritual aspect

- This deals with the believer whose faith in God is tested by trial.
- In meeting this challenge we must appeal to the truth revealed by God in Scriptures.

VI. The Logical Challenge

David Hume, the 18th century philosopher, stated the problem as follows:

- Premise 1: An all-good God would desire to abolish evil
- Premise 2: An all-powerful God would be able to abolish evil
- Premise 3: Evil exists
- Conclusion: Therefore, an all-good, all-powerful God cannot exist.

Various formulations

- Premise 1: God is the author of everything.
- Premise 2: Evil is something
- Conclusion: Therefore, God is the author of evil.

In sum, the "problem" arises from the speculation that a perfectly good God would not allow evil to exist in the world. He ought to set up an evil-free world in accord with his perfection.

Since evil and suffering are noticeably present, it gives the impression that God either intends it that way and is therefore not entirely good; or lacks sufficient power to arrange a world free of pain and suffering.

VII. Responses to the Challenge (Theodicies)

- Theodicy: The branch of theology that defends God's goodness and justice in the face of the existence of evil.

The Nature of Evil Theodicy (St. Augustine)

- St. Augustine realized that the solution was tied to the question: What is evil? The argument above depends on the idea that evil is a thing (2nd premise).
- But what if evil is not a "thing" in that sense? Then evil did not need creating.
- According to St. Augustine, evil has no positive nature; but the loss of good has received the name "evil".
- Evil does not exist: it is not a thing and does not have being. Evil is a lack of being, and hence a lack of goodness.
- Since God made everything, and everything God made was good. Evil becomes the privation of goodness. Just as coldness is the absence of heat and a shadow is no more than a "hole" in light and, evil is a hole in goodness.
- Augustine observed that evil could not be chosen because there is no evil thing to choose. One can only turn away from the good.
- For when the will abandons the will of God and turns to what is lower, it becomes evil, not because that is evil to which it turns, but because the turning itself is wicked. Evil, then, is the act itself of choosing the lesser good.

The Free Will Theodicy (St. Augustine)

- One must recognize that for God to create beings capable of sustaining a relationship with Him, they must be beings who are capable of freely loving Him and following his will without coercion.
- Love, worship and obedience on any other basis would not be love, worship or obedience at all, but mere compliance. Additionally beings who are free to love God must also be free to ignore Him.
- He can't give these creatures the freedom to perform evil and at the same time prevent them from doing so. And when beings act in ways against the will of God, evil and suffering is the ultimate result.
- Adam and Eve's Sin ("Original Sin") resulted in corruption of our moral nature, causing loss of the inner harmony between reason and the passions. The ability not to sin was replaced by an inability not to sin.

Greater Good Theodicy (St Irenaeus)

- St. Irenaeus states that God has permitted evil in order to bring about a greater good which, in His infinite wisdom, He determined could not have come about without the existence of evil.
- Those things which appear evil only appear that way because of a limited context or perspective. When viewed as a whole, that which appears to be evil ultimately contributes to the greater good.
- For example, certain virtues couldn't exist without evil: courage, mercy,

forgiveness, patience, the giving of comfort, heroism, perseverance, faithfulness, self-control, long-suffering, submission and obedience, etc.

Another "Logical" Defense

- There are 2 hidden assumptions in the logical problem of evil.
- The 1st assumption is that if God is all-powerful than He could create any world He wishes; namely, a world without evil, pain, or suffering.
- The 2nd assumption is that if God is all good and loving, than He would prefer a world without evil.
- A good reason for rejecting the first assumption is that God's omnipotence does not mean He has the power to bring about logical contradictions.
- He could not create a round square or
- Accordingly, God cannot "lie" (Titus 1:2)
- C.S. Lewis writes in the "Problem of Pain"
- "If you choose to say "God can give a creature free will and at the same time withhold free will from it," you have not succeeded in saying anything about God: meaningless combinations of words do not suddenly acquire meaning simply because we prefix to them the two other words "God can."

VIII. Is It Worth It?

- Only God could ever know the answer to this question... You and I couldn't know that because our perspective is too limited.
- We must, however, believe that God thinks it was worth it or else, according to His ultimate wisdom wouldn't have allowed it to happen.
- Our Lord Jesus Christ paid a tremendous price (1 Cor 6:20). He would not have shown His sacrificial love unless there was something to sacrifice for.

IX. Faulty Perspective

- We think that life is about giving us pleasure and making us happy. This view is very prevalent in the United States. Our personal happiness, pleasure, and enjoyment are the most important things in life.
- Therefore, if this does not occur, then God must either have abandoned us, not exist, or be evil for allowing such a thing.
- True, there are aspects of enjoyment, but the ultimate reason we were created was not so we can have fun and enjoy life.
- God's purpose for creating us was to develop us into certain types of people who were fit to spend eternity with Him. He does that by conforming us to His image by helping us grow through the process of living in a fallen world.

- Do you know what kind of person thinks that way? A child. A child sees what it wants and goes to get it, and if it's stopped, that child puts up a fuss.
- Unfortunately, we've bred a society that are, in many ways, like a bunch of adult two-year-olds, grown-ups who believe it's their divine right to feel every pleasure they can possibly feel, to never encounter any difficulty, any pain, any suffering. And if they do, then God must be a cruel God.
- What's the alternative? If you conclude there's no God because of the existence of evil, then there's no possibility of ever redeeming that evil for good.

X. What About Natural Evil

- It is important to recognize that we live in a fallen world, and that we are subject to natural disasters that would not have occurred had man not chosen to rebel against God.
- Even so, it is difficult to imagine how we could function as free creatures in a world much different than our own--a world in which consistent natural processes allow us to predict with some certainty the consequences of our choices and actions.
- Sin, as a result of our free will has left the world in bondage to decay (Rom 8:21).

XI. The Purpose of Evil (The Emotional / Spiritual Aspect)

- God is able to turn evil against itself. And it is because of this truth that we can find joy even in the midst of sorrow and pain.
- St. Paul described himself as "sorrowful, yet always rejoicing" (2 Cor 6:10). And we are told to rejoice in trial, not because the affliction itself is a cause for joy (it is not), but because in it God can find an occasion for producing what is good.
- Just because we may not know a good purpose for evil does not mean there is none. An all-good God has a good purpose for everything.
- The secret things belong to the Lord our God, but to us and to our children the things that are revealed" (Deut 29:29).
- His ways are unsearchable and judgments past finding out (Rom 11:33)
- Paul Harvey, the ABC radio broadcaster, visited a young man dying of cancer, and he went in to encourage him. Instead he went away encouraged because the young man looked at him and he said, "Paul, I do not believe that the divine architect of the universe ever builds a staircase that leads to nowhere."
- Pain is God's Megaphone
- C.S. Lewis writes: "God whispers to us in our pleasures, speaks in our conscience, but shouts in our pains: it is His megaphone to rouse a deaf world" (C.S. Lewis, *The Problem of Pain*, 81).

- Even in severe trial God is working all things together for the good of those who love Him (Rom 8:28). This is not at all to imply that evil is somehow good. But it does mean that we are to recognize that even in what is evil God is at work to bring about his good purposes in our lives.
- You intended to harm me, but God intended it for good to accomplish what is now being done, the saving of many lives (Gen 50:20).
- No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness (Heb 12:11).
- Growth and refinement. As mentioned earlier, some virtues can only be developed through evil and trial:
- No Courage without danger, no Perseverance without obstacles, no Compassion without suffering, no Patience without tribulation
- Count it all joy when you fall into various trials, knowing that the testing of your faith produces patience. But let patience have its perfect work, that you may be perfect and complete, lacking nothing (James 1:2).
- We also glory in tribulation, knowing tribulation produces perseverance; and perseverance, character, and character, hope (Romans 5:3-4).
- For our light and momentary troubles are achieving for us an eternal glory that far outweighs them all (2 Cor 4:17).
- Suffering can provide an opportunity for God to display his glory-- to make evident his mercy, faithfulness, power and love in the midst of painful circumstances (Jn 9:1-3).
- Suffering can also allow us to give proof of the genuineness of our faith, and even serve to purify our life (1 Pet 1:7). As in the case of Job, our faithfulness in trial shows that we serve Him not merely for the benefits He offers, but for the love of God Himself (Job 1:9-11).
- Suffering provides an opportunity for us to demonstrate our love for one another as members of the body of Christ who "bear one another's burdens" (1 Cor 12:26; Gal 6:2).
- Suffering also plays a key role in developing godly virtues, and in deterring us from sin. Paul recognized that his "thorn in the flesh" served to keep him from boasting, and promoted true humility and dependence on God (2 Cor 12:7).
- David, the prophet, recognized that his affliction had increased his determination to follow God's will (Ps 119:71).
- Finally, evil and suffering can awaken in us a greater hunger for heaven, and for that time when God's purposes for these experiences will have been finally fulfilled, when pain and sorrow shall be no more (Rev 21:4).

XII. The Problem of Evil in Light of the Redemptive Suffering of Christ

- By the sufferings in His human nature by which mankind was redeemed, Christ gave to all of us who suffer a redeeming power when accepted as union with His Passion.
- In bringing about the Redemption through suffering, Christ raised human suffering to the level of the Redemption. Thus each man, in his sufferings, can also become a partaker in the redemptive suffering of Christ.
- All the miracles mentioned in the scriptures, curing the lame, the blind, the deaf, the leprous, etc. were changes on the purely natural level; that is, the gift given in each miracle was some benefit of the natural order.
- But when God transforms human suffering giving it a supernatural value, a supernatural power that is a far greater gift, a far greater miracle.
- But it is a gift so little appreciated, for it is known only in the light of faith. How many opportunities for spiritual growth and for helping others are wasted in complaining about the crosses of life?

XIII. Conclusion

- It is difficult for us to understand why God would allow some things to happen. But simply because we find it difficult to imagine what reasons God could have for permitting them, does not mean that no such reasons exist.
- It is entirely possible that such reasons are not only beyond our present knowledge, but also beyond our present ability to understand.
- A child does not always understand the reasons that lie behind all that his father allows or does not allow him to do. It would be unrealistic for us to expect to understand all of God's reasons for allowing all that He does.
- God does not will that anyone should suffer for the sake of suffering itself. Rather, it is for the fruit yielded by that suffering through the furnace of affliction that both magnifies the glory of God and further shapes the soul of the believer for eternity.
- In Conclusion, God is neither the author of evil, nor its helpless victim. Rather, precisely because of His goodness He chooses to co-exist with evil for a time.

Does God Exist?

"If there were no God, there would be no atheists"
--GK Chesterton, Where All Roads Lead

I. Introduction

- The existence or non-existence of God is the most important question we humans are ever asked to answer. If God does exist, a significant set of consequences follow, which should affect every day and every moment of our earthly existence.
- We are living in an increasingly atheistic world. The magazines we read, the music we hear, the peers and professors we have, are all shifting towards disbelief in God.
- Every Christian must be ready to discuss the question of God's existence -- especially if he/she is in a leadership position. This can make all the difference to the young people who are still open to see both sides of the question.
- Science is becoming our greatest endeavor to discover truth. People tend to equate science with truth and other kinds of knowledge with imagination. Atheists have used this mindset to their advantage by claiming that science has disproved God.

II. Can We Prove Gods Existence?

- The simple answer to this question is yes!
- The existence of God can be proven using logical principles. Not empirical methods.
- In other words, we cannot setup an experiment in a laboratory where God will appear for us in a test tube or under the conditions of some other controlled environment.
- But we must understand that the scientific method, while extremely valuable, is only one of the many vehicles that we have for learning about truth and reality.

III. The Limits of Science

- The aim of science is to study matter and energy. For example, love is a fact of life, but since it is neither matter nor energy it cannot be investigated by science. There is no gadget to measure the mass, length, breadth, or temperature of love.
- The aim of science is not to investigate all reality, but rather to investigate those realities that are seen in the form of matter and energy.
- God is neither matter nor energy. Therefore the methods of experimental

sciences cannot be applied to disprove His existence.

- It is true that we can't prove God by the empirical method of verification. But there are many things we can't prove in this way.
- For example, we can't use the scientific method to prove the existence of Abraham Lincoln. History, by its very nature, is unrepeatable. We can't rerun 1994 Super Bowl game, yet no one denies that these events took place.
- No one would deny the existence of love or justice or compassion, yet none of these can be proven scientifically. There are certain things that simply can't be measured, and the existence of God fits into that category.

IV. Different Instruments for Each Science

In the search for truth, one uses different instruments of investigation. Every department of Science has its own specific instruments for investigating truth.

Example:

Medicine ---> Scalpel

Astronomy ---> Telescope

Biology ---> Microscope

Chemistry ---> Test Tubes

- Same with God, since He is neither matter nor energy and cannot be dissected with a scalpel or placed in a test tube, we use other instruments to investigate His truth. i.e. Prayer, Repentance, Purity of Heart, His Word (Holy Bible), His Body (Church).
- We simply use spiritual tools to discover spiritual truths.
- Faith in God is not against reason, it is beyond reason. If we could analyze God in a test tube and understand Him logically, He would not be God. We would be God.

V. Arguments for the Existence of God

+ The Law of Cause and Effect

- It has always been a fundamental first principle of philosophy and science that "from nothing, nothing comes".
- We know that every event in the Universe has a cause for it. Apples fall down because of gravity while rockets go up because of thrust from burning fuel.
- Every effect has a cause. That cause in turn has another cause behind it. This cause in turn must have another cause behind it.
- Everything in this Universe has a cause except the First Cause. This first cause gave rise to everything else: God. There are 4 possible explanations for the existence of the universe. It is either: 1. An illusion 2. Self-created 3. Eternal 4. Created

- **An Illusion:** If the universe is merely an illusion, than who or what is having the illusion? Something must exist to experience the illusion. We dont have to worry about such people. If they are right, even they dont exist! And they shouldnt worry about us, because we dont exist!
- **Self Created:** This is referred to as "spontaneous generation" But for something to create itself, it must first be! In other words, in order for something to create itself, it must exist prior to itself. This is, of course, logically impossible.
- **Eternal:** Science proved that the Universe is not eternal. For example it would violate the 2nd law of Thermodynamics. According to this law, the universe will eventually reach a state of equilibrium, a cold, dark, dead, virtually motionless universe. Clearly if the universe is without beginning, then the universe should already be in a state of equilibrium.
- **Created:** Having established the first 3 options to be unreasonable, we arrive at the final option: the universe is created. In the words of the very first line of the Holy Bible, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth* (Genesis 1:1).
- Moreover, if something exists, there must exist what it takes for it to exist. The universe exists.
- Therefore, there must exist what it takes for the universe to exist.
- What it takes for the universe to exist cannot exist within it.
- Therefore, what it takes for the universe to exist must transcend it.
- Also whatever comes to being or goes out of being doesnt have to be. Suppose that nothing has to be. Then right now nothing would exist.
- If the universe began to exist, then all being must trace its origin to some past moment.
- And we said that from nothing, nothing comes. So the universe could not have begun.
- So there must exist that which has to exist, which cannot not exist. This sort of being is called necessary.
- Either this necessity belongs to the thing in itself or it is derived from another. If derived from another there must ultimately exist a being whose necessity is not derived, that is, an absolutely necessary being. This absolutely necessary being is God.

+ **The Argument from the Origin of the Idea of God**

- We have ideas of many things. These ideas must arise either from ourselves or from things outside us.
- One of the ideas we have is the idea of God, an infinite, all-perfect Being.

- This idea could not have been caused by ourselves, because we know ourselves to be limited and imperfect, and no effect can be greater than its cause.
- Therefore, the idea must have been caused by something outside us. Someone that is infinite, all-perfect, all knowing.
- But only God Himself has those qualities. Therefore God must be the cause of the idea we have of Him.
- Therefore God exists.

+ The Argument From Design

- Common sense tells us that the existence of a magnificent universe sustained by countless laws of physics requires the existence of a Creator of those laws, a Designer of those structures.
- An intricately crafted universe points to an intelligent Designer. Could time plus chance result in such an intricate design of our universe? Would that not be the greatest leap of faith? *Consider this:* What are the chances that a tornado blowing through a junkyard containing all the parts of a 747, accidentally assembling them into a plane, and leaving it ready for take-off?
- When one sees a beautiful painting, his thoughts immediately go to the artist who worked on it. When one looks at the infinitely complex Universe, one has to think of the infinitely intelligent and powerful Artist who put it all together!

+ A Planet Perfect for Life

- Our atmosphere contains a mixture of gases in perfect proportions to sustain life. Oxygen makes up 21% of our air. If the proportion of oxygen in the air increased by only 2%, objects around us could literally burst into flame.
- If earth were only a little larger, making its gravity slightly stronger, hydrogen would be unable to escape earth's gravity and would collect in our atmosphere, making it inhospitable to life. Yet, if earth were only slightly smaller, oxygen would escape.
- The earth travels through space at 66,600 miles an hour as it orbits the sun. That speed perfectly offsets the sun's gravitational pull and keeps earth's orbit the proper distance from the sun. If earth's speed were less, it would be gradually pulled toward the sun, eventually scorching and extinguishing life. Mercury, the planet closest to the sun, has a daytime temperature of about 600 degrees.
- Astronomers estimate that, if the distance from earth to the sun changed by as little as 2 percent, all life would be extinguished as water either froze or evaporated.
- No wonder the Genesis creation account concludes with this summary of God's handiwork: "*Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was*

very good" (Genesis 1:31).

+ The Argument From Conscience (Moral Values)

- Our sense of moral responsibility cannot be explained except by the existence of a Superior Lawgiver whom we are bound to obey.
- CS Lewis said When I was an atheist my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line.
- The existence of a standard of morality requires the existence of a moral God. What else could set the standard? Unless there is a God, there is absolutely no objective basis for morality.
- If there is no God, who holds us accountable for these things? What can you appeal to say they are wrong?
- A moral constitution and moral law imply a creator, law-giver, and judge. This creator, this law-giver and judge, is God.

+ Relational Verification of God

- In our everyday life we all experience love, peace, anger. All these feelings are "real", but there is no scientific method to detect them, verify them, or to measure them.
- Love is neither matter nor energy. Therefore no scientific apparatus can measure it. Yet love is accepted as a reality. This is because people experience love relationally.
- The same concept is applied in our knowledge of God. He is neither matter nor energy as we stated above. He is a Supreme Being, and He can be known, experienced, and verified only by **the method of relations**.
- God can be known in a personal way, and when people know God it reflects in their lives. There are so many changed lives around that no one can refute this as mere propaganda.
- Countless number of Christians have devoted their lives to serve the poor, the orphans and the unfortunate. **How many atheists do that?**
- Further, when these deluded young people reap the consequences, atheists are nowhere to be seen. They do not run hospitals, orphanages, old-age homes, and shelters for the destitute. Christians do that because of their relationship with God. This relationship motivates them to express their love practically.

VI. Conclusion

- In many cases the arguments are not the real issue. The issue is that Atheists have decided beforehand that they want to be autonomous, independent, masters of

their own destiny. *For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse because, although they knew God, they did not glorify Him as God, nor were thankful, but became futile in their thoughts, and their foolish hearts were darkened. Professing to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the incorruptible God into an image made like corruptible man--and birds and four-footed animals and creeping things* (Romans 1:20-23).

- Blaise Pascal the French philosopher and mathematician said: "God has given us evidence sufficiently clear to convince those with an open heart and mind. Yet evidence sufficiently vague so as not to compel those whose hearts and minds are closed."
- God wants all His creation not only to know Him but to get into a deep relationship with Him. He desires all to come to the knowledge of the truth (1 Tim 2:4). But we have to be ready to search for this truth with all our heart. "*You will seek me and find me when you search for me with all your heart*" (Jer 29:13).
- Pascal also says that there are three kinds of people: those who have sought God and found Him, those who are seeking and have not yet found, and those who neither seek nor find. The first are reasonable and happy, the second are reasonable and unhappy, and the third are both unreasonable and unhappy. If what's at stake stimulates us at least to seek, then it will at least stimulate us to be reasonable. And if the promise Christ makes is true, all who seek will find (Mt 7:7-8), then we will be reasonable AND happy.

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Material taken from www.suscopts.org