

Twenty Arguments for the Existence of God

1. The Argument from Change [An Aspect of the Cosmological Argument]

- The universe is filled with changing things; as far as we know, the entire universe is changing.
- All change needs an outside force to actualize it.
- Therefore, there is some force outside (in addition to) the universe, some real being transcendent to the universe. This being we call "God."

2. The Argument from Efficient Causality [An Aspect of the Cosmological Argument]

- All things that exist are the result of some cause.
- There must be something uncaused, something on which all things that need an efficient cause of being are dependent. This being we call "God."
- The idea that something can be caused by nothing is absurd.

3. The Argument from Time and Contingency

- The universe is filled with things that do not need to exist; their existence is not *necessary*.
- There must be something in the universe which *must* exist; some absolute necessary being. This necessary being we call "God."

4. The Argument from Degrees of Perfection

- The existence of degrees of perfection means that there is a perfect ideal.
- The concept of a perfect ideal applies not only to material things and properties, but also to *being*.
- There exists an absolutely Perfect Being, whom we call "God."

5. The Argument from Design [Teleological Argument]

- The universe displays a staggering amount of design.
- This design is the result of either chance or intelligence.
- Chance is a completely inadequate explanation for design; therefore it must be designed by a Supreme Intelligence. This Supreme Intelligence we call "God."

6. The Kalam Argument; the Argument from Eternity

- If the universe never began, then it always was.
- If the universe always was, then it is infinitely old.
- If it is infinitely old, then an infinite amount of time must have elapsed before the present time.
- The idea of an infinite amount of time having a completion is irrational; therefore the universe is not infinitely old, had a beginning, and the "Beginner" we call "God."

7. *The Argument from Contingency [An Aspect of the Cosmological Argument]*

- If something exists, there must exist things upon which the existence of that thing depends.
- The universe exists; therefore there must exist something upon which the universe depends.
- That which the universe depends upon cannot be *within* the universe, or be bounded by space and time.
- That being that transcends space and time, upon which the universe depends, is the being we call "God."

8. *The Argument from the World as an Interacting Whole*

- The universe is a dynamic, ordered system of many active, interacting parts.
- The active nature of each part is defined by its relation to the other parts.
- The system as a whole cannot explain its own existence; it needs a planner and a cause outside the system. This planner and causer of the system we call "God."

9. *The Argument of Miracles*

- A miracle is an event whose only adequate explanation is the extraordinary and direct intervention of God.
- There are numerous well documented miracles.
- Therefore, there are numerous events whose only adequate explanation is the extraordinary and direct intervention of God. Therefore, there must be a God.

10. *The Argument from Consciousness*

- We experience the universe as something can be understood, at least in part.
- Therefore, the universe is graspable by intelligence.
- This universe that can be understood and the intelligence by which we understand it are either the products of a transcendent intelligence, or the product of chance.
- Since chance is a completely inadequate explanation, the best explanation is a transcendent intelligence. This transcendent intelligence we call "God."

11. *The Argument from Truth*

- Our limited minds can discover some truth about eternal being.
- Truth properly resides in a mind; but our minds are not eternal.
- Therefore, there must exist an eternal mind in which these truths reside. This eternal mind we call "God."

12. *The Argument from the Origin of the Idea of God (Rene Descartes)*

- We have ideas of many things; these ideas come either from ourselves or from outside of ourselves.
- One of these ideas is the idea of God.
- This idea of God could not have come from ourselves, because we know that we are limited and imperfect, and no effect can be great than the cause.

- Only God has the qualities of God; therefore God must be the cause of the concept of God, and therefore God exists.

13. The Ontological Argument (Anselm)

- It is a greater thing for something to exist in the mind *and* in reality, more than just in the mind alone.
- “God” means “the ultimate” – that than which a greater cannot be thought.
- Suppose that God exists in the mind, but not in reality. Then a greater than God *could* be thought; namely, a being that has all the qualities of our thought of God *plus* real existence.
- But, this is impossible, because God is “the ultimate” – that than which a greater cannot be thought.
- Therefore, God exists in both the mind *and* in reality.

14. The Moral Argument

- Real moral obligation is a fact. We are really, truly, objectively obligated to do both good and evil.
- The atheistic world view is incompatible with the idea of a true moral obligation.
- Therefore, there must be a God who establishes moral obligations.

15. The Argument from Conscience

- It is good to obey one’s conscience; our conscience has moral authority.
- There are possible sources of this moral authority: nature (less than me), the individual (me), society (equal to me), and God (greater than me).
- Only God is an adequate explanation for the moral authority of conscience.

16. The Argument from Desire

- Every natural, innate desire in us corresponds with some real object that can satisfy that desire.
- There exists in us a desire which nothing in time, nothing on earth, and no creature can satisfy; we desire the eternal and the transcendent.
- Therefore, there must exist something that is greater than time, earth, and all creatures, which can satisfy this desire.
- This something is what we call “God” and relationship with God.

17. The Argument from Aesthetic Experience

- There is the music of Johann Sebastian Bach.
- Therefore there must be a God.

18. The Argument from Religious Experience

- Many people of different eras and of widely different cultures claim to have had an experience of the “divine.”
- It is inconceivable that so many people could have been so utterly wrong about the nature and content of their own experience.

- Therefore, there exists a “divine” reality which many people of different eras and of widely different cultures have experienced.

19. *The Common Consent Argument*

- Belief in God is common to almost all people of every era.
- Either the vast majority of people have been wrong about this most profound element of their lives or they have not.
- It is more plausible to believe they have been right than it is to believe they have been wrong. Therefore it is more plausible to believe that God exists.

20. *Pascal's Wager*

- Logical reasoning can not finally settle the matter of the existence of God. There is some evidence on both sides of the issue.
- If reason itself cannot decide the matter, then we must decide somehow, and we “wager” what we cannot absolutely prove. You must place a bet on either the existence of God or on His non-existence.
- If you place your bet on God, you lose nothing even if it turns out that God does not exist.
- If you place your bet on God’s non-existence, you lose everything if it turns out that God does exist.
- Therefore it is reasonable and logical to believe that God exists, even despite the absence of absolute evidence.