

LIVING FAITH CHAPEL OF SPC

The Doctrine of God: Lesson One

The Existence of God

A. The Testimony of the Scriptures

1. That God exists is the great assumption and assertion of Scripture
2. Genesis 1:1, “In the beginning, *God* created the heavens and the earth...”

B. The Testimony of Creation

1. Romans 1:20, “For since the creation of the world God’s invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse.”
2. Psalm 19:1-2, “The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. Day after day they pour forth speech; night after night they display knowledge.”
3. Man, the apex of creation, is the image and glory of God (1 Cor. 11:7)

C. The Testimony of Providence

1. Acts 14:17, “Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.”

D. The Testimony of the Heart

1. God has set eternity in the hearts of men (Eccl. 3:11)

E. Traditional Proofs Outside of Scripture¹

1. The Cosmological Argument – considers the fact that every known thing in the universe has a cause. Therefore, it reasons, the universe itself must also have a cause, and the cause of such a great universe can only be God.
 - a. Alternative Definition: “a line of theistic argument appealing to very general contingent facts, e.g. the existence of caused things. There must be some sufficient explanation for these contingent facts. Each such fact may be explained by some other contingent fact, but this series of explanations cannot be infinite. It must terminate (or begin) with something whose existence needs no further explanation, i.e. God.” (Oxford, 167)
2. The Teleological Argument – Since the universe appears to be designed with a purpose, there must be an intelligent and purposeful God who created it to function this way.
3. The Ontological Argument
 - a. “begins with the idea of God, who is defined as a being “greater than which nothing can be imagined.” It then argues that the characteristic

¹ Adopted from Wayne Grudem’s Systematic Theology, pp. 143-144.

of existence must belong to such a being, since it is greater to exist than not to exist.” (Grudem)

- b. It argues that “man has the idea of an absolutely perfect being; that existence is an attribute of perfection; and that therefore an absolutely perfect being must exist.” (Berkhof)
- c. The logical argumentation:²
 - (1) By definition, God is a being than which none greater can be imagined.
 - (2) A being that *necessarily* exists in reality is greater than a being that does not *necessarily* exist.
 - (3) Thus, by definition, if God exists as an idea in the mind but does not necessarily exist in reality, then we can imagine something that is greater than God.
 - (4) But we cannot imagine something that is greater than God.
 - (5) Thus, if God exists in the mind as an idea, then God necessarily exists in reality.
 - (6) God exists in the mind as an idea.
 - (7) Therefore, God necessarily exists in reality.
- 4. The Moral Argument – begins from man’s sense of right and wrong, and of the need for justice to be done, and argues that there must be a God who is the source of right and wrong and who will someday mete out justice to all people.
- 5. The Historical Argument – Among all peoples and tribes of the earth there is a sense of the divine, which reveals itself in an external cultus. Since the phenomenon is universal, it must belong to the very nature of man. And if the nature of man naturally leads to religious worship, this can only find its explanation in a higher Being who has constituted man a religious being.
- 6. What is the value of these proofs for believers? They can overcome some of the intellectual objections of unbelievers.

F. Explanation of Man’s Denial of God

- 1. Men clearly know God, but suppress the truth (Ro. 1:18)
- 2. They exchange the truth of God for the lie and worship and serve created things rather than the Creator (Ro. 1:25).
- 3. *Conclusion:* Sin is the reason men deny the true God. We cannot persuade men intellectually to recognize our Savior and Lord. We must realize that sin affects even the way men process evidence, their argumentation, and their reasoning. It is only as God the Father draws them and gives them the Holy Spirit can men see God (John 6:44,65).

² <http://www.utm.edu/research/iep/o/ont-arg.htm>