

## 1 **The Existence of God: Exploring Natural Theology (3)**

- Module: Philosophy
- Lesson 11

## 2 **Some Recommended Resources**

- Reasonable Faith, by William Lane Craig. pp. 91-204
- To Everyone an Answer, by Beckwith, Craig, and Moreland. pp. 57-134
- The Existence of God, by Richard Swinburne.
- Mind and Cosmos, by Thomas Nagel

## 3 **The Moral Argument**

- The argument stated:
  - If objective (transcendent) moral values and duties exist, then an objective (transcendent) source must exist.
  - An objective moral source must be a sentient, free, being. (Moral values and duties cannot arise from mere matter and energy, absent of a living being.)
  - Objective moral values and duties do exist.
  - Therefore, God (a transcendent, sentient, free, being) exists.
- This argument can also be called the Argument from Evil, in that it is difficult to see how one can speak of evil existing without implying an absolute standard of morals beyond us.

## 4 **The Moral Argument**

- Certain moral taboos are virtually universal across cultures and throughout time.
  - "It is an observable fact that if you look a cultures of whatever kind around the world, you will find common moral elements like respect for the truth, family, property, and tribe—and indeed other people—as well as reprehension of murder, lying, stealing, and cheating." (John Lennox, in 2084)

## 5 **The Moral Argument**

- Most people you encounter will concede at least some objective moral values. For example, most will admit:
  - It is wrong to torture babies to death.
  - Racism is wrong.
  - Rape is wrong.
  - It is wrong for someone to steal your possessions.
- Such universal objective moral values imply an objective (outside of ourselves) Law-giver.

## 6 **The Argument from Consciousness**

- Consciousness: To be aware of one's self (including thoughts, sensations, etc.) and of the world.
- Consciousness is a non-material phenomenon. There is no evidence of it existing in matter or energy.

- “Consciousness is the most conspicuous obstacle to a comprehensive naturalism that relies only on the resources of physical science. ...it threatens to unravel the entire naturalistic world picture.” (Thomas Nagel in *Mind and Cosmos*)
- There appear to be levels of consciousness.
  - There appears to be a vast difference between the consciousness of a bird and that of a human being.
  - Humans appear to be the only beings on earth that are not only conscious, but conscious that they are conscious, and contemplate the significance of consciousness.

## 7 **The Argument from Consciousness**

- As a non-material phenomenon, consciousness cannot arise from or emerge from a material cause (matter and/or energy).
- The cause or source of consciousness appears to be a necessary conscious source.
- God, as the only necessary conscious being appears to be the best explanation for consciousness.

## 8 **C. S. Lewis' Argument From Joy**

- Lewis uses joy in his own unique technical sense: “...an unsatisfied desire which is itself more desirable than any other satisfaction. I call it Joy, which is here a technical term and must be sharply distinguished both from Happiness and Pleasure.” (from *Surprised by Joy*)
- We each experience at times a strong desire and yearning for something beyond or greater, and which always remains unsatisfied. (Such as the pleasure/pang which one may feel when seeing an astonishingly grand landscape, or listening to an exquisitely beautiful piece of music. Lewis calls this Joy.)
- This joy or desire is simultaneously a pang or unsatisfied yearning and pleasurable, hence Lewis' use of the word joy to identify it..

## 9 **C. S. Lewis' Argument From Joy**

- Strong universal desires or yearnings reflect that there really is something that exists which satisfies that longing. (e. g. thirst/water, hunger/food, sexual desire/sexual intimacy, etc.)
- Lewis argues that this experience of Joy points to Something or Someone which can/will satisfy our Joy.
- Other great Christian thinkers have touched on a similar theme:
- Augustine (354-430 A. D.): “Thou hast made us for Thyself, and our hearts are restless until they find their rest in Thee.”

- Blaise Pascal (1623-1662): "There is a God-shaped vacuum in the heart of every man which cannot be filled by any created thing, but only by God, the Creator, made known through Jesus."

## 10 The Argument from Beauty

- The universe is full of beauty. (The beauty of a flower, the beauty of mathematical equations, the beauty of Beethoven's Fifth, etc.)
- Human beings are uniquely attuned to recognize, value, and create beauty.
  - How is the existence of beauty in the cosmos accounted for?
  - How is our deep appreciation of beauty accounted for by random mutation/natural selection?
  - How is the human ability to create beauty for beauty's sake accounted for by strictly materialistic mechanisms?

## 11 The Argument from Beauty

- It is very difficult to account by any kind of materialistic or naturalistic mechanism, for beauty, the human appreciation of it, and humankind's ability to create it.
- The very existence of beauty, as well as our deep ability to observe and appreciate it and to create it ourselves, all seem to point to a grand artist who both loves and creates beauty, and instills his creatures with a similar love and ability to create beauty. (the Imago Dei)
  - That beauty and its appreciation by humans has existed since creation is asserted by Scripture in Genesis 3:
    - "When the woman saw that the tree...was a delight to the eyes..." (v. 6)

## 12 Some More Arguments for God's Existence

- The argument from miracles. (More on miracles in later lessons.)
- The argument from religious experience.
- The argument from common consent. (The nearly universal belief in God or gods, and the inclination to worship.)

## 13 Reflections on the Hiddenness of God

- If there is a God, why doesn't He make Himself so obvious we can't miss Him?
  - The Answer from Human Freedom:
    - The Christian view of God is that He is uncompromisingly good.
    - Human freedom is a good quality.
    - Therefore, in the Christian view, God would create free creatures.
    - Were God to make Himself too conspicuous, it would override human freedom to act contrary to God.
      - Illus: Consider how carefully you drive when being followed by a policeman.

- Hence, under the Christian view of God, we should expect Him to be largely hidden from everyday view in order to facilitate human freedom.

#### 14 Reflections on the Hiddenness of God

- The Answer from God's Desire:
  - The Christian view is that God created humans for the purpose of fellowship with Him.
  - God's primary purpose in disclosing Himself to humans is in order that they might love, obey, and worship Him and receive and enjoy His love.
  - God may have no particular reason to clearly reveal himself to curiosity seekers who merely wish to know if God exists, but have no desire or intention to obey, worship, or fellowship with Him.

#### 15 Reflections on the Hiddenness of God

- The Answer from the Reality of Spirit:
  - The Christian view is that God is spirit, not matter.
  - The spiritual realm unlike the material world, is not perceptible by the five senses.
  - God, as spirit, cannot be perceived by our five senses, and so can only be perceived by a spiritual awareness, or by our senses when he chooses to act upon the physical world.
  - If God is spirit, someone who denies all spiritual reality (e.g. a naturalist or materialist) is unlikely to be perceptive of such a God.

#### 16 Reflections on the Hiddenness of God

- Is God Really Hidden?
- The objection that God is hidden makes an a priori assumption that simply because God has not revealed himself in ways we might prefer, that he has therefore not revealed himself to humans.
- While it is true that God is not conspicuous to us in materialistic ways we might insist that he be, that is not evidence he has not revealed himself.
- A claim of God's hiddenness is predicated on a categorical rejection of all arguments for God's existence as failing either deductively or inductively as evidence for his existence.

#### 17 Some Reminders

- The arguments for God's existence are mostly inductive. They are not "proofs" in the strictest sense, but evidence pointing to God's existence.
- Few people, if any, have merely intellectual obstacles to belief in God. Psychological and moral factors also play a role.
  - It is important to be equipped to address people's intellectual concerns via the arguments for God's existence.
  - But, we must also be willing and able to help people confront their psychological and moral barriers to faith.

#### 18 Next Week:

- The Nature of God

(In defending God's existence, it is important that we not attempt to define a "straw man" view of God often attacked by skeptics or atheists.)