

God, the Trinity & the Divinity of Jesus

Arguments for the existence of God

- Cosmological
 - Orderliness
 - Moral
 - Existential
 - Teleological
 - Historical
-
- “Faith COMETH by hearing, and hearing by the word of God” Romans 10:17

Orderliness Argument

- 1. If there is no God, there is no reason for the universe to behave in an orderly and consistent manner.

“The fact that there are rules at all to be checked is a kind of miracle; that it is possible to find a rule, like the inverse square law of gravitation, is some sort of miracle. It is not understood at all, but it leads to the possibility of prediction” Richard Feynman (Nobel Prize winner)

2. The universe does behave consistently (otherwise science would not be possible).

3. Therefore it is reasonable to believe there is a God consistently

“upholding all things by the word of His power” Heb. 1:3

“The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands.” Psalm 19:1

Cosmological Argument

1. Everything that begins to exist must have a cause.
2. The universe began to exist.
 - 2a. Specifically, space, time and matter began to exist.
3. Therefore the universe must have a cause.
 - 3a. Specifically, this Cause must transcend time and space.
 - 3b. Doesn't this Cause sound like God?

“In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth” Genesis 1:1

Teleological (Design) Argument

1. Design requires a Designer.
2. The Universe seems to be deliberately designed for life.
 - 2a. Eg, Anthropic Principle.
3. Therefore the Universe must have a Designer.

Moral Argument

1. Without God, there can be no absolute moral standards.
2. There are absolute moral standards.
 - 2a. Specifically, there is evil in the world.
3. Therefore there is a God.
 - 3a. Specifically, rather than disproving God, the problem of evil actually points to the existence of moral standards and consequently, God.

Historical Argument

1. If God is not real, the events described in the Bible could not possibly have happened.

“No one can do these signs that You do unless God is with him.” John 3:1b

2. Historical investigation gives us no adequate alternative than that the events of the Bible did actually happen.

“It seemed good to me also, having had perfect understanding of all things from the very first, to write to you an orderly account, most excellent Theophilus, that you may know the certainty of those things in which you were instructed.” Luke 1:3-4

3. Therefore God is real.

Existential Argument

1. If there is no God, then life has no meaning, value or purpose.

“Meaningless! Meaningless!” says the Teacher. “Utterly meaningless! Everything is meaningless.”

Eccl. 1:2

2. Life does have meaning, value and purpose.

2a. Specifically, we can find meaning, value and purpose through Christ.

3. Therefore there is a God!

We need revelation

*In the wisdom of God,
the world did not know God through wisdom.
[1 Cor. 1:21]*

God has revealed himself!

- [John 1:18] *No-one has ever seen God, but God the Only-Begotten has made Him known.*
- [Acts 17:23] *“As I passed along and observed the objects of your worship, I found also an altar with this inscription, ‘To the unknown God’. What therefore you worship as unknown this I proclaim to you...”*
- [Heb. 1:1-2] *Long ago, at many times and in many way, God spoke to our fathers by the prophets, but in these last days he has spoken to us by His Son... through whom also He made the world.*

The Israelite Revelation: One God

- 1. The Defining Moment: Israel at Sinai

“And God spoke all these words, saying: ‘I am YHWH your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of bondage. You shall have no other gods before Me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image—any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth; you shall not bow down to them nor serve them. For I, YHWH your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers upon the children to the third and fourth generations of those who hate Me, but showing mercy to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.’” Exodus 20:1-6

The Israelite Revelation: One God

- 2. Israelite Monotheism

The key features of Israelite monotheism are clearly recognised and understood by Moses:

1. God is Absolute ('YHWH'="I AM WHO I AM" Ex. 3:14) — and uniquely so.
 2. God is superior to all other 'gods' (systematically shown in 10 Plagues; cf. Ex. 8:18-19).
 3. God refuses to be worshipped the way we worship our other idols (Golden Calf Ex. 32:5)—YHWH is not a tribal idol!
 4. God is personal Ex. 33:12-23; (and therefore is "jealous" for us; Ex. 34:14).
 5. And because God cares jealously for each individual person, he is interested in the nitty-gritty ethical issues of everyday life (eg. Ex. 21-23) —even when involvement becomes messy! (eg. Divorce: Deut. 24:1, Matt. 19:8).
- But for all Israel to recognise this was a slow, painful process (as Moses prophesied! Deut. 31:29).

The Christian Revelation: Father, Son & Spirit

- 1. The Defining Moment: Jesus' Baptism

“In those days Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee and was baptized by John in the Jordan. And when he came up out of the water, immediately he saw the heavens being torn open and the Spirit descending on him like a dove. And a voice came from Heaven, “You are my beloved Son ; with you I am well pleased.”

Mark 1:9-11

The Christian Revelation: Father, Son & Spirit

- 2. The Trinity in the New Testament

Matthew 28:19 *Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of **the Father** and of **the Son** and of **the Holy Spirit**.*

- 1 Cor. 12:4-6 There are diversities of gifts, but the same **Spirit**.
There are differences of ministries, but the same **Lord**.
And there are diversities of activities, but it is the same **God**...
- Eph.4:4-6 There is one body and **one Spirit...**, **one Lord**, one faith, one baptism, **one God** and Father of all...
- 1 Peter 1:2 ...according to the foreknowledge of **God the Father**,
in the sanctification of **the Spirit**, for obedience to **Jesus Christ**....

The Christian Revelation: Father, Son & Spirit

3. The Trinity in the Old Testament

- a. Appearance of pre-incarnate Jesus (Ezek. 1:26, Gen. 32:22ff.)
- b. Outpouring of pre-Pentecostal Spirit (Num.11:24; 2 Kings 2:9)
- c. Plurality of Creator (Gen. 1:26-27)

Two ways of thinking about the Trinity

1. *“No sooner do I conceive of the One than I am illumined by the Splendour of the Three; no sooner do I distinguish Them than I am carried back to the One. When I think of any One of the Three I think of Him as the Whole, and my eyes are filled with tears, and the greater part of what I am thinking escapes me.”*

(Gregory of Nazianzus, Oration XL, paragraph XLI)

#1 God/Word/Spirit as One

- *In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.... And the Word became flesh and dwelt among us, and we have seen his glory, glory as of the only begotten Son from the Father...* John 1:1,14
- Implication: Communication is possible.
- Imperative: Honesty
“Let your ‘Yes’ be ‘Yes’ and your ‘No’ be ‘No’ – anything more comes from the evil one!” Matt. 5:37

#2 Father/Son/Spirit as Three

- 2 Cor. 13:14 *“...the grace of our Lord Jesus, and the love of God, and the communion of the Spirit”*
- Implication: Community is possible.
- Imperative: Openness:
 - to those you know Lev. 19:18
 - to those you don't know Heb. 13:2
 - to those you don't like Matt. 5:43-48

Two Common Stumbling Blocks

1. The Personality of the Holy Spirit

- i. Shown by use of masculine pronouns in spite of “pneuma” being neuter (Jn 14:26; 15:26; 16:8).
- ii. Also HS is said to “help”, “intercede” (Rom. 8:26) & to be “insulted” (Heb 10:29), “grieved” (Eph. 4:30).

2. The Full Deity and Full Humanity of Jesus

The Full Deity of Jesus

- Implicit in God's resurrection of the man condemned for blasphemy (Romans 1:4)
- Explicit throughout the New Testament

The Christian 'Shema'

- “Hear, O Israel: The **LORD** our **God**, the **LORD** is one” Deut. 6:4
- We know that “An idol is nothing at all in the world” and that “There is no God but one.” ⁵ For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”),
“for us there is but one **God**, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live;
and there is but one **Lord**, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.” 1 Cor. 8:6
- Clearly implies Christ is:
1. worthy of worship, 2. involved in creation, and 3. pre-existent.

Worthy of Worship

- “that all honour the Son, just as they honour the Father” John 5:23
- Revelation 4-5
- Philippians 2:10

Involved in Creation

- “through him all things were made, without him nothing was made that has been made” John 1:3
- “by him all things were created” Colossians 1:16
- “through whom God created the universe” Hebrews 1:2

Pre-existence

- “Father, glorify me in your own presence, with the glory I had before the world existed” John 17:5
- “He is before all things” Colossians 1:17
- “before Abraham was...” John 8:58
- “Isaiah saw his glory” John 12:41

Divine name

- Joel 2:32 ~ Acts 2:21 → the name of YHWH = the name of Jesus
“the name of the Lord”
+ Acts 4:12 “no other name...”
- Matt. 28:19 “... the [singular] name of the Father, Son & Spirit”
- Phil.2:9-11 “God has given him the name above all names”
Heb. 1:4 “the name he has inherited”
- John 18:6; 8:58 etc. All the I AM statements

Not an angel

- Col. 2:18 “let no-one disqualify you... insisting on the worship of angels”
- Heb. 1 “as much superior to angels...”
- Revelation 19:10; 22:8-9 “You must not do that!”
(ie. Worship angels!)

Unity with the Father

- Unity of Being
John 10:30; 10:38; 14:10; 17:21; 14:23
- Evidenced by Unity of Action (John 14:11; 10:25)
John 5:19 “the Son can do nothing of His own accord,
but only what he sees the Father doing”
 - working on Sabbath John 5:17
 - raising dead John 5:21
 - judgement John 8:16
 - teaching John 7:16

But what about “the Father is greater than I”?

- John 14:28
- Don't take the phrase out of context: John 13:3
- Jesus is returning to the Father's glory which is greater than his 'emptied' humanity
- 'The comparison is only meaningful if they're already on the same plane' (Carson, quoted in The Case for Christ)

Conclusion: God Is Love

- If God truly is love, how could he not be Trinity?
 1. “Love seeks not its own” (1 Cor.13:5)
 2. Therefore since love is personal, it requires multiple persons.
 3. Eternal love therefore requires multiple eternal persons.
 4. Thus if God is love (1 Jn.4:16), God must be multiple persons.
- 1 John 4:15-16 *Whoever confesses that Jesus is the Son of God, God abides in him, and he in God. So we have come to know and to believe the love that God has for us. God is love—& whoever abides in love abides in God and God abides in him.*

Trinitarian Prayer

- **I bow my knees to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
15 from whom the whole family in heaven and earth is named,
16 and pray that He would grant you, according to the riches of His glory,
to be strengthened with power through His Spirit in the inner man,
17 that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith;
that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
18 may be able to comprehend with all the saints
what is the width and length and depth and height—
19 to know the love of Christ which surpasses knowledge;
that you may be filled with all the fullness of God.
20 Now unto Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that
we ask or imagine,
according to the power that works in us,
21 to Him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus
to all generations, forever and ever. AMEN.**