

Apologetics: Week Five
Does God Exist: Part IV

The Religious Faculty of Man³⁶ (aka the Ontological Argument)

- Intro: 1. In all cultures throughout the ages, man has been incurably religious.³⁷
 2. Man has always searched for a higher being, something beyond themselves.
 3. This may not appear to be a “proof” for the existence of God, but it is certainly a compelling thought that points heavily in that direction.
- I. Mankind has always been religious.
- A. Think of any culture, and you will find some kind of religion that they practiced.
1. American Indians have the “Great Spirit” and many lesser “spirits.”
 2. The Greeks and Romans each had their mythological “gods.”³⁸
 3. The Arabs have “Allah.”
 4. The Egyptians had many pagan “gods” (Exodus 12:12).
 5. The inhabitants of Canaan had Baal and Ashteroth, which many Israelites began to worship (Judges 2:13).
- B. Those who have studied it have said “in all traceable cultures, monotheism always predates polytheism.”³⁹
1. This means that every culture that can be traced began as one that believed in one god before morphing into one that worshipped many gods.
 2. This one god was not necessarily the one true God in every culture.
 - a. Every culture seemed to have their own concept of the utmost deity.
 - b. Some cultures (such as certain Egyptian periods) worshipped the sun as the only god.⁴⁰
 3. Some did indeed worship the only true God.
- C. Mankind, therefore, has always had an inner desire for something beyond himself.
1. David spoke of this when he said “as the deer pants for the water brooks, so my soul pants for you, O Lord” (Psalm 42:1 - NASB).
 2. There is nothing physical to cause this desire, yet it is born into every human and culture from the beginning of recorded history.
- II. Man is incapable of creating something completely new.
- A. Solomon said “there is nothing new under the sun” (Ecclesiastes 1:9).
1. Everything that we can imagine is based upon something we have experienced.
 - a. This could be things we have seen and heard
 - b. It could be things that we have experiences with the other senses.

³⁶ This was the description of the Ontological argument given by Wayne Jackson, *Fortify Your Faith* (Apologetics Press, 1974), page 14.

³⁷ Northrop, Chuck. *Class Notes: Apologetics* (Bible Institute of Missouri, 2009).

³⁸ Paul and Barnabas were called Zeus and Hermes in Acts 14:12. Depending on the translation, either the Greek names for the gods or the Roman names (Jupiter and Mercury) are used.

³⁹ Jackson, Wayne. *Fortify Your Faith* (Apologetics Press, 1974), page 15.

⁴⁰ Roper, Coy D. *Exodus*. (Truth For Today, Searcy, AR, 2009), pages 665-667

2. Suppose you were to imagine the most horrible monster you could create.
 - a. Every visual aspect of this beast would be based upon something else you have seen or heard described in the past.
 - b. Even the horrible things that it could do would be based on the same things.
 - c. Even in using the furthest stretches of our imagination, we cannot create something completely new.
 3. An atheist once declared that man's imagination created God.⁴¹
 - a. He was then asked to describe what another sense (in addition to sight, smell, touch, taste, and hearing) would do and be like.
 - b. It is impossible to do that without it describing something that already exists in the human senses.
 - c. Man cannot create new things or concepts without using old things or concepts.
- B. This being the case, how did the concept of God arise?
1. The concept of God could not have arisen without something upon which it was based.
 - a. This means that someone, somewhere, had contact with a higher being.
 - b. We see in the Bible that it was not just one person, but many people throughout the ages.
 2. It was based upon the true, real God who indeed made Himself known to humans.
 - a. As was shown earlier, humans can only imagine things of which they have sensed or experienced.
 - b. The fact that a higher being has been conceived (in every culture throughout the ages), proves that there is indeed a higher being.

III. Arguments against this premise.

- A. "People who believe in God are not logical or rational, thus belief in God must not be logical or rational."⁴²
1. There are atheists who believe that only people with serious psychological problems would believe in God.
 2. They claim, then, that this premise is not valid, for it is based on faulty minds.
 - a. How is it, then, that every culture in all ages was completely dominated by people who were psychologically wrong?
 - b. How is it that these atheists which are in a very small, but vocal, minority have set themselves as the standard by which to judge all others in all ages?
 - c. Is it not more logical to assume that THEY are the ones with the psychological problems?
 - d. It has been shown repeatedly that most atheists have in their past a problem with God in some way.⁴³
- B. "This argument is completely subjective."
1. There are some who claim that this argument does not deal with facts, but only feelings, which are completely subjective.

⁴¹ Jackson, pages 15-16.

⁴² Northrop. Class Notes: Apologetics (paraphrase of notes).

⁴³ ibid

- a. It is admitted that feelings are indeed subjective.
- b. But this argument for God's existence is not based on feelings.
2. This argument does deal with facts:
 - a. Nothing can be conceived in the human mind that has not been experienced by humans in one form or another.
 - b. God is indeed conceived.
 - c. Therefore God has been experienced by humans in one form or another.

IV. What kind of God exists?

- A. God is, by definition, that being of which nothing greater can exist.⁴⁴
 1. Perfection is greater than imperfection; thus, God must be perfect.
 2. Omniscience is greater than limited in scope; thus God must be omnipotent.
 3. Order is greater than disorder; thus God must be orderly (logical and rational).
- B. Since nothing greater than God can exist, He is the ultimate creator and ruler over everything else.
 1. As such, we have a responsibility to seek what He wants us to do.
 2. We have a responsibility to obey His commands.

- Conc.:
1. On the surface, this argument may seem flimsy, but it does have weight to it.
 2. If you are not convinced by this argument, the question you must answer is: where did the concept of God come from, if not from God?
 3. It would appear obvious that man's seeking after God and worshipping a higher being for all ages in all cultures had to originate somewhere; where could that be if not with God?
 4. While one argument may not thoroughly convince some people, the four arguments that we have studied together these past weeks should be more than enough evidence to convince any honest mind.

⁴⁴ ibid