

The Existence of God

What is the design (teleological) argument?



Telos: purpose

- ✓ The Teleological Argument is Aquinas's "Fifth Way" of proving God exists. He says everything is working towards a purpose or goal, even unthinking things. Therefore, something must have given them this purpose and according to Aquinas, this is God.
- ✓ William Paley uses the Watch Analogy to support the Design Argument. If you found a watch, you would assume it has a designer as it so complex. Surely, nature needs a designer too, as it is very complicated (just look at a human eye!) This designer, according to Paley is God.
- ✓ Isaac Newton said a human thumb convinced him God is real, as the thumb is so complicated and has such an important purpose.

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It is based on things we can observe and test.	The conclusion that God is the designer is, at best, probably.
It can work with science- eg God could have designed the Big Bang.	Things are complicated because they evolved to survive.
God as a designer reinforces the idea that God was involved in the history of the universe and that he loves creation.	If God did design the world, it wasn't done well. There is so much evil and suffering!
The Analogy from Paley makes it easier to understand.	Just because parts of the world are designed doesn't mean it all was.

What is the cosmological argument? (The first cause argument)



Cosmos: universe

Contingent: to depend on something else to exist.

Everything in the world is contingent. We can see chains of cause and effect (e.g. human reproduction). However, there has to be a starting point. The starting point needs to be something that isn't contingent. Many people (such as Aquinas) argue this thing is God.

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It is based on things we can observe. We can see that contingent being like humans rely on something else to exist.	Why does the first cause of the universe have to be God?
Scientific discoveries, eg the Big Bang theory, can be seen to support the first cause argument. If God caused the 'Big Bang', then God is the 'first cause' that brought the cosmos (universe) into existence.	If the argument is based on the idea that everything has a cause, then this leaves open the question 'Who or what caused God?' To reply that God needs no explanation is not enough to prove God's existence.
	Big Bang was not necessarily caused by God – it could have happened by chance.

Miracles: a seemingly impossible occurrence, which goes against the laws of nature, it is usually good. Example: surviving being stabbed in the head. Theists believe that miracles prove the existence of God, as they don't believe there is a natural explanation for what happened, it must be a supernatural event. And in the opinion of a theist, the only explanation is God.

Religious experience: an encounter with God, such as a dream, vision or physical intervention.

Example: the conversion of Saul on the road to Damascus.

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While some religious experiences may be an illusion, it doesn't follow that they all are.	At some point science might be able to explain these experiences with no reference to God.
It is the best proof for the individual.	It is impossible to prove that these experiences are real.
Research at the university of Nottingham shows 60% of people questioned have had some sort of religious experience.	These experiences can have other explanations, such as drug induced hallucinations

Can you believe in God and support science?

No- theories on the development of the world such as evolution conflict with religious theories of creation (such as the 7 day creation story told in the Bible). Especially problematic for those who are creationists and believe the bible is literal.



Yes- 40% of scientists in USA are religious. God can work along side science.

Humanism: the belief that human experience and rational thinking provide the only source of both knowledge and a moral code to live by. There are no supernatural beings. Science provides the only reliable source of knowledge about this universe.