

A Summary of the arguments for the existence of God

Thomas Aquinas: 5 ways argument.

In the beginning of his masterwork *Summa Theologica* Thomas Aquinas sets out five different starting points that can be used to argue for the existence of God. They worked as five basic assumptions upon which he built his later work, but they all boil down to one basic principle.

The unmoved mover-Anytime anything moves something else moved it. For example, if we see a baseball moving through the air we can know with reasonable certainty that someone either threw it or hit it with a bat. If everything that moves has a cause which started its movement then we have two choices. Either we go back into infinity constantly regressing from cause to cause in a never ending circle, or we recognize that there must be an ultimate cause for all the movement. Thomas calls this the "unmoved mover." God, he suggests, is this unmoved mover. Thus-God is the ultimate cause for all things.

St. Anselm: The Ontological argument

warning-this argument can be very convoluted

We are capable of thinking about God as the greatest possible being that can be imagined. That is, we can conceive of a God who cannot in any way be surpassed. If this being were *only* in our mind then this by definition would not be the greatest possible being because someone smarter or more imaginative than we are could come along and think of an even greater being.

Since, however, we are not capable of imagining a being greater than God, he must by definition exist because it is logically impossible that we can imagine something that is greater than the greatest possible being in existence. Therefore, God exists.

Intelligent design

This argument is much simpler than the first two. Essentially it states that the universe is so perfectly fine tuned to support life at this time and on this planet that God must exist. The universe, without the intervention of God, is so naturally hostile to life that life could never exist. However, God has calibrated everything so carefully that it is impossible to assume that the universe spontaneously created the perfect conditions for life itself. This is in some ways the argument that I eluded to during the video in session 2.

Alvin Plantinga: Belief in God is "properly basic"

The recent Christian philosopher Alvin Plantinga turns arguments for the existence of God from a defensive posture to an offensive one. Typically, people defend with clever arguments trying to assert that belief in God is rational. Plantinga turns the conversation on its head and essentially asserts the principle that given the overall rationality of belief of God, and the fact that it seems to be a basic human condition only recently called into question since the French Enlightenment, it is atheists who should defend themselves.

While this isn't a strict argument for the existence of God it poses a question that completely changes the conversation. And, when it is paired with the next argument poses a fairly powerful challenge to atheism.

Evolutionary Argument Against Naturalism

One of the great assumptions about evolution is that it ruthlessly cuts out anything that does not help any particular species survive. Over time, anything which does not tangibly benefit any particular species will be bred out of the population through natural selection.

The question naturally follows, "what positive purpose does a false belief in God serve for the human species?" The answer? There is no obvious positive purpose. So, atheistic evolutionists either need to figure out what positive benefit the false belief in God brings to our species or recognize that God probably does exist because there is no purely biological reason why we would make God up.