

TRUTH ON TRIAL

A 12-week series on
the Evidence for
Christianity



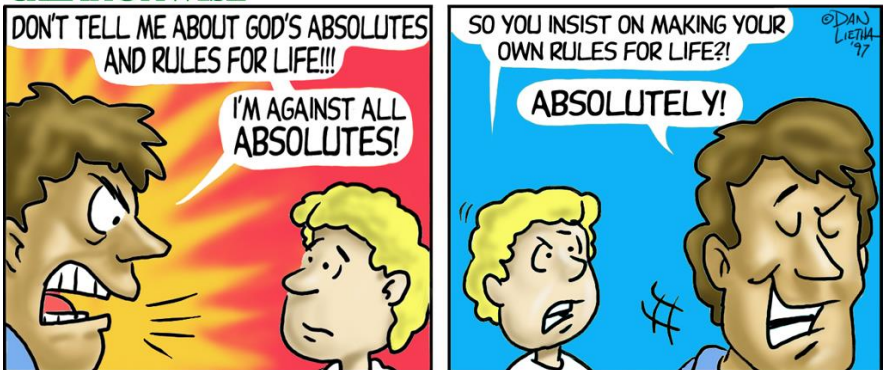
Sermon Notes 2/20/2022

“The Truth about Morality”

What does the Bible say about morality?

1. There is an objective standard of _____.
Isaiah 5:20-21
Mark 10:17-18
2. God’s morality is perfect and _____.
James 1:17
Numbers 23:19-20
3. God has revealed His morality to _____.
Psalm 119:1-4
Romans 2:14-16

CREATIONWISE



Small Group Discussion Guide

Lesson 7: “The Truth about Morality”

Some people claim that all morality is relative. They say, “Morality is just a matter of opinion. What’s right for you might not be right for me.” But when they’re being treated unfairly, they quickly change their tune. Suddenly they appeal to a standard of morality that is not just a matter of opinion. God has put within all people a basic understanding of morality. This is known as “the moral law within,” and it is a powerful argument for the existence of God.

“Two things fill the mind with...admiration and awe...the starry heavens above and the moral law within.”—Immanuel Kant, *Critique of Practical Reason*

There are many good arguments for the existence of God. But I think the three most powerful arguments are:

1. The Cosmological Argument (The Beginning of the Universe)
2. The Teleological Argument (AKA Intelligent Design)
3. The Moral Argument

Our last three lessons were about Intelligent Design and the lesson before that was about the Cosmological Argument. Both of those arguments provide a lot of scientific evidence for God. If you want to know more about those arguments, check out your notes from the last four lessons or go online and watch the videos. Today, we are going to discuss the Moral Argument for God.

Some Definitions

THE MORAL ARGUMENT—An argument for the existence of God based on the observation of a moral law within all human beings. Since humans live as if there is an absolute moral law within them, and every law requires a lawgiver, then there must be a Moral Lawgiver who put that law within all humans.

EVOLUTIONARY ETHICS—The theory that human morality developed from sentiments or emotions like sympathy, love, guilt, shame, and indignation. These sentiments evolved by natural selection to promote human survival and reproductive success.

MORAL RELATIVISM—The theory that there are no objective ethical norms that are binding on all people. There is no objective moral standard above us to which we can appeal. That which we call good, right, fair, or just is merely a personal opinion or preference.

The basic syllogism for the Moral Argument goes like this:

Premise 1: If there is no God, there can be no objective morality.

Premise 2: Objective morality does exist.

Conclusion: Therefore, God must exist.

We must understand the difference between objective morality and subjective morality. Objective morality is based on an unchanging foundation that transcends humanity. Subjective morality is just based on human opinions. Humans can recognize objective morality, but they can't create objective morality.

In things like mathematics and physics, there are unchanging laws that transcend humanity. We can recognize the objective truth that $2 + 2 = 4$. And we can test and confirm the law of gravity. But these laws are objectively true regardless of how many people recognize them and believe in them.

In addition to the laws of physics and mathematics, there are also moral laws that are objectively true regardless of how many people recognize them or believe in them. But where do those objective moral laws come from?

The Testimony of Scripture

1. **Read Isaiah 5:20-21.** What does this passage say about those who try to change God's standard of morality?
2. What are some examples of people today calling evil good and good evil?
3. **Read Mark 10:17-18.** How did the rich young man address Jesus in verse 17?
4. What question did the rich young man ask Jesus in verse 17?
5. What was the first thing Jesus said to the rich young man in verse 18? Why?
6. Just how good is God's standard of morality? (See Matthew 5:48)
7. **Read James 1:17.** What character traits of God are emphasized in this verse?
8. **Read Numbers 23:19-20.** What character traits of God are emphasized in this passage?
9. **Read Psalm 119:1-4.** According to this passage, how has God revealed His moral law to us?
10. **Read Romans 2:14-15.** In addition to the Bible, what is another way that God has revealed His moral law to us?

All humans have within them something philosophers call, "a sense of ought." This "sense of ought" is a common code of duty and obligation that can be seen in every society and culture down through history. C.S. Lewis illustrates how the Moral Law is manifested in every country of the world.

Think of a country where people are admired for running away in battle, or where a man felt proud of double-crossing all the people who had been kindest to him. You might just as well try to imagine a country where two and two made five.¹

Objections to the Moral Argument for God

Remember, the Moral Argument goes like this:

Premise 1: If there is no God, there can be no objective morality.

Premise 2: Objective morality does exist.

Conclusion: Therefore, God must exist.

Many times, people will misquote the first premise and just assume that we are accusing all atheists of being immoral. They will provide many examples of atheists throughout history doing good deeds. Then they will say, “See...people don’t need to believe in God in order to have objective morality!” However, premise 1 does **NOT** say, “If there is no **belief** in God, there can be no objective morality.” Premise 1 says, “If there **is** no God, there can be no objective morality.”

Objective morality is not contingent on any human beliefs. If it was, it wouldn’t be objective. Objective morality is based on the **existence** of God not the **belief** in God.

Think of the Holocaust. If Hitler had won the war and the Nazis were successful in either exterminating or brainwashing all their enemies, and all the survivors of WWII agreed that Hitler did what was best for humanity, would the Holocaust still be objectively wrong? **YES!**

¹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, NY: The Macmillan Company, 1960), 19.

Evolutionary Ethics

Some atheists believe that the appearance of objective morality comes from Evolutionary Ethics. They say, “Human morality is just the product of biological and social evolution.” However, the primary mechanism for evolution is Natural Selection. And the primary goal of Natural Selection is survival. Many times, the goal of survival is achieved in opposition to morality. Nature is cruel. Cannibalism is found in over 1500 species. An animal does not survive out in the wild because it is nice, kind, generous, and loving.

Darwin knew this. In his book, *The Descent of Man*, Darwin wrote,

“If... men were reared under precisely the same conditions as hive-bees, there can hardly be a doubt that our unmarried females would, like the worker-bees, think it a sacred duty to kill their brothers, and mothers would strive to kill their fertile daughters; and no one would think of interfering.”²



² Charles Darwin, *The Descent of Man* (New York, NY: Penguin Classics, 1870), 100.

For us to make moral decisions we have to have free will. But if our decisions are nothing more than the results of evolution and the chemical reactions in our brain, then there is no such thing as freewill, and we have no personal responsibility to follow any standard of morality.

In 1924 (just one year before the “Scopes Monkey Trial”) defense attorney, Clarence Darrow, gave the first “Diminished Responsibility Plea.” Nathan Leopold and Richard Loeb were two wealthy students at the University of Chicago who kidnapped and murdered 14-year-old Bobby Franks. In the trial, Clarence Darrow argued that Leopold and Loeb were not responsible for their actions because they were just a result of their natural evolution.

Why did they kill little Bobby Franks? Not for money, not for spite; not for hate. They killed him as they might kill a spider or a fly, for the experience. They killed him because they were made that way. Because somewhere in the infinite processes that go to the making up of the boy or the man something slipped, and those unfortunate lads sit here hated, despised, outcasts, with the community shouting for their blood.³



³ Clarence Darrow, The Closing Argument in The State of Illinois v. Nathan Leopold & Richard Loeb, Chicago, IL. August 22, 1924 (<http://law2.umkc.edu/faculty/projects/ftrials/leoploeb/darrowclosing.html>)

Moral Relativism

Some people will object to the second premise and claim to believe in Moral Relativism. They say, “There is no objective standard of morality. It is all a matter of personal opinion.” Many people like the idea of evolution because it gives them a way to dismiss objective morality.

The famous humanist, Julian Huxley said, “The reason we accepted Darwinism even without proof, is because we didn’t want God to interfere with our sexual mores.”⁴

However, even people who believe in Moral Relativism will have a negative reaction to injustice (especially when they are the victims). C.S. Lewis observes,

Whenever you find a man who says he does not believe in a real Right and Wrong, you find the same man going back on this a moment later. He may break his promise to you, but if you try breaking one to him he will be complaining “It’s not fair” before you can say Jack Robinson.⁵

In his book, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision*, William Lane Craig notes,

“In my experience, the moral argument is the most effective of all the arguments for the existence of God. I say this grudgingly because my favorite is the cosmological argument. But cosmological and teleological arguments don’t touch people where they live. The moral argument cannot be so easily brushed aside. For every day you get up you answer the question of whether there are objective moral values and duties by how you live.”⁶

⁴ D. James Kennedy, *Skeptics Answered* (Sisters, OR: Multnomah, 1997), 154.

⁵ Lewis, 19.

⁶ William Lane Craig, *On Guard: Defending Your Faith with Reason and Precision* (Colorado Springs, CO: David C Cook, 2010), 144.