

The Christian Worldview

I. The Existence of God

A. Naturalistic Arguments - Groothuis defines these arguments as, “Rational arguments for the existence of a monotheistic God that do not appeal to sacred scriptures for their cogency.”¹

1. Cosmological – Geisler writes, “The basic idea of this argument is that, since there is a universe rather than none at all, it must have been caused by something beyond itself. This reasoning is based on the law of causality.”² Basically it says every *effect* must have a *cause*. Groothuis summarizes, “The conclusion of a cosmological argument is...that God is a factually necessary being; that is, God’s original factuality is required to explain all the facts of the universe.”³

2. Teleological – This title comes from the Greek word *telos*, meaning “end” or “purpose.” The idea is that complex design demands a master designer. Geisler and Brooks state it simply:

a. All designs imply a designer.

b. There is great design in the universe.

c. Therefore, there must be a Great Designer of the universe.”⁴

In the late 1700’s English apologist William Paley insisted, “...if someone found a watch in an empty field, he would rightly conclude that there had been a watchmaker because of the obvious design.”⁵

3. Moral – This argument states that since moral law exists in the mind of man there must be a supreme moral Mind from which this moral idea is derived. Geisler and Brooks state the logic as follows:

a. All men are conscious of an objective moral law.

b. Moral laws imply a moral Lawgiver.

c. Therefore, there must be a supreme moral Lawgiver.”⁶

4. Ontological – This argument basically says that the idea of a Perfect Being leads to the necessary existence of that Being. Geisler simplifies:

1. If God exists, we must conceive of him as a Necessary Being.

2. But by definition, a Necessary Being cannot not exist.

3. Therefore, if a Necessary Being can, then it must, exist.”⁷

Groothuis believes that, “...the idea of a Perfect Being...is logically possible. If so...then a Perfect

¹ Douglas Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics: A Comprehensive Case for Biblical Faith* (Downers Grove, Ill.: IVP Academic, 2011), 171.

² Norman L. Geisler, “Cosmological Argument,” *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 160.

³ Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 210.

⁴ Norman L. Geisler and Ronald M. Brooks, *When Skeptics Ask: A Handbook On Christian Evidences* (Wheaton, IL: Baker Books, 1990), 20.

⁵ Geisler and Brooks, 20.

⁶ Geisler and Brooks, 22.

⁷ Norman L. Geisler, “God, Evidence For,” *Baker Encyclopedia of Christian Apologetics*, Baker Reference Library (Grand Rapids, MI: Baker Books, 1999), 278.

Being exists necessarily. If so, logic has established the existence of a being with whom we have to do.”⁸

B. Biblical Arguments – Arguments that appeal to the Bible. Biblical arguments attempt to validate the existence of God and His revelation to man from the biblical record. Old Testament history, the life, teachings, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ are presented and examined as to their historical accuracy and authenticity.

II. Specific Biblical Arguments

A. The reliability of the Bible - the logical place to start is with the historical reliability of the bible. Geisler points out two necessary steps for establishing the historical reliability of the New Testament, “First, there is the matter of the authenticity of the New Testament documents, Second, there is the question of the reliability of the New Testament writers.”⁹ Geisler notes that authenticity is established by comparing three elements: “...first, an examination of the extant manuscript copies; second, a comparison of New Testament manuscripts with those of ancient secular history; [and] third, the dating of the original sources of these manuscripts.”¹⁰ Geisler presents the following chart as an aid for comparing these categories:

Author	Date Written	Earliest Copy	Number of Copies	Accuracy of Copy
Caesar	1 st Cent. B.C.	900 A.D	10	????????????
Tacitus	c. 100 A.D.	1100 A.D.	20	????????????
Herodotus	5 th Cent. B.C.	900 A.D.	8	????????????
Homer	9 th Cent. A.D.		643	95%
New Testament	1st Cent. A.D. (50-100 A.D.)	2nd Cent. A. D. (130 A.D.)	5,000	99%+

The second consideration – The reliability of the New Testament Writers.

There are five different authentic sources for the life of Christ: Paul, Luke, Mark, John, and Peter. All these men were companions of Christ and eyewitness to His ministry. Their writings are between twenty and fifty years or so after the actual events themselves.

Geisler points to three areas concerning the New Testament writers:¹¹

- 1 – Their integrity is unquestioned.
- 2 – Their sanity is apparent.
- 3 – Their testimony is collaborated by external sources.

We may also note a fourth proof that verifies the trustworthiness of the writers:

- 4 – Their accuracy is verified by many other eyewitnesses.

Geisler summarizes:

⁸ Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 199.

⁹ Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids: Baker Book House, 1976), 305.

¹⁰ Geisler, 305.

¹¹ Geisler, 314.

Both the authenticity and the historicity of the New Testament documents are firmly established today. The authentic nature and vast amount of the manuscript evidence is overwhelming... Furthermore, many of the original manuscripts date from within twenty to thirty years of the events in Jesus' life, that is, from contemporaries and eyewitnesses. The historicity of the contemporary accounts of Christ's life, teaching, death, and resurrection is also established on firm historical grounds...there is support in general from the secular history of the first century and in particular from numerous archaeological discoveries supporting specific details of the New Testament account."¹²

B. The Birth of Christ - There are numerous prophecies in the Old Testament that foretell specific details about the birth of Christ. For example:

- A Specific time – Daniel 9
- A Specific place – Micah 5:2
- A Specific birth - Isaiah 7:14
- A Specific lineage – Genesis 49:10, Jeremiah 23:5

Mathematician Peter Stoner wrote a book in 1944 entitled "Science Speaks"¹³ in which he "used the well-known principle of probability" to establish how incredibly accurate the Bible is prophetically and how it would be impossible for certain events to be randomly fulfilled. Stoner used only eight prophecies that Jesus fulfilled and found the probability of chance fulfillment to be 1 in 10¹⁷. That's one in one hundred quadrillion!

C. Prophecies concerning Christ - Moving from just His birth, we find that Jesus, in his birth, life, death, and resurrection, fulfilled over 300 Old Testament prophecies, 108 of these being Messianic prophecies. Calculating just 48, the odds increase to 1 in 10¹⁵⁷. Stoner writes, "The bottom line is that the fulfillment of Bible prophecy in the life of Jesus proves conclusively that He truly was God in the flesh."¹⁴ It also proves the supernatural origin of the Bible.

D. The Resurrection of Christ - Perhaps the greatest apologetic for the Christian faith is the resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is the greatest miracle and best attested proof of the truth of Christianity. Geisler points out that, "Both the Old Testament prophets and Jesus Himself predicted in advance that He would arise from the dead."¹⁵

1. Old Testament predictions of the resurrection. - Geisler writes, "Psalm 2 and 16 are cited by the New Testament as applying to the resurrection of Christ (Acts 2:27, Heb. 1:5)."¹⁶ He continues, "The resurrection of Christ is taught by logical deduction from two Old Testament teachings:
 - (1) The Messiah will come and die (cf. Isa. 52; Ps. 22)
 - (2) The Messiah will have an enduring political reign from Jerusalem (Isa 9:6; Dan. 2:44; Zech. 13:1)."¹⁷
2. Jesus' predictions of the resurrection - Jesus also taught that He would rise from the dead. John 2:19, 21 – "Destroy this temple, and in three days I will raise it up."

¹² Geisler, *Christian Apologetics*, 327.

¹³ <http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/> Although Stoner's book is out of print, the entire book is available online at this site.

¹⁴ <http://sciencespeaks.dstoner.net/>

¹⁵ Geisler, 346.

¹⁶ Geisler, 346.

¹⁷ Geisler, 346.

Matthew 12:40 – “Just as Jonah was three days and three nights in the belly of the sea monster, so shall the Son of Man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth.”

Mark 8:31 – “...the Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected... and be killed, and after three days rise again.”

John 10:17-18 – “...I lay down My life that I may take it again... I lay it down on My own initiative. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again....”

3. The eyewitness testimonies - A major proof is that Jesus was seen by many eyewitnesses after His resurrection. The New Testament lists twelve separate appearances over a forty-day period.

1 – Mary Magdalene (John 20:10-18). 2 – Mary other women (Matthew 28:1-10).

3 – Peter (Luke 24:34). 4 – Two disciples on the road to Emmaus (Luke 24:13).

5 – Ten apostles – (Luke 24:36-49). 6 – Eleven apostles – (John 20:24-31).

7 – Seven apostles – (John 21). 8 – All of the apostles (Matthew 28:16-20).

9 – Five hundred disciples (1 Corinthians 15:6). 10 – James (1 Corinthians 15:7).

11 – All the apostles (Acts 1:4-8). 12 – The Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-9)

4. The transformation of the disciples - Groothuis writes, “The actual resurrection of Jesus is the best explanation for the disciples’ transformation from cowardice, despair and confusion to confident proclamation and the willingness to suffer persecution, hardship and even martyrdom for the sake of Jesus and his gospel.”¹⁸ People do not live their lives for or die for a lie.

E. The uniqueness of Christ - Notice the claims of Jesus:

-Jesus claimed to be the Messiah, and God in the flesh.

-He offered forgiveness of sins to all who would believe in Him.

-He promised to return and set up His kingdom.

C.S. Lewis, in his classic book, *Mere Christianity*, answering the charge that Jesus was simply a good man and great moral teacher, writes,

A man who was merely a man and said the sort of things Jesus said would not be a great moral teacher. He would either be a lunatic – on a level with the man who says he is a poached egg – or else he would be the Devil of Hell. You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God: or else a madman or something worse. You can shut Him up for a fool, you can spit at Him and kill Him as a demon; or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God. But let us not come with any patronizing nonsense about His being a great human teacher. He has not left that open to us. He did not intend to.¹⁹

Jesus was either a lunatic, a liar, or He was Lord!

- F. Conclusion - In conclusion, we have seen that the Christian worldview is defensible historically, and answers the greatest number of worldview questions. David Noebel summarizes well, In every discipline the Christian worldview shines brighter than its competition. It better explains our place in the universe, it is more realistic, is more scientific, is more intellectually satisfying and defensible, and best of all, is in keeping with and faithful to the one person who has the greatest influence in heaven and on earth – Jesus Christ.²⁰

¹⁸ Groothuis, *Christian Apologetics*, 551.

¹⁹ C.S. Lewis, *Mere Christianity* (New York, N.Y.: Macmillan Publishing Co., 1977), 58.

²⁰ Noebel, *Understanding the Times*, 429.