

APOLOGETICS 2 – THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

INTRODUCTION

Apologetics - ἀπολογία apologia

1 Peter 3:15 – But sanctify Christ as Lord in your hearts, always being ready to make a defense to everyone who asks you to give an account for the hope that is in you, yet with gentleness and reverence.

2 Corinthians 10:5 – We are destroying speculations and every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, and we are taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.

The definition of Christian Apologetics is “the information that enables a believer to provide a defense for why a doctrine is believed.”

GOAL

1. To strengthen the student in a confident, steadfast belief in God, Jesus, and the Scriptures so that they will never fall.
2. To prepare the student to give a proper response to common challenges.
 - a. The student may or may not actually give an answer.
 - b. The preparation is so that no challenge will cause one to doubt the truth of God, Jesus Christ.

THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT

This is probably better titled the cosmological arguments; more than one stems from the primary argument.

The cosmological arguments attempt to give evidence for the existence of God by observing the world around us (the cosmos). The arguments begin with this observation: things exist.

Since things exist, then it is argued that something had to cause those things' existence; go back far enough and that something is God.

1. Things exist.
2. It is possible for those things to not exist.
3. Whatever has the possibility of non-existence, yet exists, has been caused to exist.
 - a. Something cannot bring itself into existence.
4. There cannot be an infinite number of causes to bring something into existence.
 - a. An infinite regression of causes ultimately has no initial cause, which means there is no cause of existence.
 - b. Since the universe exists, it must have a cause.
5. Therefore, there must be an “uncaused” cause of all things.
6. The “uncaused” cause must be God.

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Since everything in our observable world has a cause, there must be an original cause. Plants, animals, people, planets, stars, and even the universe are all understood to have a beginning. Since everything that is observed has a beginning, there has to be an original or first cause. The cause has to be outside of the universe, and therefore, that cause has to be what is understood as God.

Applying this example to everything in the universe:

Does anything exist on its own?

No.

Does the universe exist?

Yes.

Therefore, the universe had to have a first cause to get started, and it also needs something to give it existence right now.

Over the years, the premise has been changed slightly to not simply “exist” but “begin.” This is to prevent the question, “Since God exists, who caused God?” God does not have a beginning, so therefore, that question does not apply.

REBUTTAL

This very simple argument has been used as evidence for the existence of God since ancient Greece. Even some of the most seasoned atheistic philosophers admit this is a very effective argument, but this is not without its retractors.

What they turn to now is the fact that we all have limited knowledge and that this argument is based on our limited empirical experience.

This point I agree with. But this is a very interesting rebuttal because that is what most believers would say about our physical world and the reality of the immaterial.

They also would claim that the idea of infinite regress is not impossible. They would actually try to argue that life and the universe are infinite.

One well-known atheist stated, “Even if we allow the dubious luxury of arbitrarily conjuring up a terminator to an infinite regress and giving it a name, simply because we need one, there is absolutely no reason to endow that terminator with any of the properties normally ascribed to God; omnipotence, omniscience, goodness, creativity of design, to say nothing of such human attributes as listening to prayers, forgiving sins and reading innermost thoughts.”

In other words, the cosmological argument does not prove that the God of the Bible is the first cause. This is true. This points directly to the weakness of the argument apart from the Word of God.

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WEAKNESS OF THE ARGUMENT

1. We do not know whether this cause was matter itself or a personal deific being.
2. We do not know if the cause of the universe is infinite or finite.
3. We do not know whether there was only one cause or many causes.

BIBLICAL REVIEW

Of all the philosophical arguments, this is one of the most biblically attested - the universe has a first, uncaused cause.

The Bible describes an uncaused, first cause of the universe:

Genesis 1:1; Psalm 148:5; Isaiah 40:26; Hebrews 3:4, 11:3

The God of creation is the same as the God who came into His creation as a man,

John 1:1-3, 14; Colossians 1:15-17; Hebrews 1:1-2

The universe's origin marks the beginning of time.

Genesis 1:1; John 1:1-2

The only thing that would not have to be given existence is a thing that exists as its very nature. It is existence. This something would always exist, have no cause, have no beginning, have no limit, be outside of time, and be infinite.

That something is God, the "I AM" of Exodus – 3:14-15.

Psalm 19:1-2; Romans 1:18-20

CONCLUSION

This is the foundational defense for the existence of God. As a foundation, it is not intended to answer all the questions. This is an understandable reason that is based on the Scripture. The God of the Bible states perpetually that He is the creator.

The argument without the Scriptures is lacking. This does not prove anything, and this argument does not point to the God of the Bible. However, this argument should be learned, understood, and if the student is comfortable, used.

The cosmological argument is also the foundation of the Scientific (Evidentiary) Apologetic. If God created, then we should be able to see the evidence of creation in our world.