

# APOLOGETICS 4

## THE ONTOLOGICAL AND MORAL ARGUMENTS

### **INTRODUCTION**

Apologetics - ἀπολογία apologia

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

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.

### **GOAL**

1. To strengthen the students so that they reach 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 intended so that any challenge will not cause the student to doubt the truth of God, Jesus Christ.

### **THE COSMOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

This philosophical argument gives evidence for the existence of God by observing the world around us and states that since things began to exist, then there must be an original self-existing cause.

We examined this argument and found it to be both biblically and logically sound.

### **THE TELEOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

The Teleological Argument is also known as the “argument from design and purpose.” It states that a designer must exist because the universe and living things exhibit marks of design in their order, consistency, complexity, unity (symbiosis), and pattern.

We examined this argument and found it to be both biblically and logically sound.

### **THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

In 1078, a monk named Anselm of Canterbury argued that if it is even possible that God exists, then logically, God does exist. This argument came to become known as the ontological argument.

*ontos* means “being.” The premise seeks to define God as a being that is greater than anything we deem possible. Greatness is defined as all-powerful, all-knowing, and morally perfect in every possible existence.

## APOLOGETICS 4

### THE ONTOLOGICAL AND MORAL ARGUMENTS

The argument stems from the philosophical discussions of possibility, not necessarily actuality. It is often used in this kind of example:

1. It is possible that a Maximally Great Being exists.
2. Therefore, a Maximally Great Being exists in some possible existence.
3. Since a Maximally Great Being exists in some possible existence, then a Maximally Great Being must exist in the actual world.

#### **STRENGTH OF THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

This argument is very much a mind puzzle and is used in the deep philosophical world. It is difficult for even an atheist to state that it is impossible that a Maximally Great Being exists.

#### **REBUTTAL**

The idea that “something that can be imagined is also possible” is silly. Other than the obvious detractors, most of the Christian world has rejected this argument.

“The Ontological Argument simply defines things into existence-and this cannot be done.”

“Not everyone who hears this word ‘God’ understands it to signify something than which nothing greater can be thought.”

#### **WEAKNESS OF THE ONTOLOGICAL ARGUMENT**

This particular system sounds like a riddle to most. This argument is usually reserved for philosophical circles, where they abandon the source of truth for a debate on imagination.

#### **BIBLICAL REVIEW**

As stated earlier, this argument has one inherent problem. It is not biblically based. The concept of this argument is one of giving in to presumptions of a secular worldview to demonstrate that God exists.

#### **CONCLUSION**

For those who enjoy philosophy, this is an interesting discussion. If one wants to learn it to its full extent, it is not bad. But we must understand the limitations. Although well-intended, this does not present the biblical view of God or His existence.

## APOLOGETICS 4

### THE ONTOLOGICAL AND MORAL ARGUMENTS

#### **THE MORAL ARGUMENT**

Where do morals and ethics come from? Is there anything that is intrinsically evil? Is there anything that is intrinsically good? If so, who has determined good and evil?

This is where that Moral Argument comes in.

God is necessary for objective moral values or ethics to exist. Since objective moral values and ethics do exist, God must also exist.

Some have stated this in the reverse order.

If God does not exist, objective and moral values and ethics do not exist. Since moral values and ethics do exist, God exists.

Good and evil morals and ethics must first be understood in regard to what is objective and obligatory. *Objective* means that a moral or ethic is good or evil regardless of the observer and the situation.

Is murder evil? Is helping those in need good? If so, then someone had to set those morals.

#### **STRENGTH OF THE MORAL ARGUMENT**

This argument hits at the core of humanity. Everyone knows that we are different than animals. Animals have no morality. Humans do. Very few will try to argue that objective good and evil do not exist.

Only a creator God accounts for a moral standard. The naturalist atheist cannot account for an absolute objective moral standard. They have to try to say that there are no moral absolutes and that murder, rape, and abuse are not morally wrong.

#### **REBUTTAL**

The primary objection to this argument is to claim that objective moral values don't actually exist. The claim is that morality is a social construct. It is a useful human tool, a necessary social device that makes society possible, but there is nothing objective or real about morality beyond what we make it. Nothing is actually good or evil. These are merely subjective human judgments. However, even those who would try and deny this must live as if it is true.

The other major objection is that morality can exist on its own without God. Things like rape and murder are really wrong whether God exists or not. The problem is that there is no clear reason why this would be so.

Biology cannot say where morality is from. If morality is a mere instinct, then it is not objective. Also, we do not see morality in any other part of creation.

If morality is reduced back to mere human perception, it can be changed or even done away with entirely. There simply is no rational ground that has ever been offered for real, objective morality outside of a personal God.

## APOLOGETICS 4

### THE ONTOLOGICAL AND MORAL ARGUMENTS

#### **WEAKNESS OF THE MORAL ARGUMENT**

The main drawback of this argument is that the existence of morality is not strictly provable. Philosophically, how does one prove that murder and abuse are objectively wrong? This does not negate the argument, but if someone is unwilling to concede to absolute, objective morality, then it is difficult to persuade them.

#### **BIBLICAL REVIEW**

The moral argument in this form is not found in Scripture. However, the basis for the moral argument is. God does exist, and He reveals what is good. Everything that is opposed to God is sin, rebellion, and evil.

Mark 10:17-18 – No one is good except God alone.

In Greek, there are two words for good, “ἀγαθός agathos” and “καλός kalos.” God is “agathos” and He determines what is good.

1 John 1:5 – God is light and in Him there is no darkness.

Darkness is in opposition to the good of God. Many Eastern religions believe that God is both light and dark, good and evil. But the biblical definition of God is no darkness, no evil.

God also establishes good morals and ethics. What God prescribes mankind to do is good; what God tells man is evil is evil.

Spreading His truth, the gospel, is a good work (Romans 10:15). The instructions from God and His will for our lives are good (Romans 7:12, 12:2).

Sin is that which is in opposition to God, even if well-intended. If an activity is not from a doctrinal understanding, it is rebellious and sinful (Romans 14:23; Hebrews 11:6).

Wickedness (evil) is defined by God throughout Scripture as idolatry, immorality, and violence.

#### **CONCLUSION**

Remember, our goal in apologetics is first to strengthen students so that they reach a confident, steadfast belief in God, Jesus, and the Scriptures so that they will never fall.

The Ontological Argument does not rest in Scripture and so does not provide the steadfast assurance that is found in Scripture. This doesn't mean that this argument does not have its place, but it cannot be a focal point of study for the believer who is dealing with doubts.

The Moral Argument is developed from an understanding that God is good and He is only good. There is no evil in Him. Good and evil are objective and absolute because God is the absolute good. Without God, there would be no moral standard. Because we do know that there is a moral standard, we can direct others to the God of creation.