

Christian Evidences

Lesson 3:

Evidences for the Existence
of God (Part II)





Teleological Argument

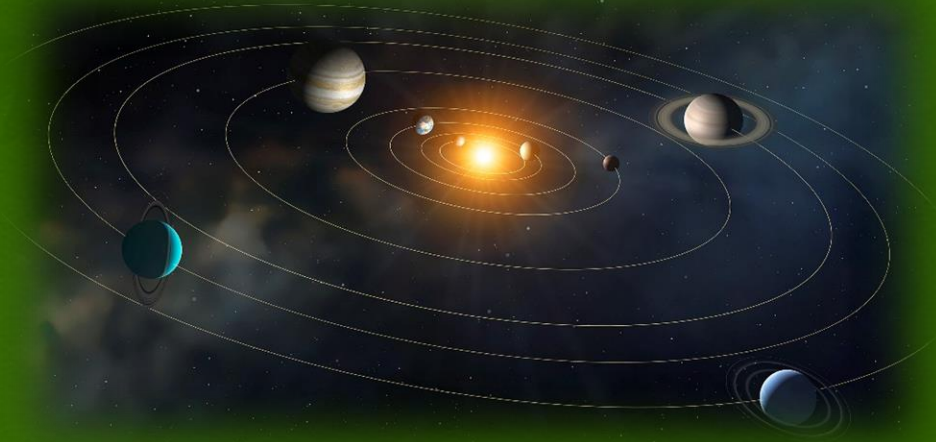
- Define teleological.
 - exhibiting or relating to design or purpose especially in nature
- The argument:
 - If the Universe evinces purposeful design, there must have been a designer.
 - The Universe does evince purposeful design.
 - Thus, the Universe must have had a designer.
- Design implies a designer
- The point of contention with the atheist is whether there is evidence of design in nature adequate to draw this conclusion

The Universe operates according to precise astronomical laws

“Modern physicists who prefer to solve their problems without recourse to God emphasize that nature mysteriously operates on mathematical principles. It is the mathematical orthodoxy of the Universe that enables theorists like Einstein to predict and discover natural laws, simply by the solution of equations.”

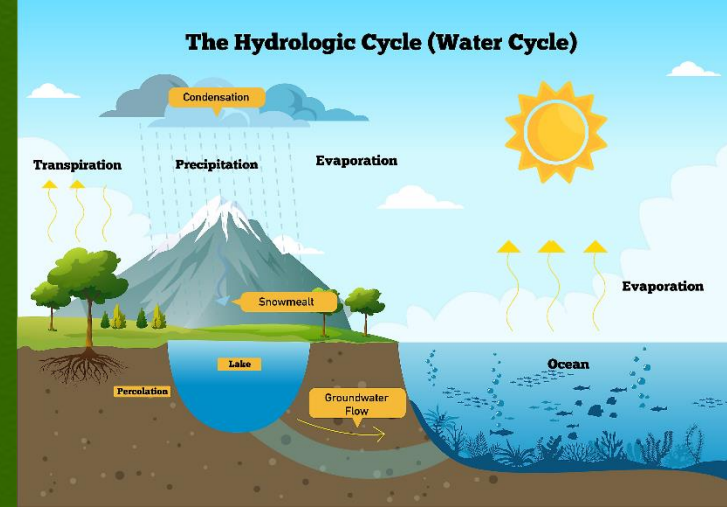


Our Solar System and the Earth



- Earth is located at exactly the correct distance from the Sun to receive the proper amount of heat and radiation to sustain life as we know it
- Positioned 240k miles from the Moon. If the Moon were closer by a fifth, the tides would be enormous - 35-50 feet high
- Earth tilted on its axis at 23.5 degrees. If it were zero, much of the Earth's water would accumulate around the two poles, leaving vast deserts in its place.
- Atmosphere is just right for protection. If it were thinner, meteorites could cause worldwide devastation

Our Solar System and the Earth



- Oceans provide a huge reservoir of moisture – evaporating and condensing as refreshing rain
- Water heats and cools at a much slower rate than a solid land mass and provides a sort of natural heating/air-conditioning system for the land areas – would have severe extremes if 4/5 of Earth were not covered with water
- Humans and animals inhale oxygen and exhale carbon dioxide. Plants take in carbon dioxide and give off oxygen. 90% of our oxygen comes from microscopic plants in the seas. If our oceans were appreciably smaller, we soon would be out of air to breathe.

Argument From Design (Teleological)

- An accident?
 - Can a person reasonably be expected to believe that these exacting requirements for life as we know it have been met “just by accident”?
 - Earth is exactly the right distance from the Sun
 - Exactly the right distance from the Moon
 - Exactly the right diameter
 - Exactly the right atmospheric pressure
 - Exactly the right tilt
 - Exactly the right amount of oceanic water
 - Exactly the right weight and mass; and so on.

Argument From Design (Teleological)

- British evolutionist Sir Fred Hoyle has stressed the insurmountable problems with such thinking
 - “the chance that higher forms have emerged in this way is comparable with the chance that a tornado sweeping through a junk-yard might assemble a Boeing 747 from the materials therein”
 - “The probability of life originating at random is so utterly miniscule as to make the random concept absurd, it becomes sensible to think that the favorable properties of physics on which life depends, are in every respect deliberate ... It is therefore almost inevitable that our own measure of intelligence must reflect in a valid way the higher intelligences ... even to the extreme idealized limit of God”

Argument From Design (Teleological)

- Animal instinct:
 - Salmon return to the place they were born after many years at sea.
 - Eels from Europe and America migrate Bermuda where they breed and die. Their young then return to either Europe or America, depending on the parents origin.
 - Migration pattern of birds has been a mystery to ornithologists for years.
- Give your own example(s) of something in nature that evinces design



Evidences of Design – The Human Body

- Psalm 139:14. What does the Psalmist exclaim?
- Augustine observed: “Men go abroad to wonder at the height of mountains, at the huge waves of the sea, at the long course of the rivers, at the vast compass of the ocean, at the circular motion of the stars; and they pass by themselves without wondering.”
- Even evolutionists have been forced to recognize
 - George Gaylord Simpson: “in man one finds the most highly endowed organization of matter that has yet appeared on the earth”
 - Guinness: “When you come right down to it, the most incredible creation in the universe is you—with your fantastic senses and strengths, your ingenious defense systems, and mental capabilities so great you can never use them to the fullest. Your body is a structural masterpiece more amazing than science fiction.”

Evidences of Design – The Human Body

- Give some specific examples of this that point to a Great Designer.
- Cell structure and function
 - Composed of over 30 different kinds of cells totaling approximately 100 trillion cells in an average adult
 - Three major components: cell membrane, cytoplasm, the nucleus (genetic material and control center)
 - In cytoplasm, over 20 different chemical reactions occurring at any one time
 - Each cell contains five major components for: (1) communication; (2) waste disposal; (3) nutrition; (4) repair; and (5) reproduction

Evidences of Design – The Human Body

- DNA
 - A supermolecule carrying coded information for the replication of the cell
 - Stores coded information in a chemical format, and then uses a biologic agent (RNA) to decode and activate it
 - DNA information in one human cell would fill a 1,000 volume set of encyclopedias, 600 pages each
 - All the genetic information needed to reproduce the entire human population (> 7 billion people) could be placed into a space of about one-eighth of a square inch

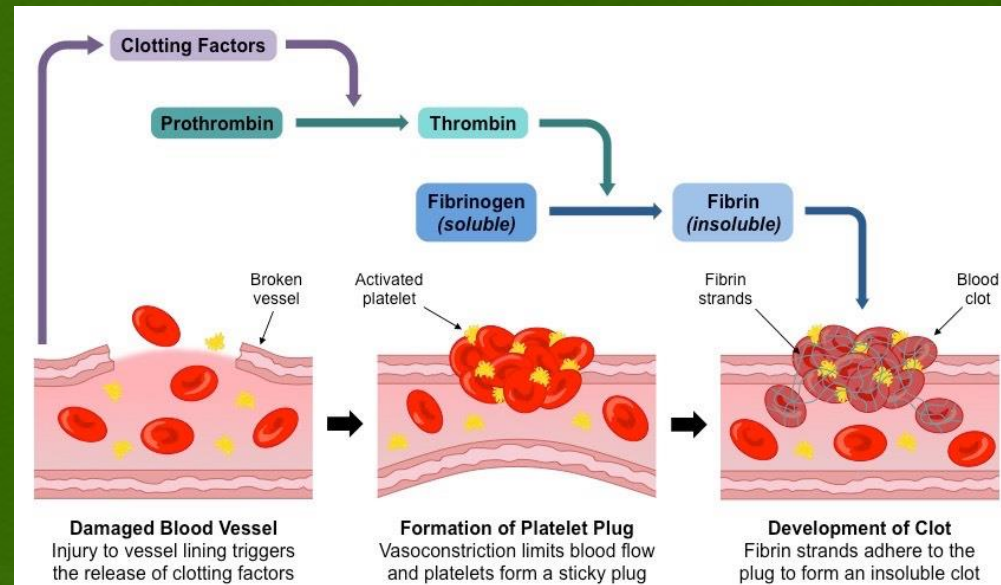


Evidences of Design – The Human Body

- DNA continued
 - This “supermolecule” simply could not have happened by blind chance
 - E.H. Andrews: “It is not possible for a code, of any kind, to arise by chance or accident ... a code is the work of an intelligent mind. Even the cleverest dog or chimpanzee could not work out a code of any kind. It is obvious then that chance cannot do it ... This could no more have been the work of chance or accident than could the “Moonlight Sonata” be played by mice running up and down the keyboard of my piano!”
 - Codes do not arise from chaos

Evidences of Design – The Human Body

- Blood clotting (see Darwin's Black Box: The Biochemical Challenge to Evolution, by Michael J. Behe)
 - Discusses the concept of irreducible complexity
 - Blood clotting is a very complicated chain process that requires every step of the chain to function for successful clotting
 - How could parts of such a chain process evolve all at the same time in just the right order?
 - Animals would have become extinct as soon as they “evolved” if not for blood clotting



“One does not get a poem without a poet or a law without a lawgiver. One does not get a painting without a painter, or a musical score without a composer. And just as surely, one does not get purposeful design without a designer. The design inherent in the Universe is evident – from the macrocosm to the microcosm – and is sufficient to draw the conclusion demanded by the evidence, in keeping with the law of rationality. God does exist.”
(Bert Thompson)



Anthropological Argument (Moral Argument)

- There is within man a moral nature. All people have a sense of what “ought” to be done in certain circumstances; a sense of fair play.
- Morality is a human trait, as even unbelievers concede.
- Animals do not operate according to any ethical code.
- Since this idea of morality is evident, what is its origin?
 - Either there is an external source of eternal goodness
 - Or, morality evolved naturally in man as a result of inanimate forces.
- We point to God as the source and motivation for morals and ethics.
 - God has instilled in man this sense of right and wrong and calls upon man to be like Him
 - “Be holy, for I am holy.” (1 Pet. 1:16)

Moral Argument

- How does Paul allude to this in Rom. 2:13-15? What is his point?
 - This is that sense of ought inherent in all men.
 - Although the Gentiles were not under the law of Moses, they had a law written in their hearts. Their conscience bore witness of this. They were subject to God just as surely as the Jews were.
- “Morality” – the character of being in accord with the principles or standards of right conduct
- “Ethics” – a system or code by which attitudes and actions are determined to be either right or wrong.
- Require a differentiation between right and wrong.
 - Must be some ultimate standard to distinguish between these.

Atheistic Explanations - Hedonism

- The doctrine that pleasure or happiness is the sole or chief good in life
- This philosophy is inconsistent
 - What if one, in the pursuit of pleasure and the avoidance of pain, must inflict pain upon others in order to achieve the goal?
 - i.e. act immorally in order to practice his “morality”
 - What is there about hedonism that would motivate a person to forego his own pleasure in the interest of others? Absolutely nothing!



Atheistic Explanations - Hedonism

- British agnostic Bertrand Russell: “We feel that the man who brings widespread happiness at the expense of misery to himself is a better man than the man who brings unhappiness to others and happiness to himself. I do not know of any rational ground for this view, or, perhaps, for the somewhat more rational view that whatever the majority desires is preferable to what the minority desires.”
- What if a person is simply an egotistical hedonist?
 - “I care not at all for others; I intend to live my life solely for my own pleasure with no consideration for others, save when such is in my own interest.”
 - Some might say, “That is so selfish.” So, what is wrong with selfishness if it brings pleasure to the committed hedonist?

Atheistic Explanations - Utilitarianism

- The useful is the good; the determining consideration of right conduct should be the usefulness of consequences
 - the aim of action should be the largest possible balance of pleasure over pain or the greatest happiness of the greatest number
 - “good” is that which gives pleasure to the greatest number of people
- Flawed for several reasons.
 1. If pleasure to the greatest number of people prevents one from achieving his own personal pleasure, what is there to motivate him toward the pleasure of the many?
 2. Second, provides no guideline to determine what the “pleasure” (genuine happiness) of the many actually is.

Atheistic Explanations - Utilitarianism

- Flaws continued
 3. This is the philosophy that stands behind, and is perfectly consistent with, numerous atrocities perpetrated in the alleged interest of humanity.
 - When Hitler slaughtered countless millions, and bred people like animals in behalf of evolving his master race, he felt he was operating in the genuine interest of mankind as a whole.
 - The principle is: If some have to suffer in order for the ultimate good to be accomplished, so what? Of course, the leaders of such movements always are willing to step forward with their definition of what that “ultimate good” is!

Theistic Explanation – The More Logical Answer

- Only the Theocentric approach to morality can explain the purpose of life.
- Provides adequate motivation for a genuinely ethical approach to life.
 - God is eternal (Psalm 90:2; 1 Timothy 1:17)
 - He is morally perfect; only God is good (Mark 10:18)
 - All that proceeds from Him is initially good and that which He created was good (Genesis 1:31)
 - All that He does, commands, and approves is likewise good (Psalm 119:39,68).
- The “good,” therefore, is what God is; what He has commanded results from Who He is, and thus is good.
 - “... do justly, love mercy, walk humbly with your God” (Micah 6:8)
- Moral sensitivity has been implanted in the soul of man by virtue of his creation in the image of God

“The plain fact of the matter is, if there is no God, there is no such thing as ‘evil’ ... Surely it ought to be obvious to every thinking person that if there are no eternal consequences for one’s actions, then we are but brute beasts with absolutely no moral responsibility!”

(Bert Thompson and Wayne Jackson)



Aesthetical Argument

- Beauty and sublimity is present in the universe.
- What can explain this presence of phenomena?
 - Must be a sufficient cause for the effect we observe.
- Give some examples of beauty that are undeniable in nature.
 - The sunset and the colors in the sky
 - A Spider's web
 - The colors of Autumn – changing leaves
 - The flowers of Spring
 - Brightly colored fish
- Also, there is an aesthetic ability in man to recognize and appreciate the beautiful in nature.



Aesthetical Argument

- Jenkins points out the following as well:
 - Mortimer Adler: “Only man decorates or adorns himself or his artifacts, and makes pictures or statues for the non-utilitarian purpose of enjoyment”
 - Francis Schaeffer often says: Only man makes works of art; such is not characteristic of non-man.
 - The repulsive, which is sometimes seen in nature and in man, only accentuates the beautiful and the sublime.



How can one account for the things we have studied in this lesson? What sufficient cause is there for the evidence of design, the inherent morality in man, the beautiful and our appreciation of it?

There can be but one conclusion; to deny it is foolish.

There is a God!



Standards for Moral Judgments - Nihilism

- Traditional values and beliefs are unfounded and that existence is senseless and useless; denies any objective ground of truth and especially of moral truths
 - Nihilism springs from the atheistic notion that since there is no God, there can be no rational justification for ethical norms.
- “if God is dead, everything is allowed”
- The hypocrisy of this dogma:
 - The propagators of such an idea really mean that “everything is permitted” for them alone.
 - They do not mean that the theft of their property and the slitting of their throats is permitted!



Standards for Moral Judgments - Relativism

- Ethical truths depend on the individuals and groups holding them
 - Rejects the idea that there can be universal criteria for determining values.
 - All value systems are thought to be culturally originated and conditioned, all are equally valid.
- Flaws
 - What if a particular culture believes that ethics is absolute? Would the relativists yield to that?
 - In some cultures, infanticide has been deemed a proper form of population control. Is that then “right”?
 - What about slavery, or the abuse of women? Where is the relativist that will declare openly and publicly the morality of such practices?

Standards for Moral Judgments - Situationism

- “situation ethics” - acts are judged within their contexts instead of by categorical principles
 - repudiates the concept of any absolute system of values
- Humanist Manifestos I and II:
 - “We affirm that moral values derive their source from human experience. Ethics is autonomous, and situational, needing no theological or ideological sanction. Ethics stems from human needs and interests. To deny this distorts the whole basis of life.”
- A more contradictory and absurd position would be difficult to conceive.
- If one argues that ethics is situational, he is suggesting that an act cannot be judged by an absolute standard, and that its rightness or wrongness is dependent upon the situation.

Standards for Moral Judgments - Situationism

- E.g., it would be wrong to lie if that falsehood was hurtful to others; if the lie could be helpful, then it would be right.
- However, morality is alleged by them to be autonomous.
 - That word means “self law,” suggesting that every man is his own law.
 - If that is the case, how could there ever be a situation in which a person could do wrong? Human ethical autonomy and situational morality are mutually exclusive.



Standards for Moral Judgments - Determinism

- Acts of the will, occurrences in nature, or social or psychological phenomena are causally determined by preceding events or natural laws
 - Absolves man of personal responsibility for his conduct.
- Behaviorism argued that personality, hence conduct, is the end product of our habit system.
- Taught that man is merely an animal resulting from the evolutionary process.
 - Man, as an animal, is the product of environment, and so even to speak of human responsibility is nonsense.
- Sociobiology is a newer notion: sees man as a mere machine, somewhat analogous to a computer, which has been programmed by its genetic makeup.

Standards for Moral Judgments - Determinism

- Problems with this philosophy:
 1. If determinism is true, there is no such thing as human responsibility. But determinists frequently speak, write, and act as though human accountability existed.
 2. If man is not responsible for his actions, such terms as “good” and “evil” are meaningless.
 3. If man is not accountable, no one should ever be punished for robbery, rape, child abuse, murder, etc.
 4. How can we be expected to be persuaded by the doctrine of determinism, since the determinists were “programmed”
 5. Determinists won’t abide by their own doctrine. Violating the copyright of their books would quickly show whether they thought one was responsible for his actions.
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