

Theistic Arguments: The Craig Program, 1

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Hebrews 11:6

- ‡ And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. [NIV]

Outline

- # Part I: Setting the Stage
 - Atheism and its implications
 - What is an argument?
- # Part II: The Craig Program
 - Cosmological Argument
 - Teleological Argument
 - Moral Argument
 - Resurrection Argument
 - Basic Beliefs

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Range of Responses

- # I don't believe that God exists.
- # Nobody knows if God exists.
- # I don't need the concept of God.
- # The idea of God doesn't make sense.
- # I don't care.
 - Even atheist philosophers, e.g., Jean Paul Sartre and Albert Camus, recognized that the whether God exists makes a tremendous difference!

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Quote from Norman Levitt

- # Victor J. Stenger, *Has Science Found God? The Latest Results in the Search for Purpose in the Universe*, Prometheus Books, 2003.
- # Quote from back of book by Norman Levitt, Professor of Mathematics, Rutgers University, and author of *Prometheous Bedeviled: Science and the Contradictions of Contemporary Culture*.

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Implications of Atheism

- # If atheism is true, then ultimately life is meaningless.
- # If atheism is true, then ultimately we must live without hope.
- # If theism is true, then not only does life have meaning and hope, but there is also the possibility to know God and his love personally.

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Life is Meaningless?

- # Quote from Stenger again.
- # For an atheist, life may have *relative* meaning, but not *ultimate* meaning.
- # For an atheist, life may have *subjective* purpose, but not *objective* purpose.

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No Hope?

- # Quote from Bertrand Russell, *Selected Papers of Bertrand Russell*, Random House, 1927, p. 3.

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Theistic Arguments

- # Pascal: all else being equal, rational to believe that God exists.
- # In fact, all else are not equal!
- # Craig: Five arguments for the existence of God.
- # Plantinga: Two dozen or so arguments.

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Arguments

- # Statements leading to a conclusion.
- # Deductive and inductive arguments.
- # What makes a good argument?
 - Validity
 - Soundness
 - Not question-begging.

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Refuting Arguments

- # Plausibility: subjective.
- # Failure of an argument does not imply that the conclusion is false.
- # Logical fallacies.

Logical Fallacy I

- # Argument:
 - Either you think for yourself or you simply accept what the Bible says.
 - You accept what the Bible says.
 - Therefore, you do not think for yourself.
- # Fallacy: Affirming a disjunct.

Logical Fallacy II

- # Argument:
 - Either you reject the Bible or you are irrational.
 - You don't reject the Bible.
 - Therefore, you are irrational.
- # Fallacy: False dilemma.
- # Gen. 3:1

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Logical Fallacy III

- # Argument:
 - The Bible was written by people.
 - People are not God.
 - Therefore, the Bible is not God's word.
- # Fallacy: Equivocation.

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Logical Fallacy IV

- # Argument:
 - The Bible claims that God performs miracles.
 - But miracles cannot happen.
 - Therefore, the Bible is false.
- # Fallacy: Begging the question.

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Logical Fallacy V

- # Argument:
 - The Bible speaks of God seeing.
 - Seeing entails having eyes.
 - Therefore, God has eyes.
- # Fallacy: False analogy.

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For More Fallacies

- # See my paper, "Logical Fallacies in Attacks Against the Bible: Eleven Examples," at:
www.engr.colostate.edu/~echong/pubs/apologetics

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Further Reading

- # William Lane Craig, *God Are You There? Five Reasons God Exists and Three Reasons It Makes a Difference*, Ravi Zacharias International Ministries (RZIM), 2002.
- # Charles Taliaferro, *Does the Idea of God Make Sense?*, RZIM, 2002.
- # James Beilby and David K. Clark, *Why Bother with Truth? Arriving at Knowledge in a Skeptical Society*, RZIM, 2000.

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