

1. Scientific Proof Against God

In God: The Failed Hypothesis — How Science Shows That God Does Not Exist, Victor J. Stenger offers this scientific argument against the existence of God:

- a) Hypothesize a God who plays an important role in the universe.
- b) Assume that God has specific attributes that should provide objective evidence for his existence.
- c) Look for such evidence with an open mind.
- d) If such evidence is found, conclude that God may exist.
- e) If such objective evidence is not found, conclude beyond a reasonable doubt that a God with these properties does not exist.

2. Evil Conflicts with the Existence of God: God Doesn't Care or God Doesn't Exist

The earliest formulation of the Argument from Evil comes from the Greek philosopher Epicurus, writing in the early 3rd century BCE:

Either God wants to abolish evil and cannot,  
or he can but does not want to,  
or he cannot and does not want to,  
or lastly he can and wants to.

If he wants to remove evil, and cannot,  
he is not omnipotent;  
If he can, but does not want to,  
he is not benevolent;  
If he neither can nor wants to,  
he is neither omnipotent nor benevolent;  
But if God can abolish evil and wants to,  
how does evil exist?

3. No Reason to Believe in Gods: Without Good Reasons, Belief is Impossible

Perhaps the most basic reason for not believing in any gods is the absence of good reasons for doing so. Since the burden of support (or proof, depending on the nature of the claim) lies first and foremost with those making the positive assertion — the theistic, religious believers who say their god exists — non-believers don't need reasons not to believe. They may help, but they aren't particularly necessary. Instead, what is required are reasons to believe.

4. Life is Material, not Supernatural: We Are Material, Natural Beings

Most religions say that life is much more than the flesh and matter we see around us. In addition, there is supposed to be some sort of spiritual or supernatural realm behind it all and that our "true selves" is spiritual, not material. All evidence, though, points to life being a purely natural phenomenon. All evidence indicates that who we really are — our selves — is material and dependent upon the workings of the brain. If this is so, religious and theistic doctrines are wrong.

5. Faith is Unreliable & Unreasonable: Faith is Not a Source of Knowledge

A common characteristic of both theism and religion is their reliance on faith: belief in the existence of a god and in the truth of religious doctrines is neither founded upon nor defended by logic, reason, evidence, or science. Instead, people are supposed to have faith — a position they wouldn't consciously adopt with just about any other issue. Faith, though, is an unreliable guide to reality or means for acquiring knowledge. Faith can be used to defend anything and everything equally.

## 6. Gods & Theists Behave Immorally: How Can Moral Gods Behave Immorally?

In most religions, gods are supposed to be the source of all morality. However, religions are responsible for widespread immorality and gods have characteristics or histories which make them similar to the vilest human. Christians, Jews, and Muslims all believe in a god which their own scriptures describe as having been the cause of tremendous suffering and evil — things which, if any human did, would cause that person to be reviled as evil.

## 7. Gods are Similar to Believers physically, in temperament, and/or attitude: Therefore Gods are Created in the Image of Humans

The gods people believe in look remarkably and disturbingly like the theists who are promoting their beliefs. Xenophanes of Colophon, an important Greek philosopher during the early 5th century BCE rejected the existence of gods which looked suspiciously like humans and thereby cast doubt upon gods generally:

*“Both Homer and Hesiod have attributed to the gods things that are shameful and a reproach among mankind: theft, adultery, and mutual deception.*

*And this he held was due to the representation of the gods in human form. But mortals suppose that gods are born, wear their own clothes and have a voice and body.*

*The Ethiopians say that their gods are flat-nosed and black, while the Thracians say that theirs have blue eyes and red hair. Yet if cattle or horses or lions had hands and could draw, and could sculpture like men, then the horses would draw their gods like horses, and cattle like cattle; and each they would shape bodies of gods in the likeness, each kind, of their own.*

## 8. Religion & Religious Doctrines are Self-Contradictory: How Can They All Be True?

No religion is perfectly consistent when it comes to doctrines, ideas, and history. Every ideology, philosophy, and cultural tradition has inconsistencies and contradictions, so this shouldn't be surprising — but other ideologies and traditions aren't alleged to be divinely created or divinely sanctioned systems for following the wishes of a god. The state of religion in the world today is more consistent with the premise that they are man-made institutions.

## 9. Gods' Contradictory Characteristics: Making God Impossible to Exist

Theists often claim that their gods are perfect beings; they describe gods, however, in contradictory and incoherent ways. Numerous characteristics are attributed to their gods, some of which are impossible and some combinations of which are impossible. As described, it's

unlikely or impossible for these gods to exist. Christianity, for example, draws from both ancient Hebrew religion and ancient Greek philosophy to describe its god. Those two traditions are not really compatible and they are what generate the most contradictions in Christian [theology](#). One Christian will define the Christian god as being so all-powerful that free will is nonexistent — who we are and what we do is entirely up to God (strict Calvinism) — while another Christian will define the Christian god as not all-powerful and who, in fact, is learning and developing alongside us (Process Theology). When we move beyond a single religious tradition and expand to related religions, like Christianity, Judaism, and Islam, the differences grow exponentially.

#### 10. Too Many Gods, Too Many Religions: All Can't Be True, But All Can Be False

It is difficult to credit any one religion as being True or any one god as being True when there have been so many throughout human history. None appears to have any greater claim to being more credible or reliable than any other. Why Christianity and not Judaism? Why Islam and not Hinduism? Why monotheism and not polytheism? Every position has had its defenders, all as ardent as those in other traditions. They can't all be right, but they can all be wrong.

#### 11. The Universe Does Not Require Gods

The concept of 'god' can mean many different things - or perhaps it can mean anything, given the apparent limitless number of characteristics which various believers assign to their gods. In *Conversations with Carl Sagan*, edited by Tom Head, Carl Sagan says in an interview published in the U.S. Catholic in 1981:

When people ask me after one of my lectures, "Do you believe in God?" I frequently reply by asking what the questioner means by "God." The term means a lot of different things in a lot of different religions. For some, it's an outsized, light-skinned male with a long white beard, sitting on a throne somewhere up there in the sky, busily tallying the fall of every sparrow. To others — for example, Baruch Spinoza, and Albert Einstein — God is essentially the sum total of the physical laws which describe the universe. I can't imagine anyone denying the existence of the laws of nature, but I don't know of any compelling evidence for the old man in the sky.

The contrast here between the laws of nature and gods is very instructive. People don't deny the existence of gravity, for example. Unequivocal evidence compels belief in something like gravity acting on us and everything around us; absolutely no evidence comes anywhere close to compelling belief on anything like a god. Perhaps the facts about the universe don't absolutely exclude the possibility of some versions of gods from existing, but there's certainly nothing about the universe which suggests that the existence of any gods is very likely.

## 12. Immorality of the Biblical God: Can God be both Moral and Immoral?

An important objection against the existence of the god of the Bible focuses on this god's character. The god of the Bible isn't simply an ideal abstraction; in Western religious traditions we find many stories about what God has done or commanded believers to do. Often such actions are contrary to basic moral principles; God is described as the source of morality. How can this be?

An argument against such a god can be formally stated thus:

- 1) God is morally perfect (premise)
- 2) Any act that God condones, commands, or causes is morally permissible or mandated (from 1)
- 3) Any act that God forbids is morally impermissible (from 1)
- 4) The Bible accurately reveals many acts condoned, commanded, or caused by God
- 5) In the Bible there are acts which God forbids but which God also condones, commands, or causes
- 6) It is incoherent for a morally perfect being to condone, command, or cause immoral acts
- 7) The God of the Bible is incoherent and, therefore, cannot exist.

## 13. Argument from Virtue: Can a Perfect God be Virtuous?

The God traditionally believed in under philosophical theism must be all-virtuous, but certain virtues (like courage) can only be developed in the context of flawed, fallible creatures. Ergo, a perfect God cannot be all-virtuous. One or the other attribute must give way and if theists insist on ascribing both to God, then God is logically impossible.

Here's a formal statement of his argument offered by Douglas Walton offers in the book *The Impossibility of God*:

- 1) God is (by definition) a being than which no greater being can be thought. (premise)
- 2) Greatness includes greatness of virtue. (premise)
- 3) Therefore, God is a being than which no being could be more virtuous. (from 1, 2)
- 4) But virtue involves overcoming pains and dangers. (premise)
- 5) Indeed, a being can only be properly said to be virtuous if it can suffer pain or be destroyed. (premise)
- 6) A God that can suffer pain or is destructible is not one than which no greater being can be thought. (premise)
- 7) For you can think of a greater being, that is, one that is nonsuffering and indestructible. (premise)
- 8) Therefore, God does not exist. (from 3, 5)

#### 14. Omnipotence and Evil: Can Evil Exist with an Omnipotent God?

Is the existence of evil compatible with the existence of an omnipotent god with the ability to desire to eliminate evil? That seems unlikely and many atheological arguments have been based upon just that. A solid argument makes the existence of the traditional God unlikely - and belief in it unreasonable.

Here is a formal statement of the contradiction between omnipotence and the existence of evil:

- 1) God is omnipotent. (premise)
- 2) God is perfectly good. (premise)
- 3) A good being always eliminates evil as far as it can. (premise)
- 4) There is no limit to what an omnipotent being can do. (premise)
- 5) An omnipotent being can eliminate evil completely. (from 4)
- 6) A good omnipotent thing will eliminate evil completely. (from 3 - 5)
- 7) The existence of a good omnipotent being is inconsistent with the existence of evil.  
(from 6)
- 8) Therefore, the existence of God is inconsistent with the existence of evil. (from 7 - 9).

#### 15. Perfect Creator: Is It Possible for a Perfect Creator to Exist?

Two qualities often attributed to God are perfection and being the 'creator' of the universe (if not more). Are these qualities compatible or incompatible? There are two good arguments that they are incompatible; and to the degree that they are valid, the existence of such a god is improbable at the very least, if not impossible.

The argument is based on the idea that a perfect being has no need to create anything at all:

- 1) God is perfect. (premise)
- 2) God deliberately created the universe. (premise)
- 3) Perfection entails the lack of needs or wants. (premise)
- 4) Being perfect, God does not now nor ever has nor ever will have any needs or wants.  
(from 1, 3)
- 5) Deliberate creation entails an effort to satisfy some need or want. (premise)
- 6) Being a creator, God at one time had some need or want. (from 2, 5)
- 7) It is impossible to have some need or want and also to never have any need or want.
- 8) Conclusion: God, if it exists, is either not perfect or has not created anything. (from 4, 6)

If God is perfect, then God can't have any needs or wants; hence, God wouldn't bother creating something. If God deliberately creates something, it must be because of some need or want — even if it is as simple as curiosity.

## 16. Who Made God? An Atheological Argument from Design

According to this common theological argument, nothing so complex as the universe with all of its accompanying natural laws could possibly have occurred simply due to random chance; ergo, it must have all been designed and created by some being which believers label “god.” This can only establish the existence of a creator god, but that is usually enough of a basis for many to then proceed with further arguments to show that a creator god must be the same god of their religion.

The response “Who made God?” can be used to point out an important flaw in the above argument: if the universe is too complex not to have been designed, then God is also too complex not to have been designed. A creator-god is never portrayed as something simple or, more importantly, something simpler than the universe. If this god is at least as complex as the universe, then it needs a designer and creator at least as much as the universe.

Believers will usually respond with one of a couple of common objections. The first is to claim that this creator-god has always existed while the universe has not; because the universe began to exist at some point, it requires a creator in a way that the god does not. Unfortunately, the assertion that this god always existed is unsupported and apparently unupportable — it’s just an assertion we have no particular reason to believe. The assertion that the universe “began” to exist is also problematic because time itself is a feature of the universe, and therefore the universe does not exist “in” time such that we can talk about a time “before the universe” or a time “after the universe.”

Another objection raised by believers is the idea that their god is a “necessary being” and doesn’t need a “creator.” Unfortunately, this is also unsupported and unupportable. There is no basis for such an arbitrary assertion, except to try to excuse their god from the same standards they wish to apply to the universe.

Moreover, both of the above excuses made for this god can be equally work for the universe. Why can’t the universe be “necessary” or not need a “creator?” Why can’t we say that the universe has “always” existed because there is no identifiable point in time when the universe did not exist? No one can say — after all, we really don’t know enough about our universe or universes in general to make such judgments. Of course, we also don’t have enough verifiable data of gods to make such judgments about them, either.