

Where is God?

*Upon my bed at night I sought him whom my soul loves;
I sought him, but found him not;
I called him, but he gave no answer.*

– Song of Solomon 3:1

Over the centuries many ‘proofs’ and arguments have been put forward to demonstrate the existence of God. Listed below are the twenty most common of these attempts. Read all twenty and then pick one that appeals to you, research it and record your findings in the space provided.

1. The Argument from Change. The material world we know is a world of change. Now when something comes to be in a certain state, such as mature size, that state cannot bring itself into being.
2. The Argument from Efficient Causality. We notice that some things cause other things to be. Existence is like a gift given from one thing to another.
3. The Argument from Time and Contingency. We notice around us things that come into being and go out of being. If the universe began to exist, then all being must trace its origin to some past moment before which there existed – literally – nothing at all.
4. The Argument from Degrees of Perfection. We notice around us things that vary in certain ways. But if these degrees of perfection pertain to being and being is caused in finite creatures, then there must exist a ‘best’, a source and real standard of all the perfections that we recognise belong to us as beings.
5. The Design Argument. Almost everyone admits that reflection on the order and beauty of nature touches something very deep within us. But are the order and beauty the product of intelligent design and conscious purpose?
6. The Kalam Argument. The Arabic word *kalam* means ‘speech’. The argument is that the world could not be infinitely old and must therefore have been created by God.
7. The Argument from Contingency. The universe – the collection of beings in space and time – exists. Therefore, there must exist what it takes for the universe to exist.
8. The Argument from the World as an Interacting Whole. This world is given to us as a dynamic, ordered system of many active component elements. Only God could create such a system.
9. The Argument from Miracles. Obviously if you believe that some extraordinary event is a miracle, then you believe in divine agency, and you believe that such agency was at work in this event.
10. The Argument from Consciousness. This intelligible universe and the finite minds so well suited to grasp it are the products of a far greater intelligence.
11. The Argument from Truth. There must exist an eternal mind in which all truths reside.

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- 12. The Argument from the Origin of the Idea of God. Only God himself could have caused this idea to arise in our minds.
- 13. The Ontological Argument. It is greater for a thing to exist in the mind and in reality than in the mind alone.
- 14. The Moral Argument. This argument sees real moral obligation as grounded in its Creator, and sees moral obligation as rooted in the fact that we have been created with a purpose and for an end.
- 15. The Argument from Conscience. Modern people often say they believe that there are no universally binding moral obligations, that we must all follow our own private conscience. But that very admission is enough of a premise to prove the existence of God.
- 16. The Argument from Desire. Every natural, innate desire in us corresponds to some real object that can satisfy that desire. This something is what people call 'God' and 'life with God forever'.
- 17. The Argument from Aesthetic Experience. There is the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. Therefore there must be a God!
- 18. The Argument from Religious Experience. This argument moves from the widespread fact of religious experience to the affirmation that only a divine reality can adequately explain it.
- 19. The Common Consent Argument. The capacity for reverence and worship seems to belong to us by nature.
- 20. Pascal's Wager. The wager assumes that logical reasoning by itself cannot decide for or against the existence of God; there seem to be good reasons on both sides. Now since reason cannot decide for sure, and since the question is of such importance that we must decide somehow, then we must 'wager' if we cannot prove. And so we are asked: Where are you going to place your bet?

Write the result of your research on one of the above:
