

# This Is Philosophy - Chapter 3.12 : 3.94 Summary

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## Why There Is a God?

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### The Argument from Scripture

Countless different "scriptures" exist, each providing examples of virtue, ways of life, and stories that are meant to provide an example of how life should be lived.

**Scripture Argument 1** - assume that scriptures are divinely inspired

1. Assume that the Bible (or whatever holy book you prefer) is the divinely inspired word of God.
2. God doesn't lie.
3. The Bible says God exists.
4. Therefore, God exists.

This provides an example of "*Circular Reasoning*" or "*Begging the Question*", because it's first premise presupposes the existence of God, the very conclusion that the argument is trying to reach.

**Scripture Argument 2** - treat scriptures no different from other literature

*Analytical Bias* - "If all you have is a hammer, everything looks like a nail."

1. Most of the historical claims in the Bible can be proven to be true by modern archaeology and historical study.
2. If the historical claims (dates, places, battles, kings, cities) are true, then the religious claims (gods, demons, spirits, miracles, afterlife) are probably true.
3. Therefore the religious claims are probably true.

This argument is logically sufficient, but:

"there is no particular reason to think that an accurate account of historical events supports any sort of religious interpretation of those events."

"The question is not whether you agree that [the author] believed in all those gods, but whether you do."

### The Ontological Argument

**Ontological Argument** - the belief that God's existence can only be demonstrated by pure abstract reason.

**St Anselm of Canterbury's Ontological Argument**

1. The concept of God is that of the most perfect being imaginable.
2. Either God is purely imaginary or God is real.
3. It is more perfect to exist than not to exist.
4. Therefore a purely imaginary God is less perfect than a real God.
5. Therefore a purely imaginary God does not correspond to the concept of God, which is that of the most perfect being.

6. Therefore God is real.

## Objection 1 - The Fool's Response

### The Lost Island Argument

1. The concept of the Lost Island is that of the most perfect island imaginable.
2. Either the Lost Island is purely imaginary or the Lost Island is real.
3. It is more perfect to exist than not to exist.
4. Therefore a purely imaginary Lost Island is less perfect than a real Lost Island.
5. Therefore a purely imaginary Lost Island does not correspond to the concept of the Lost Island, which is that of the most perfect island.
6. Therefore the Lost Island is real.

"In short, if the Lost Island were truly perfect in every way, it would be God ... [but] just because a word has "perfect" in front of it, does not mean that the word is just code for 'God.'"

## Objection 2 - A Reverse Parody

### The Nonexistence Argument

1. The concept of God is that of the most perfect being imaginable.
2. Either God is purely imaginary or God is real.
3. It is more perfect not to exist than to exist.
4. Therefore a purely imaginary God is more perfect than a real God.
5. Therefore a real God does not correspond to the concept of God, which is that of the most perfect being.
6. Therefore God is purely imaginary.

"Nonexistence is the greatest possible handicap."

## Objection 3: Existence is Not a Property

"Existence isn't a perfection because it isn't a property at all...In modern logic existence is treated as a quantifier: you have to specify what exists first, before you can start saying what properties things have."

## The Cosmological Argument - God as Creator

### Aristotle's Prime Mover Argument

1. Everything is caused by something prior in the causal chain.
2. It is absurd to think that the chain of causation can go back infinitely.
3. Thus there had to be some uncaused thing at the beginning that started the whole chain of causation.
4. This uncaused thing is God.

### Objection 1: Inconsistency

Premise 1 and premise 3 of the Prime Mover Argument present contradiction. If everything is caused by something prior, then premise 3 can not be true, as it clearly states that something uncaused occurred at the beginning.

"If some things are caused and some are not, what's the motivation to suppose there must be a first cause?"

## Objection 2: Problem of the Attributes

"Why should we leap to the conclusion that this uncaused thing is God?"

## Objection 3: Alternative Scientific Explanations

Contemporary science provides explanation for the universe, i.e. the Big Bang.

"What all this means for the cosmological argument is that, as far as the origin of the universe is concerned, God isn't the only game in town. There's also a sophisticated, evidence-based competing scientific explanation, which means that some strong reasons will be needed to prefer the God explanation to the scientific one."

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"If eternal existence is ridiculous, then it applies to God too. If everything needs a beginning, then so does God."

## The Teleological Argument or The Argument from Design

### The Design Argument

1. Everything in the universe is organized, detailed, complex, and precise.
2. Nothing explains this complexity and order except intelligent design.
3. If it is the result of design, then there must be a designer.
4. This designer is God.

## Objection 1: Weaknesses in the watch analogy