

# Does God Exist?

## The Moral Law

*We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness.*

—THE DECLARATION OF INDEPENDENCE

### MEMORY VERSE

*For when Gentiles who do not have the Law do instinctively the things of the Law, these, not having the Law, are a law to themselves, in that they show the work of the Law written in their hearts, their conscience bearing witness, and their thoughts alternately accusing or else defending them . . . (Romans 2:14-15).*

### REVIEW OF THE CONCLUSIONS FROM THE EVIDENCE SO FAR:

1. Truth about reality is knowable.
2. The opposite of true is false.
3. It is true that the theistic God exists. This is evidenced by the:
  - a. Beginning of the universe (Cosmological Argument)
  - b. Design of the universe (Teleological Argument/Anthropic Principle)
  - c. Design of life (Teleological Argument)

This lesson focuses not on a scientific argument for God, but on a philosophical argument for God. It is the argument from morality. Evidence for this argument is something we've all known since we were very small children. In fact, one of the first things kids say is "that's not fair!" Where does that come from, and why do most people have a belief that certain behaviors are objectively right while others are objectively wrong?

While social outcomes of beliefs are important, they are not the focus of this lesson. Nor are we claiming that atheists don't know morality or can't act morally—atheists, like everyone else, actually do know right from wrong and can act morally. The focus of this lesson is to show that the existence of God best explains the existence of objective morality.

## LET'S REVIEW THE TWO PREVIOUS ARGUMENTS WE'VE DISCUSSED SO FAR:

- **The Cosmological Argument** states that everything that has a beginning has a cause; the universe had a beginning; therefore the universe had a Cause.
- **The Teleological Argument** states that every design has a designer, the universe has highly complex design, and therefore, the universe has a Designer.

## THE MORAL ARGUMENT

The Moral Argument states:

1. Every law has a law giver.
2. There is an objective moral law.
3. Therefore, there is an objective moral law giver.

### Here is another way to state the argument:

1. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist.
2. Objective moral values do exist.
3. Therefore, God exists.

Some call the Moral Law "conscience" and others call it "Nature's Law." You don't use evidence to discover it, you just know it. Without an objective standard of meaning and morality, life is meaningless and there's nothing absolutely right or wrong. Everything is just a matter of opinion.

## IS THERE A STANDARD?

Are laws against murder and other crimes just based on someone's opinion? Is it simply a matter of opinion to kill innocent people who are considered a nuisance as in the Holocaust or legal abortion? What about laws against rape, slavery, and child abuse? If opinion changes, is it okay to change these laws to permit such behavior? If there is no God, then who decides what is right and wrong? Is it Mother Teresa or Hitler? Is it you? Me? Who gets to decide?

1. **The United States began with these words: "We hold these Truths to be self-evident, that all Men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Happiness." What do these words say about the Moral Law? How does this compare to Romans 2:14-15?**

## KNOWING VS. GROUNDING THE MORAL LAW

Can we prove to you that an objective Moral Law exists? No, just like we can't prove to you that the law of non-contradiction exists. It is something that is self-evident. Certain moral principles are known by all and binding on all. There only needs to be one such principle to show that God exists. If there is a Moral Law prescription, there must be a Moral Law Prescriber.

Atheists might say, "I know the moral law because my parents or my society taught it to me." But that's missing the point of the argument.

It's critically important to understand that the moral argument is not merely that we **know** objective morality, but that there really **exists** an objective moral standard beyond subjective human opinion. This is the difference between epistemology (how you know something) and ontology (that something actually exists). We might know murder is wrong because our parents or society taught it to us; but **why** murder is objectively wrong can only be explained if God exists. Objective moral duties can exist only if they are grounded in an unchanging person who has authority over human beings. That person is what we mean by God.

So even if just one objective moral duty exists (such as it's wrong to torture babies for fun), then God must exist. No temporal, subjective, changing human being or society can ground an eternal, objective, unchanging moral law. Therefore, to be a consistent atheist, you would have to admit that torturing babies for fun is not objectively morally wrong; it's merely a matter of human opinion.

## MOTHER TERESA VS. HITLER

**2. Dr. Turek uses an illustration of comparing two maps of Scotland to a real place called Scotland. He then compares Mother Teresa to Hitler. How does the map example help illustrate that an objective morality exists beyond mere human opinion?**

*"If God does not exist, then what the Nazis did was not objectively wrong."*

**3. Dr. Turek points out several absurdities that would follow if we denied objective morality. List as many of the six you can remember that he mentioned. Add any you think of yourself.**

### **THE MORAL LAW: WHAT DO DARWINISTS SAY?**

Some atheists say that society gave us morality because those “cooperative” morals helped humans survive together, but there are a number of problems with this. First, which society has the authority to tell everyone how to behave, Hitler’s or Mother Teresa’s? Can we make murder morally acceptable by majority vote?

Second, this position smuggles in a moral law by assuming survival is a moral Good. Survival for who? Who said? And isn’t the highest form of love sacrifice for others rather than survival (John 15:13)?

Finally, who said we ought to “cooperate” and why should I cooperate if I can get what I want by not cooperating? The Russian dictator Stalin got what he wanted by murdering other people. He didn’t need to cooperate.

**Morality comes from evolution to help us survive.** It’s not just how we know morality (epistemology), but that a moral law exists (ontology). You may know the times tables because your fourth grade teacher taught them to you (epistemology), but mathematical truths exist (ontology) regardless of how you came to know them. Moreover, how does a biological process (evolution) create an immaterial moral law? One cannot derive a moral ought from mere biological materials (to do so would be to commit the “is-ought fallacy”). Why should anyone cooperate with others if that person can cheat or kill others for his own benefit and get away with it? Finally, which society has the authority to tell everyone how to behave, Hitler’s or Mother Teresa’s? Can we make murder morally acceptable by majority vote? Is rape a “good” thing because it helps us survive?

**4. Darwinists often claim that morality is materially and genetically determined. It is based on inherited feelings or instincts, not on an objective standard of right and wrong. How would you answer each of the following:**

- a. You see a plane crash into a river and passengers are drowning. You immediately have two competing instincts: one to stay safe and one to help. Even though your stronger instinct is to preserve yourself by not helping them, you ignore your own safety and swim to their rescue because you sense it is the right thing to do. How does this show that morality is not a mere instinct?**
- b. Why can't non-theists justify that anything—including murder, rape, or the Holocaust—is objectively wrong?**
- c. How does the utilitarian or pragmatic view—do the greatest good, or do what works—assume an absolute moral standard?**
- d. When you state the moral argument, atheists often think you are claiming that atheists are immoral or don't know morality. What would you say in response?**

### **THE EUTHYPHRO DILEMMA**

If you say that God is the source of objective morality, you may hear atheists bring up what is known as "the Euthyphro dilemma" from one of Plato's writings. The dilemma goes like this: Does God do something because it is good (which would imply there is a standard of Good beyond God), or is it Good because God does it (which would imply that God arbitrarily makes up morality)?

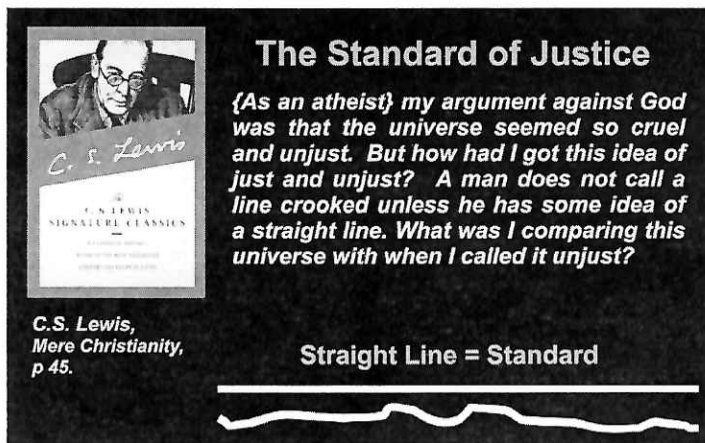
But this is not an actual dilemma at all. There is a third alternative. When it comes to morality, God doesn't look to another standard beyond Himself, nor is He arbitrary. The third alternative is that God's character **is** the standard. The buck has to stop somewhere, and it stops at God's unchanging moral nature. In other words, the standard of rightness we know as the Moral Law is derived from the very nature of God Himself—infinite justice and infinite love.

## WHAT ABOUT EVIL? THE SHADOWS PROVE THE SUNSHINE

Does the existence of evil disprove God? No. Every time an atheist complains about something evil, they are presupposing God. Why? Because evil is a lack in good. There can be no objective evil unless there is objective good, and there can be no objective good unless there is a standard of good outside of ourselves. That standard is God's very nature.

You could put it this way: The shadows (evil) prove the sunshine (good). There can be sunshine without shadows, but there can't be shadows without sunshine. So there can be good without evil, but there can't be evil without good; and there can't be objective good without God. So evil may show there's a devil out there, but it can't disprove God.

So when the late atheist Christopher Hitchens claimed that the God of the Bible is evil, he was borrowing from God in order to argue against Him. In fact, in his debates with me (Frank), Hitchens called God a "Divine Dictator." That's why I summed Mr. Hitchens' position this way: "There is no God, and I hate Him!"



**The Standard of Justice**

*{As an atheist} my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?*

C.S. Lewis,  
*Mere Christianity*,  
p 45.

**Straight Line = Standard**

C.S. Lewis was a former atheist who ultimately became a Christian. He originally thought evil somehow disproved God. But he later wrote, "{As an atheist} my argument against God was that the universe seemed so cruel and unjust. But how had I got this idea of just and unjust? A man does not call a line crooked unless he has some idea of a straight line. What was I comparing this universe with when I called it unjust?" (*Mere Christianity*, p. 45).

## ASK THE RIGHT QUESTIONS!

When trying to discuss how morality points to God, it's sometimes better to ask questions rather than make statements. At a recent *I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist* presentation on a college campus, an atheist was trying to tell me that

he had an objective standard for morality without God. When I asked him what that standard was, he said, "Whatever society decides is morally correct." So I asked him, "Are you saying that if a Nazi society decides to murder Jews, then the murder of Jews is objectively morally right?"

He hesitated, blushed and quivered a bit before he said, "yes." At that point, his atheist friend sitting right next to him looked at him and yelled, "No!" The first atheist knew in his heart the answer was "no", but in order to be consistent with his atheism he struggled to say "yes."

I didn't say anything after that. I just moved on to the next question. Once an atheist admits that his view supports Nazism, every sane person in the room knows his view is nuts. Sometimes you have to ask a question to reveal the problem with the other person's position.

Of course, even if the Nazi's had won the war and brainwashed everyone to believe that murdering Jews was right, that would not make it right. If God exists, then Moral Law obligations are binding on all people, at all times, and in all places even if everyone disagrees with them or denies they exist. God has had a long history of trouble with disobedient humans. In fact, that's why He sent His perfect Son—to rescue us from our own disobedience!

Much more could be said on the Moral Law. Take a look at the toolbox at the end of this lesson for more resources.

## **CONCLUSION: DOES GOD EXIST?**

### **WHAT ARE HIS ATTRIBUTES?**

**5. In Lessons 1-6, we focused on three arguments for God that are crucial to understanding the meaning of life: the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral arguments. Each of these arguments shows us something about the characteristics of God. What attributes about the First Cause do we discover from each argument?**

- **Cosmological:**
- **Teleological:**
- **Moral:**

**6. Look at the attributes of the First Cause that we have discovered from the Cosmological, Teleological, and Moral arguments. How do these attributes line up with the God of the Bible?**

**7. From these three arguments, we are able to know beyond a reasonable doubt that a theistic God exists. We have not assumed God exists because the Bible says so. We have shown this through natural revelation without use of the Bible as evidence. If theism is true, what are the implications for any non-theistic worldview?**

**8. Make a list of which major religions:**

- **cannot be true regarding their view of God (this does not mean that these religions are wrong about everything, but that their teaching about the existence and nature of God is incorrect)**
  
- **could be true regarding their view of God**

In our next lesson, we will begin to see which theistic religion is true.

## **TOOLBOX**

- For a classical defense of the Moral Law, read Part 1 of *Mere Christianity* by C.S. Lewis.
- In *What We Can't Not Know*, Professor J. Budziszewski questions the modern assumption that moral truths are unknowable. With clear and logical arguments he rehabilitates the natural law tradition and restores confidence in a moral code based on God's moral nature and written on the hearts of men.
- For more on this argument and others for the Christian worldview, see the popular book *On Guard* by Dr. William Lane Craig