

EQTH105 Basic Bible Doctrine

Unit 2b God's Existence

Presented by the



LANCASTER BIBLE COLLEGE
CAPITAL SEMINARY & GRADUATE SCHOOL

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In continuing a study about the identity of God, we come across the thought that people continue to ask age-old questions about the origin of God. Who created God? That is, assuming that he does exist. Where did he come from? How did he get to be God? Did he get promoted? Did he have a beginning? Did he have parents? The Bible answers that nobody created God. He is, by nature, the eternal God. He was not created at all. He always was and always will be. He did not work himself up into the position to be God. Neither did he inherit the position from his parents, for he had no parents, no mother, no father. He has no beginning and will have no end. The fact that God is eternal is stressed over and over in the Bible. The psalmists wrote, "Even from everlasting to everlasting, you are God." [Psa 90:2] Moses records God saying, "For I lift my hands to heaven, and say, as I live forever." [Deu 32:40]

So as we understand that God has always existed, we also say that God is uncaused. This, of course, is a problem because we think that everything has a cause and effect. Everything has to have a beginning. Therefore, we assume God must also have a cause. There's the term in philosophy called first cause, which is defined as a supposed ultimate cause of all events, which does not itself have a cause identified with God. As a starting point, we must assume a first cause, or else no cause whatsoever. If God is denied as always existing, then one must assume that something material has existed from all eternity. This material would have to come about without a cause. Therefore, our choice is between an intelligent being who is self-existent or lifeless matter. Some might argue that these statements beg the question, for they are assuming what they should be proving. They conveniently start with God but do not explain the how or why of his existence.

But ultimately, we must admit that there had to have been something in the beginning, whether it be God or something else. The starting point, according to the Bible, is God. God was in the beginning, and everything stems from him. This is not inconsistent with what he has revealed about himself in Scripture, nor is it inconsistent with our understanding about the origin of the universe. God has been God from all eternity. Nothing caused him to exist. He had no beginning and he will have no end. Although we are used to thinking that everything must have a beginning, there had to be something that existed eternally, the Bible states, that is an infinite personal God. The only other choice is to argue that some sort of material has existed eternally. Consequently, one must choose between an infinite personal God who has always existed or lifeless, impersonal matter. Those are our choices. Natural or supernatural. A supreme being or a completely natural, materialistic universe with no God, no creator, just what we see. No afterlife. Nothing.

Those are some stark choices. And as we wrestle with that, we might ask if the Bible attempts to prove that God exists. And the answer is no. Nowhere in the Bible, nowhere in Scripture are there arguments seeking to prove God's existence. The fact of his existence is assumed. The fact is assumed from the very beginning. The fact is assumed from the very first page where we read, "In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) His existence is assumed throughout the rest of Scripture. Nowhere do we find in subsequent verses a series of proofs of his existence. The Bible assumes the fact of God's existence and calls upon people to make a venture of faith toward him. The Bible says, "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."

[Heb 11:6] So it is impossible to know God except by faith. Since he is invisible to humanity, we can only know him by means of faith.

However, while the Bible does not attempt to prove God, Scripture does say that God’s existence is evident to everyone. In Romans 1, we read, “For what can be known about God is plain to them, because God has shown it to them. Ever since the creation of the world his eternal power and divine nature, invisible though they are, have been understood and seen through the things he has made. So they are without excuse.” [Rom 1:19-20] If a person denies the existence of God, then there is no reference point for correctly understanding themselves or the world around them. But not only does the Bible assume that God exists. It also says that fools deny his existence. In Psalms, it says, “Fools say in their hearts, ‘There is no God.’ They are corrupt, they commit abominable acts; there is no one who does good. God looks down from heaven on humankind to see if there are any who are wise, who seek after God. They have all fallen away, they are all alike perverse; there is no one who does good, no, not one.” [Psa 53:1-3]

So not to put too fine a point on it, but the Bible says only a foolish person would deny that God exists. And yet we know many in our culture do exactly that. They deny God exists. But the Bible specifically says that the fact of his existence should be obvious to all and that those who do reject the truth of God end up in idolatry. The apostle Paul wrote, “For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and wickedness of those who by their wickedness suppress the truth... for though they knew God, they did not honor him as God or give thanks to him, but they became futile in their thinking, and their senseless minds were darkened. Claiming to be wise, they became fools; and they exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling a mortal human being or birds or four-footed animals or reptiles.” [Rom 1:18, 21-23] At the end of the day, those who deny God’s existence have no real excuse. Paul wrote to the Romans, “For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes, His eternal power and divine nature, have been clearly seen, being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.” [Rom 1:20]

Rather than proving that God exists, the Bible is more interested in showing that the God of Scripture is the true God. In the ancient world, it seems that everyone believed in some type of god. Atheism was not really an issue. The question therefore was which god or which gods exist? This is the issue that the Bible addresses itself more than the mere fact of God’s existence. The God of the Bible is contrasted to the false idols that the people were worshiping. So to answer the question, “Does the Bible attempt to prove that God exists?” the answer is no. From the first page of the Bible until the last, God’s existence is assumed. Nowhere is there a case made out to prove that God exists. The writers of Scriptures take it for granted. They state that his existence is obvious to all. Only those who are fools deny that he exists. Those who reject his existence have no real excuse.

Now, a side question about the existence of God is the question that asks, “If God exists, then why is he silent?” In 1966, Time Magazine ran a cover story entitled “Is God Dead?” The article from that magazine had investigated a trend among 1960s theologians to write God out of the field of theology. In the late 1800s, German philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche wrote a short story called “Thus Spoke Zarathustra.”

He also wrote a story called "The Madman" where he said, "God is dead. God remains dead. And we have killed him." Is God dead? The question is a valid one, and the answer is no. God is alive and working his will in the universe. If this is true though, why don't we hear from him? Why is God silent? Why doesn't he reveal himself so that everyone can see him? Well, to start, we dispute that God is silent. The Bible says that God has spoken. He has revealed himself in history. Each page of the Old and New Testament gives evidence of God revealing himself. The climax to God's revelation was when he became a man in the person of Jesus Christ. The Bible says, "God, who at various times and in different ways spoke in times past to the fathers by the prophets, has in these last days spoken to us by His Son, whom He has appointed heir of all things, through whom also He made the worlds." [Heb 1:1-2]

Now, it is true that since the time of Christ, in the writing of the New Testament documents, there have been no additional revelations of God. The writing of inspired Scripture ended with the writings of Christ's apostles and their disciples. But that is not to say that God is silent. And he will come again. The next time God will publicly intervene in the affairs of humanity is when he comes again in the person of Jesus Christ. At that time, every eye shall see him. And it says, "Behold, He is coming with clouds, and every eye shall see Him, and they also who pierced Him. And all the tribes of the earth will mourn because of Him." [Rev 1:7]

Now, if you want to take this since the time of Christ as a period of silence, I would say that the silence of God is a testimony to his patience. God is still waiting for people to repent of their sins. "The Lord is not slack concerning His promises, as some count slackness, but is longsuffering towards us, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." [2Pe 3:9] So God is not silent. He is calling out to people to believe in him. And no, the God of the Bible is not dead. He not only exists; he has spoken to humanity. The Bible is the record of God revealing himself to the human race. The Scriptures are now complete and God is no longer speaking in this manner. However, God is still working his plan for the universe. The present silence of God, as far as divine revelation is concerned, is a sign of God's patience, mercy, and grace. He has promised to come to the earth again and set up his everlasting kingdom. In the interim, he is calling out for people to believe in him. There will come a time when his present silence will be broken and he will come again. In the meantime, he is very much alive and working out his will in the entire universe.