

3:14), the Messianic prophecies of which Jesus fulfilled).

6. **The historical truth of the Gospels is affirmed by Early Church Fathers and by scholars today who take into account ALL the historical evidence – biblical and extra-biblical.** Polycarp, for example, allowed himself to be martyred rather than deny Jesus; and Iranaeus, his disciple, would write that Polycarp had spoke to John the apostle and others who had seen the Lord. Ignatius, a bishop of Antioch, only 60 years after the Lord's death would choose martyrdom rather than deny the truths of Christianity. He would write, "Wherever Jesus Christ is, there is the Catholic Church." He also exhorted the Ephesians, "Come together in one faith in Jesus Christ, obey the bishop and the presbyters with an undivided mind, breaking one and the same bread, which is the medicine of immortality."

7. **Jesus founded One Church** (Mt 16:18-19; Jn 21:15-17) and, anticipating his Ascension, prayed "**that all may be one**" (Jn 17:17-23) and said there would be **one flock, one shepherd** (Jn 10:16). The Bible clearly teaches that: Jesus founded one Church on Peter alone (Mt 16:18), and gave the keys to the kingdom of heaven to Peter alone (Mt 16:19), and provided for papal and apostolic succession (cf Isaiah 22:24) in which the key indicates authority transferable to a successor, and promised to Peter that whatever he bound on earth would be bound in heaven, thereby giving him the infallible, prophetic anointing.

8. The pope and the Catholic bishops today are the true successors to Peter and the apostles. Through the solemn laying on of hands through the ages, their successors passed on the priestly anointing from one generation to the next. ***The Pope and Catholic bishops today – true successors of Peter*** (Is 22:22) ***and the other apostles through the solemn laying on of hands through the ages - continue to make disciples of all nations.*** Not suppressing his free will, **Jesus gave Peter primacy** (Mt 16:18-19) **knowing he would deny and abandon him. Not every Pope of history was personally worthy of the office. No**

pope, however, has destroyed the 2,000-year-old fabric of Doctrine. Perhaps Jesus also had in mind some in the hierarchy/clergy of his future Church when he told his followers: "Observe whatever they tell you, but not what they do". He was referring to "The scribes and the Pharisees [who] sit on Moses' seat" (Mt 23:2-3).

9. Having instituted the *Eucharist* and given Peter primacy in his One Church, ***the risen Jesus commissioned the Apostles*** (less Judas Iscariot) ***to make disciples of all nations*** (Mt 28:16-20).

10. ***Jesus never gave us a biblical "escape clause" to reject the One Church he founded and promised to be with always*** (Mt 28:20). Note Paul's warning regarding those who would preach "contrary gospels" (Gal 1:8-9) and Peter's warning against private interpretation of Scripture (2 Pet 3:16). *The exorcist in Mk 9:38 did not preach a "contrary gospel". Nor do "two or three" embrace a "contrary gospel" if truly gathered in his name (Mt 18:20). Nor are we to rely on our own insight (Prov 3:5). (Also see Mt 7:21-23).*

Today there are more than 33,000 different Christian denominations (World Christian Encyclopedia; Oxford Press; 2001) with MANY CONTRADICTORY SETS OF CRITERIA HELD AS "NECESSARY FOR SALVATION".

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Apologetics Made Easy

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1. Reason shows that an intelligent and wise God exists.

There are at least 25 reasons to "prove" the existence of God, some more cogent, some less so. The world, as it is, simply cannot be explained by chance and non-intelligent atheistic evolution. The Catholic Church does not deny the possibility that scientists may someday conclude, beyond reasonable doubt, that evolution is more than a hypothesis.

St. Thomas Aquinas' Five Proofs

St. Thomas Aquinas gave his famous five truths for the existence of God, namely:

- 1) all motion eventually has to be set in place by a first mover;
- 2) every cause eventually must presuppose a first cause;
- 3) the intricate order and design of the world necessarily presupposes a most intelligent designer,
- 4) the hierarchy of beings from inanimate to animate to animal to human to angelic must reasonably be topped off by God as the absolute pure spirit; and
- 5) contingent beings necessarily posit a necessary being, that is a being not able not to be.

Even though reason was rendered weak and clouded by sin, it still has sufficiently clear power of perception to lead us with certitude to the knowledge of the existence of God and to the revelation given to the Jews through Moses and to the Christians through Christ, the God-man.

Other Rational Proofs

6) The time argument.

Time must have a beginning, a first moment to give rise to all other moments. This first moment must be the moment of creation. Therefore, there must be a creator. This, like the above five of St. Thomas, is a cosmological argument, meaning that it is proven through the cosmos.

7) Ontological argument (Anselm)

God means that which has all conceivable perfections: since it is more perfect to exist in reality than only in the mind; therefore, God really exists.

8) Psychological arguments

A. From mind and truth

1. Augustine: Our minds are in contact with the eternal objective and absolute truth superior to our minds. Therefore, the eternal absolute objective must be God.

2. Descartes: Our ideas of a perfect being (God) could not have come from any imperfect source (cause) for the effect cannot be greater than the cause. Therefore, it must come from God.

B. from will and good

1. Kant: Morality requires a perfect ideal, and requires that this ideal be actual and real, somewhere.

2. Newman: Conscience speaks with absolute authority, which could come only from God.

C. from emotions and desire

1. C.S. Lewis: Innate desires correspond to real objects, and we have an innate desire (at least unconsciously) for God, and Heaven.

2. Von Balthasar: Beauty reveals God. There is Mozart, therefore there must be God.

D. from experience

1. Existential Argument: If there is no God (and no immortality) life is ultimately meaningless.

2. Mystical experience meets God.

3. Ordinary religious experience (prayer) meets God. (Prayer of the Skeptic:

“God, if you exist, show me” - a real experiment.)

4. Love argument: If there is no God of Love, no Absolute that is love, then love is not absolute. Or, the eyes of love reveal the infinite value of the human person as the image of God.

9) The argument from the analogy of other minds, which are not harder to prove than God (Plantinga).

10) The practice argument: Pascal’s Wager: To bet on God is your only chance of winning eternal happiness, and to bet against Him is your only chance of losing. It is the most reasonable bet in life.

11) Historical argument:

A. from miracles: If miracles exist, a supernatural miracle-worker exists.

B. from Providence, perceivable in history (e.g., in Scripture) and in one’s own life.

C. from authority: Most good, wise, reliable people believe in God.

D. from saints: You see God through them. Where do they get their joy and power?

E. from Jesus: If God is unreal, Jesus was history’s biggest fool or fake.

The list is not exhaustive, but illustrative. Intelligent design is the best scientific explanation of life. If I show you a watch, you know for certain that someone of intelligence had to make the watch. It could not have come about by chance even over the duration of millions of years. If I show you a person who is infinitely more intricate and more fantastic than a watch, you know for certain that some wise and intelligent being must have created that person. You know that the parents did not design every facet of his or her being.

2. Evolutionary theories fall far short of explaining the order in the universe, in particular the mind of man. The National Academy of Sciences says science is “neutral” regarding the existence of God.

3. Other than I AM of the Old Testament, no other founder of a religion is comparable to Jesus.

True respect for others is important, regardless of what religion they may practice.

However, it is important that students and others become aware of the following truth that may no longer be stated in a public classroom in the USA:

With the exception of Jews (and Christians) who speak of **I AM** of the Old Testament – the Messianic prophecies of which Jesus fulfilled - **no authoritative spokesperson for any non-Christian religion claims that its founder or reformers are comparable to Jesus in the way He manifested the**

authority of the Creator - including His power over death itself.

Other than **I AM**, of all founders of a religion Jesus Christ alone manifested the authority of the Creator - Only Jesus did all of the following: (a) fulfilled the many Messianic prophecies of the Old Testament; (b) proved by His works that He had the authority of the Creator; (c) acknowledged that He was God (Jn 20:28-29); (d) died on the cross to redeem us and make possible our salvation; (e) rose from death on the third day, appeared to many, and ascended into heaven; (f) said he would personally be our judge after death (Jn 5:22-23) and; (g) said that no one comes to the Father except through him. (Jn 14: 6-7).

4. For example, Jesus fulfilled all the Messianic prophecies. He would be the offspring of the woman who would crush the head of Satan (Gen 3:15); the promised offspring of Abraham (Gen 18:18), of Isaac (Gen. 17:19), of Jacob (Numb 24:17), of Judah (Gen 49:10), of David (Isaiah 9:7). He would be born in Bethlehem (Micah 5:2), 483 years after the decree to restore the temple (Daniel 9:25), of a virgin (Isaiah 7:14). He would escape into Egypt (Hosea 11:1), he would have a ministry in Galilee (Isaiah 9:1-2), He would be a prophet like Moses (Deut. 18:15), and a priest like Melchizedek (Psalm 110:4). He would enter Jerusalem triumphantly (Zech 9:9), He would be betrayed by a close friend (Ps 41:9), and sold for 30 pieces of silver (Zech 11:12). False witnesses would accuse Him (Ps 27:12), He would be led like a sheep to slaughter in silence (Isaiah 53:7); He would be hated without cause (Ps 69:4) and struck and spit upon (Isaiah 50:6). He would carry our sins and by His stripes we would be healed (Isaiah 53:4-12). His hands and feet would be pierced (Ps 22:16). They would give Him gall and vinegar to drink (Ps 69:21). His side would be pierced (Zech 12:10), and upon his garments soldiers would cast lots (Ps 22:18), yet not a bone would be broken (Ps 34:20), and yet He would rise (Ps 16:10) and ascend into heaven (Ps 68:18).

5. Of all the founders of a religion*, only Jesus manifested the power and authority of the Creator. The tombs of all the others are occupied. *(Other than I AM of the Old Testament (e.g., Ex