

- Arguments against Christian foundation
 - No Historical Resurrection
 - 1 Corinthians 15: Christianity hinges on a historical resurrection
 - 1. “Earliest documents were written decades after the events”
 - a. Impactful events are much easier to remember
 - b. Historians consider documents historically useful up to 100 years after the event
 - c. The earliest information on the resurrection is in 1 Corinthians 15:3-7, a pre-Pauline creed which scholars date to within no more than 5 years after Jesus’ death (dating explained by Gary Habermas [here](#))
 - 2. “Earliest documents are uniformly written by Jesus’ followers, so there’s an implicit bias”
 - a. There is no such thing as an unbiased source
 - b. Paul and James were originally hostile to Christianity
 - c. Historians do not discard documents as unreliable simply because they are not unbiased (William Lane Craig elaborates [here](#))
 - 3. “Earliest fragments of these documents are from the mid-second century”
 - a. Through the field of textual criticism and due to the sheer number of fragments and manuscripts available, even atheist scholars like Bart Ehrman admit that we can reconstruct the New Testament to within 99% accuracy. (Frank Turek elaborates [here](#))
 - 4. “Miracle is the least probable explanation for any event, so any natural hypothesis will have a higher probability”
 - a. This is a summary of the position of David Hume, a Scottish philosopher of the 1700s
 - b. Hume lived prior to the development of the modern probability calculus, so he didn’t realize that his position was demonstrably false. (William Lane Craig speaks on this [here](#))
- Arguments against Christian doctrines
 - Inerrancy
 - David killed Goliath. — 1 Sam 17:50
 - Elhanan killed Goliath. — 2 Sam 21:19
 - 1 Chronicles 20:5 clarifies that Elhanan killed Goliath’s brother, Lahmi, so later copies of the passage in 2 Sam 21:19 are probably just missing the words “the brother of”. Inerrancy pertains to the original autographs, not copies. (GotQuestions article on who killed Goliath [here](#))
 - 1 Kings 4:26 — Solomon has 40,000 stalls of horses
 - 2 Chronicles 9:25 — Solomon has 4,000 stalls of horses
 - As mentioned above, inerrancy pertains to the original autographs, not copies. The numbers are close enough that we can state with

a high degree of confidence that the difference was caused by a copyist's error at some point.

- It's important to note that even if this is a genuine error in the autographs, this would at most cause us to redefine what it means for the Bible to be inspired. It would not undermine the historicity of the resurrection of Jesus, which is now demonstrated by applying the methods of modern historiography to the New Testament texts just like any other ancient texts.

- Perfect Morality in Bible
 - If you're gay, you get the death penalty (Lev. 20:13)
 - If you have an affair, you get the death penalty (Deut. 22:22)
 - If you rape a virgin, you get to marry her (Deut. 22:28-29)
 - First, note that no argument is given for why this is problematic. As one person said, "I don't know how to argue against an incredulous stare." If someone objects, first ask them why these laws, which were given specifically to Israel, are objectionable.
 - Second, most westerners don't understand honor/shame culture, so they don't understand why killing the rapist might actually make things worse by leaving her 1) without her virginity, 2) without a husband, and 3) without even the prospect of a husband, since the bride's virginity was a prerequisite for most marriages in that culture. Moreover, note how restrictive the passage is: it says "He may not divorce her all his days." This means that he is forced to provide for her and her children until he dies. Not even the wives of normal marriages got that type of mandated support in those days! Moreover, her very existence would be a constant reminder to him of his horrible deed. So, while the rape was horrendous, the law provided for a substantial remedy to the woman and her family.
 - Third, if the objector is an atheist, he/she most likely claims that morality is subjective. If that's the case, then it's strange (perhaps even logically inconsistent) that they would allow for subjective morality among humans, but not God.

- Innocent children are destroyed in the Flood
 - If there is an age of accountability, then innocent children who died in the Flood are immediately ushered into the presence of God and await an eternal resurrection to glory and immortality. So, God does nothing wrong by bringing out their death. He is God, so he has the prerogative to give life or take it away. That's why we don't like it when humans "play God" with people's lives. Only God is supposed to have that right!

- “Happy is the one who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks” (Psalm 137:9)
 - The most plausible response is that the Psalmist is merely expressing the very human emotion of wanting vengeance proportional to the harm inflicted (see verse 8), not that such a thing is God’s will. After all, the Bible records many things said by both men and women that are not really in line with God’s will. If that’s the case, then perhaps these words were divinely inspired to show us that we can bring our authentic emotions before God, no matter how raw and impassioned.

- Belief in Jesus is necessary for salvation (John 3:18)
- Some people never even got the chance to hear about Jesus
 - There are a couple of solutions to the so-called “Problem of the Unevangelized”. First, if God has middle knowledge, then he knew even before he created whether each person would freely accept the Gospel. With this knowledge, he could guarantee that those who did not hear it were only those whom he knew would not freely accept it. God has no obligation to give the Gospel to people whom he knows will reject it.

 - Second, it’s possible that God judges those people who never hear only by the amount of revelation that they do have. So, people who never hear the Gospel will not be held responsible for it. Rather, they will be responsible for responding appropriately to the revelation they have through nature and conscience.
 - Excellent [animated video](#) on this topic.

- It is immoral to punish an innocent person
- Jesus is an innocent person punished for the sins of others
 - In general, it is immoral to punish an innocent person. However, even in the US legal code, there are instances where people who did not personally perform an act are punished for the act of another under a concept called *vicarious liability*.

The objection also presupposes that God cannot retain the prerogative to punish an innocent *divine* person should he so wish. After all, this would be an ultimate act of love for sinful creatures, and what could be more in line with the nature of God than that?

[Here](#) is an excellent (albeit challenging) article by William Lane Craig on this issue.

- God has planned everything out perfectly
 - God regrets creating humans (that he knew would sin?) and plans to annihilate them (Gen 6:5-7)
 - The word “regretted” doesn’t necessarily imply that God didn’t know the people would sin. In the Hebrew, it can just mean that sin deeply grieves him. His wiping out humanity would be just, since, as the text says, they were deeply wicked. But in his mercy, he saved Noah and his family and, through them, continued to bring about his plan of salvation.

- Jesus is God
 - Mustard seed is the smallest of all the seeds (Mark 4:31)
 - Note that this statement comes while Jesus is making a theological point, not a botanical one. If he was literally teaching botany, then we would count this as an error, but he wasn’t.
 - Jesus doesn’t know the day or the hour of the second coming (Matthew 24:36)
 - According to some models, Jesus was omniscient, but only consciously aware of a small amount of what he knew during his incarnation. Thus, he could truthfully say, as a sort of psychological report, that he didn’t know the day or the hour of the second coming because he wasn’t consciously aware of it. Here’s a [class](#) where William Lane Craig addresses this issue in the Q&A.
 - Jesus says the Father is the only true God (John 17:3)
 - Paul literally calls Jesus “God” in his letters
 - William Lane Craig lays out several evidences for Jesus also being divine in [this class](#).
 - Craig also responds to this particular verse as an objection to the deity of Jesus in [this podcast transcript](#).

- Arguments against the Existence of God
 - Problem of Definition: “Everyone has a different definition of God. How can “God” be a good explanation for anything if we can’t even agree on what we’re talking about?”
 - Philosophers of religion have come up with some very concise and generally acceptable definitions of “God.” For centuries, scholars used the definition given by Anselm of Canterbury, with God being “the greatest conceivable being.” This has been modified slightly in modern times: God is “a maximally great being” or “a being with all great-making properties to their greatest degree.”
 - [Here](#) is an article by William Lane Craig on defining “God”

- Problem of Inexplicable Existence: “Why does everything else need an explanation of its existence, but God gets a pass?”
 - Actually, God doesn’t get a pass. The important point is that having an *explanation* doesn’t necessarily mean having a *cause*. In the case of God, the explanation of his existence lies in the necessity of his nature. He exists because it is impossible for him to not exist. This is an important distinction that lies at the heart of an argument for the existence of God, which William Lane Craig details [here](#).
- Problem of Evil: “If God is all-powerful, he can create a world without evil. If he’s all-loving, then he would want a world without evil. Therefore, since there’s evil, there is no all-powerful, all-loving God.”
 - Neither of those claims are necessarily true. Even if God is all-powerful, it’s not necessarily true that he can create a world without evil, since creating creatures with free will may require allowing them to sin. And even if God is all-loving, perhaps that are overriding reasons to want a world in which some evil occurs, such as that it brings about the circumstances in which God can demonstrate his immeasurable mercy and grace.

In a deductive argument, the conclusion follows necessarily from the premises. Since the conclusion of this argument doesn’t necessarily follow from the premises, it fails to show that there is a logical inconsistency between the existence of God and the existence of evil.

- There are different forms of the argument. Here are two animated videos, each dealing with a different form:
 - [Logical Version](#)
 - [Probability Version](#)
- Problem of Divine Hiddenness: “There are billions of people who don’t believe in the Christian God. Surely, if God truly loved them, he could ensure that they knew he existed and is the one true God. Since he doesn’t, and many die without that knowledge, it’s more likely that the Christian God doesn’t exist.”
 - God isn’t interested in people merely believing that he exists. Even the demons believe that God exists (James 2:19). Rather, God wants a loving relationship with us.
 - As in the Problem of the Unevangelized, if God has middle knowledge, then he could know that those who do not receive a greater revelation of his existence are those for whom it wouldn’t make a difference to whether they accept the Gospel.
 - Moreover, the objection assumes that we don’t have sufficient evidence to reasonably believe in God’s existence. But, given the numerous arguments for God’s existence based on cosmology,

morality, design, consciousness, reason, aesthetics, and miracles like the resurrection, there seems to be plenty of evidence.

- God of the Gaps/Shrinking Gaps: “You’re just filling in the gaps of our knowledge of the universe with ‘God did it,’ but science is steadily closing those gaps, leaving less and less room for God.”
 - Rather than filling in the gaps of our ignorance, God’s existence is the conclusion of arguments supported by the *best* scientific evidence we have. For example, *all* of the evidence indicates that the universe had an absolute beginning, which is one of the premises in the Kalam Cosmological Argument. So, if anything, what we’re seeing is an increase of “naturalism-of-the-gaps” arguments, where we’re given promissory notes that scientific, naturalistic explanations will one day explain everything. William Lane Craig discusses this [here](#).
- Problem of dysteleology (bad design): “Thousands of people die from choking because the tube we use for breathing is connected to the tube we use for eating and drinking. Either this is really poor design or else it’s not designed at all. It’s certainly not the work of a perfect creator God.”
 - If God has middle knowledge, then he could have known prior to creation that, were he to create us, we would freely sin, bringing about the consequences of death and corruption. Perhaps if we had not sinned, we would never have any issues with choking! Thus, the arrangement of our trachea and esophagus is still logically consistent with the existence of a perfect God.
- Problem of divine foreknowledge and human freedom: “God is supposed to have perfect knowledge of the future. But if that’s true, then God knows everything we will do before we do it. And if that’s true, then we can’t do anything other than what we will do, which means no freedom. And if we don’t have any freedom, then we’re not responsible for what we do.”
 - Knowledge is not causal; merely knowing what will happen doesn’t mean one causes it. We experience this often in human affairs.
 - If God has middle knowledge, knowing before creation what any creature would freely do in any situation, then he could incorporate free choices into his exhaustive planning of history, preserving both creaturely free will and his divine sovereignty over all things.
 - William Lane Craig discusses this issue [here](#).
- Problem of Numbers: “God is supposed to be the creator of all things (other than himself). But in order to create the number one, *one* God would already have to exist. This means the theist has an internal contradiction: God created all things other than himself, but could not have created the number one. Since logical contradictions cannot exist, theism is false.”
 - First, this objection doesn’t show that theism is false. Even if successful, at most it shows that there is an inconsistency between the existence of God and the existence of numbers.

- Second, the objection assumes that numbers are things that exist. But why think that? We use words as objects in true sentences all the time without necessarily thinking that they are things that really exist “out there.” For example, I could truthfully say “My walk tomorrow will be two miles long.” Note that I’ve used “walk” in the sentence like an object. But this doesn’t mean I’m committed to there being an object called a “walk” which I can physically measure. Rather, I’m just using an object word as a stand-in for an activity - walking. The same could be true of mathematical language, numbers being object-representations of the act of quantification.
- William Lane Craig discusses the relationship between God and abstract objects (like numbers) [here](#).