

The Clues of God

EMC Wednesday Night Bible Study - 8-17-16

Introduction

“Proofs” of God

- _____ apologetics - that style of Christian defense that stresses rational arguments for the existence of God and uses evidence to substantiate biblical claims and miracles.
 - Early (Augustine, Anselm, and Thomas Aquinas)
 - Contemporary (Norman Geisler, William Craig, J. P. Moreland, and R.C. Sproul)
- No proof, but plenty of _____

The Cosmological/Contingency Clue

Begins with a simple observation: things _____.

Everything in the universe is _____, has a cause outside of itself.

Science: the universe must have had a _____

- Big Bang cosmology - the expanding universe
- Points to a first _____ cause

Biblical data

- Who is the Creator/Sustainer: Gen. 1:1 (cf. Job 38:4-7; Psalm 33:6, 136:5; Isaiah 42:5, 45:18; John 1:1-13; Acts 14:15, 17:24; Colossians 1:16; Hebrews 1:10, 11:3; Revelation 4:11)
- God is sustaining everything in the universe, even now.
 - Colossians 1:17 - “And he is before all things, and in him all things hold together.”
 - Hebrews 1:3 - “He...upholds the universe by the word of his power.”

The Fine-Tuning Clue (Anthropic Principle)

For life to exist, the _____ have to be just right

- At least 15 constants (speed of light, gravitational constant, weak and strong nuclear forces, etc.) perfectly calibrated

Anthropic principle - it's as if the universe was _____ for human beings to exist

- The livability of our planet: the unique properties of water, Earth's atmosphere, Earth's reflectivity of light, Earth's magnetic field, Earth's place in the solar system, angle of the earth's tilted axis, moon's distance from the earth, water cycle, our solar system's place in the galaxy, the color of our sun, etc.

Rebuttal from Richard Dawkins, *The God Delusion*

- There may be trillions of universes - probability
- Alvin Plantinga's card game example and John Leslie's firing squad example
 - What is technically possible would still be unreasonable to conclude
- Which is the greater leap of faith?

Biblical data

- Job 38 - the Lord challenges Job
- John 10:10 - God's desire is for us to have abundant life.

The Beauty Clue

Leonard Bernstein, *The Joy of Music*:

- "Beethoven...turned out pieces of breath-taking rightness. Rightness – that's the word! When you get the feeling that whatever note succeeds the last is the only possible note that can rightly happen at that instant, in that context, then chances are you're listening to Beethoven. Melodies, fugues, rhythms – leave them to the Tchaikovskys and Hindemiths and Ravels. Our boy has the real goods, the stuff from Heaven, the power to make you feel at the finish: Something is right in the world. There is something that checks throughout, that follows its own law consistently: something we can trust, that will never let us down."

If there is no God, then there is no actual _____ for anything

- In the presence of great art and beauty we inescapably *feel* that there *is* real meaning in life.
- More than feelings: Actually _____ for something more.
- Innate desires correspond to _____ that can satisfy them
 - The unfulfillable longing evoked by beauty is another innate desire.

God-shaped _____

- The _____ in the human soul
 - Augustine, *Confessions* (1.1.1) - "You have made us for yourself, and our hearts are rest-less till they find their rest in you."
 - Thomas Aquinas, *Exposition of the Apostles' Creed* (1) - "God alone satisfies."
 - Blaise Pascal, *Pensees* (10.148) - "What else does this craving, and this helplessness, proclaim but that there was once in man a true happiness, of which all that now remains is the empty print and trace? This he tries in vain to fill with everything around him, seeking in things that are not there the help he cannot find in those that are, though none can help, since this infinite abyss can be filled only with an infinite and immutable object; in other words by God himself."
- Ecclesiastes 3:11 - God has planted _____ in the human heart

Biblical data

- God as the source of all being (Exodus 3:14; Acts 17:28-29)
- Psalm 42:1-2a; 107:9; 145:16
- The beatitudes (Matthew 6)
- Matthew 11:28 - true rest