

Notes for Video Does God Exist by RC Sproul

(Prepared by Michael Ragosta for Shepherds Conversational Apologetics Class July 24, 2005)

Our age is one of unparalleled skepticism of Christianity overall and its truth claims regarding the origins and nature of human beings in particular.

If anyone can demonstrate God is unknowable or unprovable the truth claims of Christianity become irrelevant.

Assertion: If something exists now something exists necessarily (i.e. something has the power of existence eternally) and there never was a time when absolutely nothing existed ... or in other words, if something exists now there is of necessity a creator God (i.e. a transcendent, eternal, self-existent being).

... because "**Ex Nihilo Nihil Fit**" – Latin for “out of nothing, nothing comes”

... if anything is (i.e. has “being”) then something has the "power of being" necessarily.

How to account for existence?

1. ~~Illusion~~

- Doesn't really address the issue since you still have to account for the illusion, who is having the illusion, etc.

2. ~~Self Created~~

- Irrational and self-contradictory, since for something to create itself it would have to be before it is which is manifestly false. It violates one of the most fundamental laws of logic and reason, the law of non-contradiction which basically asserts that nothing can "be" and "not be" in the same way and in the same relationship.

3. Self Existent

- Having the power of being within itself (not irrational)
 - i. **Materialist assertion:** world itself is eternal having at its core or substratum, as yet to be discovered "essence," from which all matter flows or emanates -- some essential transcendent, immutable (unchanging), i.e. eternal "core" exists within the universe contrary to all available physical data. This sounds like an incomplete description of Christian God...
 - ii. **Christian assertion:** God's nature is transcendent, immutable and eternal, i.e. He alone is self existent not the universe He created.

4. Created By Something Eternal

- God's being (ontology) is transcendent (of a higher order), immutable and eternal (self existent) ... "in the beginning God created ..."

Everything that begins to exist has a cause. Although this cannot be proven with absolute certainty, history and common sense (applied logic, if you will) affirm it.

"**Chance**" is one of the great multipurpose catch-words frequently used incorrectly as if it was a force or power (had "being" if you will) instead of an abstract concept used to describe mathematical possibility, having in and of itself no power to act or influence anything (since it has no self). Chance – the great do-nothing!

An apologetic conversation can begin with almost any kind of simple question, such as, "What do you think...?", "What do you believe...?", "What do you mean...?", etc. These are "open" and "unloaded" questions that begin to "direct" the conversation in a way that gently prods the other individual to "be specific."

This is where you must be the most patient and listen most attentively, so that you will "begin to know" what the individual "actually thinks" about the subject at hand and so that you will then know where to take the conversation with your next question... and your next... and so on. Your questions will naturally get more "pointed" as the conversation progresses and you learn more about what the persons thinks and believes and why (assuming they know themselves, which often times they do not).

Four "Deadly" (or Really Pointed) Questions

1. How did you reach that conclusion?
2. How do you know that's true?
3. What is your source of information?
4. What if you're wrong?