

Candidate 9 evidence

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1.	<p>Aquinas uses the cosmological argument to prove the existence of God. Another version of the cosmological argument is the Kalam cosmological argument, which is similar but differs in an effort to be more persuasive.</p>
	<p>Aquinas used 5 ways to prove God's existence, but the cosmological argument is generally regarded as the first 3: motion, causation, and contingency. The cosmological argument is an inductive argument, in that it is characterised by inferences from general laws and is based on experiences and observations from which a deductable conclusion can be drawn. This means it is also an a posteriori argument.</p>
	<p>The first way is known as the argument from motion. This starts off with the empirical observation that everything is in motion;</p>

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	<p>motion being the movement from potentiality to actuality. It then says that nothing can set itself into motion; potential can only be actualised by something ^{already} in a state of actuality, and nothing can simultaneously be in a state of potentiality and actuality. Things are acted on, but they cannot set themselves into motion. Furthermore, the argument states that there cannot be an infinite regress of motion or movement, and as every thing that is moved is moved by another, there must be a first mover who started it all off. This we understand to be God.</p>
	<p>The argument from motion is successful in that it seemingly proves that there is a first mover. However, critics will point out that there is no reason to believe that the</p>

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	<p>supposed first mover is God. Even if we do accept it to be God, then how is it fair to say that 'whatever is moved is moved by another', and yet argue that God is unmoved. Surely if God is unmoved, and, as the first premise asserts, everything is in motion, then he cannot be both and therefore doesn't exist.</p>
	<p>The argument is also flawed in that it states that infinity is impossible. Aquinas denies the infinite, yet argues that God is the first mover, and therefore, infinite. In fact, it is a common belief amongst Christians that one of God's defining characteristics is that he is eternal; lasting and existing forever; without end. This must be synonymous with 'infinite'; and infinite is impossible, so God is</p>

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impossible. This suggests that ~~the~~ Aquinas's argument from motion is not convincing as he contradicts himself.

However, a Christian would defend the eternal God by arguing that God is a unique spiritual being who exists outwith the universe and the laws of nature, so they do not apply to him. Therefore he can be infinite and not contradict this argument. This is a weak defence as there is no reason to believe it, apart from blind faith. Who's to say God is infinite and does not have to obey the laws of nature? This is a made up belief in an effort to justify Christian beliefs, so it is not convincing at all.

Anthony Kenny criticises the idea that

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motion and the beginning of the universe.

Plus, the idea of there being no first mover would, following the argument, imply there is no subsequent motion, and thus no motion today, which is absurd as we have empirically observed there to be motion.

Overall, Aquinas's argument from motion gives a valiant attempt to prove the existence of God. However, I would argue that it only proves that there is, seemingly, a first mover, and there is no reason to believe this first mover to be the God of classical Theism. Aquinas leaps from first mover to God and therefore the argument is not convincing.

Another part of Aquinas's cosmological

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	<p>argument is the arguments from causation; the cause argument. This argues that everything is caused to exist, and, similarly to motion, there cannot be an infinite regression of causes. There must be a first cause, itself uncaused, and this, we are to believe is God.</p>
	<p>The argument from causation assumes that self-causation is impossible because it has never been empirically observed, and because of the sheer impossibility and absurdity of an object causing itself. Aquinas argued that, in order for something to cause itself it must have existed previously, and currently, there is no evidence of a universe existing before this one. Therefore, an object cannot cause itself, so the</p>

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universe must have a cause - God.

However, this argument could also be used against God. It says nothing can cause itself, so how can God be an uncaused causer. Aquinas would again retort that God exists outwith our laws, and they don't apply to him, but this defence is extremely weak and not at all convincing. Plus, ~~we~~ we might not currently have evidence of a universe existing previously, but we cannot say that is the 100% truth. There is, after all, the multi-verse theory. Perhaps we are one of many universes - we could have caused ourselves? We cannot say.

The argument from contingency is Aquinas's next idea to prove the existence of God.

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Contingency involves the idea that everything that exists is dependent on another being or thing to exist, but there must exist a non-contingent, necessary being which is able to exist of its own necessity - God the independent being which everything else depends on. The idea is that, without the necessary being, there would have, at some point, been nothing, and nothing can come from nothing. If this were the case, then nothing ~~could~~ would exist now, which is absurd. Therefore the necessary being exists.

While this argument may seem convincing, it can easily be disputed by the big bang theory, by which the universe started as a singularity which brought with it all time, matter,

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<p>space, and energy. Before this, there was nothing. The big bang happened completely spontaneously, out of nothing - debunking the idea that nothing could have come from nothing.</p>	
<p>The big bang theory is very convincing, but hypocritical in a way. The argument is that it broke the laws of physics and began the universe, and this is accepted. However, when Aquinas claims God exists outwith these laws, it is not necessarily accepted. Therefore, although the big bang theory is the most convincing cause of the universe, Aquinas's cosmological argument still holds quite well in comparison. Clearly this is the case, as many Christians use it to argue that God</p>	

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created the universe.	
The Kalam cosmological argument was developed by William Lane Craig and took inspiration from Al-Ghazali. It is similar to Aquinas's argument, but differs as it claims that everything that 'begins' to exist has a cause. It says that God did not begin to exist, but instead has always existed, and thus is uncaused. It also uses the big bang theory as proof that the universe began to exist, so must have a cause.	
It also argues that the universe cannot be an actual infinite, which cannot be added to or made bigger, as history is added to everyday. Instead, it is a potential infinity which, on the contrary	

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	<p>can be added to. If the universe is indeed a potential infinity, then it must have begun to exist at some point. Therefore, the Kalam argument concludes that God, who has always existed, created the universe.</p>
	<p>A philosopher of Religion, Adolf Grunbaum, questioned why God got to be the exception. If everything, including the universe itself, began to exist, why didn't God?</p>
	<p>The Kalam argument to prove the existence of God uses wordplay ("begins") in order to include the universe and exclude God. While I believe it is a stronger argument than Aquinas's, it is yet another unfounded belief in some supernatural</p>

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	<p>being who just so happens to be able to exist outwith the laws of the universe and thus exempt from the reasonable arguments against his existence. He is made up by people who are blinded by their faith.</p>
	<p>Overall, Aquinas does not offer the most convincing argument. The Kalam argument is harder to dispute and thus stronger, but still does not prove God's existence.</p>