



By

Mark McGee

Does God Exist? A History of Answers to the Question by W. David Beck (IVP Academic, 2021) is an intriguing read.

An Intriguing Read

I say “intriguing” for a couple of reasons. First, the author taught at the same institution where one of my primary mentors taught for many years. That mentor answered my questions as an atheist about whether God exists and helped lead me to believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, Lord, and Savior. Second, they both presented their arguments for the existence of God in basically the same order. It is a logical and reasonable way of answering serious questions about God’s existence.

It seems that human beings have been thinking about God from the very beginning. The first chapters of the Bible certainly have it so. Chapter 1, p 1

David Beck looks deep into history to see how humans have attempted to answer the question of God's existence. Those histories include Jewish, Greek, Hindu, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic, including secular sources.

While Beck presents many "arguments" for the existence of God, he does not attempt to provide "proof."

The word I will avoid, except where it appears in quotations, is the word proof. This is actually the traditional word. In more recent years, however, proof has come to be used for the kind of reasoning unique to mathematics. This is a sort of purely logical relationship that exists quite apart from any real or actual world considerations, and derives entirely from the particular rules of a given mathematical system.

Using the word argument is also meant to avoid the idea that any one of these stands by itself as a once-and-for-all clinching proof for a fully defined God. What we will see is that each argument has a very narrow focus, in terms of both the evidence used in the

premises and the scope and the strength or probability of the conclusion. And so each of these arguments, along with others I will only mention in passing, functions best as part of a cumulative case. Chapter 1, pp 3-4

After studying apologetic arguments for the existence of God, I find myself in agreement with Beck's statement. The cumulative case does seem strongest in answering the question – "Does God Exist?"

If you love God and apologetics, I highly recommend this book for your library.

Publisher's Note

Throughout the history of philosophical and theological reflection, this fundamental question has prompted a range of responses.

In one incisive volume, philosopher W. David Beck offers a narrative of pre-Christian, Jewish, Buddhist, Christian, and Islamic arguments for God's existence. Here, readers will encounter both classical and contemporary arguments, including cosmological, teleological, moral, and ontological arguments along with commentary from the author.

Explore the history of answers to an essential question and add your own reflections to this ongoing conversation.

Contents

Preface

Acknowledgments

1. The Beginnings of the Arguments

2. Cosmological Arguments

3. Teleological Arguments

4. Moral Arguments

5. Ontological Arguments

6. The End of the Story—For Now

About The Author

W. David Beck (PhD, Boston University) is emeritus professor of philosophy at Liberty University. He is the coeditor of *Raised on the Third Day: Defending the Historicity of the Resurrection of Jesus*, and his written work has appeared in publications including *Philosophia Christi*, *Journal of the Evangelical Theological Society*, and *Christianity Today*.

Reviews

“There are lots of books available on the existence of God, but few, if any, that do a good job of presenting all the key arguments in a historical and contemporary way. Professor Beck’s book Does God Exist? is a rare exception. It is important to realize that, setting aside a disdain for old books, a careful study of an argument as it develops in the history of philosophy is more than a mere expression of intellectual curiosity. Much can be learned from the past that is of immense contemporary importance. Beck is a well-respected philosopher and brings decades of teaching and research to this book. I highly recommend it.”

J. P. Moreland, distinguished professor of philosophy at Talbot School of Theology, Biola University, and author of Scientism and Secularism

“Finally! A single volume that contains as a historical narrative a compendium of arguments pertaining to God’s existence—pro, con, and from most religious perspectives—all under one cover. Fantastic! Highly recommended!”

Gary R. Habermas, distinguished research professor of apologetics and philosophy at Liberty University

“In this herculean effort, David Beck has written a superb guide and rich resource on the major arguments for God’s existence. Not only does he astutely summarize the breadth of positions articulated by particular thinkers on the respective arguments—pro and con—but he includes much material from primary sources, which significantly enhances the value of this volume. A fine achievement!”

Paul Copan, Pledger Family Chair of Philosophy and Ethics at Palm Beach Atlantic University, coauthor of The Gospel in the Marketplace of Ideas

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