

The Paradox of the Stone et al.

Here are a few collected arguments against the existence of God. We will talk about each of these in class, but it will be helpful for you to think about them first.

The Paradox of the Stone

The first argument is called *the paradox of the stone*. It goes like this: God is omnipotent. That means that God can do *anything*. There is nothing outside of God's power. But...can God make a stone so heavy that he can't lift it? It appears that there are only two possible answers to this question: "yes," and, "no."

Let's look at the implications of both answers. If the answer to the question is, "yes," then it appears as if there is something God couldn't do: he couldn't lift the stone. If this were right, then God couldn't be omnipotent because there would be a limit to his power: he couldn't lift the stone.

What if the answer to the question is, "no?" God isn't omnipotent if the answer is, "no." If the answer is, "no," then God can't create a stone so heavy that he can't lift it. So, there would be something God couldn't do. So, God wouldn't be omnipotent. But if God exists, he *has* to be omnipotent.

So, whether we answer the question with "yes" or "no," God couldn't be omnipotent. But if God exists he *has* to be omnipotent. So, God doesn't exist.

Can God know what it's like to be you?

If God exists, he knows everything. In other words, God is *omniscient*. There is nothing outside of the reach of God's mind, there is nothing God doesn't know the answer to.

But does God know what it is like to be you? It looks like he cannot know what it's like to be you. You know what it's like to not know something. For instance, you know what it's like to not know what the capital of New Zealand is. You know what it is like to not know how many cars are parked on campus right now.

But God *can't* know what this is like. As I noted above, God knows everything; God is omniscient. So, there is something God doesn't know: God doesn't know what it is like to be you, because you are limited in knowledge and God isn't. But this can't be right if God is omniscient. So, God doesn't exist.

Can God be perfectly good and all-powerful?

If God exists, he is perfectly good. God can't do anything wrong. God can't sin. He can't do anything bad whatsoever. But how does that fit with God's being all-powerful? If God can't sin, then there is something God doesn't have the power to do: Namely, God can't do anything bad. So, it looks like God can't be both perfectly good and all-powerful. But if God exists, he has to be *both* perfectly good *and* all-powerful. So, God doesn't exist.

Why isn't God's existence more obvious?

If God exists, he would want everyone to know exists. Further, if God exists, he would have the ability to make it obvious that he exists. For instance, he could write out, "God exists" in the stars. He could speak audibly to everyone. He could perform miracles every day to make his existence obvious.

But, God's existence isn't obvious. The stars don't spell, "God exists." We don't hear God speaking audibly to us. We don't witness miracles everyday. Whether God exists or not isn't easy to see or obvious.

But this seems to be evidence that God doesn't exist. Because, as noted above, *if* God existed he would want everyone to know, in which case he would make it obvious. So, since it isn't obvious that God exists, God does not exist.