

Does God Exist?

Crucial Questions

R. C. SPROUL

Does God Exist?

Crucial Questions booklets provide a quick introduction to definitive Christian truths. This expanding collection includes titles such as:

Who Is Jesus?

Can I Trust the Bible?

Does Prayer Change Things?

Can I Know God's Will?

How Should I Live in This World?

What Does It Mean to Be Born Again?

Can I Be Sure I'm Saved?

What Is Faith?

What Can I Do with My Guilt?

What Is the Trinity?

TO BROWSE THE REST OF THE SERIES,
PLEASE VISIT: LIGONIER.ORG/CQ

CQ

Does God Exist?

R. C. SPROUL



LIGONIER MINISTRIES

Does God Exist?

© 2019 by R.C. Sproul

Published by Ligonier Ministries
421 Ligonier Court, Sanford, FL 32771
Ligonier.org

Printed in China
Amity Printing Company
0000823

First edition, fourth printing

ISBN 978-1-64289-120-1 (Paperback)
ISBN 978-1-64289-121-8 (ePub)

All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the prior written permission of the publisher, Ligonier Ministries. The only exception is brief quotations in published reviews.

Cover design: Ligonier Creative
Interior typeset: Katherine Lloyd, The DESK

Scripture quotations are from the ESV® Bible (The Holy Bible, English Standard Version®), copyright © 2001 by Crossway, a publishing ministry of Good News Publishers. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

Library of Congress Cataloging-in-Publication Data
Names: Sproul, R.C. (Robert Charles), 1939-2017 author.
Title: Does God exist? / by R.C. Sproul.

Description: Orlando : Reformation Trust, 2019. | Series: Crucial Questions ; No. 29

Identifiers: LCCN 2018036546 | ISBN 9781642891201 (Paperback) | ISBN 9781642891218 (ePub) | ISBN 9781642891225 (Kindle)

Subjects: LCSH: God--Proof.

Classification: LCC BT103 .S693 2019 | DDC 212/.1--dc23

LC record available at <https://lcn.loc.gov/2018036546>

Contents

One	The Case for God	1
Two	Four Possibilities	9
Three	The Illusion of Descartes	15
Four	Self-Creation, Part 1	23
Five	Self-Creation, Part 2	29
Six	Self-Existence	35
Seven	Necessary Being	43
Eight	The God of the Bible vs. the God of Philosophy	51
Nine	Kant's Moral Argument	61
Ten	Vanity of Vanities	71
Eleven	The Psychology of Atheism	81

Chapter One

The Case for God

Immanuel Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* was a watershed moment in the history of theoretical thought. The book gives a comprehensive critique of the traditional arguments for the existence of God. It forced the church to wrestle with some important questions. How do we now approach apologetics (the defense of the faith)? How can we legitimately make a case for God without falling into the trap of the problems Kant posed? Several different approaches arose in response.

One view, known as fideism, maintained that we cannot convincingly argue for the existence of God. Instead, belief in God's existence must be based on faith. Many theologians and

Does God Exist?

Christians have adopted this viewpoint. Some even go so far as to say that people must simply take a leap of faith into the darkness and hope that someone out there will catch them.

There are flaws with this approach. Even though faith is central to biblical Christianity, there is a difference between faith and foolishness. Yet people often assert that the way of the Christian world is the way of faith to the exclusion of the way of reason. For example, the ancient church father Tertullian asked, “What does Jerusalem have to do with Athens?” He also said, “I believe Christianity because it is absurd.” If by saying this Tertullian meant that Christianity is absurd from the world’s perspective, that would be one thing. But if he meant that it’s objectively absurd, that would be a serious slander against the character of God and the Holy Spirit, who is the Spirit of truth.

Another approach, called evidentialism, asserts that the way to defend the Christian faith is through appeals to history. Many apologists take this approach, acknowledging that while arguments from the field of history can never give absolute proof, they do offer a high degree of probability. That high degree of probability results in what is called moral certainty. While these arguments from biblical history may not give the same formal certainty that is found in

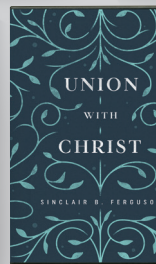
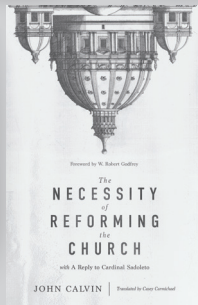
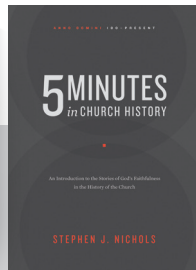
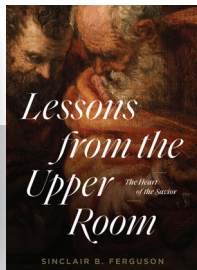
logical deduction, they certainly are powerful enough that they leave people without any moral escape hatches.

In our American judicial system, when people are charged with serious crimes, the burden of proof rests on the prosecution. They must prove that the person is guilty beyond a reasonable doubt. Similarly, evidentialists attempt to show that the evidence of history so communicates and proves the existence of God that it is beyond a reasonable doubt. In fact, the evidence is so overwhelming that only a fool would deny their conclusion.

The problem with this approach is that even in the face of overwhelming probability, the sinner still has a tiny escape hatch to say: “You didn’t prove it beyond a shadow of a doubt. Maybe it’s not reasonable for me to doubt it, but you haven’t proven your case conclusively.” A philosopher named Gotthold Ephraim Lessing posed the metaphor of the great ditch that divides this world from the world of God. He said that the contingent things of events in history can never prove eternal things.

It is often thought that there are only two kinds of apologists—evidentialists (whom we have already discussed) and presuppositionalists (whom we will examine in a moment). Yet there is another school of thought called

We want to see men and women
around the world connect the deep truths
of the Christian faith to everyday life.



Order your copy of this title, download the digital version,
or browse thousands of resources at **Ligonier.org**.