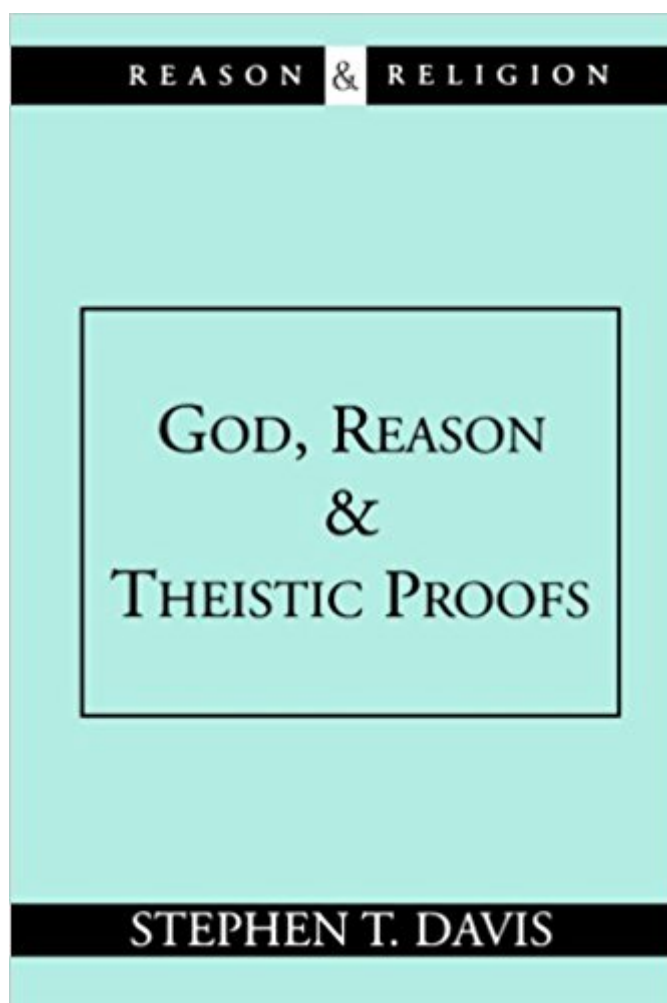


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# God, Reason And Theistic Proofs (Reason & Religion)



## Synopsis

Attempting to prove the existence of God is an ancient and venerable tradition within the discipline known as the philosophy of religion. But can we truly prove the existence of God using human reason alone? Just how do we prove the existence of God? Why try? Which, if any, of the various theistic proofs are persuasive? *God, Reason, and Theistic Proofs* tackles these fundamental questions head-on. / Stephen T. Davis examines a cross-section of theistic proofs that have been offered by theologians and thinkers from Anselm to Paley, explaining in clear terms what theistic proofs are and what they try to accomplish. He then goes on to explore in depth the relationship between theistic proofs and religious realism, the ontological argument for the existence of God, the cosmological and teleological arguments, the position known as foundationalism, and the argument from religious experience. / Wisely structured and clearly written, this volume will make an excellent resource for those looking for a comprehensive introduction to the debate surrounding the existence of God, or for those seeking intellectual validation for their faith.

## Book Information

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## Customer Reviews

Professor of philosophy and religion at Claremont McKenna College in California.

Excellent Primer for those just beginning their journey into Natural Theology- I'd highly recommend this book before reading something like "In Defense of Natural Theology", which is also an excellent

work, but not necessarily for beginners.

This is a very good introduction to the issue (though not perfect in my opinion). It not only deals with many proofs but has also some metadiscussions about the idea of theistic proofs and their alternatives.

When I studied philosophy on the graduate level, theistic proofs of the existence of God were considered unworthy of serious study, unless you studied them to understand Kant or Hume's problems with them. They were seen as artifacts of the past; medieval formulas which the age of reason had firmly overturned. While reading Stephen T. Davis' *God, Reason, & Theistic Proofs*, I now realize that those rational proofs of God were straw men, created by philosophers simply to topple. Modern thinkers still engage in theistic proofs of God's existence; they continue to generate new versions of the old theories to meet contemporary demands. In general, Davis does a good job at explaining the three main rational proofs of God's existence: the Ontological Argument, the Cosmological Argument, and the Teleological, or the Argument from Design. Davis is trying to teach us the basics of these arguments, and tries to stay away from professional jargon. But he does engage in jargon based writing at times, making this book slightly difficult for a rank beginner. I would suggest reading this book and then watching some of the fine demonstrations on YouTube by William Lane Craig. Davis investigates other proofs of God's existence that are not strictly rational, and this muddies the pond a bit. He also examines things out of order, like the Kalam Cosmological proof in the latter half of the book. It would have been better if he kept them all in the same order. This is a good book to read for an introduction to this difficult topic. But you will need outside help.

Many years after I first read this book, I still think it is the best treatment of the subject I have seen. The author is a professor of philosophy, he is very fair-minded (he is a theist, from memory, but he does not allow that to sway his philosophical judgment), he presents the arguments in a very structured and thorough but also clear way (if it hadn't been clear, I as very much a layman, would not have understood it!) and it is easy to agree with his cautious conclusions. I have not read another book, by believer or non-believer, that I thought had all these qualities. I recommend it. He covers a number of the classic arguments - ontological (which gets a fairer treatment than I would have given it!), cosmological, design, religious experience, moral, etc, plus he addresses interesting core issues such as religious realism, foundationalism (plus coherentism & pragmatism as

alternatives) and the principle of sufficient reason, all in ways and at places where they are relevant to the main discussion and relatively easy to understand. His conclusion? He thinks the "proofs" can show at least that theism is rational, and possibly more rational than alternatives, but he doesn't think any proof actually proves the existence of God. That is probably what we might expect, leaving the questions open for each of us to decide for ourselves.

God, Reason and Theistic Proofs is a discussion on the various philosophical arguments given in favour of religious belief. This includes both direct arguments that theists offer as proofs of the existence of God- eg: Various versions of the cosmological argument- but also includes more general arguments in favour of religious belief, such as Pascal's Wager. Stand alone chapters can be read on various arguments, and interspersed between these chapters are discussions on more foundational issues in the philosophy of religion such as foundationalism vs reformed epistemology and religious realism vs non realism.

I'm an atheist and I'm very interested in philosophy and religion. I purchased this book so that I would have a better idea how theists use arguments to bolster their faith. This book is satisfactory, although it could be much better. Stephen Davis, the author, sometimes writes unnecessarily complicated sentences which only serves to confuse the reader. For the most part, however, he is rather clear. He gives a rather in depth look into the most popular proofs for the existence of God and examines the objections to them. This book was an interesting read, but a basic philosophical background will probably be necessary in order for a person to fully understand the arguments which Davis examines. The only other complaint I have about the book is Davis's major (and unjustified) leaps of logic. He sometimes examines a theistic proof and then concludes that it proves the existence of God, but he fails to consider the most basic objections to these very proofs. It almost seems as if he is ignoring these objections. Otherwise, it was a fairly enjoyable read.

Davis offers a largely sympathetic overview of arguments for the existence of god and common objections to them. The book is good as far as it goes, but Davis has an unfortunate tendency to lean heavily on personal intuition when the issues become the most difficult, and hence the most interesting. This is disappointing, because Davis is obviously intelligent enough to have done much more. Had he sought more carefully to identify the reasons underlying his intuitions, the book would surely have been a five-star effort. I enjoyed the book, and do not at all regret having spent time reading it, but I hoped for much more.

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