Stoa Apologetics Preparation for Monument Members

Season 22 Monument Release #8



Directions: Work through the source material in this download to help you understand this week’s selection of apologetics prompts. This release addresses approximately 5% of the total number of prompts you will need to be prepared for in your next tournament, so keep up the studying from week to week to ensure your knowledge in Apologetics. This week’s prompts are:

**Category 4: God and Man (Part 2)**

1. What is man’s purpose?
2. When does human life begin? Why is this important?
3. How is it possible for an individual to have a personal relationship with an almighty God?
4. Can a person do enough good in their life to get into heaven?\*
5. If God is omnipotent and holy, how could He allow so much sin and suffering in the world?
6. Respond to the statement by St. Augustine: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Augustine, St, Bishop of Hippo, Augustine’s Confessions, 1.1.1, 397\*
7. Respond to someone who asks, “Is there judgment after death?”\*

\*This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. A worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

For a list of all the prompts for the year and all other downloads for NCFCA apologetics, visit your download page at <https://club.monumentmembers.com/stoa-apologetics/download-category/stoa-apologetics>.

Purpose of Man *by Taryn Murphy*

What is man’s purpose?

Bible Verses

Isaiah 43:7

1 Corinthians 6:20

Zephaniah 3:17

Jeremiah 29:11

1 Peter 2:9

Revelation 4:11

Psalm 8:3-4

Quotations

“Why did God make us? To answer that, we need to know three things: First…it wasn’t because he needed us: “The God who made the world and everything in it … is not served by human hands, as if he needed anything” (Acts 17:24-25). And he didn’t make us because he was lonely. Long before we were here, God already had “company” with his Son and the Holy Spirit, referred to in Genesis 1:26, “Let us make man in our own image.” And he didn’t make us because he needed his ego fed. It’s not like God made us to satisfy some craving to be worshiped. God is totally secure in who he is—without us. Second, despite not needing us, God chose to create us anyway, out of his great love: “I have loved you with an everlasting love” (Jeremiah 31:3). Yes, God loved us before he even created us. It’s impossible to get our heads around that idea, but it’s true; that’s what “everlasting” love means. God is love (1 John 4:8), and because of that love and his wonderful creativity, he made us so we can enjoy all that he is and all that he’s done.” (Dawson McAllister, popular youth speaker, radio host, and author)

“Why did He create us? While we can never fully answer the question, it helps to recognize that the answer will come only as we recognize the character and attributes of God. First and foremost, God is a God of love, and love must be demonstrated by showering it upon the object of that love. His grace comes only to those who deserve punishment, and the demonstration of His love and grace and mercy stands without parallel among humans. But in His love He desired reciprocal love, so He created man in His own image…Perhaps the grandest statement of His purpose can be found in Revelation 4:11, where we see heavenly beings gather in His praise, saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honor and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” And there we have it! God created us for His pleasure, for His ultimate good will, because it is best in His estimation.” (John D. Morris, Christian author and Ph.D.)

“In eternity, I imagine God having a holy huddle and saying, ‘We have such a great life together and an over abundance of love, let’s share it. Let Us make humanity in Our image so that they can love like Us. Then they can enjoy an intimate relationship with Us.’ In the great love chapter, the Apostle Paul says that true love “does not seek its own.” This means that love is not selfish or self-centered. God did not keep His life and love to Himself, but He shared it. He breathed into man the breath of life, and man became a living soul. God created humanity because ‘He is love,’ not for what humanity could do for Him.” (Greg Brezina, retired NFL player and author for Christian Families Today)

“The great tragedy of the universe is that, while human beings were made to glorify God, we have all fallen short of this purpose and “exchanged the glory of the immortal God for images resembling mortal man” ([Romans 1:23](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Rom%201.23)) — especially the one in the mirror. This is the essence of what we call sin.” (John Piper, world-renowned Christian author and pastor)

Recommendations

“Why did God create the world?” by John Piper, *DesiringGod.org* (<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/why-did-god-create-the-world>)

“Why Did God Create Us?” by Dawson McAllister, *ChristianityToday.com* (<http://www.christianitytoday.com/iyf/advice/faithdoubt/why-did-god-create-man.html>)

“Why am I here on earth?” by Sharon Houk, *Christian Broadcasting Network* (<http://www.cbn.com/spirituallife/churchandministry/evangelism/houk_WhyAmIHere.aspx>)

Commentary

One of the most famous questions in the Westminster Short Catechism is this: “What is the chief end of man?” The answer clearly and succinctly sums up the age old question of man’s purpose on earth: “Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him forever.”

Almost every person has, at some point, asked themselves a similar question. Why are we here? The Bible is full of answers to this age-old struggle, stressing that God made each and every one of us for a purpose, and ultimately created us because of His love, pleasure, and glory.

The Scriptures say that God does not just love, but He is love itself. Being the perfect embodiment of this amazing attribute, God wished to create a species who could share in the joy that comes from such a love. Thus, He created Adam and Eve, even walking with them in the Garden of Eden. The three shared a relationship full of intimacy, fellowship, and harmony. With man inhabiting the earth, God could now shower His abundance of love upon others, bringing happiness to both creation and Himself. Nevertheless, when Adam and Eve sinned by disobeying God, this tore the fellowship between them, fracturing the perfect love man had for God. Only through atonement and a future Savior could man’s inability to wholly love God be restored and forgiven.

It was because God still so loved man that it pleased Him to provide a means of salvation. God’s pleasure was not only manifested in an enjoyment of friendship with man, but also in the ability to grant an amazing gift to man—the gift of grace. Immediately after Adam and Eve sinned, God made atonement for them by killing an animal and using its skin to clothe them. This signified the future, final atonement which would be made through Christ’s sacrifice. Even before Christ came to earth, it pleased God to seek out the Israelite people and call them His people, even though they rebelled against Him again and again. Despite man’s fallen nature, God still found pleasure in fellowship with him, fellowship that was eventually repaired again when Christ interceded for us.

Lastly, God created man so that He might demonstrate His glory through Christ’s death, resurrection, and gift of eternal life. However, the crucifixion was not a pompous act created to flaunt God’s greatness in a prideful manner, nor does God need us to glorify Him in order to be great. Instead, God foreknew that this demonstration of His glory to man would bring a joy to the world like no other—the joy of salvation and restored communion with our Creator.

Human Life *by Bethany Kawalec*

When does human life begin? Why is this important?

Bible Verses

* Psalm 139:13-14
* Genesis 1:27
* Genesis 2:7
* Job 33:4
* Isaiah 44:24
* Jeremiah 1:5

Quotations

“Conception, then is the act of God whereby a person is created by God's sovereign will. A soul is breathed into the living tissue by the Holy Spirit.”—John MacArthur

“The image of God deals with humanity's reflection of God in such things as compassion, rationality, love, hatred, fellowship, etc.  God exhibits all of these characteristics, as do people.”—Matthew Slick (president and founder of CARM)

Recommendations

*The Unaborted* *Socrates* by Peter Kreeft

*The Abolition of Man* by C. S. Lewis

<https://gracequotes.org/?topic=&author-quote=&s=human+life+conception>

<https://prolifetraining.com/so-you-care-about-human-equality-become-pro-life/>

<https://www.princeton.edu/~prolife/articles/embryoquotes2.html>

Commentary

The central question to explore here is “What does it mean to be human?” Rather than address the topics of abortion or birth control, you’ll want to establish how humanity begins before we’re born. If this is true, providing the unborn with human rights follows naturally as a conclusion. Presenting some scientific facts along with Scripture makes a compelling case for life at conception. Then, you can explore what being made in God’s image means, how this separates us from the animals, and why our position as humans instills our life with eternal meaning and purpose. God didn’t just make us; He gave us a soul and takes special delight in us. Isn’t this an amazing and humbling thought? In conclusion, you can gently challenge the audience to ask themselves if they’re fulfilling God’s call on their lives. Whether you’re a Christian or a non-believer, God still loves you and longs to give you abundant life. From the moment of your conception, and in fact, even before time began, God created you for a purpose.

Personal Relationship *by Christopher Larson*

How is it possible for an individual to have a personal relationship with an almighty God?

Bible Verses

John 1:12

1 John 3:1-2

1 John 3:10

John 11: 51-52

Romans 8:16-17

Romans 9:8

Matthew 25:41

Acts 17:28-29

Quotations

“In other words, if you become a child of God, you become an heir of all that God owns. All that belongs to God is your inheritance. In the resurrection everything that exists will be yours. And God will care for you forever and make you infinitely happy in his presence.But if you do not become a child of God, then there will be only judgment. There will be no slaves in the age to come, only children. The slaves do not remain in the house forever (8:35). They experience what Jesus calls "the resurrection of judgment" (5:29), and it will be too late for any adoption proceedings.” John Piper, (<http://www.desiringgod.org/messages/how-to-become-a-child-of-god>)

“In 3:1a, John expresses great wonder at the love God has showed in making us His children. We must always remember that God was under no obligation to save us from our sin. Even less was He obligated to grant us the privilege of sonship that we might receive an inheritance in His Son ([Eph. 1:11](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%201.11)). God would have been just to leave us in our sins or simply to call us slaves, without the great love and honor a child receives from a good father. Yet in His great love, He has not only saved us but has adopted us into His family, and has given us every spiritual blessing in the heavenly places ([Eph. 1:3–6](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/Eph.%201.3%E2%80%936)). May we never become ungrateful for this tremendous love! However, the question remains: what does it mean to be a child of God? The answer is that to be a child of God is to be righteous in Christ. This is implicit in [1 John 3:1b](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/1%20John%203.1b) where the apostle speaks of the world rejecting us in ways analogous to Jesus’ own rejection by the world ([John 1:10](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%201.10); [16:2–3](http://biblia.com/bible/esv/John%2016.2%E2%80%933)). That we are also rejected implies that we will be like Christ who is Himself the only begotten Son of God.” (http://www.ligonier.org/learn/devotionals/children-god/)

Commentary

NOTE: This commentary was originally answering the prompt, “Are all persons children of God?”

It seems that many questions, both in and out of apologetics, are dependent on definitions, and this topic is no different. What is a child of God? What does it mean to be a child of God? As you construct your speech, you should keep several things in mind.

In Acts 17 Paul cites a pagan poet who made the statement that all people are the offspring of God. Instead of rejecting this idea point blank, Paul seems to accept it. “Being then God’s offspring…” he says, before continuing on to make his point. Evidently, then, the answer to this question is more nuanced than it may at first appear. What do we mean by a child of God?

What Paul might be getting at in Acts 17 is the likeness of God to man. After all, when God creates man he does so “after [His] likeness. (Genesis 1:26)” This is not to say that God and man are equivalent beings. This is merely to say that there are certain similarities between God and man–attributes they have in common. The use of speech and the ability to think rationally are just two to consider. The point being this: in regards to the *imago dei* (image of God) we are the offspring of God.

But in a very different sense we are not. 1 John 3:10 tells us, in part, what a child of God is. “By this it is evident who are the children of God, and who are the children of the devil: whoever does not practice righteousness is not of God, nor is the one who does not love his brother.” While John doesn’t use the phrase “children of God,” he provides further tests all throughout 1 John. We can tell who are the children of God by whoever does not make “a practice of lawlessness, (3:4)” whoever “practices righteousness, (3:7)” whoever does not keep on sinning (3:6), whoever “keeps his commandments, (3:24)” “whoever loves, (4:7-8)” etc.

This is a massive burden. A child of God is someone who does not practice lawlessness but practices righteousness, someone who keeps the commandments of God and does not keep on sinning, and someone who loves his brother and does not hate him. Who can, in their natural state, keep this list? If someone wants to claim that all people are children of God they must also claim that all people pass these tests.

This, of course, can’t be true. Perhaps nowhere is this more clearly illustrated than in Romans 8:8. “Those who are in the flesh,”–meaning those who are not saved–“cannot please God.” If people keep God’s commandments, practice righteousness, and love their brothers then they will please God and they can be called children of God. Yet here in Romans, Paul tells us that no unbeliever can please God.

By extension, no unbeliever can pass the tests of 1 John. Is anyone a child of God, then? In his Gospel, John gives us the answer. “But to all who did receive him,”–that is, Jesus–“who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God, who were born, not of blood nor of the will of the flesh nor of the will of man, but of God. (John 1:12-13)”

This is how we become children of God. This is how we are enabled to pass the tests of 1 John. Only those who believe on the name of Jesus are children of God, because only by believing on His name can we be given “the right to become children of God.”

Get to Heaven

Can a person do enough good in their life to get into heaven?

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Omnipotence *by Joshua Johnson*

If God is omnipotent and holy, how could He allow so much sin and suffering in the world?

Bible Verses

[Genesis 18:14](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Genesis+18%3A14&version=NIV)

[Exodus 15:11-18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Exodus+15%3A11-18&version=NIV)

[Job 42:2](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Job+42%3A2&version=NIV)

[Psalm 95:3-7](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Psalm+95%3A3-7&version=NIV)

[Isaiah 40:30-31](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Isaiah+40%3A30-31&version=NIV)

[Jeremiah 32:17; 27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Jeremiah+32%3A17%3B+27&version=NIV)

[Matthew 19:26](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+19%3A26&version=NIV)

[Mark 9:23; 10:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Mark+9%3A23%3B+10%3A27&version=NIV)

[Luke 1:37; 18:27](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Luke+1%3A37%3B+18%3A27&version=NIV)

[John 10:29](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=John+10%3A29&version=NIV)

[Romans 8:31-39](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Romans+8%3A31-39&version=NIV)

[Philippians 4:13](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Philippians+4%3A13&version=NIV)

[Colossians 1:17](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Colossians+1%3A17&version=NIV)

[Hebrews 1:3; 6:18](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Hebrews+1%3A3%3B+6%3A18&version=NIV)

[Revelation 19:6](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Revelation+19%3A6&version=NIV)

Quotations

“Once you grant an omnipotent God, it isn’t really hard to imagine him doing any number of amazing things.” –Mark Mittelberg

“Realize that when your friends are experiencing pain they are probably not looking for explanations as much as they’re looking for empathy, concern, and tangible expressions of love. They may be asking, ‘Where was God?’ but mostly be wondering, *You say you know God; will you show me his kind of love and care?*” –Mark Mittelberg

“His Omnipotence means power to do all that is intrinsically possible, not to do the intrinsically impossible. You may attribute miracles to Him, but not nonsense. There is no limit to His power.If you choose to say, ‘God can give a creature free will and at the same time withhold free will from it,’ you have not succeeded in saying *anything* about God: meaningless combinations of words do not suddenly acquire meaning simply because we prefix to them the two other words, ‘God can.’It remains true that all things are possible with God: the intrinsic impossibilities are not things but nonentities. It is no more possible for God than for the weakest of His creatures to carry out both of two mutually exclusive alternatives; not because His power meets an obstacle, but because nonsense remains nonsense even when we talk it about God.” –[C.S. Lewis](http://www.goodreads.com/author/show/1069006.C_S_Lewis), [*The Problem of Pain*](http://www.goodreads.com/work/quotes/2976220)

Recommendations

*The Problem of Pain* by C.S. Lewis, Chapters 2 and 6

*Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, Chapter 13 (pages 216-218)

<http://www.gotquestions.org/God-omnipotent.html>

<http://www.str.org/articles/if-god-can-t-do-anything-is-he-all-powerful#.VaBT0Wcg_Vg>

Commentary

NOTE: This commentary originally answered the prompt, “What is the meaning of God’s omnipotence? Why does this matter?”

God is all-powerful; omnipotent. “God’s omnipotence means that God is able to do all his holy will.”[[1]](#footnote-1) His power can be clearly seen in the majesty of mountains, oceans, planets, stars, galaxies and all of creation, which He spoke into existence using only His words. In Christ, we see that power repeatedly. He healed the sick and raised the dead to life. He opened the eyes of the blind. He examined the hearts and thoughts of men. He walked on water and calmed storms. He died on the cross and rose from the dead. Creation and Christ reveal God’s all-powerful nature.

Skeptics sometimes criticize the idea of omnipotence by claiming that God cannot make a round square, a married bachelor, or a rock so big that He cannot lift it. But, as C.S. Lewis pointed out, these kinds of “nonsense” are not real limitations. “[M]eaningless combinations of words do not suddenly acquire meaning simply because we prefix to them the two other words, ‘God can.’” An inability to effectuate a contradictory (and nonsensical) combination of words is not a real limitation on omnipotence. Thomas Aquinas said it well in his *Summa Theologica*: “Nothing which implies contradiction falls under the omnipotence of God.”[[2]](#footnote-2)

Christians freely acknowledge that God cannot do anything that contradicts His very nature. He is inherently good, holy, righteous, merciful, just, and gracious. Therefore, He is incapable of acting in a bad, unholy unrighteous, unmerciful, unjust or ungracious manner. “God cannot lie, sin, deny himself, or be tempted with evil. He cannot cease to exist, or cease to be God, or act in a way inconsistent with any of his attributes.”[[3]](#footnote-3) God cannot commit evil acts or tempts anyone else to do so (James 1:13).

In light of God’s goodness and omnipotence, skeptics sometimes criticize God because evil still exists. Some people see the evil in the world today and believe that no loving, omnipotent God could exist because He does not prevent evil. They often have deep personal pain and desire a loving response that provides hope. You can provide that hope and explain that God will defeat evil entirely. One major reason why the omnipotence of God matters is because one day God will wipe away every tear and bring justice to those who have been wronged. A time will come when there will be no more death, mourning, crying or pain (Revelation 21:4).

In the meantime, God is working on earth through the lives of millions of Christians across the globe to bring healing, justice, and mercy to those who are suffering. There are stories of miracles and God doing incredible things today across the world even in the face of evil. Share such stories in your speech. In many ways, the presence of evil is actually a great way to introduce the Gospel and the omnipotent power of God over the wickedness in this world. “[L]et us kneel before the lord our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.” Psalm 95:6-7 (NIV).

Rest in God

Respond to the statement by St. Augustine: “You have made us for yourself, O Lord, and our hearts are restless until they rest in you.” Augustine, St, Bishop of Hippo, Augustine’s Confessions, 1.1.1, 397

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

Judgment After Death

Respond to someone who asks, “Is there judgment after death?”

This question is not answered at this time in the Season 22 release schedule. This worksheet is provided for you to take your own notes for preparation.

Bible Verses

Quotations

Recommendations

Commentary

1. *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, Chapter 13 (pages 216) [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. <http://www.mobilenovel.net/mobile/novels/divine-omnipotence> [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. *Systematic Theology* by Wayne Grudem, Chapter 13 (pages 217) [↑](#footnote-ref-3)