

THE EXISTENCE OF GOD AND THE BEGINNING OF THE UNIVERSE

HOMEWORK # 1

Name _____

1. Read the preface and chapter 1.
2. What is so terrifying about the “threat of non-being”?
3. If there is no God, life holds no ultimate significance.
 - All our activities are meaningless, if there is no God
 - If the end is the same, then man is no more significant than a barnyard of pigs
 - Because man ends in nothing, he is nothing
 - Man needs even more than immortality for life to hold meaning
 - Man needs God to define and order and give meaning to that immortality
4. If there is no God, life holds no value.
 - Sacrifice for another person would be stupid, if there is no God
 - There would be no absolute standard of right and wrong, if there is no God
 - We could not condemn war, crime, racism, or injustice if there is no God
 - If there is no God, we could not praise brotherhood, equality, or love as good
 - It would not matter if we lived as Hitler or as Mother Teresa, if there is no God
 - The concept of morality loses all meaning in a world without God
5. If there is no God, life is without purpose
 - If death is the end, then there is no ultimate reason for one’s life
 - If there is no God, the universe exists for no reason
6. What is the *lower story*?
7. What is the *upper story*?
8. Who is Jean Paul Sartre ? (Research apart from the book is required)

9. Sartre proposed that life could have meaning if you did what?

10. In reality, Sartre is saying, "Let's _____ the universe has meaning."

11. What is Dostoyevsky's point in his novel, *Crime and Punishment*?

- All things are permitted
- Man may think he can live as though there is no God, but he really can't
- The upper story and the lower story are really the same things
- Life can have some meaning if you realize you need others
- Sin will always find you out

12. Read the last paragraph on page 24 again, "Man cannot live without...."

13. Summarize the second problem (man's failure to live consistently with his belief that there is no God) on page 25.

14. Zeldovich, Novikov, Crick, Hoyle, and other scientists cannot bear to live in a universe where everything is the chance result of impersonal forces. How do they try to smuggle God in through the back door?

15. Show how it is inconsistent to promote women's rights and yet deny God's existence.

16. What is the basis for opposing the Nazi experiments at Dachau, if there is no God?

17. Who is Friedrich Nietzsche? (Research apart from the book is required)

18. What drove Nietzsche mad, forcing him to spend the last 10 years of his life in an insane asylum?

- A. He hated God and tried unsuccessfully to disprove his existence
- B. Preachers who warned him about the fires of Hell
- C. The finite world alone is insufficient in finding meaning, value, and purpose
- D. His wife poisoned him

19. Man does not cease to exist when he dies physically. Therefore, the choices he makes during this life have a real and everlasting significance. Use this as a premise to show how the existence of Hell reinforces the idea that life has meaning.

20. What is an existentialist? (Research apart from the book is required)

21. What is the freedom man has that an existentialist can't fathom?

22. Do you understand the point of Craig's chart on page 30?

23. How does Christianity affirm that life has meaning?

24. How does Christianity affirm that life has value?

25. How does Christianity affirm that life has purpose?

26. Why does Christianity lead to happiness and Atheism to despair?

- A. Christians sing happier songs
- B. Christianity's world view provides meaning, value, and purpose to man
- C. Christianity is based on faith, Atheism is based on facts
- D. None of the above

27. Who is Anthony Flew? (Research apart from the book is required)

28. Who is Pascal? (Research apart from the book is required)

29. Have you ever heard of *Pascal's wager*? How does Craig sum it up?

30. Look over the chart below. You should be able to provide explanations for each of the points. (No need to write anything).

GOD DOES NOT EXIST	GOD DOES EXIST
Life has no meaning	Life has meaning
Life has no value	Life has value
Life has no purpose	Life has purpose

31. Rate this chapter and homework.

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HOMEWORK #2

Name _____

1. Read chapter 2. This chapter has some challenging concepts so you will want to read it carefully before you attempt to complete the writing assignments.

2. What is significant about the question, "Why does anything exist?"

3. Something exists because there is an _____, _____ being for which no other explanation is possible.

4. Follow closely the logic behind Craig's chart of alternatives on page 38. It leads us to this conclusion: The universe had a beginning which was caused by a personal being.

5. The first philosophical argument Craig uses has to do with infinity, an actual infinite cannot exist. From this he states that "a beginningless series of events in time is an actual infinite." And therefore concludes that "a beginningless series of events in time cannot exist." This argument is worth understanding and I have used it often. There are 2 reasons why the universe is not eternal: First, modern science does not support this theory as it once did -- however, evidence that the universe began continues to increase; Secondly, it is impossible philosophically. Craig does an excellent job of laying this out in a simple fashion – but it does require some effort to follow his points. Therefore, the following questions are designed to help you keep your focus.

6. A collection of things is said to actually be infinite only if a _____ of it is _____ to the _____ of it.

7. Which set contains the most number of numerals?

- a. 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, 18, 21, ...
- b. 2, 4, 8, 16, 32, 64, 128,
- c. 10, 100, 1000, 10000,
- d. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,
- e. 3, 4, 5, 6, 7,
- f. all are equal because each set contains an infinite number of numerals
- g. all are equal except **c**
- h. all are equal except **b** and **c**
- i. this is a trick question and I refuse to play along

8. How can the set, "2, 4, 6, 8, 10," have the same number of numerals as the set, "1, 2, 3, 4, 5,...." when it skips every other number?

9. The difference between an *actual infinite* and a *potential infinite* is
- a potential infinite is increasing toward infinity, but not “yet” an actual infinite
 - a potential infinite is indefinite, an actual infinite is definite
 - a potential infinite is always growing, an actual infinite is complete
10. An atheist who claims that the universe is eternal must therefore conclude that
- the universe created itself
 - the past contains a finite number of events
 - the past contains an infinite number of events
11. Be sure you understand the bottom half of page 41. The past is realized and complete – it is a definite totality. From Christmas, 2001 to the past would have to consist of an actual infinite (if the universe is eternal). The past is an actual infinite (because it is complete), the future is always a potential infinite (because minutes and days are always being added).
12. Start with the second paragraph on page 42, “A second clarification....” Craig claims that an actual infinite can only exist in the abstract and not in the concrete. In other words, it can exist in mathematics and thought, but not in the real world where it can be observed or studied. Follow closely his examples of an “infinite library” to the top of page 46. Reread any paragraph that might not be clear to you.
13. The reason an actual infinite cannot exist in the real world is because
- we don’t have a high enough number to assign to such large quantities
 - our minds are incapable of understanding an actual infinite
 - we can always add to it, thus it isn’t really *actual* but only *potential*
14. The first step is now established. Don’t lose it: “An actual infinite cannot exist.”
15. The second step of Craig’s argument is
- A beginningless series of events in time is an actual infinite
 - A beginningless series of events in time is a potential infinite
 - A beginningless series of events in time is possible
16. If the universe had a beginning, then the period of time from that beginning to this moment would be: (think carefully)
- An actual infinite
 - A potential infinite
 - A finite period of time
17. If the universe did not have a beginning, then the period of time to this moment would be:
- An actual infinite
 - A potential infinite
 - A finite period of time

18. If the universe existed forever, then the series of all past events taken together constitute an actual infinite, because every event in the past was _____ by another event.

19. The third step of Craig's argument is

- A beginningless series of events in time is possible
- A beginningless series of events in time is impossible

20. Because the present moment is the result of all preceding causes and effects, the present universe *is* the series of all events. And because, an actual infinite cannot exist, the number of preceding causes and effects is finite. Therefore, the universe _____ have a beginning.

21. Start with the middle of page 47, "Let me give you..." Craig argues that our "time" cannot be an actual infinite because moments are still being _____ to it.

22. Remember the definition of an actual infinite at the beginning of the chapter, "a part of the collection equals the whole of it." If the universe has existed forever, without a beginning, then the number of events that have occurred up to birth of Christ is no _____ than the number of events that have occurred up to the present moment.

23. Read the long paragraph on page 48 twice, "Or, finally, suppose..."

24. If you cannot count numbers from eternity, neither can you have _____ from eternity. (The act of counting numbers is equivalent to events). **If the universe did not begin to exist a finite time ago, then the present moment would never arrive.**

25. Craig now turns his attention to his second main argument for the beginning of the universe, which he outlines in 3 points at the top of page 49 and explains in the following paragraphs.

26. Why is it impossible to "cross" an infinite number of days?

27. It is impossible to "cross" an infinite number of days to reach today. But today has arrived. Therefore, the number of days before today is _____ and the universe had a _____.

28. This chapter has demonstrated the force of what is called the *Kalam Argument*. Do you think you could use it to challenge the thinking of an unbeliever who believes that the universe has always existed?

- not at all, I'm still confused
- maybe, but I would need to review it first
- I think I could hold my own
- I would be very confident

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HOMEWORK #3

Name _____

1. Read chapter 3.

2. This chapter deals with the scientific evidence that the universe had a beginning. Craig marvels that much has been written *recently* to support this theory. Interestingly, his book was written over 20 years ago. Since then there has been even more of a landslide among scientists and astronomers; only a *very small minority* resist the premise that the universe began with a “big bang” about 15 billion years ago. Each year new evidence continues to support the biblical truth that the universe did indeed have a definite and decisive beginning. There are several Christian scientists who have developed this quite extensively, especially Hugh Ross. If you are interested in this subject and would like to read more, please see me and I will fix you up with one of his books.

3. Check the ones that are true:

- The universe is expanding
- The farther back one goes in the past, the denser the universe becomes
- The beginning point of this expansion was an explosion of an *infinite density*
- No object possesses *infinite density*
- The big bang theory requires creation of matter from *nothing*
- The 3 theories scientists entertain are: big bang, steady state, and oscillating

4. The *steady state model* basically claims what?

5. The paragraph on the top of page 61 states that the radiation background of the universe indicates that it was once very hot and very dense. This book was published in 1979. In 1992, the COBE satellite confirmed this with even more convincing proofs. It is extremely unpopular for any scientist today to hold to a steady-state model.

6. The *oscillating model* basically claims what?

7. Again, since this book was written scientists have much more evidence supporting the theory that the universe is “open” (will always expand and will never contract).

8. The astronomer Allan Sandage has concluded:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

9. True or False? The oscillating model is *doubly impossible* because the universe is not dense enough to stop the expansion and pull it together again, and there is no known physics to reverse the collapse and bounce the universe back.

10. What does the “Second Law of Thermodynamics” basically teach?

11. What is the “heat death” of the universe?

12. Do you understand the argument: *If the universe, given enough time, will reach heat death, then why is it not in a state of heat death now if it has existed forever, from eternity? If the universe had no beginning, it should now be in a state of equilibrium; its energy should be all used up.*

13. Briefly explain how the Second Law of Thermodynamics refutes the eternal oscillating model of the universe.

14. Read carefully Craig's responses to 2 objections, starting at the bottom of page 66.

16. What did the scientist P. C. W. Davis conclude (page 68)?

17. How difficult was it for you to follow the arguments of this chapter?

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HOMEWORK #4

Name _____

1. Read chapter 4 – This is your final assignment for this book.

2. Note carefully the series of logical alternatives:

- I. There is no universe
- II. There is a universe
 - A. The universe did not have a beginning
 - B. The universe did have a beginning
 - 1) The universe was not caused
 - 2) The universe was caused
 - a. this cause was not personal
 - b. this cause was personal

If II is true, then it must be A or B. If B is true, then it must be 1) or 2). If 2) is true, then it must be a. or b. After reading this book, do you believe you could refute the wrong alternatives and support the right ones?

- Yes, I feel pretty confident
- Yes, but I might need do a little review first
- Maybe some of the points, but I have a hard time seeing the whole picture
- Probably not too well
- No, not at all
- Other: _____

3. Why is it intellectually irresponsible to claim that the universe was not caused? (Just sum up the argument).

4. Why is it intellectually irresponsible to claim that the universe was not caused by a person? (Just sum up the argument).

5. Starting halfway down page 87 with the paragraph, “I would like to...” From this point on the end of the chapter Craig discusses the timelessness of God and introduces some philosophical concepts about the Trinity. Read all of this at least twice. Check off the points that you feel like you adequately understand (not *exhaustively* understand, but understand enough).

- The question: Does *eternal* mean God is outside of time or is everlasting?
- God is changeless, and hence, timeless prior to creation
- God is tri-personal; in His being are 3 centers of self-consciousness
- The point that God was not lonely before creation
- God did not “need” to create us
- God created time when he created the universe
- God places himself within time so he can interact with his creation (us)

6. Use your own words to rate this chapter.

7. Use your own words to rate this book.

8. Optional: Read chapter 5.