

## Doctrine of Vanity of Vanities

1. Not everyone is convinced that the Moral Argument for the existence of God is a valid one.
2. It is argued that as difficult as it may be to live a life without God, that does not mean that He really exists. Life might be like Alice in Wonderland, hoping that someone is “out there” to help.
3. To embrace a universe in which there is no God is to embrace a universe in which there is no ultimate justice. All of life is vain or empty.
  - *Ecclesiastes 1:2 Vanity of vanities, saith the Preacher, vanity of vanities; all is vanity.*
  - *Ecclesiastes 12:8 Vanity of vanities, saith the preacher; all is vanity.*
4. In the search for God, the various philosophical and theological systems of thought fall into two general categories. All other philosophies fall somewhere on the continuum.
  - Full Body Theism. There is a God who is omnipotent, omniscient, and omnipresent. He is holy, just, and good.
  - Nihilism. There is no God, and there is no meaning to life. There is no sense to human existence.
5. In the Old Testament, there is life experience in two forms.
  - There is life experienced under the sun. *Ecclesiastes 1:3 What profit hath a man of all his labour which he taketh under the sun?*
  - There is life experienced under heaven. *Ecclesiastes 1:13 And I gave my heart to seek and search out by wisdom concerning all things that are done under heaven: this sore travail hath God given to the sons of man to be exercised therewith.*
6. In modern terms there are two worlds.
  - There is the phenomenal world, as conveyed by our senses. This is the world, or life, “*under the sun*”.
  - There is the noumenal world based on a transcendental understanding of the universe. This is the world, or life, “*under heaven*.”
7. In the book of Ecclesiastes, if there is life only “*under the sun*”, then let it be said that life is “*vanity of vanity, all is vanity.*”
8. In contrast, if there is life “*under heaven*”, then Jesus Christ is “*LORD of Lords*”, which is another way to say that life is not vain.

- *1 Timothy 6:15 Which in his times he shall shew, who is the blessed and only Potentate, the King of kings, and Lord of lords.*
9. The Hebrew word for vanity (hebel, heh'bel) means “futility”. A life without God is empty. It is transitory and unsatisfactory. Everything we do is lost in a vicious cycle that has no beginning, and no meaningful end.
    - “Life's but a walking shadow, a poor player  
That struts and frets his hour upon the stage  
And then is heard no more: it is a tale  
Told by an idiot, full of sound and fury,  
Signifying nothing” (Macbeth, Act 5, Scene 5).
  10. There are few philosophers who are unwilling to go to the extreme and deny the existence of God. However, what humanistic philosophers are willing to do is to “borrow capital” from those who embrace full body theism.
  11. Some humanist say there is no God, and insist that our origin come from nothing. They declare individuals are moving towards annihilation, and yet, while they are alive, they want a moral universe to live in because it is to their advantage. They fight for human rights, and human dignity and so, logically, they have both feet planted in mid-air. In the immortal words of one prominent political existentialist, “What difference does it make?”
  12. In the end, the atheist is resting on sentiment. He does not have the courage to go where logic dictates which is to full nihilism. There is no basis for believing in human dignity if we are a cosmic accident.
  13. The humanist borrows from Christianity, for to be without Christ, is to be without hope.
    - *1 Corinthians 15:14 And if Christ be not risen, then is our preaching vain, and your faith is also vain.*
  14. Immanuel Kant argued that our lives do have meaning, and every fiber in our being declares this.
  15. Albert Camus (November 7, 1914 – January 4, 1960) lived his life “*under the sun*”, and decided that the only serious question left for philosophers to consider is the validity of suicide. Camus is not wrong. If a soul awakens to the idea that there is no God, and the future is annihilation, that thought might be exhilarating for a while. But then life is without meaning, and suicide is a violable alternative to the pressures of life. And if your friends embrace the philosophy of nihilism, who will care if you live or die? Life does not count.

***Special Note.***

Camus died at the age of 46 in a car accident near Sens, France. He lived a foolish and meaningless life, filled with nonsensical quotes. One of his most famous is when he said, “I do not believe in God, and I am not an atheist.”

- *Hebrews 9:27 And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment.*

16. The French philosopher, playwright, novelist, political activist, and literary critic Jean-Paul Sartre (June 21, 1905 – April 15, 1980) defined man as a “useless passion” in his novel, *Nausea*, published in 1938. His primary idea was that people, as humans, are “condemned to be free.” Sartre assumed that the Creator does not exist, and therefore “existence precedes essence.” The Biblical view is just the opposite.

- *Isaiah 44:2 Thus saith the Lord that made thee, and formed thee from the womb, which will help thee; Fear not, O Jacob, my servant; and thou, Jesurun, whom I have chosen.*

17. What Sartre was saying is that if everything a person loves and cherishes is meaningless then that person lives only for passion, and that passion is “useless.” That is what people are, “useless passions.”

18. If man is nothing more than something from the slime and is going back to the slime, then humanity must face the grim reality, and not run to religion as escapism. But escapism is exactly what is going on in the world of those who live life “under the sun.” That is what hedonism is all about. It is an attempt to maximize pleasure in order to find some meaning, or purpose in life.

***Special Note.***

The philosophy of psychologist Timothy Leary (October 22, 1920 – May 31, 1996) to use psychedelic drugs in order to “Turn on, tune in, drop out” has prevailed, so that people do not have to think, or feel the pain of life. People are told they are a beast in human clothing with no past and no future. So they drown out this reality in music and drugs. Critics of Christianity say that religion is the “opium of the masses” (Karl Marx) in order to escape a grim reality.

19. Question. “Since there is no God, why are people incurably religious?” Around the world, people are engaged in religion. “Why?” The most common answer from humanist is that man has a psychological need, based on fear, of what life is really like without God, and that is nihilism.

20. To escape nihilism, Christians embrace theism. The reality is that the “crutch” is really what the humanist relies upon to escape personal responsibility before God for their behavior.