

Name: _____

Due: October 21, 2009 at 12 noon

Course: PHILO 4373, Christian Apologetics

Place: In cyberspace

Instructor: William A. Dembski, Fleming 215D

Grader: Jack Greenoe (JLGreenoe AT elearning.swbts.edu)

TAKE-HOME MIDTERM EXAM

Please answer each of the following questions in 250 words or less. Answer every part of each question. Be concise. This exam is open-book, but you can only consult general reference books (e.g., the Bible), the books read in class, and the notes you took in class. You may not cruise the Internet in search of answers or in any way seek the help of others. Your completed exam needs to be emailed to the grader, Jack Greenoe, by Wednesday 12:00 noon. In turning this paper in you agree, on pain of divine judgment, that this is entirely your own work.

Answer the following questions [10 points each, no more than 250 words per question]:

1. Defend the Vincentian Canon to a 21st century skeptic of Christianity.
2. What is an error and does Scripture contain any errors? Defend the inerrancy of Scripture. How does the inerrancy of Scripture differ from the infallibility of Scripture? Why isn't asserting the mere infallibility of Scripture good enough?
3. Someone comes to you explaining that her father abused her growing up and thus she has a hard time conceiving of God as a loving father. Instead, she tells you that she much prefers mother imagery for God. In part, she justifies this by claiming that all our language of God is metaphorical and that father imagery for God is simply a hold-over from a patriarchal age. Defend the fatherhood of God against this line of attack.
4. Explain Gary Habermas's minimal facts approach to establishing the Resurrection of Jesus. Assess how well this approach works. Compare this evidential approach to the classical approach to apologetics. Explain why you might prefer one approach to the other.
5. Presuppositional apologetics depends on a transcendental argument. Explain what that argument is. Assess its strengths (if it has any) and its weaknesses (if it has any).
6. What does it mean for reformed apologetics to argue that belief in God is properly basic? How does reformed apologetics challenge foundationalism? Give your own assessment of reformed apologetics' strengths (if it has any) and its weaknesses (if it has any).
7. According to Richard Dawkins, religious faith is believing in the absence of evident. Show that he is wrong. Make the case that Christian faith is a matter not of subjective opinion but of objective knowledge.
8. What, according to C. S. Lewis, is the cardinal difficulty with naturalism?
9. No amputees are recorded as having been healed in the New Testament (i.e., no one with a missing limb is said to have grown back the limb in response to a prayer by Jesus or one of the Apostles). Indeed, throughout Church history it appears that no such miracle has occurred (if you know of a well-confirmed case, please cite it). Atheists therefore argue that if miracles really happened and gave evidence of God, God would have performed a healing like growing back the limb of an amputee. Do atheists have a point here? How do you maintain that miracles are real in the face of such criticism?
10. Philosopher and theologian Nancey Murphy, who is on the faculty of Fuller Theological Seminary, argues that humans do not have a soul, that soul is a Greek invention, and that the original Hebrew understanding of the human person was as a purely physical being. Thus, for her, our immortality consists not in having immortal souls but in the prospect of God resurrecting us to a new physical existence. Contra Murphy, argue that we do have some aspect (call it soul or spirit) that is more than and different from our physical bodies.