

Subject: Ethics, Philosophy and Worldviews

Topic: Why are ultimate questions difficult to answer?

Year 7 Autumn 1

Concepts: Ultimate Questions 

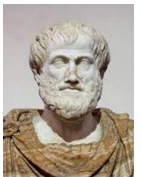
Key Words and Definitions

- **Agnostic:** Someone who believes that we cannot know if there is a God
- **Analogy:** A comparison between one thing or another. Analogies can be used to help people answer big ideas.
- **Atheist:** Someone who believes that there is no God
- **Big Bang theory:** A scientific explanation of the first moments of the existence of the universe, describing how a dense, hot point of singularity expanded and formed matter
- **Dualism:** The idea that there are two parts of a person; the physical body and the spiritual soul. The soul can separate after death.
- **Evolution:** The process by which different living creatures are believed to have developed from earlier less complex forms during the history of the earth
- **Fundamentalist Christian:** A Christian who believes that the Bible contains the direct words of God and describes actual events that have occurred. For example, they would believe the story of creation in the Bible literally describes how God created the universe.
- **Intelligent design:** the idea that certain features of life are best explained by an intelligent cause such as God.
- **Liberal Christian:** A Christian who believes in God and the moral teachings of Christianity, but believe the Bible contains the words of people about God and therefore should not be taken literally. For example, they would not believe the creation story is literally true but a metaphor to show God's power.
- **Materialism:** The idea that a person is made up of their physical body only and there is no other separate part to a person
- **Monotheism:** Belief in one God.
- **Omnibenevolent:** All-loving
- **Omnipotent:** All-powerful
- **Omnipresent:** Everywhere

- **Omniscient:** All-knowing
- **Soul:** The spiritual aspect of a being; that which connects someone to God. The soul is often regarded as non-physical and as living on after physical death, in an afterlife
- **Theist:** Someone who believes that there is a God
- **Ultimate Questions:** These are big philosophical questions in life which do not have one answer.

Who am I?

- Aristotle was a Greek philosopher.
- He believed that a human being was made up of two parts: a body and a soul. Both of these were inseparable. Therefore, the soul cannot exist without the human body. If the body dies, the soul also dies.
- According to Aristotle, the soul is what makes a person, a person.



What is the nature of God?

Most Christians are monotheists as they believe in one God. Many Christians believe that God has many different characteristics that can be seen through ways such as reading the Bible or religious experiences.

- **“And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love.”** (1 John 4:16). Shows God as omnibenevolent.
- **At the last supper, Jesus knew that he was going to die and that one of the disciples would betray him.** Shows God as omniscient.
- **Who is like the LORD our God, the One who sits enthroned on high, 6 who stoops down to look on the heavens and the earth?** (Psalm 113: 5-6). Shows God as omnipotent and omnipresent.
- **‘In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth.’** (Genesis 1:1). Shows God as omnipotent.
- **‘God even knows how many hairs are on your head.’** (Matthew 10:30). Shows God as omniscient.

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Is there a God?



British philosopher William Paley tried to prove the existence of God by design in the universe. He gave an analogy of a watch by comparing it to the world. He said imagine if you were walking along a road and you found a watch. If you had never seen a watch before you would know that someone had designed it. Our world is far more complex than any watch. Therefore, in the same way we should be able to look at the world and know it had a designer too. Therefore, he believed in intelligent design.



Others may argue that suffering and evil do not suggest there is design in the world. Or they may argue that design is not necessary with evolution, where living beings have adapted to survive.

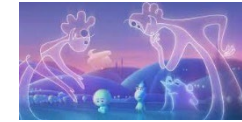
How did the universe begin?

- Many theists, including Christians, believe the universe was created by God. Fundamentalist Christians would likely believe the story of creation in the Bible literally describes how God created the universe. Genesis describes how God made light first and humans last. Humans were specially made differently from animals and given a specific role in Creation.
- **“God said ‘Let there be light’ and there was light.”** (Genesis 1:3)
- **“God said ‘Let us make mankind in our image, in our likeness, so that they may rule over ... [all the animals] ...’** (Genesis 1:26)
- Many liberal Christians would not believe the creation story is literally true but a metaphor to show God’s power. Liberal Christians will likely believe science explains *how* the universe began and how humans developed
- Atheists also believe that the universe began through scientific processes. They would reject beliefs in a creator God. They will likely accept the Big Bang theory and the process of evolution.



Is there such a thing as a soul?

- There are many views on the soul, including: -
 - The soul is a part of us, separate to our physical bodies
 - It gives us the ability to be good and moral
 - It is very special
 - It is God-given and connected to God
 - It makes us human
 - It does not exist
- Fundamentalist Christians believe that God gave Adam his soul **“Then the LORD God formed a man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being.”** (Genesis 2:7)
- People who believe in a soul may use the following evidence to support this:
 - We can reason
 - We can make moral decisions
 - Near Death Experiences
- People who reject the belief in a soul may use the following evidence to support this:
 - No conclusive scientific evidence
 - We have evolved to make moral decisions.



What is your worldview?

A worldview is a person’s way of understanding, experiencing and responding to the world. From the Final Report on the Commission for RE, 2018.

What is your worldview and how might it influence your response to these ultimate questions?



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