# The Counterintuitive Notion of Infinity

$\infty + 1 = \infty\ ?$

NO VACANCIES
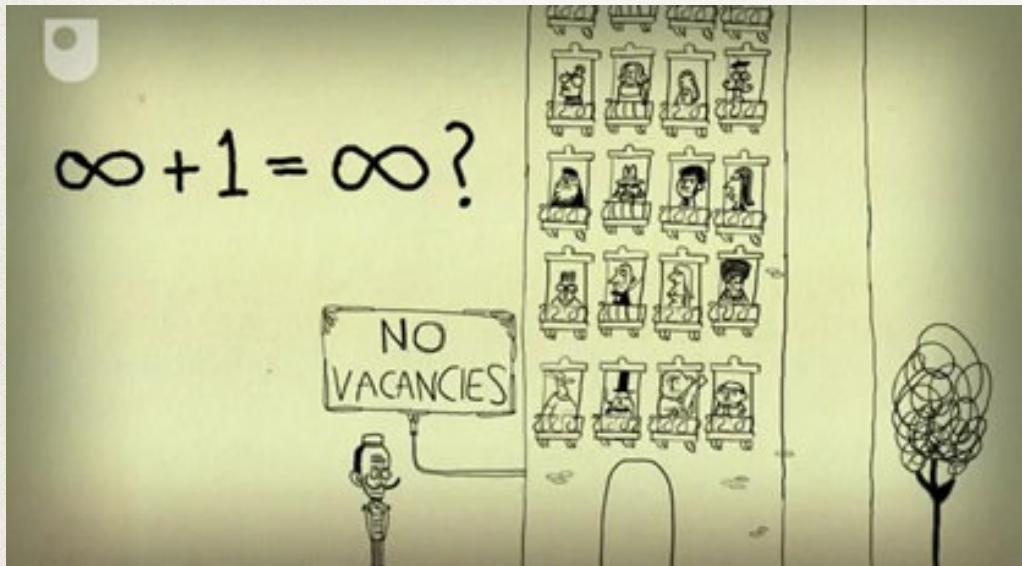
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# Why Does God Allow Tragedy and Suffering?
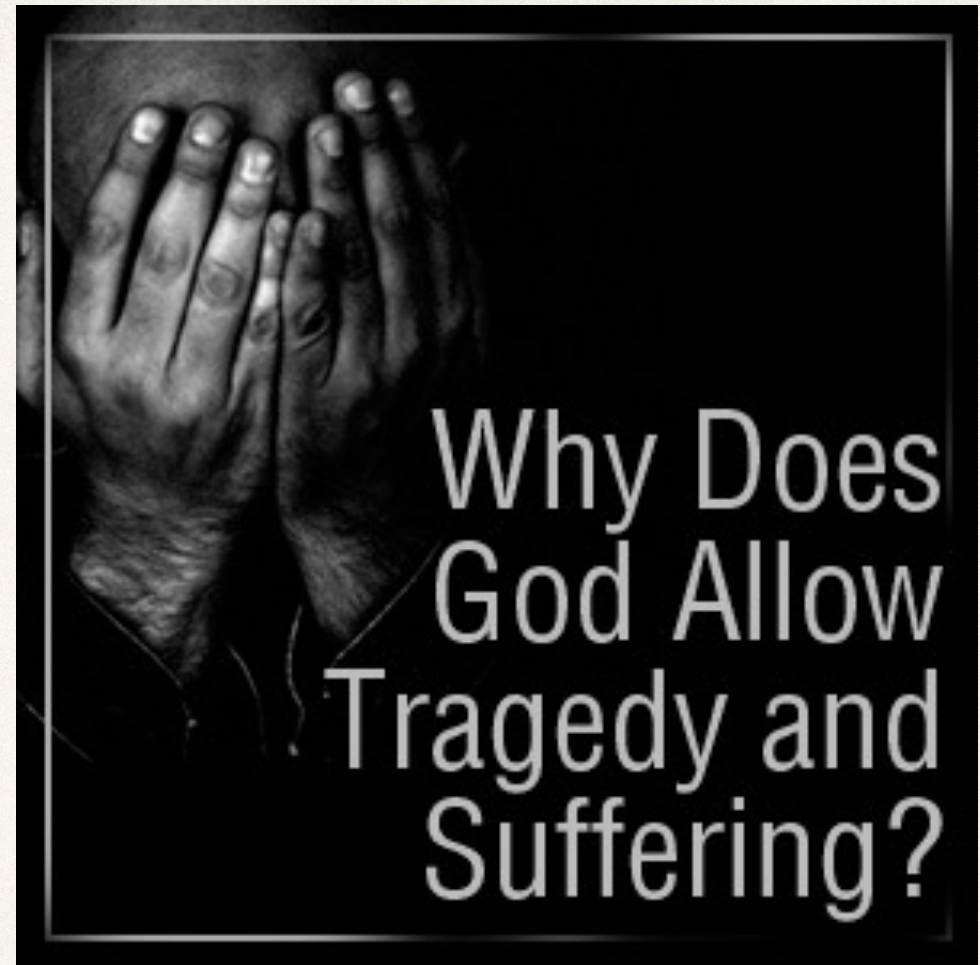
*If God Exists, Why Is There Suffering in the World?*

# God, Suffering and Faith

Can we prove that God exists?

If God exists, why is there suffering in the world?

Can we do away with faith?

Bruegel the Elder, *Tower of Babel*

# From Monday's Class—
## *The Cosmological Argument* (al-Ghazali, St. Thomas)

1. Some things are undergoing change in the world.

2. Anything that is undergoing change must have a cause of its change.

3. Such a cause, if it is itself undergoing change, must have a cause for its change as well.

4. But this cannot go on forever, otherwise there would be no first cause and no change at all.

5. So, there must be a first cause of change, where the first cause is not itself caused by something else.

6. That first cause we call God.

# Key Ideas in the Argument

Everything that undergoes change must have a cause

There cannot be an infinite regress of causes, otherwise change itself would be impossible

# Why Cannot There Be an Infinite Regress of Causes?

# William Lane Craig on Why There Cannot be an Infinite Regress of Causes

*watch the video below
up to minute 3:25*

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VeKavDdRVIg
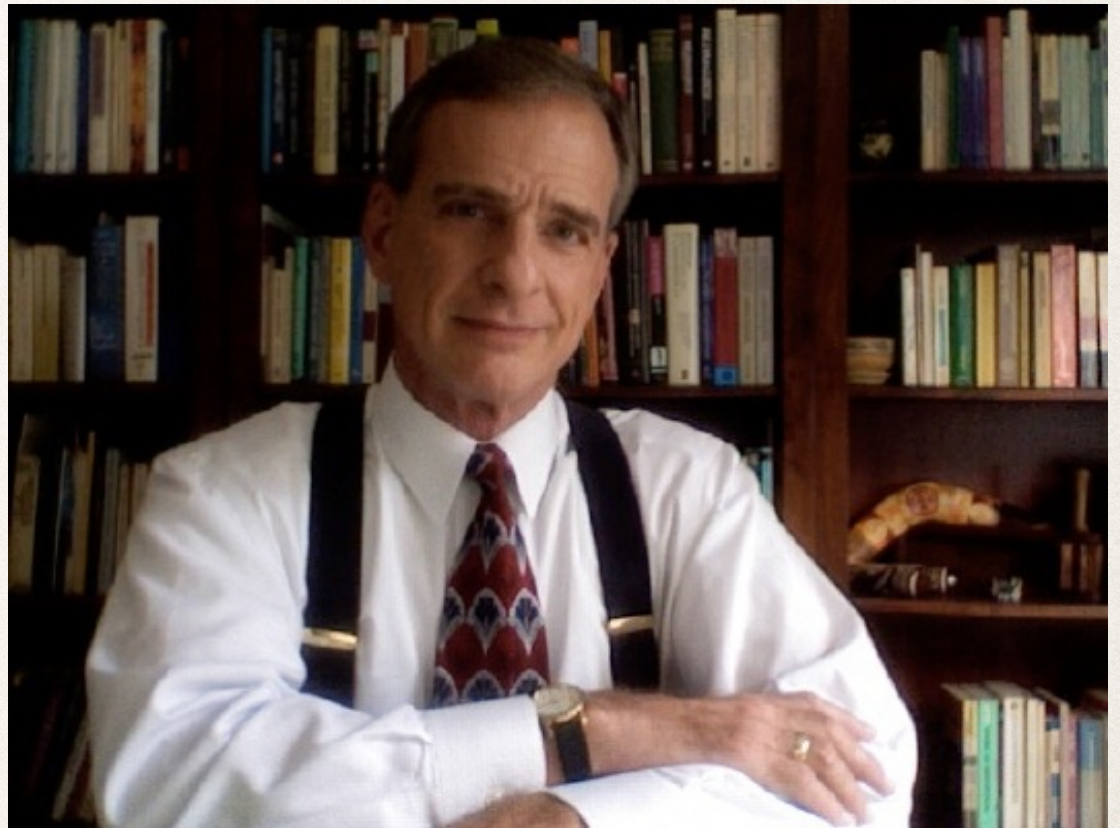
# Craig's Argument Against an Infinite Regress of Causes

1. An infinite regress of causes is impossible **because** there cannot be an infinite number of past events.

2. There cannot be an infinite number of past events **because** physical infinity is contradictory.

3. Physical infinity is contradictory **because** if you subtract infinity from infinity you can get both a <u>finite</u> number of things as well as an <u>infinite</u> number of things.

# Craig on Why "Physical Infinity" Is Contradictory

First, suppose there are an infinite number of past events, each numbered 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.

Next, subtract an <u>infinite</u> number of events from the given infinite number of events.

*Option 1*: Subtract the even numbered events. *Result*: The remaining events are still infinite (i.e. all the odd events).

*Option 2*: Subtract the events greater than 100. *Result*: the remaining events are finite (i.e. the events up to 100).

*Craig here relies on the mathematical fact that the **even numbers** are **infinite** and the numbers greater than 100 are also **infinite**.*

Infinity *minus* infinity equals infinity.

Infinity *minus* infinity equals "finity".

That's contradictory!

But all Craig's argument seems to show is that "infinity" is something counterintuitive
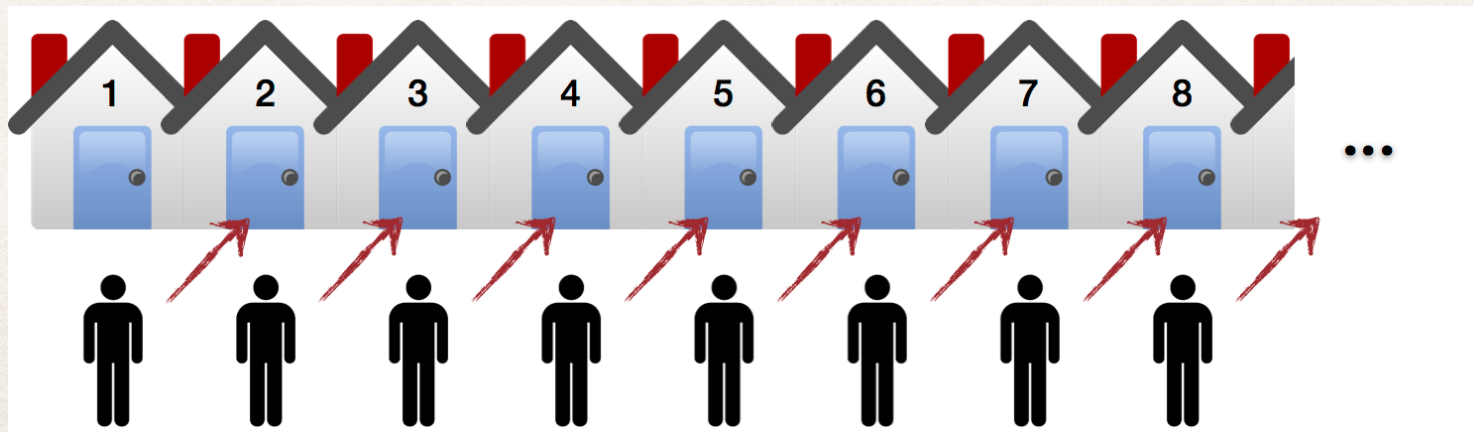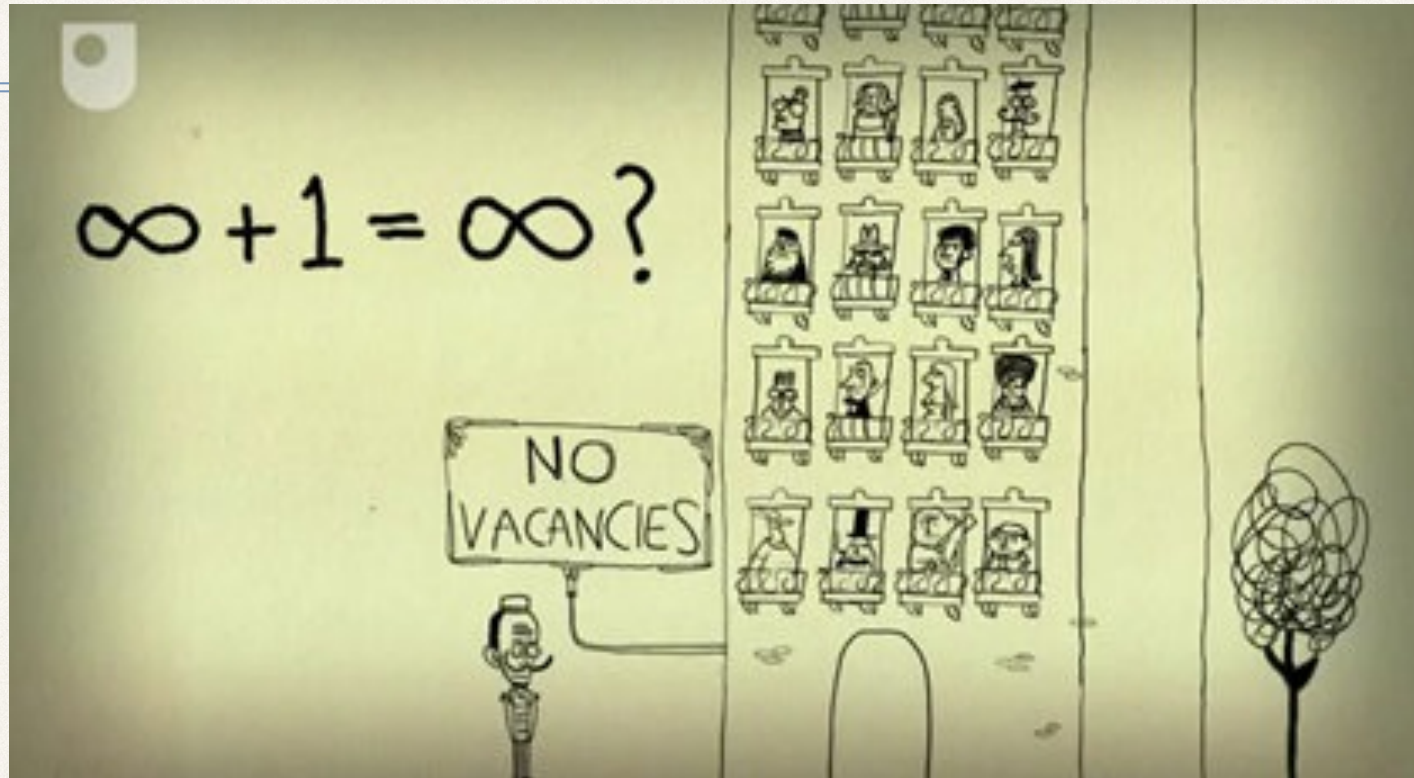
His argument does not seem to show that "physical infinity" is flat out contradictory.

*I'll let you decide for yourself*

# Another Way to Look at the Counterintuitive Nature of Infinity

# Hilbert's Infinite Hotel

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=faQBrAQ87l4

# Next Topic—*If There is a God, Why is There Suffering in this World?*

# Epicurus (341-270 BC)
## *The Problem of Evil*



Epicurus
(341-270 BCE)
philosopher and
teacher

"Is God willing to prevent evil, but not able?
Then he is not omnipotent.

Is he able, but not willing?
Then he is malevolent.

Is he both able and willing?
Then whence cometh evil?

Is he neither able nor willing?
Then why call him God?"

# One Response—
## *Two Principles of Reality, one Good and One Evil*

According to many religions, there are two principles of reality.

For example:

- *Yin* and *Yang* in Taoism

- *Apollus* and *Dionysius* in Ancient Greek religion

- *Good* and *Evil* in Manicheism

*If there are two principles, evil and suffering are explained as originating from the "evil principle".*

# Why Doesn't the "Two Principle Solution" Work?

St. Augustine against the "two principle solution":

1. Suppose that there are two principles of reality.

2. A principle of reality is just like a God. So, a principle of reality, by definition, is unlimited.

3. But if there are two principles, they cannot be unlimited.

4. Thus, there cannot be two principles of reality.
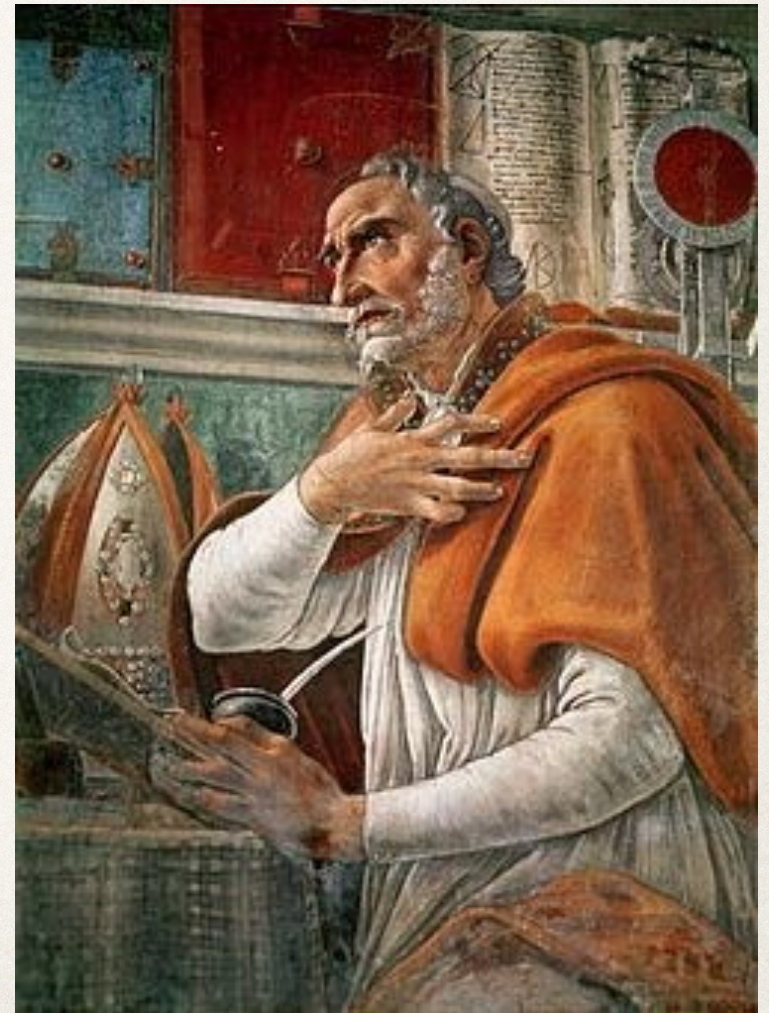
# But If There is Only One God, Where Does Evil Come From?