

- A mathematical, scientific and religious theorist...”Pascal’s Wager”
- Pascal was a child prodigy who made important discoveries in math before he was 20.

### Biography

- Born 1623 France
- His father was the royal treasurer
  
- Pascal invented an adding machine
- Pascal was a strong supporter of Copernicus and Galileo
  
- Already known for theories, he claims to have had a religious experience when crossing the Seine River in Paris during a storm.
  - ↳ He wrote down what he experienced in a document, which he kept with him, sewn in his clothing until his death.
  - ↳ He said he experienced the presence of the God of Abraham Isaac, and Jacob – not the God of the philosophers.
  - ↳ From then on he devoted himself to chiefly the philosophical religious concerns.
  
- He joined the rigid, reform-minded Catholic group “the Jansenists”; condemned by the Pope. They were against the Jesuits
- Died 1662 France



# Philosophy (major ideas)

## “Pascal’s Wager”

There are only two possibilities: either God exists or God does not exist

- ↳ We have no means of telling rationally which is the case
  - ↳ But it can make an enormous difference if God does exist – if God does not exist, they we are left in a hopeless quagmire. A prudent gambler, seeing the odds, would place his/her bet on the religious possibility.
  - ↳ As Pascal insisted: One has everything to gain and nothing to lose.
  - ↳ Living an unbeliever’s life could be extremely dangerous...if God exists.
  - ↳ If God does not exist, it really does not matter what one does.
  - ↳ Not to bet on God’s existence is itself a bet on God’s nonexistence, and it stops one from benefiting if there is a God.

Ultimate knowledge is based on faith

It is the nature of science that it is at best only hypothetical

Scientific knowledge cannot provide happiness

The weakness of human reason leads to ultimate, complete skepticism

The misery of man without God is the ordinary human condition