

**PHIL 101 Reading Questions: W. K. Clifford, "The Ethics of Belief,"
William James, "The Will to Believe"**

Clifford:

1. Give an extended description (3-4 sentences) of what Clifford thinks that we should say of the sea captain who, out of sincere conviction, deemed his ship seaworthy? Does Clifford think we should say something different if the case is altered so that the ship makes its voyage safely?
2. What does Clifford say of the two cases he mentions (the ship case and the island case). See "In the two supposed cases which have been considered . . ."
3. What statement does Clifford give to sum up his essay?

James:

1. Define: hypothesis, option, living option, forced option, momentous option
2. What is James' thesis?
3. According to James, should we wait for proof to answer questions about morality? For truths dependent on our personal action, is it permissible to exercise faith?
4. Regarding religion, explain what James means when he says that it offers itself as a momentous and forced option. Why can't we escape the issue by remaining skeptical?