

10 QUESTIONS FOR GOD

What are your biggest Questions?

What would you like to ask The Almighty (if you had his cell number)?

We ran surveys asking people just that.

Here are their top ten questions for God.

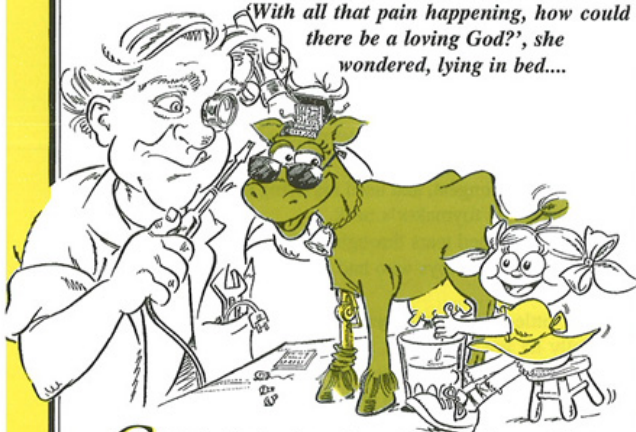
See what you think of the answers.

Before starting, please read the story of the toy maker...

TOYMAKER

Bombed orphans, AIDS sufferers, street violence, starving Africans, corrupt police... Meg held up the remote control and - click - the TV newsreader stopped spoiling her night.

With all that pain happening, how could there be a loving God?', she wondered, lying in bed....



Cinderella lost her glass slipper and jumped into a coach. The toymaker touched a button and the coach turned into a pumpkin. 'Wouldn't children love that!', he thought. But he had no children.

He had Swedish milkmaid dolls, designed to get any child to drink milk. But they milked into the toymaker's own glass.

He had Maori dolls in grass skirts, who came when they were called and gave him automatic cuddles. But pre-programmed cuddles are not the same.

No-one understood, not even the lawyer doll with the 7986 chip and a 20,000 word vocabulary. When he heard the toymaker say the simple word 'love', his face would go blank, like a pocket calculator trying to calculate infinity. The toymaker's work was perfect. But everything was pre-programmed, unspontaneous, cold.

Then he had an idea. He built a neural network processor into some sophisticated circuitry and Andrew, a musician doll with curly brown hair and melancholy eyes, blinked on.

While soldiers marched, Andrew invented gymnastic routines. While scouts sang marching songs, Andrew sat at a piano and composed soothing sonatas, happy jazz, stirring marches and - the toymaker could hardly believe it - love songs.

The other toys still spoke when spoken to, but Andrew often started conversations.

Andrew, who had the biggest chip of all, soon discovered how to lead the other toys. Brick-layer dolls would make block castles to



his design, soldiers would march for him, and other toys would listen to his songs and clap madly. The toymaker was overjoyed. He taught Andrew as much as he could fit on his disk.

The toymaker gave neural networks to other toys, so they could create, choose and love. They talked to him now because they wanted to. They even sneaked up behind him and cuddled him on the spur of the moment.

Then Andrew got an impulse - perhaps from somewhere in his chip - in a way that the toymaker, even later, could not explain.

He did not greet the toymaker that morning, and spent the day in a corner, mumbling to a group of toys.

He ordered tailors to sew him a new outfit - a uniform with six gold stars on its hat. He commanded the toys to stand in straight lines. Then, strutting up to the toymaker, he yelled, "I am now the Supreme Commander of Toys, and Commander-in-Chief of the Workshop."

The toymaker smiled kindly and opened his arms wide. "Let's talk about it, Andrew," he said. But Andrew stomped off.

He 're educated' the titanium soldiers. They lost all personality and emotion, but they were efficient Generals. They saluted him and made rude noises whenever the toymaker passed.

To keep the toymaker out of most of the workshop, re-programmed Tarzan dolls built barricades using bricks from dolls' houses. Andrew and the powerful toys kept their homes, but others were pushed out into the cold.

Some toys realised what Andrew was up to. They stood up



and said, 'We'll be loyal to the toymaker no matter what.' Andrew's thugs roughed them up so much that they had to move to the toymaker's end of the workshop.

Andrew composed songs praising himself and his government. He programmed musicians so the whole orchestra

would play the songs without thinking, while he beat a drum. Professor dolls delivered his speeches, and no-one knew he had programmed them.

The loyal toys wondered why the toymaker didn't step in and stop Andrew. But that would have made him a dictator too.

Then Andrew tried to remove the neural nets of the loyal toys so that he could command them. Until now, the toymaker had not interfered. (He still recharged the batteries of Andrew's toughest rebel soldiers while they slept.) But now he stopped Andrew from taking the freedom of the loyal toys.

The loyal toys wanted to know why Andrew had gone like this. The toymaker said, 'Every time Andrew makes a choice, he increases the likelihood of making that same choice again on his parallel processor, adding to the cumulative bias of his neural network nodes, and increasing the possibility of...'

'What?', they said. 'Does this mean you made a mistake?' 'No', he said. 'It's his choice. It's hard to explain - Andrew is, becoming a file of self-written programs, a walking bundle of habits.'

Soon, Andrew was out of the reach of logic or love. The toymaker let the rebellion go on. He let the toys take sides.

The Toymaker made new toys on a different bench. He wanted to make a new start but Andrew also got to them and confused them so that many of them joined in the rebellion. Andrew tried to win support by force, fear and lies. The toymaker offered only love and truth: the thinking toys knew that all the materials and electrical power were his. Other toys chose to forget this.

The loyal toys wrote speeches encouraging the rebels to rejoin the toymaker, saying he wanted them back as friends. Meanwhile, Andrew's side chanted his slogans and tried to make other toys mindlessly march with them. *Around and around and around...*

The little supreme commander saw he was losing. He ordered his army to take their weapons, form ranks, and,

"Charge!"

The loyal toys had never needed to learn to fight, and had no weapons. They would be cut to ribbons unless the

toymaker acted fast. **What could he do?**

1. He could tip Andrew apart. The rebels would swap sides, but not for love or loyalty - just to save their own plastic skins. Rebellion would boil underneath, and they would not be happy. *And the loyal toys would start to fear him, not love him.*

2. He could let the loyal toys be killed, or taken prisoner and reprogrammed. *Unthinkable.*

3. He could let the divided workshop go on forever. *No he couldn't, when Andrew was attacking.*

4. He could... He lay down, great 157cm giant that he was, in the path of the charging toys. They milled around him, kicking and stabbing, cutting and shooting.

Some of the rebels could not bring themselves to hurt their maker like that. Dropping their weapons, they tearfully changed sides and stood with the loyal toys.

Some, though, were not ashamed or sorry. They kept hacking.

The loyal toys bit their plastic nails and looked on in horror. Finally, from the extreme exertion, the attackers' batteries ran down. Their movements slowed, and they stopped.

Andrew lasted longest, and used his dying energy to leave his sword in the toymaker's neck.

The loyal toys shed tears through the little plastic pipes in their heads. Those toys who had just changed sides cried with them.

A lot of little mouths fell open when the toymaker stirred. Painfully he got to his feet and picked up the bodies of Andrew and his rebels. Reluctantly, but firmly, he put their dead bodies down a disposal chute into a metal compactor. Dusting his hands, he turned to the toys. He smiled at faces that showed they loved him all the more now. *'Let's clean this place up'*, he said.

Meg smiled in the dark. But then kids know more than we think.

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1. Why Don't You Stop Pain and Evil?

This is one of the most urgent questions that people want answered. *Why is there pain and suffering in our world? Why does Evil exist and prosper - if God is a Good God and Loving? What is His solution to Evil?* Read on to discover the real answers in this topic. Let's examine the true origins of evil and the role that rebellion and mutiny played in the way that God's original plan for us and planet Earth - was completely hijacked.



Voices of the City:

"In tonight's news, the famine has worsened in Africa..."

From the rooftop, *"I need another hit."*

"I'm leaving Mummy for Jennifer."

"I'm... I'm... Positive."

"DADDY, DON'T!"

Brain-strainer: Something to think about!

There's a flip side: How do we account for all the good in the world?

Would we appreciate 'good' if it was not for 'evil'?

Are 'good' and 'evil' only relative anyway?

We try to be happy and not think about 'Evil', except in the eyes of a serial killer. But why does evil exist (especially if 'God is love')?

Here's a few theories:

1. There is no God, and evil is part of the universe.

Howard Bloom says,

Nature does not abhor evil; she embraces it. She uses it to build'. So 'evil is woven into our most basic biological fabric' and 'we are casualties of Nature's callous indifference to life, pawns who suffer and die to live out her schemes.' Why? 'In a world evolving into ever-higher forms, hatred, violence, aggression and war are a part of the evolutionary plan.

(The Lucifer Principle, pp.2-3)

Gloomy! And if evil is natural, why shouldn't I be evil? Sounds like Hitler's excuse: killing 'lesser people' was actually kind because it made room for the best humans to evolve into Superman.

2. There is a God but He is uncaring and/or weak.

But if He's weak, how did He make the universe? If He's uncaring, why did He bother?

Maybe a loving, powerful, creative God won't abuse His power by forcing people to do His will, but waits until people see the consequences of bad choices and choose to let Him run the universe. (Read the [Toymaker](#) story, in a separate pop-up article).

3. There is a God but there is also a devil.

Nature has a mix of good and evil (thorns have roses; dolphins live near sharks; a leopard kills for fun but is gentle with its cubs). And we humans have a mixture in us - we can give to charity and an hour later yell at someone we love.

Looking at the natural world (and yourself) is a bit like finding a computer with a virus. You see the careful, intelligent design but you can see it has a bug.

This is what the Bible teaches.

But this raises more questions! Like...

1. Why Would God Make a Devil?

The Bible says He didn't. He made a perfect superbeing ('angel') who chose pride and selfishness and violence instead of love. Ezekiel, a Bible prophet, wrote:

The Lord spoke to me, saying, 'Man, sing the saddest blues for the King of Tyre [a symbol of Satan*]. Tell him from me:

"You had it all - perfection, wisdom, beauty You were covered in jewels and gems. I appointed you as the guarding angel. You used to walk on God's holy mountain, Among the sparkling stones. You were totally perfect when you were made - until sin was found in you.

You became greedy, and war started in your heart. You sinned. So I threw you out of the mountain of God like a nobody - And I will destroy you"

[Ezekiel 28:11-17](#), paraphrased

Another passage gives the reason Satan lost it:

'How have you fallen from heaven, Lucifer, son of the dawn?
(You've been cast to the earth, where you weaken whole nations.)

Because you said:

'I will rise higher than heaven. I will put my throne above God's stars. I will be like the Most High God. Yet you will be brought down to the grave' [Isaiah 14:12-15](#)

Pride, selfishness, competitiveness. A summary of evil.

2. Why On Earth?

And there was war in heaven: Michael [that name means 'the one who is what God is'] and his angels fought against the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought and lost, and there was no place for them in heaven. So the great dragon was thrown out - the old snake who is called the Devil and Satan - He was thrown out into the earth

[Revelation 12:7-9](#)

Put that against the old Genesis story (chapters 2,3), where a snake tempts the first humans to 'fall' (i.e. accept evil into their mind and nature) and here's the meaning you get:

Evil began in Lucifer by his own choice, and spread to other spiritual beings by their choice. The first humans experimented with it against God's advice, and brought Earth under the control of evil - Satan became... 'the prince of this world' - [John 14:30](#)

God still works with people who rebel against Satan's dark kingdom of evil and 'sin'. God hopes people will see the results of evil and choose His leadership, rather than blaming Him for what Satan did. Jesus told people to pray 'May Your will be done on Earth as it is in heaven.' Then, when it's obvious that Satan's government is to blame for all Earth's evil, God will get rid of evil and anyone who stubbornly chooses it.

Meanwhile, evil is not fair. Cancer doesn't care if you're Mother Teresa or an axe-murderer. Rapists can pass on AIDS to their innocent victims. You are less likely to suffer if you practise safe sex and don't share needles, but AIDS (like all evil) hits the best and the worst of us. Jesus said, 'Rain falls on everyone, good and bad.'

OK - Let's keep movin'...

3. What Is Evil?

If God's law is perfect, designed to make us totally happy, then anything outside that would bring evil to us or someone else.

Jesus said, '**Love your neighbour as yourself**' and '**Do to others what you want them to do to you.**'

Evil says, 'Use your neighbour for yourself.' 'Do unto others before they do you.'

Evil = selfishness = sin. (But self-nurture or self-improvement are fine!)

Sin is saying, 'I don't care about God's advice or what you need - I want this.' (E.g. child abusers desire their pleasure over a child's happiness.)

The Bible says:

- relationships work best when you are gentle and generous,
- sex is better when both are giving rather than being selfish,
- your business succeeds when you think of the customer,
- possessions give most pleasure when shared with people you love.

But human nature wonders if evil might work better

4. What Is God's Solution to Evil? - See [1 John 1:9](#)

- **God forgives our dark side** - if we ask. (Why pretend we don't need help?!)

Remember that the heart of the human problem - is the problem of the human heart.

When Jesus became a man, He died to take the death our sins deserve - so we get eternal life! He absorbed human evil and guilt, and showed that God has felt all our pain and cares deeply. (see our guide, 'What Jesus Said on the Cross')

- **God builds our good side:**
'Don't let evil defeat you - defeat evil with good.' - see [Romans 12:21](#)

- **Eventually, God will destroy evil**
and everyone who keeps choosing it. Judgment Day may sound harsh, but what else could God do? Choosing evil is choosing death, and God gives us choice.

If you were God, would you let stubborn child-abusers live forever?

Would you be a dictator and force them to change their minds? The kindest option is that they just fade away.

- **God makes a 'new Earth'**
(no pain, sickness, violence or death) for people who've overcome their dark side with His help. He takes the evil out of nature and the result is peace: in the Bible's words, 'the lion will lie down beside the lamb'. (see our guide, 'Is Heaven Real?')

Quotes:

Man: God, why don't you do anything about starving children?

God: I was about to ask you that same question.

'When we deny the EVIL within ourselves, we dehumanize ourselves, and we deprive ourselves not only of our own destiny but of any possibility of dealing with the EVIL of others.' *J. Robert Oppenheimer, inventor of A-bombs*

'If only there were EVIL people somewhere... and it were necessary only to separate them from the rest of us and destroy them. But the line dividing good and EVIL cuts through the heart of every human being. And who is willing to destroy a piece of his own heart?' *Aleksandr Solzhenitsyn*

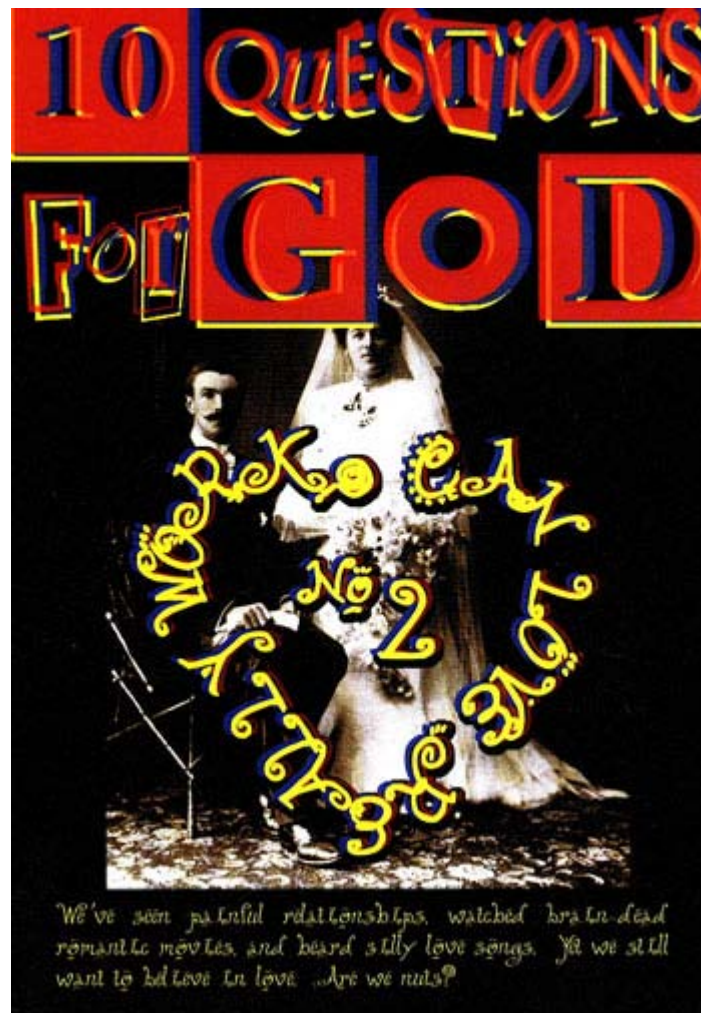
'EVIL can no more be charged upon God than darkness can be charged upon the sun.' *William Law*

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope these online spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.

2. Can Love Really Work?

In a world of broken relationships, sexual violence and divorce - are we crazy to still believe in the true power of Love? What are the qualities that men seek in women and what characteristics do women pursue in men? Are these qualities the same?

Discover the base ingredients of what true love really is and the life of one person who demonstrated the greatest gift of love for all time.



We've seen painful relationships, watched brain-dead romantic movies, and heard silly love songs. Yet we still want to believe in love.

Are we nuts?

Brain-strainer: something to think about!

Why does revenge feel so good at the time, but so bad later?

Which is easier – revenge or forgiveness?

"Looking for love in all the wrong places".

If humans are designed to enjoy love - being loved and being loving - then why do we often seek it and do it the natural (selfish) way rather than God's?

Can love really work?

Country singer Tammy Winette warbled 'Stand By Your Man' just after she dumped hers.

Ever seen a romantic movie whose stars, writers and directors are not on their third marriage or umpteenth fling? The Hollywood area has the world's highest income per person, but the world's highest divorce rate - 80% for first marriages.

Is life-long love an old-fashioned idea that no longer works, or is it wired into the human mind?

What insights does the Bible offer?

The Basics: Adam meets Eve

The oldest love story is Adam and Eve. Even if you think it's a myth or a metaphor, it contains some deep ideas.

Adam is lonely, and God says 'It's not good for man to be alone'. Which is still true. One study found suicide rates for singles are 17 per hundred thousand compared to only 9 for married people, which must say something about love and security. (But then the suicide rate is 204 for people who've been through breakup.)

Studies show that the most vital ingredient of good marriages is friendship: acceptance, ability to talk openly, understanding, doing things together. It's even more basic than good sex, romance, wealth, leisure, etc God says, 'I will create someone to be his counterpart and help him'. That word 'help' doesn't mean she was his slave, because it's also used of God as our helper. And the word 'counterpart' means they work together as equals and opposites - like two feet that are exactly opposite, but match; or like the two blades of scissors working in opposition but together. There are a lot of opposite things about men and women (surprise surprise!). Without understanding, they cause conflict. With understanding, they are an advantage (and give you lots to joke about!)

God makes Eve from Adam's rib - not from his foot-bone to be trodden on, not from his head to boss him around, but near his heart.

Adam 'knows' his wife and they have children. Obviously the word 'know' includes sexual love, but also knowledge of heart, mind and body in perfect balance.

Adam and Eve were created perfect 'in God's image', but then they decide to disobey God by eating forbidden fruit. They 'fall' - which means they allow selfishness and sin into their thinking, and it lurks in their minds like a computer virus, and is passed on to their descendants - every human being. This means we are not naturally loving, and need God's constant help to control our dark side.

Seeing what they've done, Adam and Eve feel guilty, and they make two mistakes that still wreck relationships:

One, hiding. They feel ashamed and hide behind fig-leaves. In a healthy relationship, you are safe to show your dreams, faults, flabby bits, fears, feelings, worries, achievements - yourself. Couples that hide, usually for fear of not being accepted, risk not really knowing each other, and need to discover real intimacy and closeness and

trust. (e.g. He thinks, 'She couldn't handle it if she knew how afraid I was at times. She'd think I'm a coward.' Meanwhile she's thinking, 'I wish he trusted me enough to tell me his fears instead of pretending he's fine.')

Two, blaming. Adam blames Eve for his choice! Trying to look better by putting the other person down can slowly strangle love.

But they make an important discovery: forgiveness. God forgives them for sin, and they learn to forgive each other. This is still the basis of all good relationships. People who can't forgive lock their partners into the mistakes of the past, and keep their minds full of bitter memories. Healthy relationships demand you to give forgiveness and acceptance - and give it to you as well.

Adam and Eve's marriage lasts about 900 years! Lifelong love is God's ideal - and possible, even for fallen humans.

Ever thought about the words of love songs? Here's some old classics.

'It must've been love, but it's over now.'

Right, so you didn't know what it was at the time, and then it ended. That sounds more like the flu.

'It's Friday - I'm in love.'

What about Saturday, Sunday, or next week?

'I'll be your baby tonight.'

And tomorrow I'll be shattered when you're with someone else?

'Let's talk about sex, baby.'

Great, but let's talk about friendship and commitment first.

Are there any better ones on the Top Ten now?

She'll Be Right...

Men and women often don't understand each other! (Oh, really?)

When a Morgan Gallup poll asked women what was most important in a man, the top answers were:

- communication,
- faithfulness,
- doing things together,
- mutual respect and appreciation,
- understanding and tolerance,
- good sex.

When they asked men what they think women want them to be, they said:

- handsome,
- physically attractive,
- muscular,
- passionate in bed,
- wealthy.

Oops!

'Love is very patient and kind. It's not jealous or domineering, it's not proud or rude. It's not selfish or irritable. It doesn't keep a list of what you've done wrong! It thrives on truth, not evil. It's always supportive and loyal. It stubbornly keeps believing and inspires confidence. It never quits.' * [1 Corinthians 13:4-8](#)

* This isn't saying you have to stick around and put up with abuse. In fact, the best way to show real love to an abuser can be to refuse to let them keep abusing.

'Love whole-heartedly. Reject evil and hold onto the good things...

Give each other more honour than you take yourself.

Never give up. Be fired up by the Holy Spirit within.

Let hope make you optimistic. Be patient in tough times and never stop praying...

Pray for anyone who mistreats you - ask God to bless them, not curse them!

If others are happy, be happy with them. If they're sad, empathise with them!

Don't proudly think you're smarter than others...

'Don't try to get revenge.' [Romans 12:9-19](#)

'God loves you... So be gentle, kind, humble rather than proud, and patient.

Put up with each others faults, and forgive anyone who wrongs you in the same way Christ has forgiven you. Love is more important than anything else.

It pulls everything together.' [Colossians 3:12-14](#)

'A kind, gentle answer can soothe angry feelings, but fighting words can stir them up even worse.' [Proverbs 15:1-2](#)

It's not surprising the street of love has a high road-toll when Australians spend an average of \$200 each per year on divorce costs - and 12c on relationship education! A bit like spending millions on tow trucks and nothing on driving lessons!

The Bible advises us to get understanding about how to live together - which means reading, asking questions, thinking as much about our partner and their needs as, say, car engines or hair-care! ([1 Peter 3:7](#))

Go to that course, get that book. Don't rely on magazines: '3 ways to tell if he really loves you' or 'Sealed guide to sizzling sex' probably won't tell you how to really listen, handle conflict, manage money, enjoy foreplay, wash up - or other vital skills.

A lot of us (especially males) are afraid of relationship education. So what might they teach you? Here's one sample:

What Do You Want

One writer said men's top needs are for someone who:

- satisfies them sexually,
- can have fun with them (sport, leisure),
- is physically attractive,
- helps provide a comfortable home environment,
- admires them and is proud of them.

He said that meanwhile women want someone who:

- is affectionate,
- listens and converses well,
- is honest and open,
- is financially secure,
- would be a great father.

Is your Top 5 similar or very different? (It may vary with age, family background, education etc) What do you want? What are you prepared to offer?

Does your 'Significant Other' have similar expectations to yours? Do your needs fit together? How much should you put your needs on hold for each other?

Could a relationship work without meeting either person's deeper needs if there is feeling and good sex? Could it last?

Cross Words

Q: Christians see Jesus as the greatest expert on love. Why, if he never married or had a girlfriend?

A: It's true that Jesus didn't have any romances - he was focused on his mission, and knew he wouldn't live long, so it wouldn't be responsible to marry.

BUT Jesus showed all the character traits that make a great partner.

He was incredibly unselfish and giving. He even chose to die so that His followers wouldn't have to. So his cross is a symbol of love that will stop at nothing.

He understood human nature alone was not capable of enough love - so He promised that His Spirit could live in us, giving us His attitudes. He said, 'This is how people will know you're my disciples - if you have love for each other.'

Quotes

'Love is the strongest force the world possesses, and yet it is the humblest imaginable.' *M.K. Gandhi*

'Love... is merely the exchange of two momentary desires and the contact of two skins.' *Simone Weil*

'Love is the only force capable of transforming an enemy into a friend.'
Martin Luther King

'We have all known the long loneliness and we have learned that the only solution is love.'
Dorothy Day

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3. Sex - Do You Approve?

In this topic you will encounter the fact that *God believes in sex*. What? Well He did claim to have created both the hardware and the software! The Bible contains one whole book of Erotica written by a love-sick king of Israel. If God inspired this whole book on Love - what was He trying to tell us about Sex? What principles and values can safeguard our relationships? Find a new *spiritual way* of understanding about romantic and physical love that will not leave you feeling ripped off.



Is sex about guilt? Or did God create the hardware and the software?

Little-known fact: The Bible contains a whole book of erotica...

Heart Question

Why would God (who is love) rule out some sexual practices? Could it be reasons of pure love? Could uncontrolled sexual appetites be more animal and less human?

It was banned for centuries by the medieval church.

One scholar got ten years prison for translating it.

It's the erotic diary of King Solomon - and it's in the Bible! (Not even in a sealed section!)

It's called 'The Song of Solomon' or 'The Song of Songs' (i.e. my best song).

Here's a few notes before you read it

1. It's funny!

Humour is part of good sex. If you're laughing, there's no pressure to perform, no stress, no rating. Some of its jokes don't work in English, though. (Neither do the compliments of 1000BC culture: e.g. 'Your nose is like the Tower of Lebanon'. Don't try that one.)

2. It's sensual.

They describe how sight, sound, smell, taste and, of course, touch start them up. It's imaginative.

3. There's a lot of kissing and romancing and foreplay.

(Not just 'wham bam')

4. The Lovers are proud of each other.

'Parade me on your arm.
Wear me like a medal for all the world to see
Our private love.' ([8:6](#))

5. It's little-known.

Even *The Bloomsbury Anthology of Erotic Literature* and others don't mention The Song of Solomon because no-one expects erotica in the Bible!

6. It's explicit, but tasteful.

The woman says,
He put his hand on the latch
I felt the thrill and my heart pounded
I put my hand to the door, my fingers wet with myrrh
I opened it wide to let him in. ([Song 5:4,5](#))

7. It's heterosexual.

8. They love each other's looks - in detail! - but it is not just physical.

I love your feet in those sandals, Princess.
Your thighs are like jewels shaped by a craftsman.
Your secret centre is a round cup of spicy wine, a source of pleasure.

Your smooth curved stomach is... hedged by flowers, Your breasts are like twin deers, tender and gentle to stroke.

Your neck is a smooth, tall tower of ivory.
Your eyes are cool and calm like deep pools...
Your black hair is a perfect crown for a queen -
Enough to make a fighting man like me your prisoner...

[Song of Solomon 7:1-5](#)

9. It shows secure, committed love, and sex as the ultimate togetherness.

It's not, 'Thanks for last night. What's your name again?'. It has no guilt or hang-ups.

He is mine and I am his.'
'Feast on love until you are full
Don't hold back.

[Song of Solomon 2:16, 5:1](#)

10. Both lovers talk about their pleasure.

In the book the woman makes the first move 14 times, the man only 6 times. It's not like some cultures where 'nice girls don't enjoy sex'. This is equality in 1000BC!

Solomon was tired of being chased by women who wanted a Prince, so he went to work on his father's country property where he was unknown. A poor, hard-working shepherd girl fell in love with him, and was horrified when she found out he was the Prince. But he didn't mix love and power-play. (Rape can be a crime of power, a way for a weak man to feel superior to a woman.)

11. They only want each other. They're monogamous.

He calls her the 'finest of all women' and 'my only love'. She says, 'It's me, it's me, it's me he longs for. His passion is for me!

[Song of Solomon 7:10](#)

Scholars say Solomon's wife died soon after this book was written. He slept around flat out, trying to replace quality of love with quantity of sex. You might expect him to boast how great it was, but he wrote that it was "pointless, depressing and lonely" and that he had acted like "a fool".

12. This was their first time.

She is called 'a locked garden'. Some people would laugh at that, and think she must be prudish, frustrated, and repressed. But when they're married, she enthusiastically says:

'Come into my garden and taste its fruit'

Why might they have saved sex for marriage? No risk of unwanted pregnancy. No (anti-)social diseases. They didn't feel ready for the emotional attachment sex brings. Maybe they wanted their first time to be with the person they would love for life. The Bible encourages this choice.

13. They understand each other's fears.

She tells him about her nightmare of losing him and being abused by soldiers. He listens to her fears of being used and hurt and manipulated, or not performing well, and is patient, gentle and encouraging. He wins her trust and encourages her to take the risk of love.

Why was the church so shy about sex?

NOT because of the Bible, as we've seen.

It's because of Plato (not a washing up liquid - a Greek philosopher!). He said people were made of two parts: body and soul. The soul was godly and good and the body was inferior. What the soul did (thought, prayer) was good, but things of the body (food, sex, sport) were less noble. Plato invented the 'Platonic relationship' - mind-to-mind, but not body-to-body - and said that was the best way.

But the Bible had no such hang-ups. In Genesis, God created the human body 'male and female' and said it was 'very good' and 'the man and his wife were naked and knew no shame'.

Things You Won't See In The Song of Solomon

1. A 50-year-old tourist hires a 12-year old boy.
2. A fat businessman demands perverted sex from a poor young prostitute in Bangkok because he's paid double. She is drugged to cope with the pain, and the knowledge that she has an 80% chance of dying of AIDS in the next few years.
3. A step-father pats a cute 13-year old girl who is missing her Dad. The pats turn into gropes and she feels guilty for not stopping him but doesn't know how. He takes what he wants. She suffers physical pain for months and psychological pain for years, and has trouble enjoying sex for the rest of her life.
4. A fundamentalist couple have sex only when they want a baby, and even then it's through a sheet with a hole in it so they're not being 'sinful'.
5. A girl finally sleeps with her new boyfriend because she loves him. It's her first time, and she's nervous and fumbly. He decides she's 'not that hot in bed', notches his belt and doesn't call her again.
6. A woman's doctor tells her she has chlamydia and cannot have children. She can't understand why. Then her husband admits he 'played around' - it came from him. Then he leaves her because he wants children.
7. A school-girl is pregnant. She has to choose between stopping her career, adopting her child away or coping with an abortion.
8. A teenager who attempted suicide remembers being told he was 'an accident', the unwanted result of half an hour in the back seat of a car.
9. A girl says 'no' on a second date. The guy thinks she's playing hard-to-get so he pushes her into it. She feels violated - she said no!

If God inspired Solomon to write an erotic song for the Bible, maybe He is trying to tell us sex is about deep love, giving, commitment, equality, humour, and fun.

Erotica = art or literature that depicts romantic love (including physical love) with beauty and aesthetic appeal

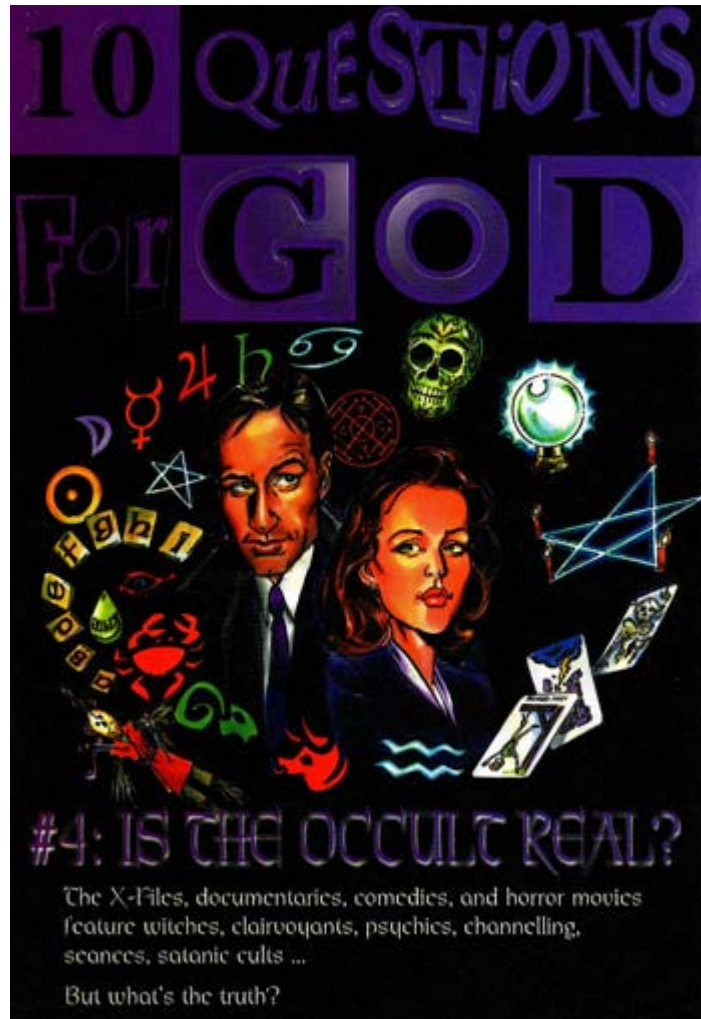
Pornography = exhibitions of sex (not necessarily loving) that emphasise the physical details

Obscenity = offensive, tending to corrupt viewers, morally destructive

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope our spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.

4. Is The Occult Real?

Ghosts, haunted houses, clairvoyants, astrology, the supernatural, psychics, channeling, seances, satanic cults... Want to find out *the truth* behind all of these phenomena? You maybe surprised when you discover just *who* are the spirits of spiritism.



The X-files, documentaries, comedies, and horror movies feature witches, clairvoyants, psychics, channelling, seances, satanic cults...

But what's the truth?

Worth thinking about? Is wearing occult trinkets, ornaments, bric-a-brac etc. like flying a flag of allegiance? Why is God so totally opposed to the Occult?

Sean Sellers is the youngest on Oklahoma's death row. He shot a shop assistant, then killed his sleeping mother and stepfather. Why? He said, 'There's such an attraction to satanism in power, curiosity, and more importantly, a place to fit in'.

Double-murderer **Paul Bostock**, 19, left a black magic circle near mutilated bodies. A British court heard he was fascinated with 'horror, the occult and black magic' and 'worshipped the devil'.

Just a few kooks? Not if you ask social workers and police.

- Child sex abuse linked with Satanism: Perth police
- Satanic cult abuse in scouts, pre-schools: NSW Govt report
- 3 teenage German satanists jailed for strangling classmate
- 4 young Greek satanists murder girl, 14, and plan human sacrifice
- Double-murderer, 17, in cult of vampirism, witchcraft, sexual torture & animal mutilation (inspired by the horror film Hideaway)
- British Health Dept inquiry documents ritual child abuse
- US states train occult crime specialists.

Children are telling us about seeing babies killed [as sacrifice], of killing animals, drinking urine and eating human flesh

said one social worker of 17 years experience.

Psychiatrists report very real symptoms -depression, hallucinations, loss of control, fascination with death and self-mutilation, personality damage - in patients involved with spiritism (ouija boards and seances), tarot, or black magic. It's 'very difficult to try to put a figure on the number of cases of mental illness as a result of dealings with spiritualism' but 'it is a very real problem....' says Professor Andrew Sims, Dean of the Royal College of Psychiatrists.

Superstition?

It is hard to prove something 'occult' (hidden or secret), and there are a lot of fakes who con sincere people. Pre-scientific societies and the Dark Ages church blamed spirits for any physical and mental illnesses, and hunted supposed witches. But despite the superstition, there's solid evidence that contact with spirits is real. Sir William Barrett's psychological experiments on blindfolded ouija operators concluded that the information they had 'was absolutely beyond the range of normal human faculty.'

In one story of thousands, Andy (name changed) lost contact with his father, thinking he was dead or maybe overseas. Andy went to a ouija session and thought it was a fake, but he asked the spirit where his father was and was told a town in Britain. He checked - and found his father, despite the fact that no-one in the seance knew him.

The Bible mentions spirits - intelligences that influence humans for good ('angels') or evil ('demons'). It warns:

None of you should sacrifice son or daughter, or practise witchcraft or clairvoyance, or cast spells. Don't be a spirit medium or channeller, or try to consult the dead. Anyone who does these

That's an accurate list of today's occult practises- written 3,500 years ago! Clairvoyants hate how the Bible lists them alongside more bloody rituals, yet police say dabblers may start with 'the soft end of the occult' but can often move on - to satanism, anti-social behaviour, sacrificing animals, 'and the next step is murder', said police officer Bill Keahon in the New York Times *Quoted in Police, Feb 87*.

If the 'soft end' is as safe as some think, then why does it often move people deeper into darkness?

Doors Into Darkness

Astrology

Popular, apparently innocent, but many people's first step in handing over their power to make decisions

Occult/Horror movies

James Bulger, 2, was abducted, tortured and left on a railway line with blue paint on his mutilated face. His killers were aged 7 and 10! They loved horror movies, including Child's Play 3 - where a doll is killed on a ghost train by two boys, its face mutilated and splashed with blue paint. Horror movies create 'occulture' - a dark, death-conscious despair

Tarot cards

Guided by a spirit - another front

Ouija boards

Messages from 'spirits of the glass' - evil spirits

Channellers, mediums, clairvoyants, seances, palm reading...

Drugs

Some occultists use drugs to enter into a trance. The Bible warns against 'sorcery' - the original word was '*pharmakeia*,' (from which we get the word pharmacy today - where we buy our drugs) i.e. occultic drug use practised since earliest times, and still today

[Galatians 5:20](#), [Revelation 9:21](#), [21:8](#)

Music

e.g. some metal bands are satanist; dance trance techno bands; Pearl Jam CD with ouija board, etc

New Age spiritualities

TM, levitation, ESP, telepathy

Role playing

e.g. D&D fantasies of spiritism, witchcraft, voodoo, murder, rape, suicide, insanity, perverted sex, torture, satan worship (-see Satanism in America, National Criminal Justice Task Force on Occult-Related Ritualistic Crime)

The Bible says:

Have nothing to do with the unsatisfying deeds of darkness. Instead, expose them for what they are.

[Ephesians 5:11](#)

Can You Talk With The Dead

Over 40% of American adults believe they have talked with the dead - from Elvis to Egyptian Pharaohs.

But the Bible says contacting the dead is impossible, and should never be attempted because it leaves people open to evil spirits. Jesus often called death 'a sleep', (e.g. [John 11:11-14](#)), suggesting dead people are unconscious and unable to be disturbed.

(For more info see the TRY JESUS Course, Topic 15, '[Jesus' Guarantee of Victory over Death](#).')

The Bible warns us never to try to contact the dead.

'Some people say, "Ask the channellers and clairvoyants... what you should do." But I tell you people should only ask God for help.

Why should the living ask advice from the dead?

Stick to God's commands and His prophets. Anyone who doesn't agree with those has no light to offer you.

[Isaiah 8:19-20](#)

This text gives us two ways to test anyone who claims to have special 'light':

- Do they agree with the Bible? God never contradicts what He has said before.
- Do they claim to get their info from a dead person or direct from God?

If God never speaks through a dead person, then who does? Evil spirits, the Bible warns.

German occult researcher Dr Kurt Koch says that the only spirits who come to seances are evil ones who want to deceive and control people's minds by impersonating dead people.

The Bible also blows the cover of 'demonic spirits performing miracles to deceive...'
[Revelation 16:14](#)

It warns about

'...Satan working in all kinds of counterfeit miracles, signs and wonders, and in every sort of evil that deceives people... They will be damned because they refuse to love the truth and be saved. So God will allow a powerful deception to lead them away from the truth.'
[2 Thessalonians 2:8-9](#)

A caring clairvoyant solving your problems, helping catch criminals, even talking about God and Jesus - that would be a powerful deception. The Bible warns of Satan pretending to be an angel of light, or even impersonating Jesus. [2 Corinthians 11:14](#),
[Matthew 24:24-26](#)

So just who is speaking to clairvoyants? Evil spirits, the Bible says. Even if they pretend to be helpful 'spirit guides' - they're demons.

Solutions

The good news is 'God has chosen you from the beginning to be saved through your faith in the truth and the Holy Spirit's power to keep you close to God... So stand tall and hang onto the true teaching we've given you.

[2 Thessalonians 2:13-15](#)

Dr Koch tells about a young girl invited to a seance by her friends. She enjoyed it at first and kept going, but then suffered deep depression and was placed into a mental hospital. She did not go to any more seances, and the chaplain helped her to trust that Jesus had power over evil spirits. She has since made a complete recovery.

Many people who've been hassled by spirits have been cured by prayer using the name of Jesus. He spent a lot of time throwing demons out of people. (e.g. [Mark 5:1-20](#) and [Luke 9:37-43](#))

Jesus said people must replace evil spirits with His Holy Spirit in their mind, or else they get worse. see [Luke 11:24-26](#)

But people who regularly ask the Holy Spirit to be with them, can expect to grow into 'love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faith, gentleness and self-control.'
[Galatians 5:22](#)

'Don't let evil defeat you. Defeat evil with good.'
[Romans 12:21](#)

Recommended Reading

Andrew Boyd, *Dangerous Obsessions: Teenagers and the Occult*,
Marshall Pickering,
Great Britain, 1996

Occult=

Secret arts for supposedly contacting the spirit world; beyond ordinary understanding; hidden, secret, mysterious.

Some people say, 'Ask the channellers and clairvoyants.... what you should do.' But I tell you people should only ask God for help. Why should the living ask advice from the dead? Stick to God's commands and His prophets. Anyone who doesn't agree with those has no light to offer you.

[Isaiah 8:19,20](#)

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope our spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.

5. Is Heaven Real?

When John Lennon sang, *"Imagine there's no Heaven..."* he may have spoken for a lot of people who doubt the reality of there being a place called Heaven. But just because it sounds *way out* and beyond our current understanding, does not discount it as an ultimate reality. So what is it? How do you get there? Forget all the soggy notions of sitting on clouds and playing harps - it's time to encounter the real details.



Sitting around on clouds playing harps?

Forget that!

Just a thought: Heaven is real, yet most discussion deals only with what it looks like and what we do there. People and relationships are real. What kind of social life would you have in heaven?

SURF Heaven



‘...NO-ONE COULD FULLY IMAGINE THE THINGS GOD HAS PLANNED FOR THOSE WHO LOVE HIM..’ 1 CORINTHIANS 2:9

Once A New Guinea Tribal Chief was invited to a UN meeting in New York. When he came home, he tried to tell his villagers about it.

'I got into a large canoe that flies like a bird', he said, 'There was water wider than 10,000 rivers, but we crossed in one day without paddling. We came to a village of a million huts, where many people are pink, some yellow and some of the normal colour. There I rode in a hut that runs, and travelled without walking along paths of black rock. We arrived at a very large hut, which was 100 huts stacked on top of each other. There was a small hut that carried us on its back as it climbed like a lizard up the wall of the 100 huts hut. When we got out, I could see above the mountains. There I sat in the clouds with the elders of many countries...'

The villagers said, 'Impossible - you're mad.' And they beat him up.

Bible Prophets described their visions of heaven with things they knew, but they had to warn us that it's a brain-stretcher: 'Look, I'm telling you a mystery...' and 'No eyes or ears have seen or heard and no-one could fully imagine the things God has prepared for those who love Him...' ([1 Corinthians 15:51; 2:9](#)) And yet God has shown them glimpses, and they say it's real...

Choose Your Dream

Building a glass house in an elephant forest

Hearing J.S. Bach performing live

Lunching with mellow giants from 3000 BC

Learning to understand dolphin squeaks

Never being lonely

Exploring - new worlds in an infinite universe

Asking God 'Why?' using 100% of your brain (not just 8%)

Peeking In

Here are some of the prophets' glimpses through heaven's keyhole:

And I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first had passed away...

God undoes human environmental destruction on land, in the sky and in space, and makes Earth like perfect again.

And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying: and there shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.

See our lesson, 'Why don't you stop pain and evil?'

The gates will not be shut at all... and there is no night there. [Revelation 21](#)

No need for locks or guards or armies. And enough energy to play day and night.

Blind eyes will be opened, deaf ears will hear, dumb people will sing and lame people dance...Sin's slaves, freed by God, will return with singing and everlasting joy. [Isaiah 35](#)

They will build houses and plant orchards and enjoy their work... They will not work for nothing, or have children in trouble. They and their descendants will be God's lucky ones. The wolf and the lamb will feed together The lion will eat like the ox... 'They will not hurt or destroy in all my holy mountain', says the Lord. [Isaiah 65:17-25](#)

Instead of violence and competition in nature, the new ecology will be based on co-operation. And no human predators will be there either.

Jesus said:

The meek will inherit the earth... [Matthew 5](#)

(meek = gentle, kind, non-aggressive)

Does that mean only good people can get in?

Blessed are those who do His commandments. They will be free to eat the tree of life, and to walk through those gates into the city ... fortune-tellers, the sexually immoral, murderers, idol-worshippers, and anyone who loves lies and lying - they're left out. [Revelation 22](#)

Gulp. Does that mean a lot of us are left out?

Yes - Jesus said most people won't go:

Choose the narrow gate. An easy turn and a wide road lead to destruction, and you can follow a large crowd there. But the road to life is through a narrow gate and has very few travellers. Very few people find it. Jesus, in [Matthew 7:13](#)

Another passage says similar things, but look at the 'happy ending':

Don't let anyone fool you. ...no-one who worships idols, or sins sexually (straight or gay), or steals, or is greedy, or gets drunk, or speaks destructively or mugs people will get to God's kingdom. Some of you WERE like that BUT you were cleaned up, changed and forgiven by Jesus and the Holy Spirit. [1 Corinthians 6:9-11](#)

So how do you get that? Jesus' first public statement was:

'The long-awaited Kingdom of God is near. Repent and believe the gospel.'
[Mark 1:14,15](#)

Repent = 'get a new mind/attitude', i.e. re-think your life, throw out bad behaviour ('sins' like selfishness, violence, pride, loveless lust), let God change your ambitions. We all need changing before we're safe to take to heaven, but God won't just brainwash us - He wants our co-operation.

Gospel = 'the good news that Jesus took the punishment for our bad behaviour. Our sins deserve death, not eternal life, but He died the death we deserve so we could have the eternal life He deserves. He did that for everybody, but most people have never believed it or accepted the gift!!

So How Do I Get There?

First the bad news:

1. Face it. Even if you think you're a nice person, you're a sinner.

You haven't kept God's law. [1 John 3:4](#)

You haven't done all the good you could. [James 4:17](#)

You've sinned without knowing it. [Leviticus 5:17](#)

You've sinned from birth. [Isaiah 48:1,8](#)

You may be 'no worse than the next person', but they're a sinner too, and most people won't go to heaven. [Romans 3:23](#)

If you think you have no sin - that's another sin! [1 John 1:8](#)

2. Sinners deserve death.

[Romans 6:23](#)

3. To deserve heaven, you need no sins AND a perfect track record.

The good news:

Jesus offers heaven as a gift to people who don't deserve it - all of us. (FREE - but no steak knives!) [Romans 6:23](#)

You need to ASK for the gift. (Most people never will!) [Romans 10:10](#)

You could say something like: 'God, I admit I'm a sinner and I need your forgiveness. I accept the gift of Jesus perfect life to make up for my life, and His death instead of me having to die. Please give me eternal life, and encourage me to clean up my act.'

God inspires you to live a better life, and to try again when you fail. As you learn more, you start seeing that sin is stupid and you want to do the right thing. [Ephesians 2:8-10](#)

Just before He takes you to heaven, God re-creates you perfect. [1 Corinthians 15:51-53](#)

Who Wants To Live Forever?

People in every culture have wanted to live forever, whether pyramid-building Pharaohs or computer geeks who want to upload their brain's contents and exist in virtual form forever. Others pay to be frozen after their death, in case future science can bring them back.

If life is not too short, why do we make tissues soggy at funerals? Whether it's crying or cryonics, all of us have a longing for more life. As the Bible puts it, 'God has put eternity into our hearts.'

'Think of the best day you've ever had, only everything's louder, tastier, faster, brighter, more real, and a billion times more fun because the best person is there - God. You'd never get sick of it. Not forever.' *Megan, 19*

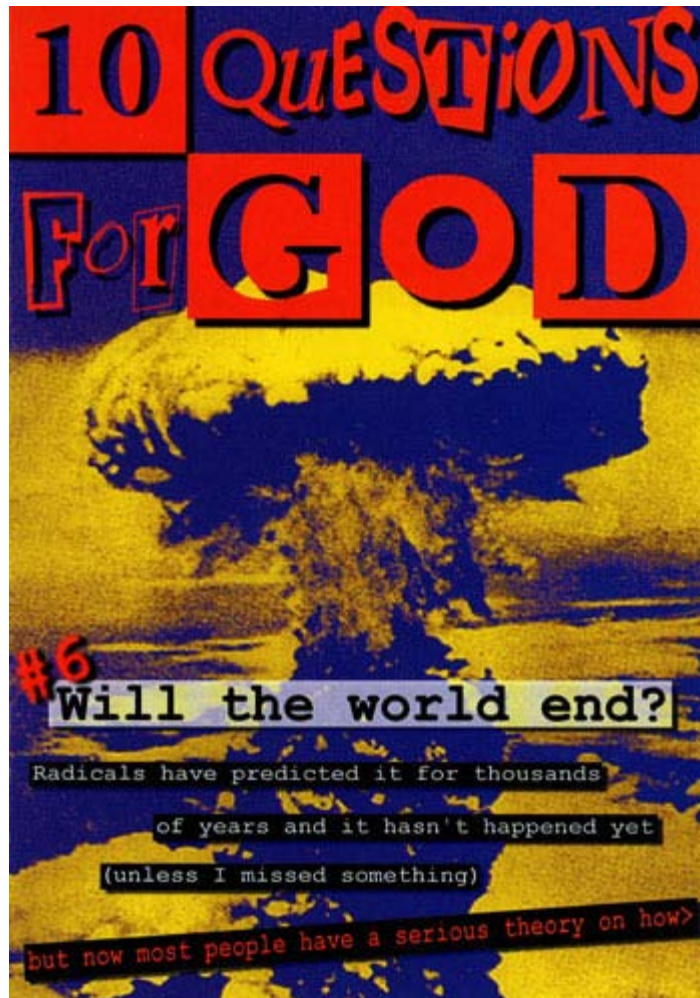
'It's a boring harp-fest, a fantasy theme park invented by losers to make themselves feel better.' *Bill, 17*

We believers don't lose heart... because we're looking forward to things you see best with your eyes shut.

Paul, [1 Corinthians 2:9](#)

6. Will The World End?

Most people today have some theory about how the end will come. Some predict a bang, others say a whimper. Encounter the 5 most popular theories of the end of Planet Earth. What do the false prophets say? And discover the 5 global SIGNS that tell us how close we are to "THE END."



Radicals have been predicting it for thousands of years and it hasn't happened yet - (unless I missed something)... but now most people have a serious theory on how...

it can happen. Here are the top 5 (4, 3, 2, 1....)

5. We'll blow ourselves up

"If it all began with a Big Bang. It'll all end with a Big Bang." *graffiti*

The Cold War's ended. There's no more MAD policy ('Mutually Assured Destruction'). But there are aging reactors in earthquake areas and mega-ton bombs in unstable countries...

4. Enviro-death

Polluting ocean and sky.
Over-population.
Ozone destruction, global warming.
End of story.

3. Nature will let us down

An asteroid? A killer virus? Scientist-philosopher Richard Robinson said, "The human species... will die one day, like all species of life... We are permanently in danger of loss, damage, misery and death... There is no god to make up for the limitations of our power, to rescue us whenever the forces affecting us get beyond our control, or to provide us hereafter with an incorruptible haven of absolute security..." *An Atheist's Values, Oxford*

2. Civilization will break down

A savage age of techno-barbarians - makes great movies but you wouldn't want to live there.

Graffiti said: "Society is deteriorating. Bribery and corruption abound. Children no longer respect their parents and everyone thinks they have a book or story to tell. It is clear that the collapse or end of the world is at hand."

That's on an Assyrian tablet dated 3000 BC!!

Or: "Our teenagers love luxury. They have bad manners, contempt for authority, they show disrespect for their parents, they mock them at home and tyrannize their teachers at school." Says who? Plato, 2400 years ago!

So can we laugh because it couldn't happen now? No - because both those writers were describing collapsing civilizations. Both Greece and Assyria once ruled the world - but cultures crumble. Couldn't ours?

Arnold Toynbee's ten-volume Study of History details 21 civilizations that went down the gurgler. He says that the symptoms of a dying society include:

- war becomes an obsession;
- technical skill outpaces moral and spiritual growth
- real creativity is replaced with 'moral abandon', lack of self-control;
- sexual 'freedom' wrecks families (kids lack care & relationship education);
- people believe the world is ruled by chance, so nothing they do matters;
- religion is watered down.

Sound familiar? Hmmm.

1. God will take over

Admittedly, plenty of fruit-loops have said this. But most of the world's religions teach it. And Jesus told His disciples,

Don't let your hearts be troubled. Trust in God. Trust in me... After I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you with me so we can be together.

[John 14:1-3](#)

Fanatics mis-quote the Bible on this (so make sure you check it out for yourself!), but Christ's return is mentioned heaps - in a whopping 14% of verses in the New Testament. Sound important?

The Bible says Jesus comes back and takes over BEFORE we manage to wipe ourselves out. Phew.

So What Happens When He Comes?

Jesus said, 'The time is coming when everyone who's dead and buried will hear His voice and come back to life. Those on God's side will wake up to live forever. Those who have chosen sin will be condemned and destroyed'. [John 5:28,29](#)

One prophet said, 'The Lord is coming with thousands of His angels to bring justice for every person.' [Jude 14,15](#)

So: resurrection then eternal life or destruction.

God renovates the planet.

'When that day comes, He will destroy earth and sky with fire... But God made a promise to us, and we are looking forward to a new earth and sky, where only goodness lives.' [2 Peter 3:13](#)

The details...

'The Lord Himself will come down from heaven with a loud command, with the shout of the commanding angel and God's trumpet-blast. And those people who have died believing in Christ will be the first to rise. After that, believers who are still alive will be gathered up with them, rising in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And we will be with the Lord forever. So encourage each other with these words... [1 Thessalonians 4:14-18](#)

The immortals.

'Here's a mystery for you: ...all believers will be changed instantly... when the last trumpet sounds. When it sounds, dead people will wake up and live forever, and we will be changed. This weak, mortal body must become immortal and indestructible... Right now death can hurt us because of sin. But through Jesus we will beat it, thank God.' [1 Corinthians 15:51-58](#)

Will everyone be ready?

'You know that the Lord's return will be a surprise, like a thief in the night. While some people are saying, 'We have peace. We're safe', they will be

destroyed quickly... But you are not living in darkness, so that day will not surprise you like a thief...' [1 Thessalonians 5:2,3](#)

Apoca-LOOPS!

'I am the Son of God ...

I judge men ...

They will take my life,

but I will arise and take their's forever'

(Self-proclaimed messiah, David Koresh, died in an FBI raid)

Jesus said, 'False prophets will come...' 'Many will come using my name... and they will deceive many people.' [Matthew 24: 11,5](#)

No man knows the day nor the hour

Jesus, Matthew 24:36

Old US President Ronald 'Ray-Gun' Reagan spent big on nuclear weapons and said, 'You might be interested to know that the Scriptures are on our side in this'. Russia is an 'evil empire'.

'I turn back to our ancient prophets in the Old Testament and the signs foretelling Armageddon, and I find myself considering if we're the generation that is going to see that come about.'

A reporter asked if he was mis-using the Bible. Ron mumbled, 'Well, I don't think I've ever used the Bible to further political ends or not.'

Say what? But then Ron also said, 'Trees cause more pollution than automobiles.' (No joke!)

When?

Jesus said no-one knew the day or the hour, But He left some clues - SIGNS that his return was soon. Here's what to look for:

1. Technology explosion

At the time of the end, many shall run to and fro and knowledge shall be increased,

wrote Daniel in c.600 BC. [Daniel 12:4](#)

- Human knowledge now doubles every few years. (Every day there's more you don't know!) And understanding of Daniel's prophecies is exploding too.
- Now you can have breakfast in London, lunch in New York, dinner in Tokyo (and luggage in Vancouver!) Running to and fro, or what?
- For thousands of years, our fastest travel was a galloping horse. Now we've progressed to supersonic jets - in one lifetime.
- Today's hot computer is tomorrow's boat anchor.

How did Daniel predict all this would happen?
And could he be right about 'the end' too?

2. Social Breakdown

The last days will be hard times. People will love themselves, love money, brag, and be proud. They...won't respect their parents or be thankful or do anything God wants. They'll be unloving and unforgiving, they'll spread gossip and slander, they'll have no self-control. They'll be cruel, they'll hate what is good, they'll turn against friends, they'll do disgusting things without thinking. They will... love pleasure more than God. They may be very 'religious', but their faith will have no power.

Paul, [2 Timothy 3:1-5](#)

Sounds like one episode of Desperate Housewives!

Or the news, I guess. OK, there were no 'good old days', but are problems like these getting worse or better?

3. Famines

'Famines in various places' Jesus, AD31. [Matthew 24:6,7](#)

More people are starving in Africa today than when Bob Geldof organised 'Band Aid'.

4. Environmental destruction

John foresaw people 'destroying the earth', That was impossible when he wrote - in AD 96. But now...!

He said it would be happening just before the final judgment. [Revelation 11:18](#)

5. 'Increasing Wars...'

Jesus, AD31, [Matthew 24:6,7](#)

4. There have been more war deaths in the last 10 years than in any other decade of history!

The bottom line: IF it's true that He's coming, THEN where does that leave me?

Toast - if only perfect people pass the judgment.

BUT thankfully, God knows human nature and can forgive.

'If we admit our sins..., He'll forgive us and clean up our character.' [1 John 1:9](#)

This is the most important thing you'll ever learn! (Lots of people think God is angry at them, so they don't bother to find out about Him.)

You don't have to join a church, pay money to charity, or help little old ladies across the road to make Him love you (though those things can be good). He already loves you. Now.

The Bible says,

'Friends, while you're waiting for all this, try to avoid sin and guilt. Aim to be at peace with God. Remember we're saved because God is patient and understanding.' [2 Peter 3:14,15](#)

Why has He done nothing about it for 2,000 years?

'You must understand that in the last days people will mock your beliefs. To cover feelings of guilt they'll say, "So where's this Return you promised? Things are going on like they always did..."

But the Lord is not slow to do what He promised - not slack or late. No - He's patient. He doesn't want anyone to be lost. He wants us all to change our hearts and lives.' [2 Peter 3:3-9](#)

Believe This?

We live on a minor planet... In the final analysis, we're as significant as the eight billionth grain of sand...in the Sahara.'

We are 'destined for oblivion' like 'dodos and dinosaurs.'

'Therefore...life is totally meaningless. We just are. For a little while, anyway. Then we aren't.'

Adams vs God, pp.176-7

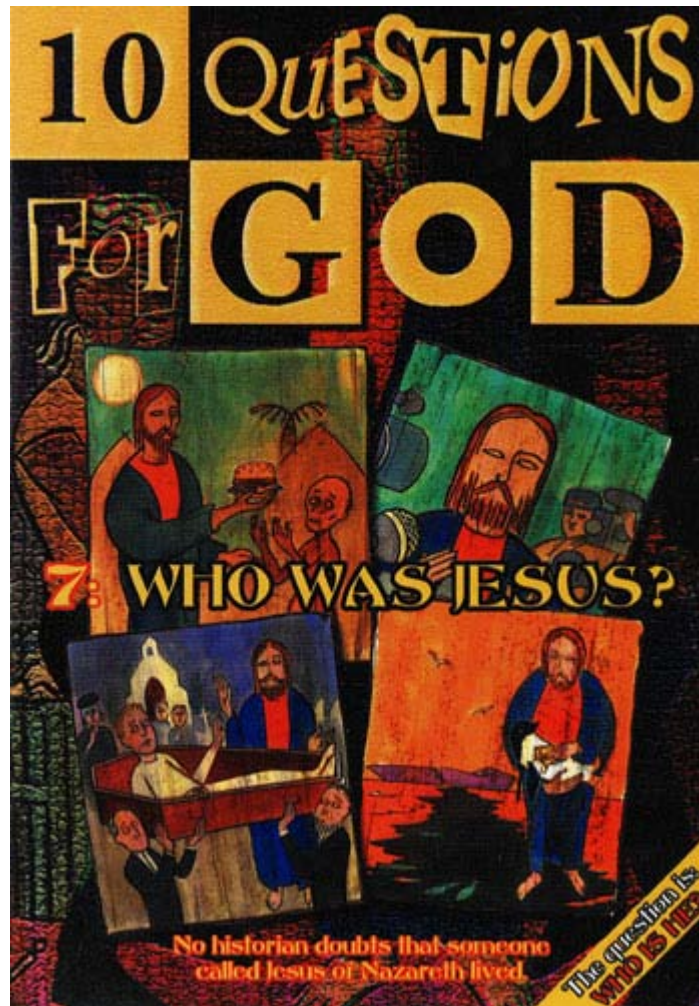
Or this?

'God loved the world so much that He gave us His only Son, so that anyone who believes in Him can avoid destruction and have eternal life.' *Jesus, [John 3:16](#)*

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope our spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.

7. Who Was Jesus?

There is no doubt that Jesus Christ of Nazareth is still a controversial figure today. The DaVinci code raised a lot of questions about his life. But no historian doubts that JC *actually* lived! Explore the meaning of His life - was he a teacher, a madman, or a great con artist? What predictions did He make? Is He exactly who He said He was? And what is the historical evidence for those amazing claims.



No historian doubts that someone called Jesus of Nazarus lived.

The question is:

WHO IS HE?

Brain-strainer

Why did people assassinate Jesus? Would the world do the same thing today?

To some people, He's richer than Bill Gates, smarter than Einstein, nicer than Mother Teresa - He's God.

To others, he's a false Messiah, a con-man or just another religious nutter.

Yet 2,000 years after his death, he's still the most influential life ever - more than Plato, Henry Ford, Buddha, Moses, Mahommed or Confucius:

He has over a billion followers worldwide

His life-story is the best-seller every year

His birth-date divides history: BC (before Christ) and AD (Anno Domini = 'in the year of our Lord')

His birthday is celebrated every year at Christmas

He is respected by almost all religions, not just Christianity

But Who Was Jesus of Nazareth?

1. Was He a great teacher?

He gave us classics like 'Blessed are the peacemakers' and 'Do to others what you would like them to do to you.' 'Come to me, all who are worn out and overloaded, and I will give you rest.'

One psychiatrist said that if you took all the best insights of the ages into how to have successful relationships, good mental health and a happy life, and boiled away all the excess words, you wouldn't quite equal Christ's sermon on Mt Olivet. Jesus said, 'I have come so you could have life, and have it more abundantly.'

His words deal clearly with life's huge questions: Does anyone love me - faults and all? What really matters in life? What happens when I die? How do I overcome my dark side? How should I treat others? How should I pray? What is God like?

His words about non-violence inspired Mohandas Gandhi, Martin Luther King Jr and Desmond Tutu. His words on concern for the poor inspire the Salvation Army, World Vision, ADRA and others. His words have caused mini-revolutions in every generation by changing people's lives, inspiring generosity and high ideals, and bringing out the best and highest in human life.

Jesus said, 'My words will never pass away'. His words have passed into more languages, more books, proverbs, artworks, talks and songs than anyone else's - they've just never passed away.

Most people would accept he was a great human teacher. But Jesus said - often! - that He was God. If that's true, then the title 'great teacher' would be a huge understatement! If that's false, then Jesus was either mad or a liar.

2. Was Jesus mad?

3. Anyone who claims to be God, and thinks it's true when it's not, is an egomaniac.

But do you see much ego or mania in someone who called himself a servant and the son of the people, and did what Jesus did? He said:

"[I] did not come to be served, but to serve." [Mark 10:45](#)

He made friends with powerless people - lepers, foreigners, prostitutes, outcasts - as well as rich, religious and powerful people. He took time to care for women and children in a culture where they were nobodies.

If you read his life story in the Bible, you see an incredible personality and understand how he has inspired people to be like him. You'll notice he is even-tempered whether the crowd is cheering for him or picking up stones to kill him. He can tolerate hateful attacks, answer rough questions, and even predict his own death with incredible emotional balance.

Plus, how could a madman be a great teacher?

3. Was Jesus a con artist?

Why might Jesus do a hoax?

- **For money?** But Jesus gave most of his to the poor and lived very simply.
- **Power?** No, he didn't let people make him King when they wanted to, and he chose to die rather than start a war of rebellion. [John 6:15](#)
- **Popularity?** No, Jesus' enemies out-numbered his friends because he told the truth. He knew that would bring his death.

So he gained nothing. If he was clever enough to pull off such a con, why would he do it for no reason?

And could he fake it even if he wanted to? To convince people he was the Messiah, he'd have to fit dozens of detailed predictions.

What Predictions?

Here's just a few...

- He'd arrive before the last of the Jewish kings lost power. ([Genesis 49:10](#) - written c.1500BC) Roman power finally took over in AD70.
- He'd start his work 483 years after Jerusalem started being rebuilt, wrote Daniel ([Daniel 9:25](#) - written 600 years earlier). Rebuilding started in 457BC.
- He'd be killed by piercing his hands and feet, wrote David in c. 1000BC, even though crucifixion was unknown in Israel until c.165BC. [Psalm 22:16](#)
- He'd be born in Bethlehem and belong to the tribe of Judah. [Micah 5:2](#), [Genesis 49:10](#)
- Too many others to fit here! See Josh McDowell, Evidence that Demands a Verdict, London: Thomas Nelson Publishers, 1979

Partial Jesus

Some 'experts' pick and choose Jesus' words as though they, at a distance of 2,000 years, know better than eyewitness writers what Jesus really said.

They argue that editors made him sound better than he really was.

Or that Jesus had some good lines but that others made up his claims to be God. But central to his teaching about peace was the idea that he had come not just to teach but also to take away human sin and guilt. He said this would kill him, but he'd come back to life and would eventually take believers to heaven.

When you know you should do what he said (e.g. 'Love your enemies'), it's sometimes easier to think up excuses why you can't believe.

Is He who He said He Was?

He was no baby-kissing politician. At first he tried just to quietly help people and avoid publicity. But when crowds asked who he was, he said he was the Messiah.

He said he was God's Son, equal with God [John 5:18](#)

When someone asked what God was like, he said 'anyone who has seen me has seen the Father' [John 14:8,9](#)

He claimed to be able to give life and take it away [John 3:3](#)

He claimed that people could get to heaven only through him [John 14:6](#)

He said he could forgive sins -something only God can do [Matthew 9:2-6](#)

He said, 'If anyone loves me and does what I say, my Father... and I will come to them and live in them.' [John 14:23](#)

If Jesus was God, then God knows from experience the problems of being human and is dying to save us (literally).

God, what a man! Man, what a God! What are you going to do about Him?

C.S. Lewis said: 'You must make your choice. Either this man was, and is, the Son of God; or else a madman or something worse. You can shut him up for a fool, you can spit at him and kill him as a demon, or you can fall at His feet and call Him Lord and God.'

JESUS: What Evidence?

Non-Christian Historians

Did Julius Caesar exist? We have only the words of historians - a number of them. And they had nothing to gain by saying it. So we believe in Julius.

Did Jesus exist? We actually have more eyewitness accounts of His life than of Caesar's, including mentions by historians who were opposed to Christians - but did not question the truth of whether Jesus lived and died. Cornelius Tacitus wrote,

[Nero] inflicted the most cruel tortures upon a group of people detested for their abominations and popularly known as 'Christians'. This name came from one Christus, who was put to death in the principate of Tiberias by the Procurator Pontius Pilate...

Annales 15.44, published c. AD 116

Pliny describes the beliefs of Christians about Christ and his attempts to stop them (in Letters 10.96, 97, dated AD 111). And Josephus, a Jewish historian, wrote in about AD 90 of

a wise man called Jesus, and his conduct was good and he was known to be virtuous. And many people from among the Jews and other nations became his disciples. Pilate condemned him to be crucified and to die. And those who had become his disciples did not abandon their discipleship. They reported that he had appeared to them three days after his crucifixion and that he was still alive. Accordingly, he was perhaps the Messiah concerning whom the prophets have recounted wonders.

from an Arabic version translated by Prof. Schlomo Pines of Hebrew University, Jerusalem; published by Israeli Academy of Sciences & Humanities, 1971, quoted in EM Blaiklock, Jesus Christ: Man or Myth, Sydney: Anzea, 1983, p.30

The Gospels

These were biographies written:

- by 3 eyewitnesses (Matthew, Mark, John) and one historian (Luke)
- within 20 years of the events (while many witnesses were still alive to expose them if they lied about the facts)
- by people who were tortured and killed for their views, not paid or put on the lecture circuit!

Have They Been Changed

- hand-written copies were done by professional scribes who were religiously careful with what they considered the word of God;
- the originals are lost (as with William Shakespeare's writings) BUT we have

88 papyrus fragments (copied less than 400 years later), and
274 vellum copies (400 to 1,100 years later),

Compared to:

8 for Thucydides' history (copied 1,300 years later)

5 for Aristotle's poetics (1,400 years later)

10 for Caesar's history (1,000 years later)

1 for Tacitus' history (1,000 years later)

- a fragment of John's gospel in Manchester University is dated AD100-125 and fragments of Matthew's gospel in Magdalen College, Oxford, are dated by papyrologists at AD 70
- Some manuscripts show slight variations due to scribal errors, but textual critics find very minor variations over thousand of years and tens of thousands of copies.
- Sir Frederic Kenyon, director and librarian of the British Museum, said:

The interval then between the dates of original composition and the earliest extant evidence becomes so small as to be in fact negligible, and the last foundation for any doubts that the Scriptures have come down to us substantially as they were written has now been removed.

For more information:

1. Ian Wilson, *Jesus: The Evidence*, London: Wiedenfeld and Nicolson, 1996
2. Josh McDowell, *Evidence that Demands a Verdict*, USA: Thomas Nelson, 1979

The ultimate 'proof' of Christianity is that the story of Jesus inspires people with hope and helps them change their lives for the better. This is evidence for the human spirit as well as the mind:

'The Spirit convinces our spirits that we too are the children of God.' [*Romans 8:16*](#)

**'Jesus Christ, Superstar Who are you? Who do you think you are?
If you think that you're so cool Walk on the water in my swimming pool.'**
Pilate, Jesus Christ Superstar

Jesus? "pallid incompetence hanging on a tree" *Anton LaVey, The Satanic Bible*

'The nature of Christ's existence is mysterious, I admit; but this mystery meets the wants of man - reject it and the world is an inexplicable riddle; believe it, and the history of our race is satisfactorily explained.' *Napoleon Bonaparte*

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope our spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.

8. Does Prayer Work?

Someone said that *'Prayer changes things.'* But people want to simply know - Does it work? Encounter 5 of the greatest doubts about Prayer. And learn why is Prayer such an effective worry remover! Discover exactly what are the 12 keys to successful prayer. Be careful as your prayers may not change the world so much as they may change you!

10 QUESTIONS FOR GOD



#8: DOES PRAYER WORK?

As the crowd screamed violent hatred at a six year old girl, Dr Robert Coles watched in shock.

It was 1960, and Ruby Bridges was the first black pupil in a New Orleans school. Every morning and afternoon for months she walked through mobs >

As the crowd screamed violent hatred at a six year old girl, Dr Robert Cole watched in shock.

It was 1960, and Ruby Bridges was the first black pupil in a New Orleans school. Every morning and afternoon for months she walked through mobs...

Bumper sticker

"Why pray when you can worry?" If prayer is like talking to your best friend, then why don't more people pray?

It was 1960, and Ruby Bridges was the first black pupil in a New Orleans school. Every morning and afternoon for months she walked through mobs that shouted the worst abuse and threatened to kill her. White families had removed their children, so she was alone in class and at play. Yet her strength and dignity amazed Coles.

Ruby's teacher said:

A woman spat at Ruby but missed; Ruby smiled at her. A man shook his fist at her; Ruby smiled at him. Then she walked up the stairs, and she stopped and turned and smiled one more time. You know what she told one of the marshals? She told him she prays for those people, the ones in the mob, every night before she goes to sleep.

Dr Coles, a Harvard professor and famous child psychiatrist, decided to study her. In one of their interviews she mentioned that she prayed and hoped God would do something. Coles did not believe in God. He asked her why she prayed, and she just said, 'Because.' When he asked again, she said, 'Because they need praying for.' Coles thought that was cute, but did not take it seriously. Yet here was a disadvantaged child showing strength and courage that baffled an expert. He said, 'I was accumulating all this information, but I was getting rather frustrated.' He had been called 'the greatest living psychiatrist' by TIME magazine, and had won a genius award and Pulitzer Prize for his study of children, but now he had to admit that he could not understand this child's superhuman dignity and courage. 'Now how do you explain that?'

Coles interviewed her family. Her parents could barely read or write, and were often taunted by mobs, but they had taught her to pray about problems. Coles even came to her church as an observer. People there said that faith and prayer kept them hopeful despite poverty and racist attack. At first Coles put it down to emotionalism in the uneducated, but it obviously worked: he saw 'the look of pain give way to the look of hope in countless faces.' Coles said, 'How is someone like me supposed to account for that, psychologically or any other way?'

Eventually he concluded that Ruby's prayers did something. Something powerful and beyond mere psychological explanations. Coles started praying. Today he is still fascinated by prayer and faith, and tells anyone - children or his Harvard students - that prayer is real. Ruby Bridges Hall, now in her 40s, is still praying. She's back at the same school as a liaison officer.

Another famous psychiatrist wrote in a medical text-book:

Prayer is a powerful and effectual worry remover. Men and women who have learned to pray with childlike sincerity, literally talking to and communing with the Heavenly Father, are in possession of a great secret whereby they can cast their care upon God, knowing that He cares for us. A clear conscience is a great step towards barricading the mind against neuroticism.

Dr William Sadler, Practice of Psychiatry

But but but...

But is prayer just a placebo, like a drugless pill that works because the patient believes it will?

Belief helps, but the Bible says prayer puts you in contact with God and gives 'peace that is beyond human understanding.' ([Philippians 4:7](#)) As Coles concluded, it's supernatural.

Is it arrogant to expect God to take 5 minutes off from running the universe to bother with you?

Not when He asks you to, and His time and love and intelligence are infinite. (That's enough data-processing capacity to give all 6.7 billion of us personal attention and still run the universe.)

Is it arrogant for humans to tell God what to do?

Yes, if we try to manipulate Him into running the universe our way. So Jesus told us to pray 'Thy will be done'. In other words: 'God, only you can see the big picture, so if I'm asking for something that's harmful or selfish or impossible, forget it and I'll trust you and try to be happy with whatever you decide.' Honestly saying that can be a struggle with yourself - what if God doesn't do what you think you want? But someone wrote, 'God never leads His children otherwise than they would choose to be led if they could see the end from the beginning.'

Why tell an all-knowing God what I want?

Because He wants to protect our free will and won't go against our choice. Prayer is like our vote to ask Him to interfere even though Earth is under Satan's rebel government. It gives him human 'permission' to move.

Does prayer always change the world?

No. There are churches in Rwanda where thousands of people were gunned down while praying for peace! The Bible has stories of prayers God answered with a 'No': e.g. Jesus asked not to have to die for the sins of the world - but He did. Paul asked God to take away a huge problem of his - but he had it for life. Prayer is not a guarantee that your life will be sweet and easy. It doesn't always change things, but then it often does. And it will give you the inner strength and courage to persevere.

How To Pray

1. Use your own words.

Talk 'like someone talks to a friend.' (See [Exodus 33:11](#)) Do you phone a friend and say, 'O Thou Most Benificent and Esteemed Companion, wilt Thou in Thy multitudinous kindnesses play basketball with me?' Do you need a script or book of what to say?

2. Pray anywhere, any time.

Even when your mobile phone is out of range, God is watching and knows your thoughts. In traffic (eyes open!), when you have a big win, when you feel like thumping someone, when you have a decision to make, any old time... e.g. When Nehemiah, a Bible hero, was asked a pressure question by the king, he flashed up a quick silent prayer and then answered. He also spent time in regular, private prayer. ([Nehemiah 2:1-6; 1:3-11](#))

3. Also have a regular time and place to pray.

Jesus went bushwalking alone in the early morning to pray. ([Mark 1:35](#)) If you're not a morning person, make another time and stick to it - when you're too tired or busy or flat, when you don't feel like it, you need it most! Even Jesus prayed a lot, on His own and with others. If He needed it...

1. Pray about anything.

'Don't worry about anything, but in everything let God know your needs, stay grateful and hopeful, and God will send His peace to guard your mind and heart...' ([Philippians 4:6,7](#)) No problem is too trivial - Jesus said He even knows how many hairs we have! No problem is too big for a Mind that created solar systems.

Jesus taught His disciples that in prayer we could:

- thank Him, and encourage ourselves by remembering how kind our Friend in High Places is;
- look forward to when He comes back;
- offer to co-operate with His plans;
- ask for whatever we need ('daily bread');
- ask Him to forgive us for mistakes;
- ask for help to forgive people who hurt us, rather than turning bitter; and
- ask for help to do the right thing.

see 'The Lord's Prayer' in [Matthew 6:9-13](#)

2. Avoid ruts.

Jesus said, 'When you pray, do not mindlessly repeat yourself. Some religions think God will listen if you keep on and on. But God knows what you need even before you ask Him!'

[Matthew 6: 7-8](#)

3. Practise.

If your mind wanders, don't give up. Go straight back to praying and you'll learn to focus. Write your prayers in a diary if that helps you concentrate - you can throw away the embarrassing ones!

4. Be honest!

Read some Psalms and you'll find writers telling God exactly how they felt - forgotten, angry at God, ripped off, needy, faithless, doubtful and guilty, or thankful and delighted. Their attitude improves. Prayer is therapy!

5. Pray for other people.

Even 'Pray for those who mistreat you.' ([Matthew 5:44](#)) That's hard! Notice it doesn't demand that you think they're great, just get rid of revenge and other attitudes that can cripple your health and emotional life. One girl said that as she prayed that her mother would stop being such a dork, she realised that she could treat her Mum a lot better too. It can work like that.

6. You don't have to deserve it!!

Jesus said any sinner could use His name in prayer, which is like dropping your billionaire uncle's name at his hotel. God sees you with the love He has for Jesus.

A character called Samson prayed when he was in a hooker's bed, trapped in an enemy city, surrounded by 1,000 soldiers, blinded in prison - any-old-where! He should have prayed before he got himself in these messes - but God still helped as much as possible. 'We can come boldly into the throne-room of our gracious God, looking forward to forgiveness and generous help in crisis.' ([Hebrews 4:16](#); [Judges 13-16](#))

7. God won't bless sin.

If you're planning something you know He won't approve, don't expect His help - except to change your plans! E.g. If you pray, 'God, make me a successful shop-lifter', you're on your own. If you pray, 'God, I want to shoplift, but I know I shouldn't', He'll help. ([Psalm 66:18](#))

8. Be determined.

Jesus said, 'Ask and keep on asking. Keep knocking on the door.' If you know God would approve but you don't get an answer, hang on. Don't focus on doubts and fears, or they'll get worse. Keep trying until you succeed. (see [Luke 11:9,10](#))

9. Listen.

If 'God' tells you to kill or what brand of toothpaste to buy, see a doctor about schizophrenia. But sometimes God 'speaks' by giving you a great idea when you pray. It could just be your subconscious or imagination, so check it out carefully against the Bible and common sense – but don't write it off. God sometimes uses this method. ([1 Samuel 3](#))

'Why pray when you can worry?' *Graffiti*

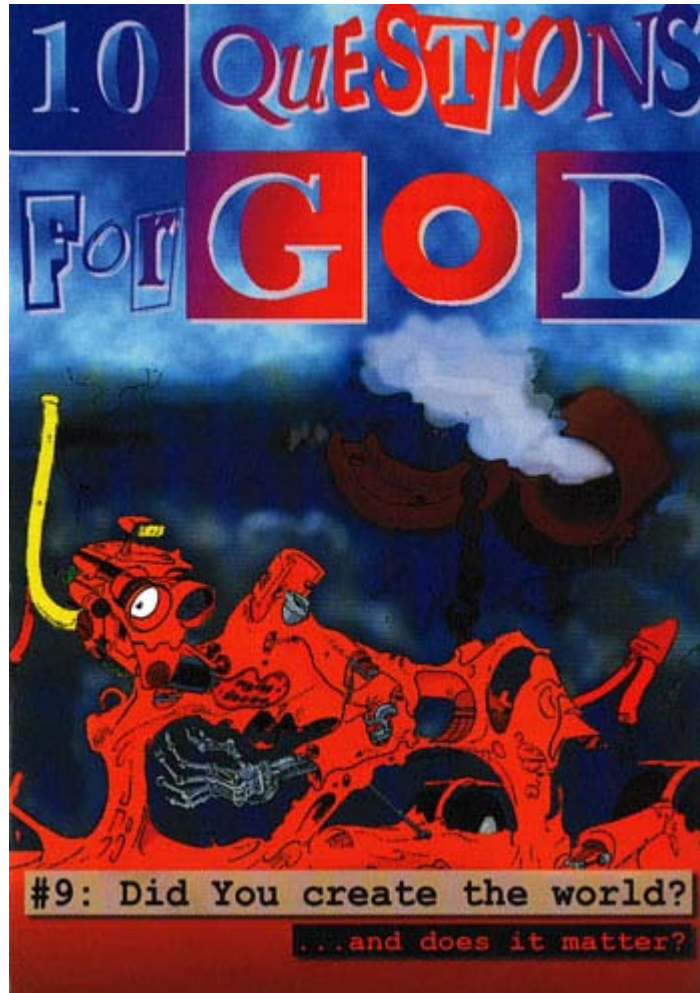
'Prayer is an education.' *Fyodor Dostoyevsky*

'Be careful... Your prayers may not change the world, but they may change you, and this is not really what you intended.' *Rabbi Lionel Blue*

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope our spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.

9. Did You Create The World?

... and does it matter? Well yes, it really does matter as our world-view influences our behaviour and lifestyle. Read about Great Moments in Evolution - when humankind have acted worse than animals ever could. Take a moment to investigate the contrasting viewpoints of atheistic evolution vs. intelligent design. These two systems are galaxies apart and yet their results will be eternal.



Did you create the world.....and does it matter?

Brain-strainer

It's a jungle out there and I am an animal.

I'm a fallen child of God.

What effects would these views have on a child's behaviour and self-esteem?

WHERE DID I COME FROM ?



WELL...

AN EXPLOSION ...

**A LUCKY BIG BANG!
IT MELTED MILLIONS
OF MICROPROCESSORS
AND WHEN IT COOLED ...**



**IT FORMED SUPERCHIPS
CAMERAS, AMAZING
ROBOTIC PARTS AND ...**

ER ...

YOU!



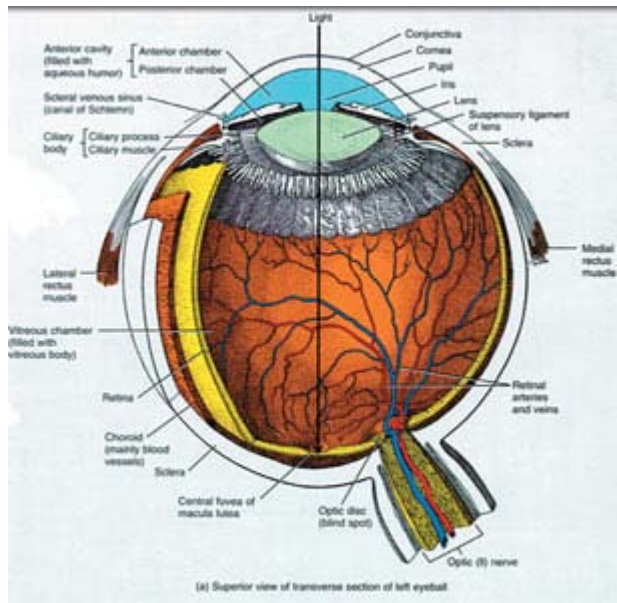
**DESIGNED
BY CHANCE ?
NO WAY! BUND
CHANCE ISN'T
CREATIVE ENOUGH
TO DESIGN ME!**

'The deep emotional conviction of the presence of a superior reasoning power, which is revealed in the incomprehensible universe, forms my idea of God.' 'I am convinced that He does not play dice.'
- Albert Einstein

See What I Mean?

You're seeing these words through a focusing lens and a light-control 'aperture' - a self-cleaning, self-repairing camera.

Images hit 125,000,000 photocells in each eye. They're 25 times as sensitive as the best film. Each has a 'light catcher', a 'power station' (processing 70+ chemicals), and a nucleus with more stored information than a 30-volume encyclopaedia.



They feed into a pre-processing computer - 3,000,000 ganglion cells - then up the optic nerve to part of the brain that's set up to decode them.

Atheistic evolution says there's no God to create, and our animal ancestors were blind until the eye developed through mutation (a freak genetic change).

But how? Bit by bit? It's impossible to imagine just one eye evolving with a few hundred million parts in working order, but it wouldn't work without muscles to focus it, ganglia, optic nerves and specialised brain-cells. A mutant fish with a useless eye would look pretty silly. OK, no-one would see it, but they'd eat it, because the useless weight would slow it down. No more mutant...

Or did the whole system evolve together? The odds of that are ridiculous.

The Bible gives a different story. It says there was a God who was:

- smart enough to design incredible machinery
- powerful enough to build it
- loving enough to bother

"In the beginning, God created..." Sure, things have changed since then. Mutation and natural selection make animals adapt - that's micro-evolution. But it didn't make us.

Genesis chapters 1-2 don't try to explain how God created. The Bible was written in a pre-scientific age, and it's about life and spirituality, not science. But it does explain big issues about creation.

Acting Like Animals: "Great Moments In Evolution"

The varieties of man seem to act on each other in the same way as different species of animals, the stronger always exterminating the weaker

Charles Darwin

Hitler said, 'Close your heart to pity. Act brutally.'

Nazis wanted lesser races to die so the 'best' humans (tall, blonde 'Aryans') could breed a race of Supermen. (This was called Social Darwinism or Eugenics.)

Darwin wrote: 'At some future period... the civilised races of man will... exterminate, and replace, the savage races throughout the world.' *Origin of Species*

Hitler took that seriously - and acted on it.

Nazi Philosophy 101

Himmler said Nazis 'value people racially' and 'bodily', like in 'animal breeding.' They must ignore 'the Christian theory... which ruled Germany for more than a thousand years and caused... racial decay....' *Padfield, Himmler, pp164-8*

What Christian theory? That God created all races, and cares for all people.

Hitler (and Nietzsche) believed weak people invented that to brainwash the strong. They didn't believe in God, just 'man evolved into Superman'. He could make the rules. Mass killing was fine if it helped 'Superman' evolve faster.

The Bible says,

They traded the truth of God for a lie. They worshipped and served what had been created in place of God the Creator ... They did not want to keep God in their thinking... and they did any shameful thing they wanted.

[Romans 1:27-28](#)

1830, Tasmania - Whites slaughtered almost all aborigines - Darwin approved!

He said: 'This most cruel step seems to have been quite unavoidable' and now Tasmania 'enjoys the great advantage of being free from a native population'.

Darwin said Aborigines were the second-lowest form of human life - a possible link between man and ape! - and would die out while the white race 'seems predestined to inherit the country' from Aboriginal children. *The Voyage of the Beagle*, pp 430,424 and *The Descent of Man*

Darwin approved mass racial murder because his evolutionary theory is racist by nature! A horrible idea to anyone who believes 'all men were created equal'.

Nature is cruel. If we're just part of nature, is cruelty moral?

Howard Bloom says 'hatred, violence, aggression and war are part of the evolutionary plan.' *The Lucifer Principle*, p.2

The Bible's alternative is better: God made us to co-operate, not compete - but selfishness and cruelty came when 'sin' infected Earth. He still wants us to live His way, and will eventually repair things. (see our guide, [Why Don't You Stop Pain and Evil?](#))

So what?

If you believe in creation by God

The Future: God probably wouldn't make us then dump us, so He has a good plan.

How We Live: God wants us to help each other. 'Love your neighbour.' Don't harm another person.

Love: Should be soul-to-soul as well as physical. Can be unselfish.

Environment: God told people to take care of the world He made.

Racism: God loves all races equally. Each has strengths to offer. We're a human family.

If you believe in atheistic evolution

The Future: Totally random, unplanned. Blind chance.

How We Live: 'Welcome to the jungle, Gets worse here every day, You learn to live like an animal, In the jungle where we play'. *Guns'n Roses*

Love: Just an animal urge of a selfish gene.

Environment: Human extinction is possible - and the universe doesn't care. Life will just take another form.

Racism: The best races should breed the next generation so the human race improves. 'Lesser races' must die. 'No remorse to save the weaker race'. *Metallica*

To Be Or Not To Be...

If 4 monkeys typed at random could they write Shakespeare?

Nay! Not one sentence in 4,600 million years according to probability.

Human DNA (the genetic material in your cells) involves spelling too...

I could prove God statistically. Take the human body alone - the chances that all the functions of an individual would just happen is a statistical monstrosity.

George Gallup, Statistician

'The Babel fish' (said the Guide)... feeds on brainwave energy...

If you stick a Babel fish in your ear you can instantly understand anything said to you in any form of language...

Now it is such a bizarrely improbable coincidence that anything so mindbogglingly useful could have evolved purely by chance that some thinkers have chosen to see it as a final and clinching proof of the NON-existence of God.

The argument goes something like this: "I refuse to prove that I exist", says God, "for proof denies faith, and without faith I am nothing."

"But", says Man, "the Babel fish is a dead giveaway, isn't it? It could not have evolved by chance. It proves you exist, and so therefore, by your own arguments, you don't. QED."

"Oh dear", says God, "I hadn't thought of that", and promptly vanishes in a puff of logic.

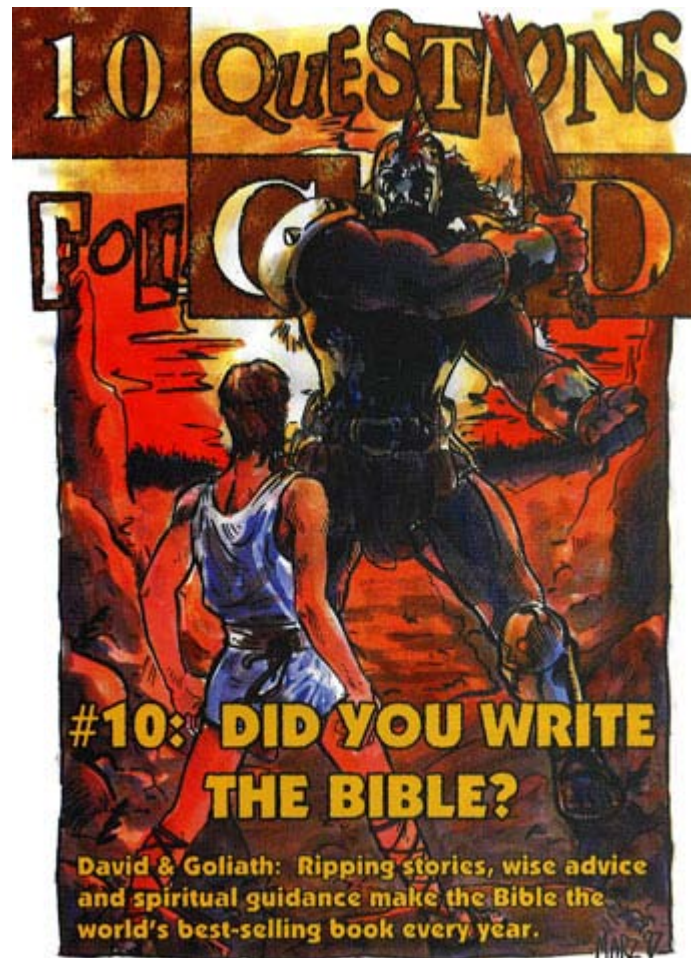
"Oh, that was easy", says Man, and for an encore goes on to prove that black is white and gets himself killed on the next zebra crossing.

-Douglas Adams, The HitchHikers Guide to the Galaxy

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10. Did You Write The Bible?

If God did not inspire the ancient Biblical writings - then someone else had better step up to claim a book that outsells all others each year including the Guinness Book of Records. Who really wrote it? Where did the writers get their material from? What is its purpose? Learn about 5 Bible myths that are lies and distortions of the countless truths found in the ancient Scriptures.



David & Goliath: Ripping stories, wise advice and spiritual guidance make the bible the world's best-selling book every year.

See for yourself

The best way to find out what the Bible has to say is to read it. let it speak for itself. Don't depend on chrches or critics.

If you do not have a Bible, would you like one?

Check it out before you chuck it out...

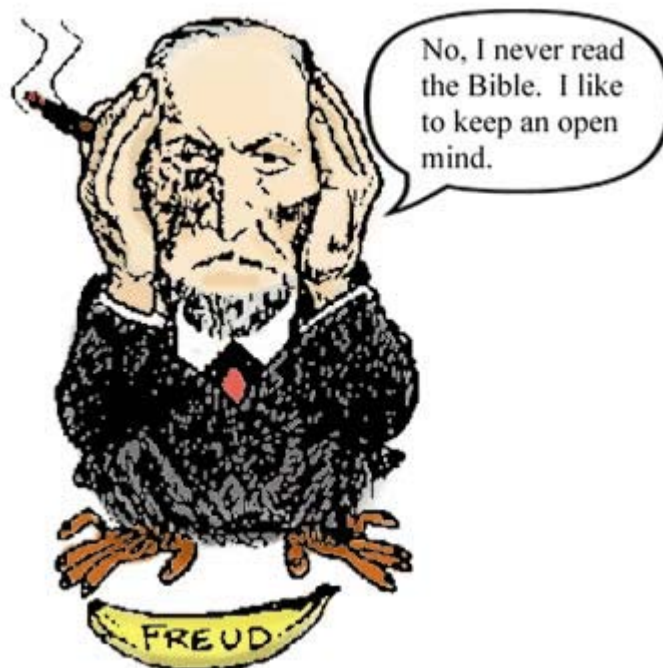
What's in it? A bunch of rules on how to have a totally drab life? Boring saints doing twee things? No! Ripping tales of the mistakes and adventures of real people, the dirty linen of royals and commoners, rich and poor, ugly and beautiful, musicians, prostitutes, slaves, hired killers, great leaders. Some stories are tragic (rape, mass-murder, divorce, betrayal, family breakdown), some are hilarious, but they all make you think. (There are also books of law, song words, imaginative visions and witty sayings...) The Guinness Book of World Records admits the Bible is the only book that out-sells it every year. Classic? It's been the bestseller since 1454, when it was the first book ever printed.

But don't take our word for it. And don't be put off by people who've never really read it except to knock. See for yourself. The real proof is when you find it speaking to you about your life. You might want to say something like, 'God - if you're up there and if this is your word to me - then please make it make sense.'

Then try the following for starters. (Make sure that thou readeest them in a modern version of the Bible!)

A book of advice and witty two-liners from King Solomon the Wise. (The Book of [Proverbs](#) - start at chapter 10)

King David's affair wrecks his family and his kingdom. (see [2 Samuel chapters 11 to 18](#))



Joseph, a rich man's favourite son, becomes a slave, survives, then rises to Prime Minister by wit, work and principle. ([Genesis 37](#), then 39-45)

Esther, an orphan slave-girl, becomes a queen and risks her life to save the Jews from a race killing over 2,000 years before Hitler. (The Book of [Esther](#))

Jesus heals a cheeky blind man. ([John 9](#))

Samson's big muscles, wobbly faith, dumb choices, tragic love life and bloody war record. ([Judges 13-16](#))

A story of the greatest life ever - Jesus of Nazareth. ([Mark](#) or [John](#))

Who wrote it?

About 40 people - shepherds, kings, prophets, apostles - between 1500 BC and 96 AD.

BUT they claim to have been inspired by God. One said, 'All the Bible was given by inspiration from God and is useful to teach us what is true and... how to live well' ([2 Timothy 3:16](#)) This is more than the 'inspiration' of a piece of music or art. It's God speaking via dreams or visions, and prophets writing down the message in their own words. One said 'Prophecy never comes because some human decides it will happen, but holy people speak from God as they are moved by the Holy Spirit.' ([2 Peter 1:21](#)) So the Bible is God's ideas in human words.

Where did the writers get their material

1. **Dictation.** Writers sometimes copied as God dictated, e.g. 'Moses wrote down everything the Lord had said.' ([Exodus 24:4](#)) But usually they wrote in their own words.
2. **Eyewitnesses.** Peter wrote, 'When we told you about the power of Jesus and his soon return, we were not telling clever stories someone made up. We saw with our own eyes how great he really was.' ([2 Peter 1:16](#)) John wrote about Jesus' life,

We saw it all happen - we're eye-witnesses... Now we're telling you what we've seen and heard so that you can share in this life with us.

[1 John 1:1-3](#)

Could they have remembered wrongly? Jesus promised them

The Spirit will teach you everything and remind you of what I said while I was with you.

[John 14:26](#)

3. **Research** Luke wrote, 'Many people have tried to tell the story of what God has done among us. They wrote what they were told by people who had actually been there from the start and seen what happened. So I made a careful study of everything and decided to write and tell you exactly what happened... so that you can know for sure that what you heard is true.' ([Acts 1:1-4](#))

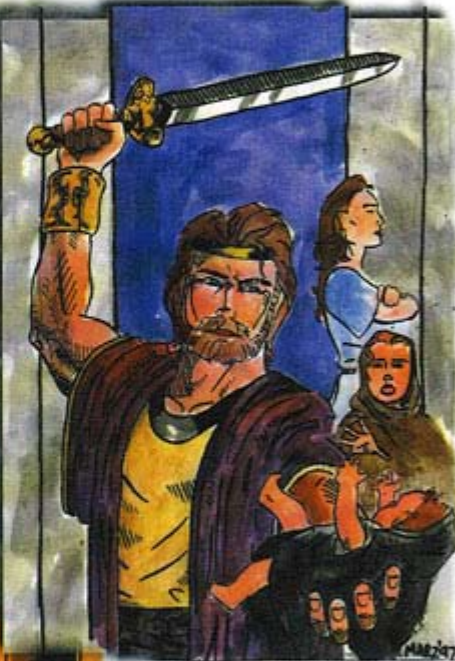
What is it for?

Quite simply to 'save' humans - to get us in a relationship with God so we can go to heaven. One writer said, 'these things are written so that you will put your faith in Jesus the Son of God... If you have faith in Him, you will have true life.' ([John 20:30-31](#)) You can read it for entertainment and information, but also read it like a love letter that builds a relationship.

Learn to find the meaning behind the facts: e.g. Fact: Jesus saved the life of a prostitute that religious leaders were going to stone. Meaning: He said to her, 'I do not condemn you. Go and sin no more.' So he says to us, 'I forgive you for XYZ sin. Now put it behind you and live right.' As you read, keep asking what it means to you - but use common sense. (Not like the guy who picked out two texts at random: 'Judas went out and hanged himself' and 'If you hear these things, you'll be happy if you do them.')



Left: A giant sized problem for David. Read about it in 1 Samuel 17



Right: Is King Solomon bluffing? See the story in 1 Kings 3:16-28



Left: How to get demoted - refuse the boss's wife. But Joseph went from slave to Prime Minister. - see Genesis 37, 39-45

Five Bible Myths

Some say the Bible contains myths. In reality there are a lot of myths about the Bible.

1. It's unscientific

Albert Einstein, Sir Isaac Newton, Blaise Pascal, Dr Isaac Asimov and many less famous scientists all read and wrote about the Bible – and believed it. OK, it's not a science text – book. But some questions need more than science: e.g. *Does that music make you sad? Do you love your partner? How can I find life after death?*

2. It's been lost in translation

The fact is we have many copies of Bible books in original languages – Hebrew, Aramaic and Greek – and scholars are learning more and more about those languages as more ancient documents are found and studied. Our translations are based on good scholarship.

3. It's been changed

Actually archaeologists have found 2000 year old manuscripts and they are almost exactly the same as the versions we have today. Hundreds of ancient copies in different parts of the world are practically identical. (For instance, the Dead Sea Scrolls, found in 1947 by a bored Arab goat herder, contain large sections of the Old Testament which showed today's version to be amazingly accurate.) Consider doing the [DIGGING UP THE PAST](#) Course next which covers this material in great detail and with lots of interesting visuals.

Ancient Scribes would not want to change what they thought was the word of God. They took painstaking accuracy to amazing extremes – some would get a new pen and even take a bath before writing the word of GOD. But if one rebel scribe decided to change 'Jesus walked on the water' into 'Jesus surfed', one of many checks would find it, and wouldn't just blot out the mistake and start again, but would destroy the whole manuscript – weeks of work.

Even if editors back then missed his mistake, today's textual critics would show that this copy was different from hundreds of others. For instance, in [Mark chapter 5](#), different manuscripts say Jesus went to a region called 'the

Gerasenes', 'the Gergasenes' or 'the Gadarenes'. Big deal - and most variations are about this serious!

For more info go back to Topic 7: ['Who was Jesus \(Really\)?'](#)

4. The writers wrote novels or lies

The major problem is miracles. How can people be healed or brought back to life or walk on water? I've never seen that! But shouldn't we keep an open mind on whether a creative God might choose to interfere in the natural world now and then? Yup, it sounds unlikely, but no-one can prove tis impossible. I'd be interested to read eyewitness accounts from people who claimed to have seen the supernatural – especially if they were sane and weren't making a dollar out of their story. And especially if large crowds of people said they'd seen the same thing.

Many of the Bible writers were threatened and even killed for what they wrote (for example for saying Jesus came back from the dead). And yet they stuck to their story. Who would die for a lie or a fantasy? I don't know many people who would die for the truth of Bugs Bunny...

5. It's sexist

The Bible was written in a sexist age – which makes it all the more radical when you read its stories of female prophets, judges, heads of state, business leaders, farm managers, and mothers. It promotes equality between 'Jew and Greek, slave and free, rich and poor, male and female.' ([Galatians 3:28](#)).

But see for yourself. Read it!

'Churchgoers are used to lukewarm yogurt, but the Bible is about sin, scandal, violence, about lousy authorities, sex, money - what life is about today.' *Daniel Berrigan*

'I often read the Bible.' *Albert Einstein*

'I do not call you 'back to the Bible'. I urge you to run hard enough and fast enough to catch up with the Bible.' *James Sanders*

We don't claim to speak for God. The Bible does. We hope our spiritual explorers' guides will get you thinking about what it says.