

THE BIBLE'S ANSWERS
TO **100** OF
LIFE'S BIGGEST
QUESTIONS

Norman L. Geisler and Jason Jimenez



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Contents

- Foreword by Josh and Sean McDowell 8
- Preface 9
- Acknowledgments 11
- Part 1 Questions about God and Truth**
1. What Is Truth? 15
 2. Whose Truth Is True? 17
 3. Is There a God? 19
 4. Who Made God? 23
 5. Who Is God? 24
 6. Are Miracles Possible? 29
 7. If God, Why Evil? 31
 8. Is the God of the Old Testament a Monster? 33
 9. Would a Loving God Send People to Hell? 36
- Part 2 Questions about Creation, Science, and the Bible**
10. How Did the Universe Come to Be? 41
 11. Is Evolution a Viable Option? 43
 12. Are Science and the Bible Compatible? 46
 13. What Happened to the Dinosaurs? 48
 14. Was There Really a Worldwide Flood? 50
 15. Is the Bible True? 53
 16. How Did the Bible Come Together? 56
 17. Can We Trust the English Translations of the Bible? 59
 18. How Do I Study the Bible? 61
- Part 3 Questions about Jesus and the Holy Spirit**
19. Who Is Jesus Christ? 67
 20. How Can Jesus Be Both God and Man? 69
 21. Why Did Jesus Have to Die? 72
 22. How Do We Know Jesus Rose from the Dead? 75
 23. Where Did Jesus Go between His Death and Resurrection? 78
 24. What Kind of Body Did Jesus Have after His Resurrection? 81
 25. Isn't It Intolerant to Say Jesus Is the Only Way to God? 83
 26. Who Is the Holy Spirit? 85
 27. What Does the Holy Spirit Do? 87
 28. What Is the "Filling" of the Holy Spirit? 90

Part 4 Questions about Sin and Salvation

- 29. Why Are We Born into Sin? 95
- 30. Are Humans More Than a Body? 96
- 31. Did God Pick Me or Did I Choose Him? 98
- 32. What Is the Gospel? 100
- 33. What about Those Who Never Heard the Gospel? 102
- 34. Can I Lose My Salvation? 104
- 35. Is Baptism Necessary for Salvation? 106
- 36. How Does One Become a Christian? 108

Part 5 Questions about Heaven and Hell

- 37. What Is Heaven Like? 113
- 38. Is There Really a Hell? 115
- 39. Can a Good Person Get into Heaven? 117
- 40. Do Near-Death Experiences Really Happen? 118

Part 6 Questions about Angels and Demons

- 41. Who Are Angels and What Do They Do? 123
- 42. Who Are Demons and What Do They Do? 125
- 43. What Kind of Power Does Satan Have? 126
- 44. Can a Christian Be Demon Possessed? 129
- 45. Can Christians Cast Demons Out of People? 131

Part 7 Questions about the Church and End Times

- 46. What Is the Church? 137

- 47. How Can I Know a Good Church from a Bad One? 139
- 48. How Can I Get My Family Involved in Church? 141
- 49. Why Are Churches So Divided? 143
- 50. Can Protestants and Catholics Agree on Anything? 145
- 51. Is Tithing 10 Percent Enough? 148
- 52. Why Is Biblical Prophecy Important? 150
- 53. Is America Mentioned in Prophecy? 152
- 54. Should Americans Care about Israel? 154
- 55. What Is Going to Happen in the End Times? 157
- 56. Who Is the Antichrist? 161
- 57. Will Christians Face the Great White Throne Judgment? 163
- 58. What Is the Millennial Kingdom? 165
- 59. What Is the New Heaven and New Earth? 167

Part 8 Questions about the Christian Life

- 60. How Can I Overcome Sin in My Life? 171
- 61. How Can I Grow in My Faith? 173
- 62. What Is the Great Commission? 175
- 63. How Do I Share My Faith? 176
- 64. How Can I Defend My Faith against Attacks? 179
- 65. Why Does God Allow Trials in My Life? 181
- 66. How Can I Forgive Someone Who Has Hurt Me Deeply? 183
- 67. Does God Hear My Prayers? 185

- 68. How Can I Know God’s Will for My Life? 187
- 69. What Are My Spiritual Gifts? 189
- 70. How Can I Set and Accomplish Goals in My Life? 193

Part 9 Questions about Moral and Ethical Issues

- 71. Who Determines What Is Morally Right and Morally Wrong? 199
- 72. Should Christians Judge Others? 202
- 73. Is Abortion Murder? 203
- 74. Does God Approve of Human Cloning? 206
- 75. What Is Wrong with Same-Sex Marriage? 208
- 76. Is Lying Ever Right? 211
- 77. How Should Christians View Euthanasia and Physician-Assisted Suicide? 213
- 78. What Is the Bible’s Position on Capital Punishment? 216

Part 10 Questions about Culture and Politics

- 79. What Is the Role of Government? 221
- 80. Why Should Christians Care about the United States Constitution? 225
- 81. Should Christians Be Involved in Politics? 226
- 82. Is There an Agenda behind Public Education? 229

Part 11 Questions about Worldviews and World Religions

- 83. What Are Some Worldviews That Oppose Christianity? 235
- 84. Can All Religions Be True? 237
- 85. What Do Muslims Believe? 239
- 86. What Do Mormons Believe? 243
- 87. What Do Jehovah’s Witnesses Believe? 247
- 88. What Do Hindus Believe? 250
- 89. What Do Buddhists Believe? 253
- 90. What Do New Agers Believe? 255

Part 12 Questions about Family

- 91. Why Do Many Christian Marriages End in Divorce? 261
- 92. How Can I Have a Good Marriage? 263
- 93. How Do You Grow a Healthy Blended Family? 266
- 94. How Can I Train My Children in the Ways of the Lord? 268
- 95. Why Are So Many Young People Abandoning the Faith? 271
- 96. How Can I Win Back a Prodigal Child? 274
- 97. Should a Christian Date an Unbeliever? 277
- 98. Am I a Bad Parent for Not Having Family Devotions? 279
- 99. How Can I Deal with Pornography in the Home? 282
- 100. Should I Let My Child Join Social Networking? 284

Notes 287

Foreword

We (Josh and Sean) have spent much of our lives and ministries trying to help people answer the tough questions of life. Even though culture has changed drastically over the past few decades, one thing remains the same: *people have questions and they want answers*. Being prepared with answers to tough questions is not just *our* job though. The Bible says all believers are to be ready with an answer to everyone who asks (1 Pet. 3:15). And that includes *you!* That's why we are so thrilled that Norm and Jason have written this Q&A book. This book is written for the Christian who needs clear and convincing answers to some of the most challenging questions of the day. If you have questions, this is the book for you.

No longer do you have to worry or be afraid when someone asks you a tough question about your faith. This book will equip you with solid answers to questions most Christians struggle to answer. Not only will it help you build confidence to defend the faith, but it will also be an encouragement as you grow in your faith.

We believe Christians from all walks of life will benefit from Norm and Jason's biblical and practical approach to tackling one hundred of life's biggest questions. Their way of laying out the book not only gives you (the Christian reader) biblical answers but also provides practical application and additional resources that will help you go deeper in your study.

We deeply value resources designed to help Christians grow in their faith—and we have no doubt that this book fits that description. As you read and explore the valuable answers in this book, you will come to better understand what it is that you believe and will come away with a stronger conviction as to why you believe it.

We highly recommend this Q&A book, which covers such a wide range of thought-provoking questions with such insightful responses. The beginner will not feel overwhelmed, and the expert will find some insights to deepen his or her faith. This is truly an outstanding resource that we hope many believers will get, study, and share with their friends.

Josh and Sean McDowell

Preface

Have you ever asked a question of someone you expected would know the answer, and to your surprise, he or she struggled to give a response? That's a bit unsettling, isn't it? But now, let us turn the question on you. How many times have you been asked a question about the Bible or the Christian faith and been unable to give an answer? Not a great feeling, *is it?* Both situations are unpleasant, and it is why most Christians freak out over being asked a question for fear they won't be able to give an answer.

We can relate. In the course of our ministry careers, we have been asked everything from the most elaborate to the most simplistic questions by people of every age and walk of life. That's not to say we've gotten the answers right all the time, but we try our best to answer people's questions with God's honest truth. But it takes a lot of discipline and a considerable amount of time to be able to answer people's questions.

The sad reality is that far too few Christians spend time studying—leaving most Christians helpless to answer even the most basic questions about their faith. Statistics show that a whole new generation is abandoning the church because of a lack of biblical knowledge. This indeed is troubling because questions—particularly spiritual questions—demand answers and shouldn't be sidestepped.

That's why we joined forces to write this Q&A book. We wanted to offer a resource with real and relevant answers in a time of great uncertainty. To provide a resource that not only gives Christians of all ages credible answers but brings comfort and assurance as well.

No longer can we afford to ignore the doubts and questions so many Christians have. We must be about the business of equipping Christians so they can be sure of what they believe, while confidently offering clear and convincing answers as to why they believe it. That's why we feel it is necessary to address the serious concerns and questions Christians have, from the purpose of life to life after death—and everything in between.

But having the right answers is only part of the equation (Prov. 18:13). What is equally important is to extend the same level of care toward the

person asking the question as we give to the answer—which is the very approach taken in writing this book. We not only answer each question from a biblical perspective but also provide the reader with practical application and additional resources to go deeper. Thus, the end product is an answer book (with a family focus) to one hundred of life's most challenging questions that Christians, both young and old, can read and understand.

It is our fervent prayer that this answer book will help Christian readers learn more about their faith and be emboldened to go out and offer biblical answers to those searching for truth. You will find that offering solid answers to people's questions will be a blessing not only to them but to you as well (Prov. 15:23).

Acknowledgments

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Finally, we want to thank all the brave souls who raised their hands and tolerated long lines just to ask questions. We are forever grateful to you for trusting us as reliable sources to answer your questions.

P A R T 1

Questions about God and Truth

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QUESTION

1 What Is Truth?

Answer

Who would have thought that a belief in absolute truth would be under attack in our day and age? Today, young people are embracing a “feel-good” truth to satisfy their appetites, and, paradoxically, pastors and churches are shifting toward a one-size-fits-all mentality of truth.

But we’ve seen this dismissal of truth before. Centuries ago, standing right in front of Pontius Pilate was the embodiment of truth, Jesus Christ. Jesus confronted Pilate by saying, “You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me” (John 18:37). But despite the overwhelming proof of Christ’s innocence, and his indisputable claim to be God, Pilate responded flippantly, “What is truth?” (John 18:38).

Rather than discover the truth, Pilate rejected it to appease the Jews and maintain his status with the emperor. But what Pilate (and most Americans) failed to realize is that truth is of the utmost importance, for without it, we know nothing.

So what is truth?

Simply put, *truth is telling it like it is*. That is, truth corresponds with the way things really are. This acrostic will help you remember what is TRUE about truth:

Transcendent: Truth comes from God, and he has revealed it to his creation.

Take gravity, for example. Newton didn’t *determine* gravity; he merely *discovered* its existence. In the same way, humans *know* truth because God reveals it in his creation and in his Word, the Bible.

Real: Truth matches (corresponds to) the facts in the real world. Two opposing things can’t be true at the same time and in the same sense. That would be a contradiction.

Universal: Truth applies to all people, at all times, and in all locations. For example, $1 + 1 = 2$ is a universal truth that is not challenged or denied.

Exclusive: Truth is absolute. Though opinions about truth change, truth, on the other hand, remains the truth and therefore cannot change. Beliefs change but not truth.

Application

Be careful not to buy into the self-defeating belief that truth is relative, for even the assertion that there is no absolute truth claims to be absolutely true. There are many people today who push their thinking on Christians to be more tolerant and accept the belief that truth is not absolute or exclusive. King David wrote, “Lead me in your truth and teach me, for you are the God of my salvation” (Ps. 25:5 ESV). God is truth, and your life is in far better hands than if you trust the lies spouted out in the world.

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DVD

Truth Project, Focus on the Family

Online Video

Norman L. Geisler, “What Is Truth?,” The One Minute Apologist, <http://www.oneminuteapologist.com/searchpage#what-is-truth>¹

QUESTION

2 Whose Truth Is True?

Answer

Several years ago, I (Jason) was talking to a student about Jesus Christ. After I shared the gospel with him, he looked at me and said, “That’s all great and stuff, but that’s just *your* truth.”

After poring over many proofs of Christianity, the student wasn’t fazed a bit. He thought all those *truths* about Jesus were cool. Just one problem—they didn’t apply to him.

This speaks to the growing movement of *postmodernism*, which not only questions propositional truth and authority but also goes as far as stating that truth is unknowable. (The basic ideas of postmodernism have existed since the early days of humankind. In the Garden of Eden, Adam and Eve rejected God’s absolute standard in exchange for their own selfish gain.)

This postmodern view of truth may seem acceptable to some, but it’s a contradiction. Think about it: *How do postmodernists know truth is unknowable?* To say truth is unknown is to *know* something about truth. This is complete nonsense. It is undeniable that truth is knowable.

But in the midst of so many different religious beliefs, *whose truth is true?*

Christianity is all about “testing all things” to determine what is right and wrong (1 Thess. 5:21). To do so, however, you must appeal to an absolute position; otherwise, there is nothing on which to base your findings or draw concrete conclusions. Any meaningful statement must be true or false; it must be affirmable or deniable.

This leads to three alternatives to determine whose truth is true:

1. *All religious views are true.* This is known as *religious pluralism*. It is important to point out, however, that most religions don’t hold to such a belief. Why? It’s absurd. Based on the Law of Noncontradiction (A is not non-A), it’s impossible for all religions to be true. It is impossible to

Law of Noncontradiction

Aristotle referred to the Law of Noncontradiction (LNC) as the “first principle of knowledge.” The LNC is self-evident and unavoidable. Something can’t both exist and not exist at the same time and in the same sense (A is not non-A).

affirm God exists and deny he exists at the same time and in the same sense. Christianity, for example, believes in God, but atheism and religions such as Buddhism deny God exists. Either there is a God or there is not. It can't be both.

2. *All religious views are false.* It's possible that all religious views are false, but to know that, it must be measured by an absolute standard that corresponds to the truth. In this case, there would be a religious view above the rest that is true.
3. *One religious view is exclusively true.* Considering that truth is absolute and exclusive, it's reasonable then to assume that this truth claim is exclusively true. There is one view that is true, and everything opposed to it is false. But how do you figure out which religious view is the right one?

Ravi Zacharias posits three tests that any statement or belief system must pass: (1) logical consistency (*Are there contradictions?*), (2) empirical adequacy (*Is there any proof?*), and (3) experiential relevance (*Does it work in real life?*). For a statement or belief system to be logically consistent it must not contradict itself, but correspond to reality (that which is true). Moreover, the belief system must not only correspond to reality, but also cohere with the facts of reality (empirical adequacy). In other words, there must be evidence to substantiate its truth claims. And finally, a view or belief system must be viable to live by in the real world (experiential relevance). That is, its actions and values must comply with objective morality that we instinctively know is right.

Allow us to demonstrate how these three tests of truth (logical consistency, empirical adequacy, and experiential relevance) come in handy in very practical ways. Take, for instance, directions. It matters a great deal to have the right directions in order to reach your destination. If you program the wrong coordinates into a GPS, it will lead you to the wrong location. Similarly, when you are sick, it matters a great deal that your doctor gives the right diagnosis to determine the right course of treatment. So if following the right directions and receiving the right treatments matter, *how much more so when it comes to spiritual matters?*

Application

Though our views or emotions concerning truth change, truth stays the same. Holding fast to God's truth will bring you the greatest rewards and have the biggest impact on those around you. Don't underestimate the influence of those who disregard absolute truth for something more alluring. Take the advice of John: "Test the spirits to see whether they are from God" (1 John 4:1).

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Norman L. Geisler, “Truth and Relativism,” The One Minute Apologist, <http://www.oneminuteapologist.com/searchpage#geisler-relativism>

QUESTION

3 Is There a God?

Answer

Deep down inside each human being is a God-shaped vacuum waiting to be filled. There are many lost people searching for answers to the purpose and meaning of life, and many of them have no inkling that their questions of identity and eternal destiny are answered only in God. That’s why it’s critical that Christians understand and can confidently articulate proof of this basic and most fundamental truth: there is a God.

To help show you evidence for God’s existence, we put together a simple acrostic—GOD: *goodness*, *origin*, and *design*. Let’s take one letter at a time.

Goodness

The apostle Paul stated that all people have “no excuse” because the “law is written on their hearts” (Rom. 2:1, 15 ESV). This is to say that there are objective moral laws about what is good that are binding on all people and by which we must live. Thus, the Moral Law Argument can be summarized as follows:

1. Moral law implies a moral lawgiver.
2. There is an objective moral law.
3. Therefore, there is an objective moral lawgiver.

Moral laws not only *describe* certain behaviors but also *prescribe* what ought to be. We know in our hearts that we should do good and not bad because there is an objective moral law that governs everyone. If there is no God, then there is no ultimate moral standard by which to differentiate right and wrong. But evidence shows that moral laws are *objective* for all humans on the basis that God is the objective moral lawgiver. We all know that we should do to others what we want them to do to us. Thus, we know that stealing, rape, and killing are wrong because we do not want anyone to do those things to us.

Origin

There is overwhelming evidence that the universe had a beginning. In 1915, Albert Einstein developed the general theory of relativity. This theory is now almost universally accepted because of all the scientific evidence for it. Essentially, this theory holds that time, space, and matter all had a beginning point. In the 1920s, Edwin Hubble (after whom the Hubble Space Telescope is named) captured magnificent evidence of the expanding universe (which gave enormous proof that the universe had a beginning).

The argument for the origin of the universe goes like this:

1. Everything that had a beginning has a cause.
2. The universe had a beginning.
3. Therefore, the universe has a cause.

Premise 1 is based on the Law of Causality: every effect must have a cause. Based on science and pure reason, we know that *something cannot come from nothing*.

Premise 2 identifies that the universe must have a cause greater than itself. This is evidenced by a great SURGE:

Second Law of Thermodynamics: The universe is running out of useable energy. It's like the unwinding of a clock.

Universe expansion: The universe is spreading from a beginning point.

Radiation echo: There are traces of *afterglow* from the expansion of the universe from the beginning point.

Galaxy seeding: A great mass of energy has been discovered in outer space just as many scientists predicted.

Einstein's theory: This shows that the universe had a beginning and that time, space, and matter are all needed for everything to exist.

Design

One of the oldest and most popular arguments for the existence of God is the Design Argument. You can better understand it this way:

1. Every complex design has a designer.
2. The universe has a highly complex design.
3. Therefore, the universe has a designer.

All reasonable persons infer a designer when comparing the presidential faces on Mount Rushmore to the grandeur of the Grand Canyon. Common observation shows that it took a designer to produce Mount Rushmore, while the Grand Canyon features came about by gradual succession of wind and erosion.

THE DESIGN OF THE UNIVERSE

Let's take a look at one very finely tuned constant of the universe: *gravity*. If the gravitational force were even slightly altered, the world could not sustain life.

THE DESIGN OF THE WORLD

It's quite amazing to think that the earth is the only known planet in the universe that contains and sustains life. There are many reasons for this, but allow us to list two essential reasons.

The first reason is the *placement of the earth*. The earth is uniquely placed in the Milky Way galaxy (between the Sagittarius and Perseus spiral arms) so as not to be threatened by hazardous conditions of giant molecule clouds or supernova explosions. Another amazing fact of the earth is its proximity to the moon. The size of the earth and the distance to the moon causes the earth's axis to tilt perfectly at 23.5 degrees (allowing for annual seasons to occur).

The second reason is the *condition of the earth*. The earth's atmosphere has the perfect amount of oxygen, carbon dioxide, nitrogen, and hydrogen to be a habitable planet for life to survive and thrive. For example, oxygen comprises 21 percent of the atmosphere. If the amount were any higher, it would create massive fires; if it were any lower, life would suffocate.

THE DESIGN OF HUMAN LIFE

Yet even more incredible than the divine design of the universe and the world is the human body. The amount of genetic information contained in the human brain alone exceeds all the information in all the books in the Library of Congress. Therefore, common sense tells us that just as it takes a sculptor to sculpt a statue, we must assume it takes a Creator to create the amazing detail of human life.

Application

It's important not to take for granted the many blessings given by God. He created you in his image and has formed within you amazing talents and spiritual gifts to bring him glory, honor, and praise. Being created in his image grants every human being special status and makes human life sacred. David shouted, "Great is the LORD, and greatly to be praised, and his greatness is unsearchable. One generation shall commend your works to another, and shall declare your mighty acts" (Ps. 145:3–4).

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