

How Do You Know God is There?

- The existence of creatures/creation points to a 'creator'. I know he exists because I have come to know him in a personal way. I've discovered he is real and relevant to daily life.
- 'But have you ever seen God?' 'No, but I could have if I had been born at the right time.'
- Jesus claimed to be God (John 20-28, 5:18). His Actions bear out that claim. He healed the sick, Stilled the storm, brought the dead back to life, exorcised demons, died and was then raised from death.
- If Jesus is not God then he is either a lunatic or a liar. That is, he thinks that he is God but he isn't (a lunatic), or he knows he isn't but says he is (a liar). The one thing he can't be is just a good person, because if he claimed to be God and wasn't he was a liar. Read one of the accounts of Jesus' life and check it out for yourself.

For further reading: 'A Fresh Start' John Chapman Chapters 6 – 8



Aren't All Good People Christians?

- 'Do you think it is possible to be good and not be a Christian?' 'Yes'. This leaves us with the question 'what is a Christian?'
- What is 'good' anyway, and how 'good' do you Have to be to please God?
- What is sin? We tend to define sin in terms of Things other people do, the really bad things. But That is not how the Bible defines sin. It is defined as our attitude of rebellion against God, our desire to be independent from his rule over our lives. If this is sin, we are all guilty.
- Some people are better than others but none of us Is good enough for God. Suppose you and I enter

an exam and the pass mark is 100%. You get 95% and I get 15%. You've done better than me, but we have both failed. God's Standards are perfection, and none of us make the grade.

- God says there is only one way to restore our relationship with him, and it is not 'being good'.
- God is after Friends, not good rebels. It is a matter of whose side you are on. Are you for Jesus or against Him? (John 3:36).



What About Those Who Have Never Heard About Jesus?

- We can trust God to be just; he will judge people according to their response to what they know. No one will be able to point the finger at God and say 'That is not fair'.
- Everyone has received some knowledge about God even if only from the created order.
- Those who have had more revealed to them will be held more responsible (Matthew 11:20-24).
- You have heard, so you have the opportunity to do something about it.

For further reading: 'How to Give Away Your Faith' Paul E. Little (IVP) Chapter 5.



What About Other Religions?

- We don't have the right to judge which is right and which is wrong. We need to respect those of other faiths.
- Just because someone is sincere in their religious belief doesn't mean they are necessarily right. Sincerity is not the issue. It is possible to be sincerely wrong.

- If different religions contradict each other (which they do) they cannot all be right.
- Therefore who has the right to tell us the truth about God, humans, the meaning of life, heaven? Surely only God himself. Jesus uniquely claims to be God 'in the flesh', God talking to us in a way we can understand.
- If Jesus' claim is valid then his claim to be the only sure way to God means other ways are misguided.

For further reading: 'So What's the Difference' Fritz Rideour (Regal books)



Doesn't Science Disprove God?

The popular view is that Christianity and science are somehow mutually contradictory. This is not the case, they are complementary. Both are needed to make full sense of the world we live in.

- A good number of leading scientists are Christians and don't find any problem marrying the two together.
- Science seeks to explore the ordering of the world, to answer the 'how' questions. Christianity also explores the ordered world, but addresses a different set of questions, the 'why' questions.
- A number of sciences back up the claims of the Bible e.g. archaeology.
- When it comes to the creation of the world, the vital issue is not so much how it came about, but why God started it in the first place.

For further reading: David Wilkinson, 'God the Big Bang and All That . . .'



Why Does God Allow Suffering?

Be careful! Note the difference between answering this as an intellectual question and dealing with it when the person asking is suffering themselves. Those in pain are more likely to want loving attention, a listening ear and practical help than a clever answer.

It is the hardest of all questions to answer because we don't know what the answer is. It is tied up with the bigger question 'Why did God allow evil into His world?' We do, however, have some things to say which may be helpful.

- When God made the world all was well. Purposeless suffering entered the world when we decided we knew better than God how to live in his world and rebelled against him.
- Therefore some suffering is caused directly through our wrongdoing. A drunken driver may cause an accident and the suffering that results is because of his/her irresponsibility. But some suffering is not the result of any particular person's sin, but a result of 'fallen' creation (Romans 8:18-25).
- God weeps with those who weep and mourns with those who mourn. He knows what it is to suffer, for he died on a cross.
- God can use suffering to strengthen us and speak to us (Romans 5:3-5).
- The very question 'why suffering?' necessitates a belief in God. For the atheist the question is 'why not suffering?', for if we are here by chance then there is no reason why suffering shouldn't exist.
- Jesus suffered himself on the cross so we could be forgiven (1 Peter 2:24) and get to heaven. There will be no suffering in the 'new creation' so make sure you don't miss out on it! (Revelation 21:4)

For further reading: 'Suffering – Why?' James Jones (Lion)



What Do Christians Believe?

Christians believe many things, indeed God's perspective on the whole of life is crucial for our understanding of who we are and why we are here. But at the heart of the gospel, the good news, is a wonderful message. The simple framework below is just one way to begin to express and explore something of this good news.

God

God exists and he is a loving God. This is his world, and he wants us to live in friendship with him.

People

Tragically we have turned our backs on God and gone our own way, thinking we know better how to live in God's world than he does. This is foolishness, and has led to the pain of broken relationship with God, with other people and with ourselves.

God

God's response to this is what you'd expect. He longs for our broken relationship with him to be restored. This is why Jesus came, not just to show us what God is like, but to die as an act of love to enable us to be forgiven for going against God. He offers us a new start.

What if we won't accept what he has done for us?

If we continue to ignore God until our dying day God will respect our decision not to be with him. We will be held accountable for our life, and we will discover Jesus really is in charge.

What if we will accept what he has done for us?

What would happen if a person stopped going their way in life and started going God's way? That person would be treated as if s/he had never rebelled. They will receive forgiveness for everything they have ever done wrong, a new start in life and certainty that when they die they will be with God for ever. They will enter a restored relationship with God. It is too good to miss out on!

Exploring Common Questions

Brief thoughts on how to explore some of the common questions about Christianity