

Googling God

The Top 5 Questions Answered!

- 🔍 how can I know - God Search
- 🔍 how can I know that God is real?
- 🔍 how can I know which is the real God?
- 🔍 how can I know who is the real Jesus?
- 🔍 how can I know why we suffer?
- 🔍 how can I know what happens when you die?



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Introduction

In 1954, long before the internet was even conceived, science fiction author Fredric Brown published a very short story – barely a page long – titled “The Answer.” The story is about a world in which all of the computers in existence were finally connected together to form a single, all-knowing network capable of answering any question. The man given the honor of asking the first question to this newly-created intelligence stepped forward with humanity’s most pressing question: “Is there a God?”

In the modern world, Brown’s omniscient computer network is a reality, and the question “Is there a God?” is still very relevant. Based on Google statistics, the question “how do we know God is real?” is queried over 50,000 times in a year, with many other versions of this question, such as “is there any evidence for God?” driving these questions about God into the hundreds of thousands in English-speaking countries alone.

The world before the internet is still within living memory of roughly half the humans in developed countries. As of this writing, most people over the age of 40 remember a time when one had to visit a library in order to access information about the world, and much of the more scholarly work was locked behind university doors. But now it is very little exaggeration to say that the accumulated knowledge of the human race is at our fingertips, and only a search-term away.

Because of this relatively sudden leap in the availability of information, many people are turning to the internet to ask the deeper questions of life. The king of the search engines is, of course, Google. The top Google search of all time is the very pragmatic question “What is my IP?” Beyond that, most queries deal with celebrities, weight loss, and sex, but buried within this flood of questions about pop culture and how to look attractive are some deeper questions that show a human interest in meaning and purpose. In 2021, under the “how to be” search terms, people wanted to know how to be happy with yourself, how to be mindful, and how to be romantic. People need meaning, and they are turning to the internet to find it.

In this document we will be looking at some of the more meaningful – and skeptical – questions about God and religion commonly searched on Google. This document will serve as a one-stop resource to inform you of the most common questions that people are asking about God and religion, and give those questions the fair treatment they deserve.

Question 1



How do we know God is real?

We begin, of course, with the most fundamental question related to spirituality: the reality of God. Questions about the reality of God, evidence for God, or evidence *against* God run into the hundreds of thousands in Google queries.

As surprising as it may seem, this is a relatively new question in human history. Whereas the nature of God or gods has been disputed – sometimes quite violently – throughout the millennia, to question if God even exists at all is quite a modern phenomenon. This is so modern, in fact, that a 2013 study by Ara Norenzayan and Will M. Gervais attempted to answer the question, “where did religious *disbelief* come from?” It was taken as a given that humans were

inherently religious believers – so much so that where religious *disbelievers* came from was still a mystery.

To no small degree, this near-universal belief in God is related to individual experience. Followers of God will almost always report deep, profound, and significant personal experiences which have contributed to both their belief in God, and their beliefs *about* God. This is, paradoxically, both the strongest and weakest evidence of God's existence. It is strongest, because personal experience is more meaningful to us than any sort of indirect information. It is far different, for instance, to stare up at the Victoria Falls and marvel at their beauty than it is to read the measurements and history of the Falls. It takes no great intellect or sophistication to *experience* the Falls, but the impact is profound and lasting. Just so with religious experiences. Weak or strong, young or old, foolish or wise; everyone can have such experiences, making the knowledge of God a very inclusive prospect.

Equally, personal experience is a convincing way to report on one's beliefs. One is more likely to be convinced to visit Victoria Falls when told about their grandeur from an eyewitness than when one reads about them in a book. This is why personal testimony has been such an effective means of religious evangelism throughout history. Reports of personal experiences of God have an emotional power which cannot be matched by academic evidence. However, such

reports are also weak evidence insofar as one cannot *prove* that one's experience is genuine to someone else. One cannot demonstrate an inner feeling. And if a person happens to be a skeptic, it is as easy to dismiss a report of an unseen and unseeable personal experience as it is to dismiss ghost-sightings and UFOs.

The ancients would look at the world around them and see the beauty, intelligibility, and apparent design, and could only believe that this must all come from a beautiful, intelligent designer. However, as history progressed, and the universe was explored, cataloged, and explained, the necessity for a designer became less and less apparent.

In 2012 the Huffington Post published an article entitled *Will Biology, Astronomy, Physics Rule Out The Existence Of Deity?*

The article begins with this statement:

"Over the past few centuries, science can be said to have gradually chipped away at the traditional grounds for believing in God. Much of what once seemed mysterious – the existence of humanity, the life-bearing perfection of Earth, the workings of the universe – can now be explained by biology, astronomy, physics and other domains of science.

"Although cosmic mysteries remain, Sean Carroll, a theoretical

cosmologist at the California Institute of Technology, says there's good reason to think science will ultimately arrive at a complete understanding of the universe that leaves no grounds for God whatsoever."

Notice the reasoning here: if we can somehow gain a complete understanding of how every cog in the universe turns, we have explained away the need for God. This operates off of an idea sometimes called "the God of the Gaps." This idea essentially states that we only invent God to explain things we don't understand. Once we understand everything, God is no longer needed. Indeed, there was a time in history when gods and heroes were used to explain everything from the rising of the sun to the sprouting of grass and the roll of thunder. We have, in our modern wisdom, more or less done away with these mythical beings by defining how the universe works.

Now imagine coming across a smartphone lying on the ground. You press a button and it lights up. You touch the screen and it responds. How does it do all of these remarkable things? An easy and quick explanation would be that the phone is a living thing, or has a spirit within it that causes it to respond intelligently. As we study and dissect the device, however, we come to understand that it is an accumulation of circuitry and processors and everything it does can be explained without needing the proverbial "ghost in the machine."

Does our new understanding of how the phone works eliminate the need for an intelligence behind it? Not remotely. Knowing how it works is not the same as knowing why it works. Nor does it explain where it came from to begin with. What is true of a phone is true of the universe. The universe is far more complicated than a mobile phone, but like a mobile phone, it came from somewhere, and it very likely works the way it does for some reason.

Imagine, for instance, that a child asks her father why the sun shines. He could tell her that thermonuclear forces within the core of the star lead to a process called nuclear fusion that creates the light. Or he could tell her that it shines to give the earth light to see, warmth for comfort, and to help plants grow and animals live. Both answers are true, but the second implies that the sun was put there for that purpose, rather than just a happy accident.

But, of course, remove God and that is what the universe is: a happy accident.

The physical universe

Evidence suggests that the universe had a beginning in time and space. It is difficult to deny that the universe is expanding away from a point, and that it started to expand at a very specific time in history. Things like smart phones and universes do not simply pop into existence without some kind of cause. And whatever caused the

universe to exist cannot be *part of* the universe. It must be separate from the universe.

This is an important point because it works against Sean Carroll's idea that explaining the functioning of every inch of the universe does away with the need for a divine intelligence. No matter how well the universe is understood, the universe cannot be self-caused. One needs to look outside of the universe for a cause. A universe has certain limitations. It is restricted to three dimensions, changes over time, and gradually winds down. Whatever causes the universe cannot have these same limitations. This leaves us with a spaceless, timeless, and unchanging cause.

In fact, even if the universe did not begin to exist, these limitations still do exist. The universe moves, changes, and deteriorates. The universe is quite clearly a thing which doesn't have to exist. We can easily imagine some force that has to exist which does not change or deteriorate. This addresses an important objection which asks, "if the universe needs a cause, wouldn't God need a cause as well?" The only reason the universe requires a cause is that it began to exist, has limitations, and changes over time. If the universe were changeless, limitless, and timeless, it would require no explanation. And nor does God.

Fine Tuning

Every year a new smartphone hits the market. The new phone is faster, has a more attractive screen, takes better pictures, and holds a charge longer. As time goes on, phones are more and more finely tuned.

The universe is similarly finely tuned. There are about 40 specific forces and numbers that our universe was birthed with that had to take exactly the value they do for life to be possible in the cosmos. These include phenomena such as the ratio of electrons to protons in the universe, the weak and strong nuclear forces, the force of electromagnetism.

For instance, the force of gravity takes a very specific value which, if it were even fractionally weaker, would mean that matter, stars, planets and galaxies could not coalesce and form. But had it been just a fraction stronger, matter would collapse back in on itself - resulting in no stars, or galaxies to harbor life either. In fact, physicists predict that if the force of gravity had differed from its actual value by any more than 1 part in 10^{60} (that a 1 with 60 zeros after it!) then we would not have a life-permitting universe. Many of the values are exponentially more finely-tuned than even these numbers.

And then those atoms and molecules had to discretely form individual stars. We still don't know how specific clumps of stars came together

to form galaxies that rotate like pinwheels without tearing themselves apart or collapsing inward with the vast gravitational forces they maintain.

The core of a star is a delicate nuclear furnace which is the only force capable of forging the heavy elements out of which living things are constructed. Had these atoms and molecules not danced about one another in a very specific way, these stars would never have formed.

Stars are, in fact, very stable machines. They operate on a balance of energetic processes so exact that it is a wonder that a single star formed, let alone trillions of trillions. It is impossible to exaggerate how specifically fine tuned our universe is to allow for life to develop.

This is, mind you, no “God of the gaps” appeal. We know a great deal about the formation of the universe from its earliest expansion to its modern state. It is because we know so much that we know exactly how unlikely – nigh impossible – that these exact processes could have taken place in the precise manner that allowed for the stable and beautiful canvass that spreads across the sky – let alone the building blocks of life itself.

Life Itself

Just like the formation of the universe is mind-bogglingly precise, the same can be said of life. Even if we knew how raw matter somehow

turned into living, reproducing organisms – which is a mystery we have not yet solved – the amazing complexity and exactitude of even the simplest life forms still has the power to amaze. The most surprising thing about life is the amount of information it holds. In its microscopic code, a single strand of DNA holds more information than all the libraries in the world. This is not just any kind of information, either. This is a code – a language – which holds the blueprints for an entire organism in each individual cell. And we know of no source of code or language that comes from anything other than intelligence.

Just like the creator of a universe cannot be part of the universe it creates, the writer of the code cannot be contained within the code.

Beyond matter and energy

It's not something we think about very often, but the universe is more than just matter and energy. There are things that exist that cannot be explained by way of physics or chemistry. Science is one of the great human achievements – but so are art, poetry, music, and literature. The beauty contained within these objects can be explored, studied, and explained, but not in terms of science. Where do standards of beauty come from if not a mind?

The same could be said of things such as math, logic, and language, but possibly most important is the issue of Right and Wrong.

Does an understanding of matter and energy give us insight into the wrong-ness of murder or the right-ness of love?

Morality always boils down to personal value. Human beings have rights and value, and when those rights are violated or that value is demeaned, a wrong has been done. But what gives humans their value? The only thing that could give humans value is a personal being that values them. This is why a man cannot be taken to court for squashing a bug or shooting a wild bird, but could be sued for killing a pet dog. The dog has value because it is valued by someone.

We have historically fought for the human worth of the enslaved and the disabled because we all understand that these human beings have value built into them. Just because a homeless man has no family or friends who care about him does not make him worthless. He has, we say, human dignity. This dignity is in-built – a product of design. And design, as we have seen, suggests a designer.

Question 2



Who is the real God?

In the previous answer we noted that the question of God's existence is a relatively new one, however the question of which God is the right God is one of the oldest. Nevertheless, this ancient question is as troubling now as it ever has been. Assuming the above argument were to prove there was a God, which God does it prove? The Christian God? Why not Zeus or Thor or Amun Ra?

From the beginning of history to today, no matter where you go in the world, people are worshiping their own gods in their own ways. Some have suggested that each religion holds elements of truth. Be that as it may, all religions make claims that contradict one another. So whatever a particular religion has right, they can't all be entirely true.

So by sheer probability yours is more likely wrong than right. This can seem quite threatening to a religious person.

One will see this objection phrased in several ways. Here are a few of the most common:

- Your religion is determined by where you were born. In the West, you're likely Christian, but if you had been born in India, you'd be Hindu, or in Iraq, you'd be Muslim.
- If God wanted everyone to believe in him, why does he allow so many contradicting religions?
- All religions – Christian, Buddhist, and Islam alike – claim to feel deep spiritual experiences or connections. At least some of those experiences *must be untrue*. Is it not possible they are *all* untrue?

In 2013, atheist author John Loftus published his book *The Outsider Test of Faith*. This test asks the reader to step outside of their religious faith and preconceptions for a moment and look at it with the same skepticism they would apply to any other supernatural claim. For instance, why would a Christian willingly accept that Moses parted the Red Sea, but not that Muhammad parted the moon in half? Or that Jesus rose from the dead, but not that Buddha transcended into Nirvana?

Loftus argues that a person will accept one claim uncritically because

it comes from his or her religion. The same person is rightly critical of the other claims but only because they come from different religions. But, of course, people in that religion are critical in return.

So which God is the real God?

Let's start at the bottom and work our way up.

A Sense of the Divine

The human race is incurably religious. This is obvious. Every culture on earth throughout history had some kind of religion. But far from being an argument against any God, the existence of multiple religions is actually evidence *for* God's existence. Consider:

In 2004, Psychologist Deborah Kelemen published her study titled "Are Children Intuitive Theists?" Her study found two important things. Firstly, that as early as we are able to measure, children seem to think there is some intelligence behind things that happen, even if they can't see who it is.

The second thing she finds is that children have an in-built idea that everything exists for a purpose. Children in her study were asked about pointy rocks in the wilderness. The children agreed that those must have been put there for animals to scratch their backs upon.

From childhood, people automatically believe that there is some unseen person directing things, and that the things that exist all have a purpose. These are the basics of God-belief.

But this isn't exclusive to children. A 2011 Oxford study, titled "Humans Predisposed to Belief in God/Afterlife," shows just what the title suggests: a survey of every culture they could access across the globe found that almost everyone on earth has some kind of idea of God and the afterlife. Certainly, some people don't believe in these things, but they still have a notion of what is meant when "God" and "afterlife" are discussed.

So why are there so many religions? One explanation is that people are built to believe in God.

This argument, however, might suggest a general theism, but does nothing to answer our question of "who is the real God?"

Let's address that.

Drifting Toward Monotheism

In the 1500's BCE, an Iranian prophet named Zoroaster started paring down all of the Iranian deities. And there were many.

Zoroaster came from a polytheist society - a society which believes

in many different gods. He recognized a problem with polytheism: if you have dozens of gods, you don't have any kind of foundation for standards.

So, for instance, Baal is the god of the harvest. Pray to him and you might get a good crop. But why is it *good* that Baal should give you a quality harvest? Where did that standard come from? Elsewhere you have a goddess of draught and locusts, and she's blighting your crops. So you have to sacrifice and pray to her so that she *doesn't* damage your crops. What makes one of these gods the good guy and the other the bad? If it is in your self-interest to curse your neighbor, is that wrong? Ask any given god and you get a different answer.

Zoroaster realized that you need more than a collection of limited individual gods acting in their own interests in order to explain reality – you need some higher standard to *ground* reality.

Zoroaster decided to cut down all the extra deities and settle on just two: a good god and a bad god. Now he had what he needed to explain reality: either follow the good god and maximize harmony in the world or follow the bad god and maximize chaos. Zoroaster realized that polytheism didn't work as a system.

Several hundred years later, Greek philosophers came to a similar conclusion. Starting with Socrates, they began to reject the Greek pantheon for much the same reason. Plato came to the conclusion

that there was a single transcendent grounding for reality he called "The Good."

After him, Aristotle came up with the idea of the unmoved mover. This "Prime Mover" began the chain of events leading up to this current moment, without having to have an origin himself.

We even see a similar idea in tribal religions such as those in early Africa and North America. The native peoples had animistic ideas - that all objects have a kind of spirit within them - but at the core, they acknowledge that there is a supreme being that transcends all the other spirits and gods.

This seems consistent across the history of religion: given enough time and thought, religions begin to drift in the direction of monotheism, and come up with ideas that sound more and more like the Judeo-Christian God.

Religion and Coping

It's a fact established by research that the worse off people have it, the more likely they are to be religious. For instance, based on Gallup polls, very wealthy countries are very irreligious, whereas the poorer a country is, the more religious its population will be.

There are several theories as to why this is, but one conclusion is that

religion is a very effective coping mechanism. A religious person has access to a supportive community, a shared set of values, and instant connections which are akin to close friendships and family.

Religion provides these connections much more effectively than things like book clubs, political rallies, football games, or any other social groups.

A study titled "Religion and Well-being" looked at specific religious practices and beliefs, and how they affected the mental, emotional, and physical wellbeing of adherents and arrived at some very telling conclusions. It found that of the many benefits various religious beliefs provide, the religious system with the best combination of beliefs for mental and emotional stability was Protestantism. This is because of the specific beliefs Protestants have regarding the afterlife, ultimate justice for the evil in the world, God's love, grace and so forth. It is, according to this research, the religious system most compatible with personal fulfillment and community.

So, what have we seen so far? That from birth, everyone has a rudimentary idea of God as an all-seeing, powerful, and intelligent unseen agency. That over time, religions begin to change their ideas on God to more closely resemble the Judeo-Christian God. And that ultimately, the Protestant conception of God is the one most compatible with the flourishing of individuals and society. Of the five

major world religions, the majority fall back on the God of the Jewish scriptures – they just disagree on his actions and nature.

The Historical Significance of Jesus

Jesus is arguably the most controversial religious figure on the planet. Christians and Muslims both consider Jesus an important figure in their respective religions, but a significant number of Hindus and Buddhists also make claims to Jesus as aligning with their beliefs.

Much like God, everyone seems to want to lay claim to Jesus. Even outside the realm of religions, political parties and interest groups can be seen arguing that Jesus's ideas align most closely with theirs. Clearly, what Jesus had to say on the subject of God does make a difference to a significant number of people.

Christians have a very specific historical person and historical event which can verify or falsify their religion. If Jesus rose from the dead, this contradicts the Islamic Jesus, who is said to have never died at all. If Jesus was divine as Christians claim, then Judaism isn't so much wrong as it is incomplete. Taken in combination with Jesus' resurrection – should this event be true – Christianity emerges.

The Success of Christianity

The world power at the time Jesus was born was the Roman empire.

However, preceding the Romans was the Greek empire.

Alexander the Great had a rapid rise, and a very brief stay in power. In that brief time, the Greeks brought philosophy and art, but also a common language to the world that became the language of trade and scholarship. In fact, this was such a phenomenon, that by the time Jesus was born, there was an official Greek translation of the Jewish scriptures available for everyone to read.

The Romans were in control when Jesus was born. Among their many accomplishments was numbered the excellent roads they built. One could travel the Mediterranean world more easily than ever before in history.

Jesus birth didn't just occur at a fortuitous time in history, it also happened at a very unique location.

It is evident throughout history that the Middle East is a contentious area, and the subject of nearly endless warfare. This is partly because it is the thoroughway between Africa, Europe, and Asia. It also has the best ports on the Mediterranean Sea, which gives it easy access to all of Europe and North Africa.

All roads might lead to Rome, but all roads lead through Israel.

It just so happens that Jesus was born in the most traveled land in

the world during the only time in history that everyone had a common second language, when there were roads and sea routes running to the three most populated continents. It is easy to see the effect this had on how quickly Christianity spread. As it happens, Jesus was born in the best time and place in human history for founding a successful religion.

The only religion which is in any way competitive with the spread of Christianity is Islam. Muslims continue to contend with Christians in terms of global spread and sheer numbers, but it still has many centuries of ground to make up.

At this point in time, one out of every three people in the world are Christian. Christianity is the only religion that is represented in some part of the population of every country on earth.

A person born into a Muslim country has a high probability of adopting his or her culture's values – but there is at least an underground Christian community somewhere in the country. So Christianity remains an option to practically everyone.

Through the way in which a monotheistic, personal God best represents the way that rules and values can be anchored, the way in which Christianity represent the best combination of beliefs and values for flourishing communities, and the way in which Christianity has been so globally successful and historically anchored, the

Christian God, or something very like him, emerges as the most likely candidate for the one, true God. Christianity is hardly a failure, and it is hardly just a face in the crowd of world religions. In fact, it is the largest and most widely represented religion in the world.

The most significant fact that argues for the Christian God is, of course, the resurrection of Jesus. This is a very specific historical event, able to prove or disprove Christianity as a religion. Most religions have significant historical events to which they tie their significance. Muhamad's journey from Mecca to Medina forms a core element to Islam. The Exodus from Egypt is the event core to the identity of Judaism. The giving of the Diamond Sutra marks the sacred site of Buddhism. The resurrection of Jesus, however, has a certain flavor to it that speaks of the Christian God directly. It is, firstly, more miraculous than Muhammad's journey or Buddha's oracle. But most importantly, it is an event which supports the authority of what Jesus said about God. In the following section we will make further arguments for the resurrection of Jesus.

Question 3



Who is the real Jesus?

The Christian Bible is a very controversial book. On the one hand it has some roots in actual history due to its accuracy in referencing historical figures, places, practices, and events which have been uncovered by archaeology. On the other hand, it has many supernatural events about which scholars are understandably skeptical.

Since the Bible is very clearly a *religious* text, in what sense can it be taken as *historical*? This difficulty in untangling the historical from the religious has led to a real problem in figuring out what to do with the religious figure known as Jesus of Nazareth.

The group of scholars who think of Jesus as entirely fictional is vanishingly small. However very few are willing to suggest that we should take the Bible at face-value when figuring out who the real Jesus actually was. This has led many to make a distinction between the *Biblical* Jesus and the *Historical* Jesus.

The Bible

Most of what we know about Jesus comes from the Bible. But to what degree can the Bible be trusted? The first objection to overcome is that of the miraculous events. If the Bible had included Jesus' travels, teachings, and the account of his death without all of the healings, exorcisms, and resurrections, then historians would have very little difficulty in believing that the accounts were likely historically accurate. Here are a few reasons they qualify for historical accuracy:

Eyewitness Accounts

Interestingly, the Bible contains four separate biographies of Jesus' life. Whereas they have many similarities – three of them seeming to draw the stories from a common source – they also bear enough differences to carry the hallmarks of eyewitness testimony.

It is widely believed that the book of Mark was the first to be written down. The book is named after John Mark – who is the author of the book according to early tradition. A variety of early church writings

from at least 3 sources tell us that John Mark was an educated young man who followed Peter and Paul on their missionary trips.

Because Mark was able to write (an uncommon quality in the first century), other followers of Peter in the Roman church asked Mark to write down Peter's stories about Jesus in Greek so that the stories would be available to read after Peter was gone.

The book of Mark is not written as a smooth biographical account with neat transitions from story to story. Rather the narrative jumps around rapidly, and reads very much like sermon notes which have been jotted down. Further evidence that Mark was written from Peter's accounts include the fact that the book paints the disciple Peter as the main character frequently, saying things like "Peter and the other disciples went out" or "Peter spoke up and the rest agreed." Mark records the healing of Peter's mother-in-law and the fact that Jesus had moved to Peter's hometown, referring to that town as "his home."

Should the early traditions and evidence within the book itself be true, then Mark was at the very least the transcription of an eyewitness account.

The book of Luke states upfront that its author was not an eyewitness, however he says that he had access to eyewitnesses, and his stated intent is to (unlike Mark) write the stories in an ordered manner. Luke appears to use the book of Mark as a source, but also includes what

appear to be eyewitness accounts from Jesus' women followers. Also unlike Mark, Luke is a careful historian, placing his accounts in context of the rulers and events during which the stories happened.

The book of John claims in no uncertain terms to be a direct eyewitness account, reiterating this point repeatedly throughout the books. Unlike the other 3, John includes new stories, many of which seem to have the intent of stressing their eyewitness nature (including the "doubting Thomas" tale, wherein the witness physically touches the risen Jesus).

We also have fairly direct testimony suggesting that John, the disciple, was indeed the author of that book. This comes from an early church writer named Irenaeus. Irenaeus wrote in the early second century, but was a disciple of a man named Polycarp. Polycarp, in turn, was a disciple of John himself. We have very early copies of Irenaeus's work which claims very clearly that John wrote the book after which he was named. This gives us fairly close testimony that John was the author of this book.

But the suggestion of eyewitness testimony is not exclusive to the authorship of the books. One way in which the books support one another's accounts are in accidental details which were clearly not placed there intentionally. For instance Matthew records that when Jesus called his first disciples, they were sitting around and mending

their fishing nets. Luke records the event of this calling and includes the fact that the disciples had just caught an enormous haul of fish which had broken their nets. So Luke explains the detail in the book of Matthew.

Matthew talks about the Roman ruler of Israel, Herod, hearing about the works of Jesus. Luke mentions that one of Jesus's women followers was the wife of Herod's advisor, explaining how he would have heard of Jesus.

Matthew tells us that Peter somehow made it into the inner courtyard of the Sanhedrin to witness Jesus's trial, but doesn't tell us how he gained access to such an exclusive location. John tells us that "another disciple" (probably John himself) went with Peter, and was a friend of the gatekeeper. And these are just a few examples of dozens of such accidental details.

These small, unintended details create the kinds of corroboration seen only in eyewitness testimony. Because of their eyewitness nature, the Gospel accounts cannot be immediately dismissed as inaccurate, even though they are also religious.

In addition to their eyewitness nature, the Gospels also accurately portray the geography, culture, political figures, and historical events of the time period that we know from other written sources and archeology. These things alone make it possible – perhaps even likely

– that the Gospels have some true things to say.

External Support

Let's say, however, that you are still skeptical about the Jesus the Bible portrays. There are contemporary sources outside of the Bible which also speak of Jesus. One of these is a Jewish historian writing for a Roman audience whose name was Josephus. As a Jew, Josephus would have little motivation to make up stories about Jesus, and his Roman audience probably wouldn't be interested in reading such fictions. Nevertheless, Josephus records the rise of Jesus as a popular teacher, his death, the reports of his resurrection, and the rise of the Christian church thereafter. Josephus wrote these things within the first century, and relatively close to the events he was recording.

A Roman historian named Tacitus also wrote within the first century. As little motivation as Josephus might have to compliment Jesus or his followers, Tacitus had plentiful motivation to dislike Christians – and he evidently did. Tacitus writes that, despite the execution of the troublesome Jesus, these scandalous Christians still persisted in their beliefs. He then reported on the various tortures and attempts at extermination carried out by the Romans to rid themselves of these persistent scoundrels.

Writing in the first century, the Syrian philosopher Mara Bar-Serapion

lists Jesus alongside of Socrates and Pythagoras as wise men who were killed for their teachings.

Similar to Tacitus above, the extensive commentaries Jewish Rabbis wrote on religion, known as the Talmud, contains an early reference to Jesus which is none too complimentary. The Talmud accuses Jesus of witchcraft and leading the Jewish youth astray, and records the execution of Jesus as a result of his crimes.

From these non-biblical accounts alone we can gather that Jesus lived, taught, allegedly performed supernatural feats, was killed, was reported to have resurrected, and gained a loyal following.

A Supernatural Jesus

The resurrection of Jesus is both a well-testified miracle in the available sources, and the only miracle necessary for Christianity to be true. What are the implications of a supernatural Jesus?

As mentioned above, Jesus as a supernatural being has been largely unproblematic for religious or even vaguely spiritualistic people around the globe and throughout the centuries. Hindus who see Jesus as a sort of Brahman or Buddhists who see him as an enlightened master don't have difficulty with his miracle reports. Jesus's miracles are a central part of Muslim doctrine. The Jewish Talmud reports them as being acts of witchcraft, and New Age spiritualists have seen

Jesus as everything from a spiritual guide to an extraterrestrial.

Whatever else he may have been, Jesus was very much a Jew. Both Matthew and Luke go to lengths to chronicle Jesus' Jewish lineage, Jesus participates in all of the Jewish holidays, Jesus regularly quotes Jewish scriptures, and evidently had the appearance of a Jew, as he was recognized on site as a Jew both by Jews and Samaritans who encountered him.

Under Jewish doctrine, a person who did supernatural acts was either a prophet of God, or a false prophet meant to mislead people. The Talmud considers him the latter. Jewish doctrine from the books of Moses holds that one must discern a prophet both by deeds and by words. If the prophet's message isn't consistent with the scriptures, he is clearly a false prophet. This leads us to examine how Jesus' life and teachings reflect on Jewish scriptures.

Jesus was an odd sort of Messiah in the Gospels. Whereas he would admit to being the Messiah when confronted by the disciples of John the Baptist, by his own disciples, or in a discreet midnight meeting with a Jewish Rabbi, Jesus regularly counseled people to remain quiet about his miraculous deeds, and declined to take a leadership role when one was insisted upon him. He seemed content to remain an itinerant teacher rather than ascend to the throne as the Messiah ought to do.

When Jesus was killed by the Gentile oppressors rather than freeing Israel and assuming the throne, this robbed his followers of hope, and confirmed to his enemies that he was not any kind of Messiah that scripture had predicted.

This is the common objection of Jews through the ages that Jesus could not have been the Messiah because he did not do the work of a Messiah: become a national liberator and a political ruler. But this is not an objection made after the fact; it was made in the Gospels themselves. Jesus's detractors and disciples alike both voiced issue with his avoidance of political power.

However, Jesus's life as recorded in the Gospels was not so inconsistent with Messiahship as it may otherwise seem. If one examines the Messianic characters throughout the Bible, they all follow the same pattern. Joseph came to his brothers with visions of being their ruler. His brothers beat him and sold him into slavery. In spite of this abuse, Joseph returned as a king and liberated his entire family from starvation.

Moses came down from his palace and began to mingle with his people. After saving one of them from the abuses of a slave master, his people rejected him and drove him into the wilderness. Many years later he returned as their great liberator.

David was anointed to be king as a teenager. He came onto the

battlefield and single-handedly defeated the enemy's strongest warrior, driving away the enemies of the Jews. But he was driven out and hunted for several years by King Saul. Once King Saul came to defeat, David rode in with his warriors to deliver Israel and take the throne. This story of rejection and return is thematic throughout the Bible, and exactly the kind of doctrine seen in Christianity.

However, Christians do not see Jesus merely as Messiah, but also as God incarnate. Is there any evidence for this? Jesus made claims to Godhood in the Gospels. He said "I and the Father are one," "If you have seen me, you have seen the Father," and "Before Abraham was, I am." He also accepted worship and spoke on his own authority. Instead of "Thus saith the Lord," he was prone to say, "Truly I say to you."

Moreover, there is strong suggestion that the Messiah may well be God incarnate. In the book of Zechariah, God speaks to Israel about their liberation, and he says "When they look on me, on him whom they have pierced, they shall mourn for him." In the prophecy in Micah wherein the birth of the Messiah in Bethlehem is predicted, it says that "His coming forth is from old, the ancient of days." In the famous passage in Isaiah which speaks of the virgin birth, it says that the son who is born will be called "Wonderful Counselor, the Mighty God, the Everlasting Father, the Prince of Peace." The idea of a Messiah who is God incarnate is not foreign to the language of the Jewish scriptures.

So who is the real Jesus? The case can be made that the Jesus of the Bible was the real Jesus, that he is the savior of humankind, and that he was God incarnate.

Question 4

 **If God is real, why do we suffer?**

The existence of suffering in the world has been a tremendous challenge to the idea of God for many years. It seems that if suffering exists, then we have a God who doesn't care about suffering, actually desires people to suffer, or is unable to prevent suffering. Can suffering be somehow reconciled with the idea of God?

The assumption here is that physical or emotional pain is somehow wrong, evil, or suboptimal. The opposite idea being that comfort and pleasure are right, good, and optimal. However, we can easily think of ways in which we could both suffer and yet find fulfillment. Contrary-wise, we can also think of ways that it is possible to have the best of all comforts and advantages and be distinctly unfulfilled and find no

purpose or meaning.

People who work as doctors or psychologists or social workers live lives of stress where the work they do is rarely met with appreciation or gratitude. Many of them struggle to balance family and any form of social life against their highly demanding jobs. Such people could easily find less stressful work and yet something drives them to pursue these career choices.

Why? Perhaps one reason is because these same people can go to bed at night with the knowledge that they are making an impact in the world, and that what they are doing is good and worthwhile. What they fail to receive from the thankless people they help, they receive existentially by the knowledge that their work has some kind of purpose. These people may rarely be in a happy mood, but they are sometimes deeply fulfilled.

Pain and Fulfillment

When a philosopher talks about “Existential Fulfillment” they mean that a person has found purpose and meaning in their life, such that their very existence is justified. It can reasonably be assumed that a person who experiences suffering and is living a fulfilled life is far better off than a person who is comfortable - who has access to pleasures of every sort - and is living a restless and meaningless life.

Imagine that you could take a pill and would instantly feel happy no matter what. Pain or pleasure, success or failure, fed or starving, regardless of the circumstances, you would feel nothing but happiness. There is a certain pity to be had toward a person who is mindlessly happy without anything to which the happiness is attached. The feeling of happiness divorced from any purpose or meaning is not desirable, but rather pitiful.

It is worth noting at this point, that there are no stories, real or fictional, that boast an achievement or accomplishment that was not reached through a process of struggle and pain. It could be argued that triumph can *only be achieved* as a result of struggle. This is not merely true of fictional characters. One can think of individuals such as Hellen Keller whose blindness and deafness caused her to struggle so much of her childhood, but ultimately led to her being an international celebrity, speaker, author, and activist for the disabled community. In fact, it would be difficult to find a great character anywhere in history that experienced no struggle before their achievements.

Perhaps an apt example of this would be the Biblical story of Joseph.

In this story, Joseph was born to his father's favorite wife after her many years of heartbreak over her infertility. Because of the privileged treatment he received from his father, Joseph was verbally abused

regularly, and ultimately beaten and sold into slavery by his own brothers. While in slavery, Joseph was falsely accused of rape and placed in prison. After successfully prophesying the fate of two inmates, he was not thanked, but rather forgotten for years. Finally, that act of prophecy paid off, and he ended up the king's confidant and eventually second in command. As such, he administrated the land during a famine, saving millions of lives, including his family.

His rise to power and fulfillment involved a path of humiliation and suffering, but was all the sweeter by virtue of the struggle.

In the popular mind, comfort, pleasure and enjoyment might be termed "good" whilst struggle, pain, and tragedy might be termed "evil." But if struggle and pain lead to purpose and existential satisfaction, then they are, in fact, beneficial in a way that comfort is not.

Why are we Dissatisfied?

It needs very little documentation that human beings, no matter what kind of life they have, are a restless, unhappy, and discontented lot.

Take, for instance, the story of the Gautama Buddha, the founder of Buddhism. According to legend, he grew up in a wealthy home where all his needs were tended to, but found himself unhappy. Casting about the world, he quickly discovered that everyone he

met was unhappy. It was partially this realization which caused him to found his new religion. When he founded Buddhism, it was in part designed to answer the question of how to satisfy the deep sense of dissatisfaction in all people. In the end, he concluded that it couldn't be satisfied, only eliminated. Thusly, one of the central tenants of Buddhism is to force oneself to desire nothing at all.

One would think that if humans formed in, evolved through, and constantly adapt to their environment, that contentment would be the status quo. How is it that human beings are not satisfied with *this* world if they have known no other world? How do humans recognize that something about the world is *wrong* when they know of no *right*?

From whence does this sense of longing come, and more importantly, what *in the world* could satisfy it? The answer is clearly nothing *in the world* can. No matter how hard they look, people cannot find the missing thing that would once and for all satisfy them.

Human beings recognize that they have needs and longings which no material thing seems to satisfy. The complaint of the problem of suffering might be stated as "Why do bad things happen?" Perhaps an even deeper question would be, "Why don't good things satisfy?"

What Do Humans Really Need?

In 1943, psychologist Abraham Maslow wrote a paper entitled “A Theory of Human Motivation.” In this paper he proposed his now-famous “Hierarchy of Needs.” What Maslow said is that human beings begin with a very basic set of needs that they pursue in order to live. These include such things as hunger, thirst, and physical comfort. Once these immediate needs are met, they pursue more long-term needs such as safety and security. The third tier of needs Maslow suggests includes love and belonging. Fourthly, an individual would pursue respect and accomplishment. Finally they would seek out things such as philosophy, knowledge, and wisdom.

In all likelihood, Maslow would have considered things like religion and spirituality to belong to this final tier of human needs, making them the most expendable of all the needs a person might have.

The Bible appears to have the opposite view. In the book of Deuteronomy, Moses instructs the new generation of Israelites with these words:

“And he humbled you and let you hunger and fed you with manna... that he might make you know that man does not live by bread alone, but man lives by every word that comes from the mouth of the Lord.” (Deuteronomy 8:3 ESV)

Later, Jesus quotes this same passage when responding to Satan's temptation to break his fasting by turning the stones to bread.

In fact, the practice of fasting itself, recommended throughout the Bible, is a blatant denial of the Maslow Hierarchy. What the Bible seems to suggest is that spiritual needs are superior to physical needs such that physical needs must be placed in subjection to them.

While this may seem topsy-turvy, it makes a great deal more sense when one considers that, no matter how effective a person is in meeting their physical needs, they will still inevitably die. There is no amount of food, water, comfort or safety that can eliminate the possibility of death; these things can only delay it. However, if Jesus' teachings are correct, then the meeting of spiritual needs affords a person eternal life beyond death.

Additionally, it is disputable that, even if a person were to rise to the top of Maslow's hierarchy, they would ever truly be satisfied. The author of the Old Testament book of Ecclesiastes walks the reader through his pursuit of existential satisfaction. He relates that he tried physical pleasure - living a life of hedonism; he tried vocational pleasure - gaining wealth and accomplishing great building projects that brought him fame; and he tried mental and spiritual satisfaction - studying and becoming renowned for his wisdom. After accomplishing every stage of Maslow's Hierarchy, he found it all to be meaningless and unfulfilling.

The search to meet these physical needs may, in fact, be a catalyst that brings people in search of God in the first place. As an example of this, consider this passage from the book of Matthew:

“And behold, some people brought to him a paralytic, lying on a bed. And when Jesus saw their faith, he said to the paralytic, ‘Take heart, my son; your sins are forgiven.’ And behold, some of the scribes said to themselves, ‘This man is blaspheming.’ But Jesus, knowing their thoughts, said, ‘Why do you think evil in your hearts? For which is easier, to say, ‘Your sins are forgiven,’ or to say, ‘Rise and walk’? But that you may know that the Son of Man has authority on earth to forgive sins”—he then said to the paralytic—“Rise, pick up your bed and go home.” And he rose and went home. When the crowds saw it, they were afraid, and they glorified God, who had given such authority to men.”

(Matthew 9:2-8 ESV)

Presumably the purpose for which the people brought the paralytic to Christ was not to have his sins forgiven, but rather to have him healed. Jesus, instead, put the priorities in their proper perspective by forgiving the sin for the eternal net benefit of the paralytic, rather than healing his paralysis, which was a temporary benefit at best. It was only when they questioned his authority to forgive sins that Jesus healed the man, doing so to prove his authority, and, as is fitting, the people who saw it “Glorified God, which had given such authority

to men.” Thus, the man’s suffering served the ultimate purpose of glorifying God.

In fact, a strong argument could be made that people are brought to knowledge of God most frequently *through* suffering. The case of the paralytic is a good example. This man came to Jesus *because* of his suffering, an act that resulted in eternal rewards: a net gain for his suffering. The Gospels and the book of Acts are packed with such examples of people in suffering who, by seeking relief, came to saving knowledge in Jesus.

But one need not turn to the Gospels to see examples of this. Ask any Christian to give you their testimony and, in the vast majority of cases, they will sight an example of suffering that brought them into union – or a closer relationship – with God.

Question 5



What happens when you die?

We have saved the most commonly Googled religious question for last. As phrased, this question has received over 74,000 inquiries in one year alone. Everyone dies, and as we have mentioned in a previous question, the idea that life extends beyond death is almost a universal concept across history and cultures.

If life is merely a physical property of matter and energy, then when a person dies, they cease to be. There is nothing left of that person except in other people's memories, and whatever dents and fingerprints they may have left behind.

Of course religions as a rule tend to differ in their opinions of the

afterlife. One thing consistent across all known religions is the idea that some part of that person continues beyond their body. Eastern religions tend to think that some part of that person's soul merges with the universe or returns in a new body to live out an endless cycle. Most ancient pagan religions depict some kind of shadowy spirit world wherein the departed continue to exist for eternity – be it the “Land of the Dead” of Egyptian lore, the Underworld of Grecian mythology, or the “Hel” of Norse legend. Islam has a Heaven/Hell model familiar to most people in Western society. Jewish teachings are somewhat unspecific about the destination of the dead, but generally teach that there will be a physical return to earth – a resurrection – at the return of the Messiah.

Christian thought on the afterlife can be a bit schizophrenic. Biblically, the Christian model resembles the Jewish one: that there will be a physical resurrection and a re-creation of the universe such that death is but a way-station on the path to a perfected universe. However, across the centuries, this Biblical model of bodily resurrection has been replaced in the popular mind with the familiar “heaven/hell” model of a merely spiritual eternity. This has had unfortunate consequences, as critics of Christianity find the prospect of sitting about in some spiritual realm for eternity to be uninteresting. Given that the Biblical model in both Old and New Testament suggests a resurrection to a perfected earth, this is likely the most scriptural view, suggesting that eternal life will not be unlike earthly life, except

without death, suffering, or the bad behavior we currently undergo.

This is not, mind you, to argue that there is no heaven. There may be something like a heaven, but it does not represent the ultimate eternal life in the Biblical schema.

The Soul

Among the reasons that cultures around the world have come to the conclusion that there is some part of a person which exists beyond death is the conclusion that human beings are more than just a body. There is a *you* that peers out from behind your eyes, can observe yourself make decisions and then reflect on those decisions, can think back on a time when you were younger and knew less things than you do now, and who does not change even as you have surgeries to remove your appendix, your body ages, and your brain isn't able to think as well as it used to.

But is there some way to demonstrate that you are more than just your body? One of the simplest ways to demonstrate this is the fact that you and your body don't always want the same things. Consider the breaking of addictions. Addiction studies have been done on animals, and in none of these studies do animals attempt to break the addiction or fight the urge to give into the addictive behavior. Now pursuing an addiction to its end is exactly what one would expect if we were following merely biological urges. That human beings have

the ability to fight against the biological urges that bring pleasure or gratification is surprising, and indicates some motivating force fighting against biology. Clearly, it is neither common nor easy for a person to break their addiction, but it is possible.

Another example of this can be seen in faithfulness in marriage or relationships. Only 3-5% of all mammals mate for life. This puts humans in a pretty exclusive club. However, the truly defining difference is the vast range of sexual behaviors of humans around the globe. Sexual pleasure is arguably the strongest motivator of human behavior. So much so, that large amounts of money and resources – in both the private and public sectors – are devoted to separating the act of sex from its biological purpose of procreation.

Clearly the temptation to sexual promiscuity is strongly ingrained in human biology – and yet many humans decide to pursue values like loyalty and fidelity above the urge to pursue pleasure. More telling, however, is that neither fidelity nor infidelity are universal human behaviors. Whereas with all other animals, the entire species tends to either mate for life or not, only in humans do behaviors vary so widely.

Perhaps most interesting is that, in humans, experiences of bodily pain and pleasure are not always connected to feelings of personal fulfillment. On a purely biological model, one would expect that people suffering from chronic pain or physical disabilities would mostly

be emotionally depressed. One would also expect that people who experience biological pleasure – such as frequent sexual experiences – would mostly be happy or contented. However, the studies suggest that this is not nearly as straightforward as it would seem. Many studies – such as “The relationship between religion/spirituality and physical health, mental health, and pain in a chronic pain population” – have found that certain kinds of religious beliefs and practices help people to cope with their chronic pain.

People who have disabilities or medical conditions in which they experience chronic pain can be content and fulfilled. This becomes obvious when one considers the wealthy, influential and attractive people who are constantly airing their personal problems in the media while flitting between relationships, as contrasted with people who find purpose and fulfillment in monogamy and in stressful and under-appreciated jobs such as healthcare, therapy and missionary work.

Ultimately, if animals are used as a baseline against which to compare the human experience, it becomes obvious that animals are very much slaves to their biological experiences of pain and pleasure, whereas humans have an entirely separate dimension of experience that ascends to the level of the spiritual.

Others, such as Dr. Gary Habermas, have made a more empirical argument for the human soul in studying Near Death Experiences

(NDEs). Habermas has accumulated accounts wherein the person who had the NDE experience has observed things outside of his or her body which they could not possibly have known otherwise. Things like seeing a shoe on the top of the building, or knowing something happening somewhere else in the building. Due to its somewhat paranormal flavor, not everyone is comfortable with looking at NDEs as evidence of a spiritual aspect to humans, but it is also the kind of thing one might expect if humans had a non-physical nature, and when such accounts include observations which are difficult to explain by any means besides an out-of-body experience, the evidence deserves some consideration.

The Resurrection

We have argued in response to the question “What happens when you die” that the ultimate expectation is that of a physical resurrection. Not only is this the strongest theme of Jewish and Christian scriptures, but it also has one of the most solid cases for its reality.

That case is none other than the resurrection of Jesus himself. Paul makes this argument in his letters, that if Jesus was, indeed, resurrected from the dead, we can expect to also be resurrected. But isn't the resurrection just a claim one must take on faith? Not necessarily.

We have argued in a previous section that there are good reasons to

believe that the Gospels contain eyewitness accounts. Now we will argue that the accounts of the resurrection specifically have a high degree of reliability.

One of the stronger arguments to be made for the resurrection comes from Paul's letter of 1 Corinthians chapter 15:3 – 7. This passage reads as follows:

“For I delivered to you as of first importance what I also received: that Christ died for our sins in accordance with the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day in accordance with the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, then to the twelve. Then he appeared to more than five hundred brothers at one time, most of whom are still alive, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles. Last of all, as to one untimely born, he appeared also to me.”

At first glance this seems to be just a run-of-the-mill story about Jesus's resurrection, but there are some surprising features of this passage worth considering.

The book of 1 Corinthians is considered by practically every historian who studies the Bible – including a sizable amount who are not, themselves, Christians – to be an original book written by Paul of Tarsus sometime around 60 CE. This would place it within 20 or 30 years of the crucifixion. However, the above statement in the book has

all the hallmarks of a hymn or Rabbinic tradition which pre-dates the book by a significant amount. In other words, this is likely a quote Paul is making from an older tradition that he picked up from elsewhere. It happens to list several eyewitnesses of the resurrected Jesus, not least of which was Paul himself.

The first witnesses listed are the disciples. One might expect the disciples to be eager to believe that their leader had come back from the dead, or perhaps even willing to fabricate such a story. There are, however, several reasons to believe otherwise.

We have mentioned that Jesus did not resemble the Messiah the Jews expected. He was rejected by the Jewish leaders and was killed by the hands of pagan oppressors in the most humiliating way possible – one which was specifically identified as a curse by Jewish scriptures.

Moreover, the Jewish conception of the resurrection was a massive event which would happen to the entire nation at the return of the Messiah. The disciples, as good Jews, would have no reason to expect that their leader could be the Messiah if he died on a cross, and the resurrection of a single man was not something they would have expected as Jews, or have fabricated as a story to convince themselves or others.

Further, if they had fabricated the story, they would not have done

so by listing women as the first eyewitnesses. The testimony of women was considered invalid in first century Judea. Nor would they have painted themselves, the men, as skeptics and doubters as the Gospels depict (no, Thomas was not the only doubter. When the women reported seeing Jesus alive, all of the disciples were said to have disbelieved).

We have shown previously that the first century writings of Romans and Jews have been particularly harsh toward the Christians. One of the ways in which the Christian sect could have been quickly squashed was to present the body of the dead Jesus. The place of his burial was known to Jewish leaders and Romans alike. The Gospels say that the Jewish leaders started a rumor suggesting the disciples stole the corpse, which in turn suggests that the leaders knew the body was absent from its resting place.

In addition to Jesus's death being an embarrassment for his Jewish followers, and his resurrection being something the Jews were not expecting, another reason to believe that they did not fabricate the story was the amount of suffering they experienced as a result of the story. They were ousted from the Jewish community, attacked and even killed by Jewish opponents, and tortured by Romans, as testified by the first century writers we have already seen. This "lie" of theirs was doing them no favors, and it would have done them a great deal of good to confess the truth and escape the persecution.

Conclusion

If Jesus rose from the dead, then not only is resurrection possible, it is among the things he promised his followers. Having evidence that his promises are true, this is something we can expect to happen after we die.

Conclusion

In this book we have taken a look at five of the most Googled questions related to God and spirituality. The foremost of these questions asks about what happens when we die. Death has always been a frightening thing – arguably the most frightening thing for humans. However, if the God of the Bible exists, as we have argued in questions 1 and 2, there exists a ray of hope for our morbid fears.

Further, as we have discussed in question 5, that hope involves a resurrection followed by eternal life. This is not, as some imagine, an airy spiritual eternity among the clouds with all of the tedium that suggests, rather it is a physical life in a physical universe with limitless personal freedom which is accompanied neither by the desire nor the willingness to misbehave for those who have elected to ask God for forgiveness in this current life.

Because of the perfection of this universe to come, the discomfort

and suffering experienced in this current life will be either absent or without the associated unpleasantness we currently experience. But as we have argued in question 4, it is not discomfort that is the cause of our true suffering, but rather the absence of hope and fulfillment. One of the beautiful things offered by Christianity is both the hope and personal fulfillment which make suffering endurable.

If these are questions you have Googled in the past, have thought of asking, or had not yet occurred to you, we hope this has been a thought-provoking read that will have you exploring these questions further. Asking Google is always a tempting option, but nothing is as enlightening as asking a human being, and we hope you will seek out others for these discussions.



We believe there is too much heat and not enough light when we discuss faith online. That we won't make progress until we can learn to discuss and disagree well.

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