TABLE OF CONTENTS

QUESTION 1

IS THERE A GOD? DOES THAT MATTER TO MY LIFE?.....6

What evidence for God's existence is there? Why isn't that evidence more conclusive? Can we even know if God is real? Is God close or distant? Would I want to know God if he did exist? How would God's existence or non-existence change my life?

QUESTION 2

HOW CAN I FIND PEACE IN SUCH A STRESSFUL AND CONFUSING WORLD?.....16

Why does it seem like we're all so stressed? Where can I turn to find stability and peace? Why do we have so much but still feel anxious and unsatisfied? Is freedom from anxiety even possible?

QUESTION 3

IN SUCH A CONNECTED WORLD, WHY DO I FEEL SO ISOLATED AND LONELY?.....24

How can I have so many friends but still feel so alone? Does anyone truly know me? Do I know myself? If I let people see the real me, would they accept me or push me away? How can I escape loneliness? Can God help me feel less lonely?

QUESTION 4

IF GOD IS GOOD, WHY IS THERE SO MUCH EVIL, PAIN, AND SUFFERING?.....32

Why is life so hard? Why do bad things happen to good people? Why doesn't God do something about it? If God loves us, why does suffering even exist at all? What about the trauma I've faced—where was God in it? How can I find healing and hope?

QUESTION 5

WHAT DOES THE BIBLE SAY ABOUT JUSTICE?.....40

Why do we yearn for justice so deeply? Why do so many Christians seem unconcerned about social injustices? How does God view injustice? What does he do about it? What about injustices I've committed—what does pursuing justice for them mean for me? What does true justice look like?

QUESTION 6

DOESN'T SCIENCE REFUTE MUCH OF WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS?.....50

Doesn't the Bible and Christian teaching reject established scientific facts? Would I need to turn my brain off to become a Christian? Are there questions that science can't answer but the Bible can? Is it possible for science and the Bible to be harmonized? How?

QUESTION 7

AREN'T ALL RELIGIONS BASICALLY THE SAME?.....60

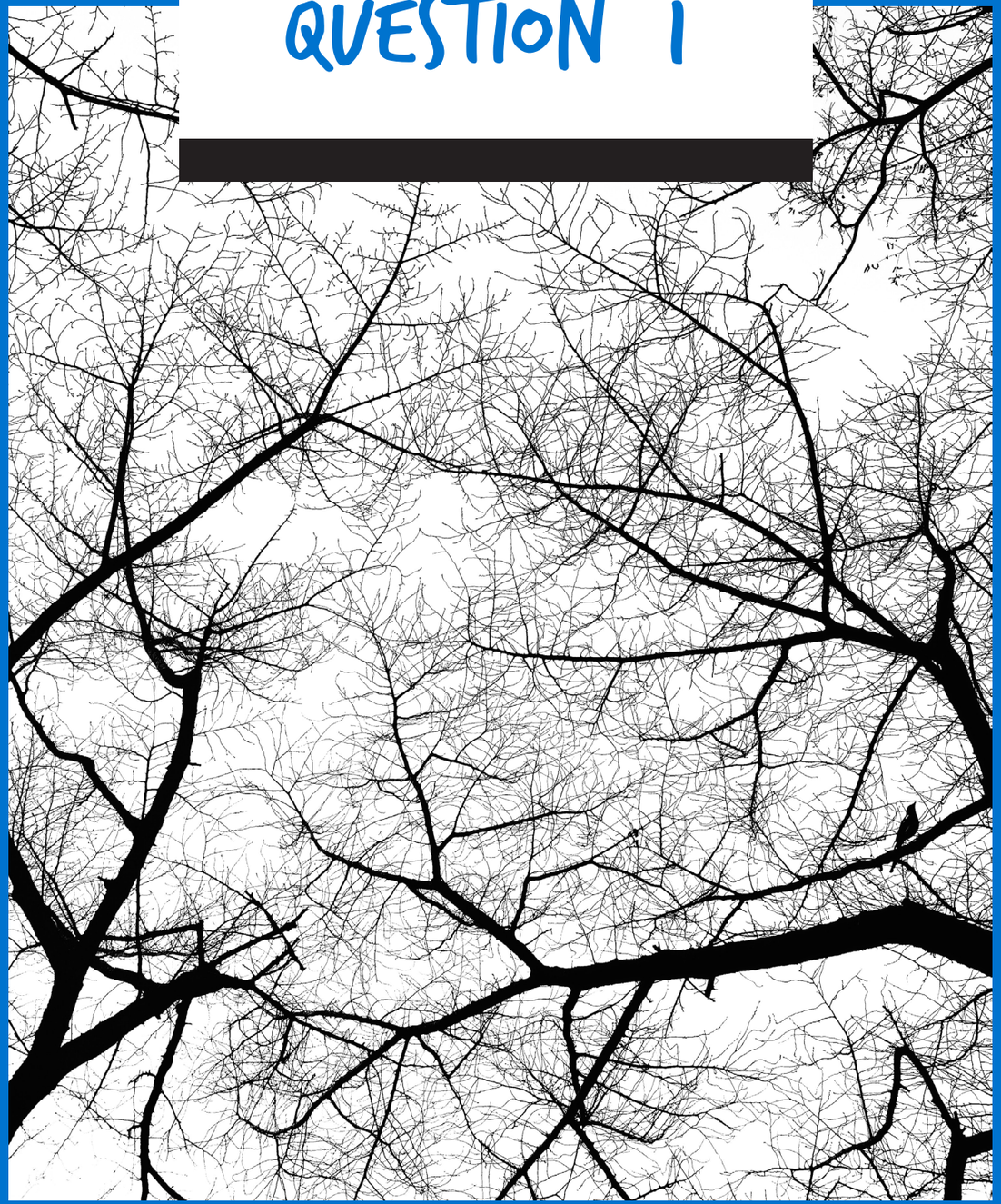
Aren't different religions just different perspectives on the same God? Why does Christianity claim to be the "only way?" Isn't that bigoted and intolerant? Isn't it unloving, even un-Christian, to judge people and tell them they're wrong? Wouldn't God accept good-hearted people from other faiths?

QUESTION 8

ISN'T BELIEVING IN JESUS JUST BLIND FAITH?.....70

Hasn't the Bible been changed over time, so that the real Jesus has become distorted? What was Jesus's life really like? What factual evidence is there for him and for the Bible? How can serious people accept miracles like the resurrection to be true? Isn't it like believing a fairy tale? What do Jesus's claims and the evidence surrounding him mean for me?

QUESTION 1



IS THERE A GOD? DOES THAT MATTER TO MY LIFE?

Imagine you live in a two-dimensional world. You have height and width but no depth, like a drawing on flat paper. To you, a 3-D person would be impossible to comprehend. They'd exist off the paper. You could look left and right or up and down, but looking outward—off the paper—isn't possible; that plane simply doesn't exist.[1]

How would the 3-D person reveal themselves and engage with people in the 2-D world?

This is a bit like our situation with God. You and I exist in space and time—a physical world—so understanding or interacting with a being outside these dimensions is difficult. We can't "see" this being any more than a 2-D person could look off the paper to see a 3-D one. We might wonder if such a being even exists. We need that being to reveal themselves to us in some way.

A 3-D person might reveal themselves to a 2-D world by pressing their finger to the paper. They'd enter the world, but their appearance in it would be a fingerprint. It would suggest the 3-D person's existence, and even say something about what they're like, but it could also be dismissed. What if that "fingerprint" is just a part of 2-D reality, not an indication of a superior being?

The Bible anticipates these different responses. One of the Psalms, a songbook for the Hebrew people, begins: "The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands."[A] A later book states, "since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities—his eternal power and divine nature—have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made...."[B] The observable world gives indications of God's existence. But the same passage says that people look at this plain evidence and dismiss it, suppressing the truth about God. [C]

So, as we examine some evidence for God's existence, ask yourself: *If God exists, would I want to know him?* If you do, God says, "You will seek me and find me when you seek me with all your heart." [D]

[A] PSALM 19:1
[B] ROMANS 1:20
[C] ROMANS 1:18
[D] JEREMIAH 29:13

WHAT "FINGERPRINTS" OF GOD ARE OBSERVABLE?

When we encounter something that appears to serve a clear purpose, we assume it has been designed. For example, when you see a Bird or Lime scooter on the street, you recognize that a company created it with an intended purpose, that it's something you ride, something you must pay to rent, something able take you places faster than walking can. You don't assume that it formed by a chance combination of parts.

When we observe the world around us, do we see indications of design? What should we do with that information if we do?

Here are just a few things that appear to show design, and, therefore, a designer.

THE BIG BANG

Scientists are convinced that our universe began with a massive explosion of energy and light. Astrophysicist Robert Jastrow, a self-described agnostic, stated, "The seed of everything that has happened in the Universe was planted in that first instant; every star, every planet, and every living creature in the Universe came into being as a result of events that were set in motion in the moment of the cosmic explosion...and we cannot find out what caused that to happen."[2]

Cause-and-effect is a scientific sure thing. There is no spontaneous motion; some force must act first. Chemicals don't suddenly change unless something causes a reaction. Matter cannot arise from non-matter.

Alternative theories for the universe's origins continue to be proposed, but the most scientifically consistent one is that there was an outside cause.

EARTH

The Earth is located the exact right distance from the sun. Our surface temperatures range, generally, between -30 and +120 degrees. If the Earth were any farther away, we'd all freeze. Any closer and we'd burn up. Even a tiny shift in the Earth's position in relation to the sun would make life on Earth impossible.

Our Moon is also precisely sized and positioned. The Moon's gravitational pull creates important ocean tides and movement so ocean waters don't stagnate, while at the same time restraining them from spilling across the continents.[3]

WATER

No living thing can survive without water. Its abundance on Earth is remarkable, but water's unique properties are what make it an indicator of design: it behaves differently than any other liquid.[4]

Water is a universal solvent, allowing chemicals, minerals, and nutrients to easily dissolve and be carried, absorbed and used throughout our bodies.[5] It's also chemically neutral, so it doesn't change the nature of the substances it carries.

Water has a unique surface tension, so it can flow upward in plants, against gravity, bringing nourishment to the top of even the tallest trees. It's also unique in that it becomes less dense as it cools. It freezes from the top down and floats in solid form, allowing aquatic life to survive winter. If water acted like other liquids, plant and sea life would be nearly impossible. All other forms of life would become impossible too.

> SUPER-INTELLIGENCE IS THE ONLY GOOD EXPLANATION FOR THE ORIGIN OF LIFE AND THE COMPLEXITY OF NATURE. – ANTONY FLEW

HUMAN BEINGS

Our eyes can distinguish among seven million colors. They have automatic focusing and handle an astounding 1.5 million messages at the same time.[6]

The eye is just one of many systems the human brain must manage constantly. Your brain processes more than a million messages a second:[7] the temperature of the room, the swirl of sounds around you, the texture of your mobile device, the dryness of your mouth, and much more. It does this while storing memories, regulating emotions, and maintaining involuntary functions like heartbeat and breathing.

But more than any other complex biological system, DNA is what prompts many scientists to consider whether intentional design lies behind all life.

Dr. Antony Flew, a British philosopher and longtime advocate of atheism, stated in 2004, "Super-intelligence is the only good explanation for the origin of life and the complexity of nature."[8] DNA research and discoveries played a large role in his conclusion.

VIDEO: DR. FRANCIS COLLINS OFFERS FURTHER EVIDENCE FOR GOD'S EXISTENCE (LENGTH: 1:45)

The DNA code is similar to an intricate computer program. Only, instead of ones and zeroes, a DNA strand is made of four chemicals, abbreviated with the letters A, T, G, and C. Embedded within every human cell is a code of three billion pairs of these letters. If you were to read that code aloud at three letters per second, it would take thirty-one years.[9]

Dr. Francis Collins, director of the Human Genome Project (which mapped the human DNA structure) said that one can "think of DNA as an instructional script, a software program, sitting in the nucleus of the cell."[10] And your DNA is 99.9% similar to everyone else's; the variations in the script that cause you to be you lie in that tiny difference.[11]

As we consider these examples, we have to ask, "Why?" Why are Earth's properties so finely tuned to accommodate life? Why does water behave differently than any other liquid? Why is DNA so complex? Are these a few of the fingerprints God has left on the paper of our world?

DOES GOD CARE WHETHER WE ACKNOWLEDGE HIM?

I (Marilyn) was once an atheist. And like many atheists, the issue of people believing in God bothered me. Why would we would devote so much time and energy refuting something we don't even believe exists?

I thought my attention came from a sense of care for those poor, delusional believers. I wanted to help them realize their hope was ill-founded. But to be honest, I had another motive. As I challenged those who believed in God, I was deeply curious to see if they could convince me otherwise. Part of my quest was to become free from the question of God. If I could prove believers wrong, the issue would be off the table; I could freely go about my life.