

# TOP 50 APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS



# TOP 50 APOLOGETICS QUESTIONS PART 1

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## GENERAL INTRODUCTION

When students come to college, they enter a world swimming in the secular worldview. Those who grew up church-ed are made to believe that their faith is made up. And those who profess to be curious about the faith are scoffed at and told that to believe is “intellectual suicide.” More and more, students are turning away from religion.

But contrary to popular belief, there are good answers to many of the objections to Christianity that can help bolster faith and even convince atheists that Christianity is true. The issue is that many people do not take the time and effort to reason it out and consider for themselves. That’s why as Christians, we need to be able to, in the words of 1 Peter 3:15, “[be] prepared to make a defense to anyone who asks you for a reason for the hope that is in you.”

Drawing upon our decades of college ministry experience, we’ve created a list of the Top 50 Apologetics Questions along with basic talking points to help equip college ministers to be able to answer commonly asked questions and provide a rational basis for our faith. What we provide here will be useful as a refresher for those familiar with apologetics. For others, we encourage you to start with these questions and do further reading to investigate more deeply upon these topics. There are many good books as well as websites such as [Reasonable Faith](#) & [Stand to Reason](#). Take this opportunity to strengthen your own faith and become personally equipped in order to win our generation to Christ!

## PART 1 INTRODUCTION:

In this first section, we explore the questions related to the existence and nature of God. Questions such as – Does God exist? If there is a good God, then why is there pain and suffering? Why does God remain hidden? These are questions that cause many to just give up – and say that there must be NO God. And yet, there is a good case for why there HAS to be God, and why it is rational to believe in Him.

We’ll also explore the questions surrounding truth and worldview. Is there such a thing as absolute truth? Do all roads lead to god? These questions are popular in today’s culture where you’re told that you can believe anything you want. But can all beliefs be equally true?

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## QUESTIONS ABOUT THE EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

### 1. What key arguments are there for God's existence?

- a. Kalam cosmological argument
  - i. Everything that begins to exist has a cause
  - ii. The universe BEGAN to exist (Big Bang)
  - iii. THEREFORE: The universe has a cause
- b. Moral argument: ([Video](#) from William Lane Craig)
  - i. If God does not exist, objective moral values do not exist because there is no higher moral authority to determine what is right & wrong.
  - ii. BUT, objective moral values do exist (justice, honesty, compassion)
  - iii. THEREFORE: God exists
- c. Teleological argument / "Fine Tuning" argument: ([Video](#) from William Lane Craig)
  - i. The initial conditions of the universe, the fundamental laws of the universe, the formation of our solar system, and the evolution of intelligent life was either by chance, necessity, or design.
  - ii. Evidence shows that this was not by chance (probabilistic resources insufficient) or necessity (no such interdisciplinary system across cosmology, astrophysics, chemistry, and biology exists or is even proposed to exist)
  - iii. THEREFORE this was by design

### 2. What key arguments are there for God's existence?

- 1. Morality / meaning are illusions. They are just electrical signals firing in our synapses rather than anything deeper or more universal.
  - a. All moral impulses for good rather than evil are as binding as an impulse for chocolate vs. vanilla.
- 2. We are complex robots without free will. We're simply driven by our genes.
- 3. No ultimate meaning or purpose.

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### 3. Why would a good God allow evil / suffering to exist?

1. Free will defense: Because God created us to be free. In order to be free, we need to be able to choose good OR evil. To not allow for the possibility of evil is to not be free.
2. Jesus redeemer defense: Because the suffering can be redeemed. If the goal of this world is to find God and salvation rather than to maximize physical comfort, then suffering is entirely compatible, perhaps even desirable for God to permit
  - a. Common sense example: parents who don't maximize comfort for kids but allow struggle/suffering for growth & maturity.
  - b. Biblical examples: famine causes younger son in Luke 15 to be restored to his Father, Jesus' suffering results in our salvation

### 4. Why would God command the death of so many people in the Bible (e.g., the Canaanites)?

1. The Bible's divine commandment is a judgment of God, which is his prerogative.
2. Even we recognize that there is a certain point of no return for a culture that has engaged in evil (like Nazi culture had to be crushed)
3. Based on mankind's sin, we are ALL condemned to judgment. The fact that we do not face the same judgment as them is not a right, but grace. But ultimately all of us will face the judgment of death.

### 5. How can a loving God send people to hell?

1. Hell is the state of final separation from God - and is the natural outcome for those who choose not to follow God. So, to have no Hell is to say that all have to follow God. It negates free will.
2. Without there being Hell, it means that when we sin or do wrong, there is no place of judgment. The implications is that...
  - a. Our moral choices (what matters to us the most - whether we love someone or kill someone) ultimately doesn't matter.
  - b. Or God is evil, indifferent, but a cruel jokester who gave us the illusion of having our choices matter.
3. Heaven is a place of eternal, awesome worship of God
  - a. The experience would be torturous and terrifying to those not reconciled to him. E.g. Imagine forcing an angry atheist into an eternal worship service. Heaven and hell are relational conditions: see Luke 15 (older son refuses to come into the father's house, even though he is technically a "better guy.")

*"There are only two kinds of people in the end: those who say to God, 'Thy will be done,' and those to whom God says, in the end, 'Thy will be done.' All that are in Hell, choose it." (CS Lewis, Great Divorce)*

## 6. Why does God remain so “hidden?”

1. Because God wants to woo us into love, and not overwhelm us with power (analogy of the prince who wants to marry a peasant girl). Ultimately, God will be revealed at the time of judgment where seeing God would mean that we've already chosen to love him or not love him.
2. God's holiness and power mean his certain presence would be, for most people, the equivalent of an epistemological handgun (coercion): i.e. assurance of his brute existence necessitates immediate submission regardless of attitude/heart
3. He's veiled out of mercy so that His holy presence would not cause ordinary, sinful people to shrivel up. (eg. wise parents who reduce their presence around children, knowing that to notice every infraction & misdeed would stifle the child)

*“Love must be chosen. It must be free, and it must be from the heart, without external motivations. But, quite frankly, it's very difficult for an all-powerful God to behave in such a way that love can occur with these qualities. If He uses the “direct approach” -- to the point where an alternative explanation is not possible (if it's possible to do this), and continuously enough so it doesn't fade from our memories—He only succeeds in blowing us over or in spoiling us with a magical genie.” (Gregory Boyd, Letters From A Skeptic)*

## 7. Why does the “Old Testament God” seem different from the “New Testament God?”

There is a perception that the OT God is full of anger & wrath while the NT God in the form of Jesus is full of grace & love. But there is grace shown by God throughout the OT. David in Psalm 103 says that God is “merciful and gracious, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love.” In Jeremiah, God warns about the consequence of their sins, but if they turn, will offer forgiveness. Similarly, Jesus was not just about grace & love. He called the Pharisees “brood of vipers” and “whitewashed tombs.” And then in the temple, he overturned tables & drove people away with a whip. In Matthew 7, Jesus will judge people and say “I never knew you.”

So, they are NOT different. It's the same God who is BOTH grace and judgment. In fact, Jesus said that he was the God of the OT. John 8:58 “Truly, truly, I say to you, before Abraham was, I am.” He pre-existed Abraham and identified as the Creator God of the OT.

## 8. Why would God need people to worship Him (isn't that egotistical and arrogant)?

1. God would be arrogant if God is just us. But when a parent says to his child that she should respect and listen to him, then is that arrogance or being in accord to reality?
2. God has no need of our worship (c.f. Acts 17). However, we're designed to worship- it is pleasing and ultimately fulfilling. Example: we need to eat. Most people find that quite enjoyable- we generally don't get angry at God for that. Also, if we try to eat non-food, it has consequences. Similarly, when we go against our designed need to worship, it also has negative consequences. When we worship as we were designed to, it builds us up.

## Questions About Truth and Worldviews

### 1. What is the difference between absolute and relative truth?

- a. Absolute truth is truth that remains apart from people's opinion (like earth is round).
- b. Relative truth is truth that is more of an opinion, because it is just an internal subjective thing (like favorite ice cream flavor) and has no external reference point (like the earth's shape or mathematical truth)

### 2. How can it be reasonable for Christians to claim knowledge of an objective truth?

- a. We all claim knowledge of objective truth. (Ex: earth is round,  $1+1=2$ , George Washington was the first president, etc.). How did you come to that? It was using a similar method - logic, experience, history, and learning. Similar with the truth of God and claims of Christianity.

### 3. Isn't hell an unreasonable punishment for not believing in a specific set of truth claims?

- a. It is not a punishment for not believing. It is a punishment for sins.
- b. In Romans 2, it says that all will be judged fairly, without favoritism, according to what they did know, not on what they did not know. Romans 2:6-11 "6 He will render to each one according to his works: 7 to those who by patience in well-doing seek for glory and honor and immortality, he will give eternal life; 8 but for those who are self-seeking and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness, there will be wrath and fury... 11 For God shows no partiality."
- c. According to the Bible, the verdict for all people is - Romans 3:10 "None is righteous, no, not one." That just so happens to mean that it's not looking good for all of humanity. Without a solution, we are all deserving of hell.

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**4. How can Christians think their personal religious experiences with God are any more “true” than those of adherents to other belief systems?**

Christians don't claim that their "experiences" are truer than others. If we're only talking about some kind of religious experience, we would not be able to claim that, because there is no way to compare my internal experience to yours. Christians claim that Christianity is the truth (best describes reality), because there was actually a Christ-event in history where Jesus died and rose historically.

**5. Do all religions ultimately point to the same God? Why or why not?**

No, because they are mutually exclusive descriptions of God. Each religion makes claims about God, Jesus, the universe, our origin, salvation, meaning and purpose. And these claims contradict one another.

**6. What are key similarities and differences between the world's major religions (e.g., Judaism, Christianity, Islam, Buddhism, Hinduism)?**

1. Judaism / Christianity / Islam = monotheism, but splits on the identity of Jesus. Interesting that all share the history with Israel as the basis.
2. Buddhism = atheism
3. Hinduism = pantheism

**7. Christianity a less intelligent worldview than atheism? Why or why not?**

Not less intelligent. Granted that there are some difficulties, such as allowing for the possibility of miracles. But I believe atheism has a bigger problem - you have to believe that you are not thinking, and not making choices (no free will in an atheistic worldview). That seems like a bigger leap of faith. You also have to be absolutely certain that there is NO evidence for God, which is very difficult to prove. In fact, making universal negative claims (like “God does not exist” i.e. atheism) is incompatible with the scientific method and something scientists never do.

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## ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

### **Videos:**

[Kalam Cosmological Argument](#) - Reasonable Faith - William Lane Craig

[The Moral Argument](#) - Reasonable Faith - William Lane Craig

[The Fine-tuning of the Universe](#) - Reasonable Faith - William Lane Craig

[If God, Why Evil?](#) - Sean McDowell

[How Can a Loving God Send Someone to Hell?](#) - Sean McDowell

[Do All Religions Lead to God?](#) Impact 360 Institute

Websites:

Dr. William Lane Craig: [Reasonablefaith.org](http://Reasonablefaith.org)

Stand to Reason: [str.org](http://str.org)

### **Works Cited:**

Boyd, G. (2008). Letters From A Skeptic. David C. Cook

Lewis, C.S. (1978). The Great Divorce. Macmillan Publishing Co.