



## Questions about the Bible

—What is the Bible? Who wrote the Bible? Is the Bible true? Why do Christians read the Bible?

- The Bible is made up of 66 books, written by around 40 different people. It has many authors—but only one Author. The whole Bible is the Word of God, the Author. God made sure that people wrote His words—see **2 Timothy 3 v 16-17**.
- The Bible says of itself that it is true (see **Psalms 119 v 160**); the writers were careful to write historical truth (see **Luke 1 v 1-4**); and we must not add anything to it or take anything away from it (see **Revelation 22 v 18-19**).
- We can think of the Bible as being like a letter from God. As we read it, we get to know God more and more, and we learn how He wants us to live—see **1 Thessalonians 2 v 13** and **Psalms 119 v 105**.

## Questions about heaven and hell

—What is heaven like? Will I like it in heaven? Do bad people go to hell?

- The Bible doesn't tell us exactly what heaven is like or where it is. Instead, the Bible uses a lot of picture language when talking about heaven or hell. This can be helpful for children, as long as we choose the pictures they can relate to (and which won't be too upsetting.) The example of a banquet or party is helpful—see **Luke 14 v 16-24**. Heaven is like being at a great party, but hell is like being left out of that party.
- We don't know much about heaven, but we know it's going to be great because Jesus has promised to prepare a special place for His friends—see **John 14 v 2-3**.



- Going to heaven isn't about being good or bad. If we have put our trust in Jesus, and live as one of His followers, then one day we will live with Him for ever in heaven—see **John 3 v 16**. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has eternal life, and will live with Him in heaven. But people who choose not to follow Jesus while they're living here on earth, won't live with Him in heaven either—see **John 3 v 36**.



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## Answering children's questions



Where's heaven? Why can't I see God? Does Jesus have blue eyes? What do angels look like?

Children are great at asking questions. But we sometimes find it hard answering them! This leaflet has a few hints and tips to help you and your child find the answers together, and some suggestions of who else might help you with those tricky questions...

### Three key points:

#### 1. Go to the Bible for the answer

When a child asks a question about God, or the world He made, it's often easiest just to say whatever first comes into our head. But one of our aims in answering a child's questions is to help them learn **where** those answers can be found. Everything we need to know about God can be found in the God's Word, the Bible. He has revealed Himself through it.



Children need to know that they are being told the truth about God—not just because their parents or Sunday School leaders say it, but because the **Bible** says it. So, a helpful way to answer a child is: "That's a great question. Let's see what the Bible has to say about that."

Of course, you might not know where to look in the Bible! Which leads to the second key point...

#### 2. It's OK not to know the answer

It's easy to feel that we have to answer every question straight away. But we don't! If it's an important question, then it's worth coming back to later. There are several ways you might do this. For example, if your child suddenly asks what angels look like, you might say:

*"I'm not sure what angels look like. Why don't we read about a few angels later today, and see if we can find out."*

or

*"I know they must have been pretty scary, because most angels started by saying 'Don't be afraid'. Let's see what the Bible tells us..."*

or

*"What a great question. Let's talk about that after dinner." (Which gives you time to ring someone for a crash course on angels!)*

#### 3. Get help with the answer

What if you're keen to check out the Bible with your child, but don't know where to look? The following may be help:

- The rest of this leaflet gives some suggestions for helpful Bible passages to answer some of the more common questions children ask.
- Some Bibles—especially children's Bibles—have an index or word list at the back. This may be enough to lead you to a helpful verse that you can talk about with your child.
- Ring or email someone for help. Try one of the Sunday School leaders, your homegroup leader or your pastor. Your church will want to help you teach your child about God, so do ask for help.



## Questions about God

—How do we know that God is real? What is God like? Who made God? Why can't we see God? Why does God let bad things happen?

- The Bible tells us that God is real. But God doesn't have a body, like we do. God is a Spirit, who is everywhere and knows everything—see **John 4 v 24** and **Psalms 139 v 4 and 7**.
- Our wonderful world shows us that God is real. He is the Designer of everything—see **Romans 1 v 20**. Some children find the watchmaker example helpful: Imagine finding a watch in a field. Would you think that lots of bits and pieces came together by accident to become a watch? Or would you think that there must be a watchmaker somewhere who made that watch? In the same way, our world is far too beautiful, amazing and complicated to have come together by accident. Someone designed it—and that someone is God.
- The Bible tells us what God is like—He is holy and just, wise, true and loving—see **Revelation 15 v 3-4**, **Romans 16 v 27** and **1 John 4 v 8**. Another way to answer this question is by looking at Jesus—we know what **God** is like because **Jesus** shows us—see **John 14 v 9**.
- Nobody made God. God has always existed and always will—see **Psalms 90 v 2**. God doesn't change, so if we read a Bible story that shows that God keeps His promises, we know that means He will keep His promises today as well—see **Malachi 3 v 6**. Jesus doesn't change either—see **Hebrews 13 v 6**.



• God is in charge of our universe. He's the Real King of everything, and always in control. Some bad things happen because there are people who don't love God who choose to steal, fight, lie etc. But God is still in control. For example, the people who put Jesus to death did it because they hated Him—but it was always God's plan that Jesus would die for us—see **Acts 4 v 27-28**. For an Old Testament example of this, read the story of Joseph. It was

Joseph's brothers who attacked him and sold him as a slave. Their plans were wicked. But God's plan was always to use Joseph to rescue God's people—see **Genesis 50 v 20**. God uses everything in our lives—good, bad, exciting, scary or disappointing, for our good—see **Romans 8 v 28**.



## Questions about our world

—Who made the world? Why does the world have famines, disasters etc?

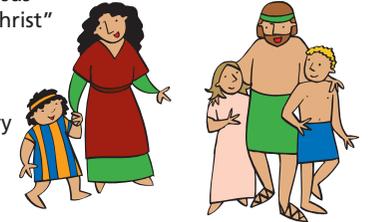
- God made our world, the universe and everything. It was all very good—see **Genesis 1 v 1 – 2 v 4**. God created all of this through Jesus—see **Colossians 1 v 16** and **John 1 v 3**. The Bible tells us *who* created our world, but it doesn't tell us everything about *how* God created it. (We wouldn't be able to understand everything God did anyway!)
- When God created the first family, they had a perfect garden to live in, which contained everything they needed. But this perfect existence was spoilt by sin (disobeying God)—see **Genesis 3 v 1-24**. Ever since then, our world has been spoilt by sin—there is illness, famine and natural disasters—and all people are spoilt by sin too—we do what **we** want, instead of what **God** wants.
- Heaven is perfect—there is no sin there. In heaven there is no illness, sadness or pain. Everyone who trusts Jesus can look forward to living in heaven with Him, where the sad things we see in this world will no longer happen—see **Revelation 21 v 1-4**.



## Questions about Jesus

—Who is Jesus? Why did Jesus wear funny clothes? Why can't we see Jesus?

- Jesus is the Son of God. He is God and man in one person—see **John 1 v 14-15**. Jesus is often called Jesus Christ. This isn't His surname! "Christ" means "God's chosen King". See **Matthew 16 v 15-17**.
- Jesus lived here on our world 2000 years ago, in the country of Israel. People wore clothes like the ones shown—and men often had beards and long hair!
- Jesus lived a perfect life—He never sinned. When Jesus was about 33 years old, He was crucified. He was nailed to a cross and left to die. We call the day that Jesus died Good Friday. But Jesus didn't stay dead! After three days, God brought Jesus back to life. Jesus is still alive today, living in heaven and ruling as our King. One day Jesus will come back to earth, and the world as we know it will end. When that happens, everyone who trusts in Jesus will be with Him and live with Him for ever. See **Acts 10 v 38-43** and **1 Thessalonians 4 v 16-17**.
- After God brought Jesus back to life, Jesus went up to heaven to be with God—see **Acts 1 v 9-11**. We can't see Jesus now, but we can know that He is with us because He gives His Holy Spirit to everyone who has put their trust in Him—see **John 14 v 16-17** and **John 16 v 7**.



## Questions about ourselves

—Who made me? Why did God make me? Does God stop loving me when I'm naughty?

- God made us and knew everything about us even before we were born—see **Psalms 139 v 13-16**.
- God made us so that we can know Him as our Father and Friend—see **Acts 17 v 26-28**.
- We all let God down (children *and* adults!). We do what **we** want instead of what **God** wants. This is called sin. God loves sinners—that's why He sent His Son Jesus to die for us, so that we can be forgiven for our sins—see **Romans 5 v 8**. God doesn't stop loving us if we sin—but when we sin we do hurt God (see **Ephesians 4 v 30** and **Genesis 6 v 5-6**). If we tell God we are sorry, He will forgive us and help us to change—see **1 John 1 v 8-9**. If we love God and Jesus, we will want to live for them, rather than disobey them—see **John 14 v 15** and **1 John 2 v 5-6**.

