



3 QUESTIONS

People Would Like
to Ask God

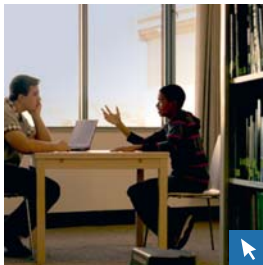
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ARTICLES



YOUNG PEOPLE ASK

Creation or Evolution? —Part 1: Why Believe in God?

This article provides solid reasons
for belief in a Creator.

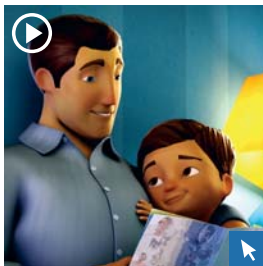


Creation or Evolution? —Part 2: Why Question Evolution?

Here are two good reasons to
reconsider the claim that evolution
is a fact.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS
> TEENAGERS)

VIDEOS



BECOME JEHOVAH'S FRIEND

“Jehovah . . . Created All Things”

Go along with Caleb as he looks
at things Jehovah made.

(Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > CHILDREN)

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COVER SUBJECT

Three Questions

People Would Like to Ask God

SUSAN'S questions about God began at age seven, when her nine-year-old friend Al was hospitalized with polio and confined to an iron lung. She wrote about her experience in the January 6, 2013, issue of *The New York Times*.

After visiting Al in the hospital, Susan asked her mother: "Why would God do that to a little boy?"

"The priest would say God must have his reasons," her mother replied, "but I don't know what they could be."

Two years later, in 1954, Jonas Salk's polio vaccine became available, and Susan's mother suggested that perhaps God had guided his research.

"Well, God should have guided the doctors a long time ago so that Al wouldn't be in an iron lung," Susan replied.

Susan summed up the account of her childhood experience by writing: "[Al] was to die only eight years later, by which time I was a committed atheist."

Like Susan, many people who have suffered from tragedy or have witnessed it are unable to find satisfying answers to their questions about God. Some become atheists. Others may not entirely *deny* God's existence, but they become skeptical.

It is not that atheists and skeptics are completely unfamiliar with religion. On the contrary, their experience with religion is often what pushes them toward disbelief. Organized religion, they may feel, has failed to answer life's tough questions. What kind of questions? Ironically, they are often the same questions that people who claim to have faith in God struggle with. Consider three questions that many people would like to ask God, if given the chance, and the answers that the Bible provides.



“WHY DO YOU ALLOW SUFFERING?”

Why ask that question?

‘A loving God would prevent life’s tragedies,’ many conclude.

TO THINK ABOUT: We might find the habits and customs of people from another culture to be strange—perhaps even shocking. We could easily misinterpret their actions. For example, in one culture people feel that maintaining eye contact is a sign of sincerity; in another they see it as a sign of disrespect. Yet even in such cases, there would be no reason to say that they are wrong. Instead, we just need to get to know them better.

Could something similar happen when it comes to understanding God? Many believe that the presence of suffering proves that God does not exist. Others, though, who have come to understand why God has allowed suffering, are confident that he does exist.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: God’s thoughts and ways are different from ours. (Isaiah 55: 8, 9) Because of that, his actions, as well as his reasons for waiting before he acts, may at first seem strange to us.

Still, the Bible does not ask us to accept such hollow expressions as “God works in mysterious ways.” Instead, it encourages us to learn more about God, helping us to understand why and when he acts as he does.* We can even draw close to him.

—James 4:8.

* For the reason why God allows suffering, see chapter 11 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.



HE FOUND ANSWERS TO HIS QUESTIONS

As a boy, Harry never understood why a loving God permitted suffering. As a young man, he witnessed firsthand the horrors of war and asked, “If there is an almighty Creator, why would he permit such conditions to afflict so many people, especially innocent children?”

Despite his university education and his examination of various religions, Harry’s questions persisted. After wrestling with the issue for years, he concluded that “perhaps there was no God after all.”

Harry kept an open mind when he heard what the Bible had to say on the matter. He learned that God is not the source of wickedness; rather, God hates it and feels pain when others suffer. (Proverbs 6:16-19; Isaiah 63:9; James 1:13)

2



“WHY IS RELIGION FULL OF HYPOCRISY?”

Why ask that question?

‘If God appreciated sincerity,’ some might reason, ‘there wouldn’t be so much pretense among those who claim to worship him.’

TO THINK ABOUT: Imagine a son who rejects his father’s fine upbringing and leaves home to lead a corrupt life. Although the father does not approve, he allows his son to make that choice. Could those who later meet the son rightfully conclude that he had a bad father or even that he had no father at all? Of course not! Likewise, hypocrisy in religion only proves that God allows people to choose their own path in life.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: God hates religious hypocrisy. (Jeremiah 7:29-31; 32:35) At the same time, he allows people to exercise free will. Many who claim to believe in God choose to follow man-made religious teachings and their own brand of morality. —Matthew 15:7-9.

In contrast, religion that God approves is not hypocritical.* Jesus said: “By this all will know that you are my disciples—if you have love among yourselves.” (John 13:35) This love must be “without hypocrisy.” (Romans 12:9) Most religions have failed to live up to that standard. During the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, for example, tens of thousands of religious people slaughtered members of their own faith, simply because those people were of a different tribe. In contrast, Jehovah’s Witnesses did not share in the massacre, and many of them protected fellow believers *and others*, even risking their life to do so. Such selfless acts prove that religion can be free of hypocrisy.

* For more information, see chapter 15 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.

Harry found out that ultimately all pain and suffering can be traced to humans’ rejecting God’s authority and using their free will to decide for themselves what is right and what is wrong. (Deuteronomy 32:4, 5; James 1:14, 15) He also saw that God did not stand back and take an ‘I told you so’ posture. Instead, God immediately set in motion arrangements to eradicate wickedness and suffering. He will completely undo all the damage that has been done. Harry came to realize that in the meantime, God has provided comfort and support to help individuals endure.—Genesis 3:15; Romans 8:20, 21; Revelation 21:4.

These answers did more than satisfy Harry’s curiosity about a fundamental question. They helped him to weather the emotional turmoil he later experienced when tragedy touched him personally.



Harry



“WHY ARE WE HERE?”

Why ask that question?

Some may wonder: ‘Why do humans live for only 80 or 90 years and then die? What is the purpose of such a brief existence?’

TO THINK ABOUT: Many who do not believe in God still recognize the need to account for the complexity, intricacy, and order of the natural world. They perceive that our planet, other planets, and the moon are configured in just the right way to sustain life on earth. They describe the natural laws that govern the universe as being fine-tuned, perfectly set so that even the slightest alteration would make life on earth impossible.

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: While many people view our relatively brief life span as proof that there is no God, the natural world gives ample evidence that there is a Creator. (Romans 1:20) He had a purpose in making these things, and the reason for our existence is closely linked to his purpose. God created humans to live forever on the earth, and he has not abandoned his purpose.—Psalm 37:11, 29; Isaiah 55:11.

While we can discern God’s existence and even some of his qualities through the natural world, God did not intend for us to perceive his *purpose* that way. For us to know God’s purpose, and hence the meaning of our existence, we need communication from God. In the Bible he communicates with us, using simple, direct terms.* Jehovah’s Witnesses invite you to take a fresh look at the answers found there. ■

* For more information, see chapter 3 of the book *What Does the Bible Really Teach?* published by Jehovah’s Witnesses. Also available at www.jw.org.





The Thorny Devil Lizard's Moisture-Extracting Skin

THE Australian thorny devil lizard (*Moloch horridus*) extracts moisture from fog, humidity, and wet sand. Then it channels the water to its mouth for drinking. How? The answer may lie in the lizard's amazing skin.

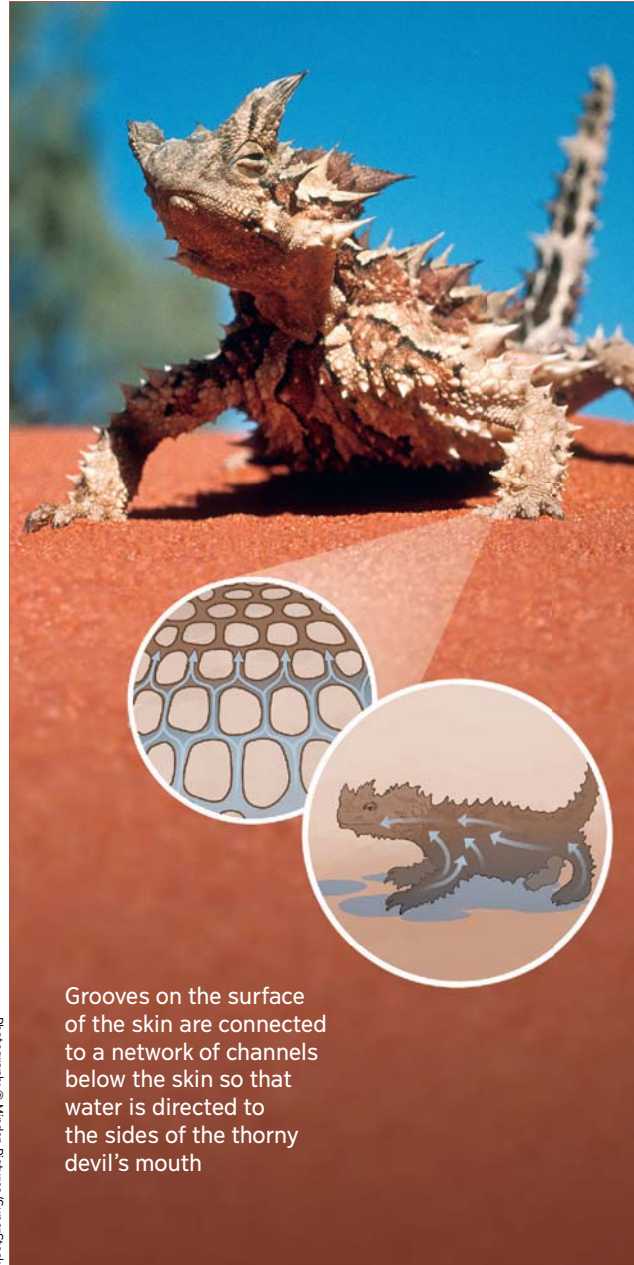
Consider: The thorny devil's skin is overlaid with scales. Some scientists think that moisture or dew collected on the scales runs down to the rough surface of the skin and enters the skin's network of half-open channels, or grooves, located between the scales. These channels are interconnected and lead to the sides of the thorny devil's mouth.

But how does this lizard draw up water—up its legs, across its body, and into its mouth—defying gravity in the process? And how does the thorny devil extract moisture from wet surfaces by rubbing its belly against them?

Researchers have apparently unveiled the thorny devil's secret. The channels on the surface of the skin are connected by way of ducts to another network of channels below, that is, within the lizard's skin. The structure of these channels enables capillary action—a phenomenon in which water is drawn into narrow spaces even against the force of gravity. The lizard's skin thus acts as a sponge.

Janine Benyus, president of the Biomimicry Institute, says that mimicking moisture-extracting technologies may help engineers design a system to remove humidity from air in order to cool buildings more efficiently and also to obtain drinking water.

What do you think? Did the moisture-extracting skin of the thorny devil come about by evolution? Or was it designed? ■



Grooves on the surface of the skin are connected to a network of channels below the skin so that water is directed to the sides of the thorny devil's mouth

Photograph: © Minden Pictures/SuperStock



EVOLUTION

Some people say that life evolved. Others contend that God merely started creation off and then let the process of evolution take over. What does the Bible say?

Does the Bible's creation account rule out the possibility that the universe began with the big bang?

The Bible simply says: "In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1) It does not comment on exactly *how* God created everything. So even if a cosmic explosion produced our universe, that would *not* contradict what is stated in the Bible. Rather, Genesis 1:1 would answer the question, Who *caused* the big bang?

Of course, many scientists believe that the big bang was a spontaneous, undirected event that led to the self-arranging

of particles of matter into stars and planets over a period of time. The Bible does not support that view but states that the formation of the universe was a direct act of God, whether he employed some sort of cosmic explosion or some other method of creation.

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth."—Genesis 1:1.

Does the Bible's account allow for living things to change over time?

Yes. The Bible says that God created living things "according to their kinds." (Genesis 1:11, 12, 21, 24, 25) Can variation occur *within a kind*? Yes. However, does observed adaptation within a kind prove that eventually new kinds can evolve? No.

Consider an example: In the 1970's, researchers studied finches on the Galápagos Islands. They noted that climate changes caused finches with slightly larger beaks to survive more readily. This,

some concluded, provided evidence of evolution. But was it evidence of evolution, or was it simply adaptation? Years later, the finches with smaller beaks once again dominated the population. This experiment led Jeffrey H. Schwartz, a professor of anthropology, to conclude that while adaptation may help a species survive under changing circumstances, "it is not creating anything new."





Can the Bible and the theory of evolution be reconciled?

The Bible says that “[God] created all things.” (Revelation 4:11) He did not “rest” until his creative work was complete. (Genesis 2:2) The implication is clear: God did not create a simple organism and then rest, or take a backseat, while that organism evolved over millions of years into various kinds of fish, apes, and humans.* That idea, called macroevolution, denies the role of a Creator, who the Bible says “made the heavens and the earth, the sea, and all that is in them.”—Exodus 20:11; Revelation 10:6.

* Contrary to the claims of creationists, the Bible does not support the idea that God created the earth in six 24-hour days. For more information, see pages 24–27 of the brochure *Was Life Created?* The brochure is published by Jehovah’s Witnesses and is available for free download at www.jw.org.

“You are worthy, Jehovah our God, to receive the glory and the honor and the power, because you created all things.”—Revelation 4:11.

To learn more: The Bible says that God’s “invisible qualities are clearly seen from the world’s creation onward, because they are perceived by the things made.” (Romans 1:20) Learning about God can give real meaning to life, for he has a loving purpose that includes all who sincerely seek him. (Ecclesiastes 12:13; Hebrews 11:6) For more information, visit www.jw.org or contact Jehovah’s Witnesses. Look under BIBLE TEACHINGS > BIBLE QUESTIONS ANSWERED. ■



A Visit to Uzbekistan



TRANSOXANIA. The Land Between the Rivers.

Tartary. Turkistan. Many names have been used for the region that now includes Uzbekistan, the “Land of Uzbeks.” From as early as the 15th century, Uzbekistan’s cities were useful to merchants traveling on the Silk Road, a network of roads that once connected China to the Mediterranean. Cotton now dominates the Uzbek textile market. Beautiful carpets made of cotton, wool, or silk are also sold here.

Uzbek culture has been influenced by many peoples throughout history. Famous conquerors and their powerful armies marched through the mountains and deserts of Uzbekistan. These include Alexander the Great, who met his beloved Roxane here; Genghis Khan, from Mongolia; and Timur (also known as Tamerlane), a native of the region, who ruled over one of the vastest empires in history.

Magnificent, colorful monuments having domes covered with blue tiles shape the modern urban



Traditional clothing



Making silk carpets



Dried-fruit stall
in a city market



Walls of Itchan Kala in Khiva

landscape in Uzbekistan. Many of these buildings function as schools.

The Silk Road. Already in use before our common era and thriving until the opening of the sea route to India at the end of the 15th century C.E., this trade-road network, part of which passed through what is now Uzbekistan, had a central place in world commerce.

The Aral Sea. As a result of water diversion for irrigation purposes, the Aral Sea—once the world's fourth-largest lake—is vanishing. In cooperation with other Central Asian nations, Uzbekistan is trying to remedy the issue.

Uzbekistan's changing alphabet. Various languages were spoken here, and after Islamic conquest in the eighth century, Arabic was adopted. After the country entered the Soviet Union, the Latin alphabet was first used and then replaced with Cyrillic at the end of the 1930's. In 1993 a new law introduced the Uzbek alphabet, which is based on the Latin script. ■

FAST FACTS

Population: 30 million

Capital: Tashkent

Climate: Mostly arid, with low rainfall and low relative humidity

Land: Plains toward the west, mountains toward the east



When You Must Return Home



THE CHALLENGE

They are called “the boomerang generation”—young adults who left home and tried to live on their own but who fell on hard times and had to return home. Has that happened to you?

Even if you love your dad and mom, moving back home can be difficult. For example, a young woman named Sarah* says: “Living on my own boosted my self-confidence because I didn’t have to rely on others. But returning home made me feel like a child again.” A young man named Richard felt similarly. “I didn’t want to go back home,” he says, “but I couldn’t support myself. I felt like a failure.”

If you are in a similar situation, this article can help you get back on your feet.

* Names in this article have been changed.

WHY IT HAPPENS

Money issues. Many young people face a rude awakening when they first encounter the high cost of living. “Any savings I had were drained trying to support myself,” says Richard, quoted earlier. It was similar with Shaina, a young woman who left home at 24 and returned a year and a half later. “I could have handled my finances better,” she admits. “I left home with no money, and I returned home in debt.”*

Employment problems. Loss of a job can upset even the most careful plans for independent living—something that Shaina discovered. “I graduated from a program in the medical field, and I joined an agency that helped me find work,” she says. “But when I lost the job, I was stuck. I had been living in a rural area with no further job prospects in my field!”

Unrealistic expectations. Some young adults enter the workforce unprepared for what it takes to make a living. Their work is often more difficult than they had expected. To their dismay, they discover that their much anticipated independence has lost its glamour. They certainly had not expected adulthood to be so challenging.

* College students in the United States often face a similar predicament. According to a report in *The Wall Street Journal*, a student with a loan graduates with, on average, a \$33,000 debt.



WHAT YOU CAN DO

Talk to your parents about your moving back home.

Discuss issues such as these: How long will you need to live at home? While you are there, how will you contribute toward household expenses? What household chores can you take care of? What steps will you take to regain your financial independence? Regardless of your age, remember that you are back under your parents' roof and must abide by their rules.—*Bible principle: Exodus 20:12.*

Learn to manage your money. The book *The Complete Guide to Personal Finance: For Teenagers and College Students* says: "The way you spend your money has a lot to do with whether or not you can be successful with personal financial management. . . . The basic fundamental concept of not spending your money on things you don't need is a vital concept to grasp."—*Bible principle: Luke 14:28.*

More important than *what* you do is *becoming proficient* at what you do

Get sound advice. Parents or other adults can help you acquire practical skills with banking, budgeting, and bill paying. "I had to go back to basics," says a young woman named Marie. "A friend helped me to list necessary and unnecessary expenses. I couldn't believe it—most of my expenses were completely unnecessary! I also learned how to cultivate an essential quality for independent living—self-discipline."—*Bible principle: Proverbs 13:10.*

Take steps to find employment. Use the time you would have been working to apply for jobs. A caution: Some people would tell you to "follow your dreams" when it comes to a career. But looking for your 'dream career' likely will narrow your options for work and blind you to employment opportunities that are right in front of you! Rather than waste time focusing on a particular type of work, keep your options open. Remember, more important than *what* you do is *becoming proficient* at what you do. In fact, it has been observed that the more experience and skill workers acquire, the more they enjoy their work. You don't have to do what you love in order to love what you do! ■

KEY SCRIPTURES

"Honor your father and your mother."—Exodus 20:12.

"Who of you wanting to build a tower does not first sit down and calculate the expense to see if he has enough to complete it?"—Luke 14:28.

"Wisdom belongs to those who seek advice."—Proverbs 13:10.

FOR PARENTS

Take advantage of the time your children are at home to train them in the basic skills they will need for independent living. These skills include money management (including judicious spending habits and responsible use of credit), domestic work (cooking, washing and ironing clothes, and performing basic maintenance on a car), and social skills (the ability to get along well with others).

For more information, see pages 305 and 306 of the book "Questions Young People Ask—Answers That Work," Volume 1, published by Jehovah's Witnesses. It is available online at www.jw.org. Look under PUBLICATIONS > BOOKS AND BROCHURES.

When a Loved One Is Sick

“When Dad was about to be released from the hospital, we asked his doctor to review Dad’s blood tests with us. The doctor assured us that the results were normal, but he kindly looked them up. To his surprise, two of the results were above normal! He apologized and called a specialist. Dad is doing well now. But we are very glad that we asked questions.”—Maribel.

Before the appointment, list symptoms and medications



Medical appointments and hospital stays can be nerve-racking. As Maribel’s experience shows, the assistance of a friend or a relative can be very helpful—possibly even life-saving. How can you help a loved one?

Before the visit. Help the patient write down his symptoms as well as any medications or supplements he takes. Also list any questions that should be asked of the physician. Help your friend recall any details of his condition or any family history of the illness. Do not assume that the doctor already knows those details or will ask for them.

During the visit. Be sure you and the patient understand what the doctor says. Ask questions, but avoid making assertions. Allow the patient to ask questions and to speak for himself. Pay attention, and take careful notes. Ask about treatment options. In some cases, it may be wise to suggest to the patient that he get a second opinion.

After the visit. Review the appointment with the patient. Make sure that he gets the right medication. Encourage him to take the medication as prescribed and to inform the doctor immediately of any adverse reaction. Urge the patient to keep a positive outlook, and encourage him to follow any additional instructions, such as that he get follow-up treatment. Help him to learn more about his condition.

Pay attention, ask respectful questions, and take notes



Review the doctor’s directions, and check prescriptions



Be sure that all forms are filled out correctly



In the Hospital

Be calm and alert. A patient going into the hospital may feel worried and helpless. By being calm and attentive, you can help everyone to relax and also to avoid making mistakes. Make sure that admittance forms are filled out correctly. Respect the patient's right to make informed medical decisions. If he is too ill to do so, honor his previously written wishes and the authority of his next of kin or health-care agent.*

Take initiative. Do not be afraid to speak up. Your respectable appearance and good manners can move the medical team to take greater interest in the patient and can even move them to improve the quality of his care. In many hospitals, patients are seen by various doctors. You can help them by communicating what others on the staff have said. You know the patient, so point out any changes you notice in his physical or mental state.

Show respect and gratitude. Hospital staff often work under stressful conditions. Treat them as you would want to be treated. (Matthew 7:12) Show respect for their training and experience, confidence in their ability, and gratitude for their efforts. Such appreciation can encourage them to do their best.

No one can avoid getting sick. But through forethought and practical assistance, you can help a friend or a relative make the best of a difficult situation.

—Proverbs 17:17. ■

* Laws and practices regarding a patient's rights and duties vary from place to place. Make sure that the patient's documents containing his medical wishes are complete and up-to-date.

Respectfully share your observations with the staff



Do what you can without getting in the way



SPOTLIGHT ON THE FAMILY

Families face many challenges, but the Bible's timeless wisdom can help them to meet these successfully and thrive.



AFRICA According to the World Health Organization, mothers should begin breastfeeding their babies within an hour of birth and breastfeed them exclusively for six months. Despite this recommendation, the UNICEF Regional Nutrition Adviser for Eastern and Southern Africa stated that false advertising persists in claiming that “infant formula is as good as breast milk.”

WHAT THE BIBLE SAYS: “The naive person believes every word, but the shrewd one ponders each step.”—Proverbs 14:15.

THE NETHERLANDS A study of Dutch families in which both parents work has concluded that parents who keep their work and family roles strictly separate have better interactions with their children than parents who allow their work to interfere with family responsibilities. For example, integrating work and family by making work-related telephone calls from home after working hours may prevent parents from giving their children the attention they need.

TO THINK ABOUT: “There is an appointed [best] time for everything.”—Ecclesiastes 3:1.

CANADA Researchers in Montreal have suggested that children of authoritarian parents—those who enforce rigid rules but show little affection for their children—are 30 percent more likely to be obese than children whose parents maintain a balance of affection and discipline.

DID YOU KNOW? The parenting style that is most beneficial for children was identified in the Bible centuries ago.—Colossians 3:21.



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