



HAS ANYONE EVER SEEN GOD?

101 QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ABOUT GOD, THE WORLD,
AND THE BIBLE

WRITTEN BY: *Carolyn Larsen*

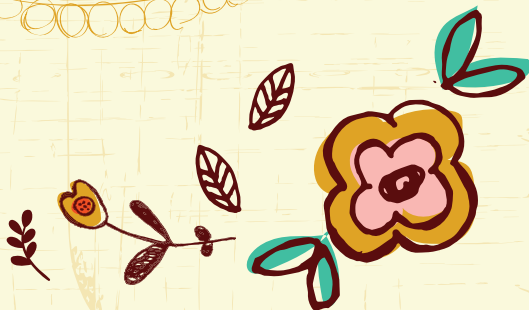
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INTRODUCTION

Faith is belief or confidence in something, even when the object of faith cannot be fully grasped in the physical realm. A relationship with God is based on faith in him. It's a growth process of learning to accept and appreciate his grace, mercy, and love. The “instruction manual” God has given us—the Bible—helps us understand who God is and shows us how to live for him, obey him, trust him, and love him. But even with this source of amazing help and the commitment to engage in life with God through faith, we sometimes have questions.

Questions aren't wrong. In fact, they're helpful because they express a desire to learn and understand. However, it's important to search for answers to your questions from a reliable source that is true to Scripture. *Has Anyone Ever Seen God?* answers 101 frequently asked questions that are common to those who are investigating faith in Jesus Christ.

Some questions are about God and his character, his plans, and his interactions with people. Others explore God's process of creation and the world he made. And some are about the Bible itself and what it teaches about knowing, serving, and loving God. It is our hope that this book will help answer some of your questions and pave the way to a strong faith in God.



ACKNOWLEDGMENTS



Writing a book like this one carries with it the responsibility to be true to Scripture, to not mislead readers, and to honor and revere God. It is not something that can be accomplished alone. So I wish to thank the wonderful people at Tyndale House Publishers for their wisdom, input, and support. I appreciate Tyndale's standard of excellence and desire to honor God in every book they publish. Thank you, Anisa Baker and Becky Brandvik, for your vision for this book. Thank you to Anne Christian Buchanan for your attention to detail and "big picture" plan. It's been a privilege to work with all of you.

Carolyn Larsen





Part 1



QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS
ABOUT GOD



Q. HOW DO I KNOW GOD IS REAL?

Some people believe God is real, and they devote their lives to knowing him and living for him. But some people say he isn't real at all. How can I know which one is right?

A. The evidence of God's existence is all around us. Consider, for example, the fact that our planet has just the right amount of everything—oxygen, water, carbon dioxide—to support life. The earth circles our sun at just the right distance to give us warmth but not burn up in its intense heat.

Think about your complex body. It has a brain that tells your lungs to breathe, your heart to beat, your blood to flow, your arms and legs to move, and a zillion other things, and you don't even have to think about any of it. Do you think that happens by accident?

Then there is the yearning in your heart to connect with God. You long to know him, to know he loves you. That's another proof that he is real. God has put that longing in your heart because he wants to know you, too.

Before the mountains were born, before you gave birth to the earth and the world, from beginning to end, you are God.

PSALM 90:2



Q. WHERE DID GOD COME FROM?

I've been told that God made the earth and everything in it. But who made God? Where did he come from?

- A. Something cannot come from nothing. There would be no plants without seeds. A house can't be built without wood or a similar material. Rain and snow can't fall unless moisture condenses in the sky. Something comes from something. Nothing comes from nothing.

But the truth of this statement stops where God is concerned. God was not created by anyone or anything. God simply was . . . and is. God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit always have been and always will be. God was already here before he made the universe and everything in it.

Is this hard to understand? Yes—because we humans are used to looking for the beginning and ending of things. Believing that God has always existed can be done only by faith. But that faith is reinforced by what the Bible—God's written Word—says about him.

He always was. He is now. He always will be.

Your throne, O LORD, has stood from time immemorial. You yourself are from the everlasting past. PSALM 93:2



Q. HAS ANYONE EVER SEEN GOD?

If not, how do we know he exists?

A. God is a spirit, so no one knows what he looks like, and no one has ever actually seen God face-to-face. The Bible even says that if anyone did see his face, they would die because of God's great glory.

Many, many people, however, have seen God's power or felt his presence. According to the Bible, Moses saw him in a burning bush. Jesus' disciples heard him speaking from heaven. Even today, people all over the world can tell you amazing stories of how they have seen God acting in their lives.

But there is another part to this. God actually sent his Son, Jesus, to live as a human being on earth. He taught people about God. He healed the sick. He raised dead people back to life. Many people saw him, heard him, even touched him. And Jesus said that seeing him was the same as seeing God. In the life of Jesus, we get a vivid picture of just what God is like. And the Bible promises that someday we really will see him face-to-face.

No one has ever seen God. But the unique One, who is himself God, is near to the Father's heart. He has revealed God to us.

JOHN 1:18



Q. IS GOD A PERSON?

Can I touch God's hand? Can I feel his arms giving me a hug?

A. God is a Spirit, not a person with skin. And yet God does many of the things we do. He communicates, feels emotions, and thinks. He has ideas. He acts in the world. And he connects with human beings by demonstrating his care and provision in their lives.

Can you feel God's arms around you? Yes, but not in the way you feel another person give you a hug. When you are sad or frightened or lonely and need his comfort, sit quietly and think about him; you might just feel his presence with you. You may even feel his Spirit wrapping you in a hug, reminding you that he is with you and loves you very much.

There's another important way you can feel the touch of God: through the loving words and actions of people who love him. It is a wonderfully tangible manifestation of God's personal care in our lives. Have you encountered this kind of touch?

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The Lord is the Spirit. . . . So all of us who have had that veil removed can see and reflect the glory of the Lord. And the Lord—who is the Spirit—makes us more and more like him as we are changed into his glorious image. 2 CORINTHIANS 3:17-18



Q. WHAT IS GOD LIKE?

If we can't see or touch God, how do we know what he's like?

A. Here are just a few descriptions of the God you'll get to know as you read the Bible and spend time with him in prayer:

- *God is righteous.* He is so good that sin and evil cannot coexist with him—which is why our sin is such a problem.
- *God is incredibly powerful.* He can do anything he wants—except contradict his own character.
- *God is infinitely creative.* He dreamed up our amazing world and continues to find new ways of solving the problems we create.
- *God is deeply mysterious.* If we could understand him completely, he wouldn't be God!
- *God is patient.* He doesn't see time the way we do, and he's willing to wait for everything to be made right in his world.
- *God is full of grace and mercy.* He loves us even when we don't deserve love. And if we are truly sorry when we've done wrong, he forgives us for even the most terrible things.
- *God is love.* This is the very essence of God's character—almost a definition. We can always trust God to love us and act lovingly toward us.

God is love, and all who live in love live in God, and God lives in them. 1 JOHN 4:16



Q. ARE JESUS AND GOD THE SAME PERSON?

They have different names, and both have several other names too. But are they actually the same person?

A. The answer to this question is yes . . . and no. And yes, that's a bit confusing. More accurately, it's a mystery—one of those truths about God that takes a lifetime or more to understand completely.

Jesus is God's Son. God is his Father. One time Jesus said that he and his Father are one. That doesn't mean they are the same, but that they are united. Jesus also said that anyone who sees him has also seen the Father. So it's obvious that they are very, very close.

God the Father, Jesus the Son, and the Holy Spirit are all God but are also separate "persons" or manifestations that exist together in intimate relationship. The term for this threefold nature of God is the Trinity. To help explain the Trinity, the example of an egg is sometimes used. An egg has three separate parts—the shell, the white, and the yolk. All are separate, but together they are an egg.

So Jesus is not the same as God the Father, but he is still God and is a part of the Trinity: the three persons of God.

The Father and I are one. JOHN 10:30



Q. WHAT (OR WHO) IS THE HOLY SPIRIT?

What role does he play in my Christian life?

A. The Bible clearly states that the Holy Spirit is . . . God. He is one person of the three persons who are all God and together are often called the Trinity. He has the same characteristics as God—he is everywhere, he knows our thoughts, he sees what's in our hearts, and he loves us.

The Holy Spirit has been present from the beginning of time but has a special role to play in the lives of Christian believers. Before Jesus went back to heaven after his resurrection, he said he would send the Spirit to give his followers comfort and guidance. The Spirit helps us understand the Bible. He exposes our sin and nudges us gently to return to the Father. He cares so much for us that he even prays for us when we are so upset or emotional that we can't find the words to form our own prayers. He is our Comforter, and his love for us is evident in all the ways he cares for us.

I will send you the Advocate—the Spirit of truth. He will come to you from the Father and will testify all about me. JOHN 15:26



Q. IS THERE ANYTHING GOD CAN'T DO?

God is in charge of everything, right? He is strong and powerful. Is there anything he can't do?

- A. God is indeed powerful—the Bible records a myriad of his supernatural acts. He made the world and everything in it: plants, flowers, oceans, mountains, animals, and people. The wind and weather answer to him. When he told a storm to stop, it did. At his command, the Red Sea parted and the Jordan River stopped flowing. When he told a dead man to live again, it happened. Nothing—and no one—is more powerful than God!

So is there anything God can't do? As a matter of fact, there is. God cannot be something he is not. He cannot act against his own character. He cannot tell a lie or break any of his promises. God cannot be anything less than perfect.

God cannot do those things because of who he is. It's a matter of character and identity, not ability.

Everything is possible with God. MARK 10:27