



# THE TOP 100 QUESTIONS





‘In this highly readable book, Richard Bewes provides direct, clear, concise and relevant answers to questions with which many people struggle. The material is simply and easily laid out in short bite-sized chapters and with sufficient content to be helpful to both the reader and non-reader alike. You could even use it as a basis for a daily reading over a three-month period.

The material could prove very useful for youth groups, house groups, as well as for those, both young and old, who are searching for clear, compelling and helpful answers to questions which disturb and challenge them. I learned a lot, and you will too if you buy the book!’

**Lindsay Brown, General Secretary, IFES**

‘I honestly believe this book could only come from someone who has spent a lifetime in Christian ministry. It is the accumulated wisdom and illustration from decades of mulling over some very difficult questions – and wonderfully it is distilled down to the key points.’

**Rico Tice, author of Christianity Explored**



‘The right questions. Clear biblical answers. Having read the manuscript I’m already planning who I could send copies of the book to when it’s published.’

**Peter Maiden, International Director, OM**



‘Richard Bewes gives deeply thought-out, carefully informed answers to many of the questions most troublesome to contemporary humanity. He conveys the greatness of God and the mastery of Jesus in the stream of history. But, just as importantly, he points in the sensible, plain language to our part in seizing the kingdom of God in our time, and how we must go about it square in the midst of daily life.’

**Dallas Willard, Speaker and Author**





# **THE TOP 100 QUESTIONS**

***BIBLICAL ANSWERS  
TO  
POPULAR QUESTIONS***

**Plus**

***EXPLANATIONS OF  
50  
DIFFICULT BIBLE PASSAGES***

**RICHARD BEWES**

**CHRISTIAN FOCUS**



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## Introduction

Finding oneself on the receiving end of questions is a regular way of life for anyone who is applying the truth of the Bible to our modern, questioning world. Yes, it has to be the Bible! And the questions and answers that feature in these pages are drawn from a myriad of public meetings, a syndicated newspaper question column I used to run, late-night conversations, youth events, dinner parties, radio phone-ins, letters from enquirers, and innumerable encounters at the church door.

Here now is a new collection of questions and answers! In fact, I am submitting them as *the top hundred* that seem to be surfacing in our twenty-first century. I must emphatically declare that this book in no way attempts to present a coherent systematic body of teaching. These are simply answers to questions I have been given. Nevertheless, by dividing these pages into several sections, we can together cover a fair range of life, belief and experiences that provoke us into asking ‘Why?’ ‘What?’ and ‘How?’ I hope, too, that readers will value the closing appendix, on the top fifty *Difficult Bible Passage Questions* that have puzzled Christians over the years. Some of these only require a paragraph or two of explanation.

As far as Bible passages that I quote, I shall use a variety of available versions, including the King James Version (KJV) and the English Standard Version (ESV). **Please look up the references** where space forbids me to make the Bible quotation in full.





I am grateful to those who kindly endorse this book with their generous comments. I am also grateful to my secretary, Miranda Lewis, and our Resource and Communications Coordinator, Pam Glover, for their great help while this book has been in preparation. And I am *always* grateful to Anne Norrie and my ever-patient publishers at Christian Focus.

Richard Bewes

*Written at All Souls Church,  
Langham Place, London*





# Part One

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## The universe we inhabit



*'And God saw that it was good'.* In these words we see the approval of God stamped upon his work. For God did not merely discover that his work was good after he had finished it, but he teaches us that it is good....There cannot be a higher author, a more effectual instrument, or a more excellent reason, than God, his Word, and his creation of the good.'

*The City of God,*  
Augustine of Hippo AD354-430



## 1. One universe or many?

**Is Jesus Christ 'IT'....or is He only part of something yet bigger still? Are there other systems out there, alien to our own?**

The answer to the question lies in the nature of Christ himself. He is the key to the whole of our existence. The Christian apostle Paul sums up the divine purpose vividly: *'...to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ'* (Ephesians 1:10).

Why a universe, and not a series of 'multiverses'? Christ is the single, unifying reason. As two student leaders – Tom Parsons and Stephen Nichols – once explained in a Bible study at All Souls Church in London, 'Even the origin of the **university** (Latin: *'uni'* – one; *'veritas'* – truth) reflects the vision of a single coherent story, *one truth*. From the beginning, all subjects in our campuses – physics, music or mathematics – were separate chapters in one over-arching story, slices cut from one cake.'

But in recent years a widespread loss of confidence has resulted in a growing collection of highly diverse and irreconcilable 'stories'; there are as many narratives as there are narrators – 'my' story, 'your' story, the Marxist story, the feminist story. The university curriculum has widened to bizarre dimensions. 'You can even do courses in Star Trek', say Tom and Stephen, 'or studies on the career of some football star!' The idea that there could be *one* story that explains all the rest – a single factor, an individual Person – is dismissed as naïve.

*But this is nothing new.* The Christian apostles were up against the most fragmented world-view imaginable. There was Delphi with its oracle, the rites of the Egyptian god Isis, and Cybele, the mother of gods in Asia. Romans could go to Greece and identify their own Jupiter with Zeus, or






## The universe we inhabit


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visit Syria and find him in Baal. Yet this whole edifice was to crumble.

As the message of Christ took hold – by whose ‘blood’ all things on earth or in heaven could be made *one* (Colossians 1:20) – a new and unprecedented unity of thought began to take over. Tatian, the second century Christian leader, spoke of the relief of exchanging the tyranny of 10,000 gods for the benign monarchy of *one*. Augustine, two centuries later put it, ‘This Child of the manger fills the world.’



The apostle Paul put it still more dramatically: ‘He who descended is the very one who ascended higher than all the heavens, in order to fill the whole universe’ (Ephesians 4:10). By this, Paul meant that there is no part of the universe that is free from Christ’s control. Secondly, there is no room for anyone else. Diana, Mithras, Jupiter, Osiris and Venus had to go. Jesus has taken all the space! Thirdly, the ascension of Jesus implies, not a Christ-deserted world, but a Christ-*filled* world.



**There is just one great universe – and Christ is its explanation and goal.**