



The Top 100 Questions

REMIX



Richard Bewes
Edited by Ian Thompson





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INTRODUCTION

If you want to apply the truth of the Bible to our modern, questioning world then you are going to be asked questions. Some may be sarcastic but most will be from people who beneath the surface want answers! The questions and answers that feature in these pages are drawn from those people have asked at public meetings, in a syndicated newspaper 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 what I am submitting as *the top hundred* that seem to be surfacing in our twenty-first century. I must declare that this book in no way attempts to present a systematic teaching manual. These are simply answers to questions I have been asked. 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?'

These are not Bible studies, they are the sort of thing you can say to start a conversation. If it leads to study, great, but we need to be able to show that we have answers that are worth exploring before someone will take us seriously enough to come along.

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.

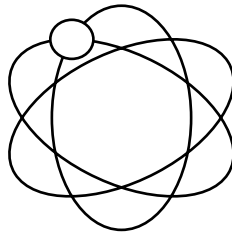
I am grateful to those who kindly endorse this book with their generous comments. I am also grateful to my secretary, Miranda Lewis, and our Resource and Communications Co-ordinator, Pam Glover, for their great help while this book has been in preparation. And I am *always* grateful to Anne Norrie and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

Richard Bewes

Written at All Souls Church, Langham Place, London







PART ONE 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



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THE TOP 100 QUESTIONS – REMIX

Q.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 just whom exactly Jesus Christ is. He is the key to the whole of our existence. The Christian apostle Paul sums up the divine purpose in vivid language: ‘...to bring all things in heaven and on earth together under one head, even Christ’ (Eph. 1:10).

Why a universe, and not a series of ‘multi-verses’? 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 word 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 the widespread loss of confidence in there being just one true story has resulted in a growing collection of highly diverse and irreconcilable ‘stories’; there are as many stories as there are story-tellers – ‘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 first Christians 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 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 (Col. 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 like this, ‘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’ (Eph. 4:10). By this Paul meant that -

- 1] There is no part of the universe that is free from Christ’s control.
- 2] There is no room for anyone else. Diana, Mithras, Jupiter, Osiris and Venus had to go. Jesus has taken all the space!
- 3] 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.

