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# 1. Questions about God (QG)

**QG 1:** *How can I be sure that God really exists?*

**AG 1:** There is no nation or tribe in the world which does not, in one form or another, believe in a god, a spirit or a being which is superior to itself. This even applies to the most isolated jungle tribes who have never had contact with another culture, let alone heard the gospel. How is that possible? We all have the intellectual capacity to deduce from the wonderful visible creation which surrounds us that there is an invisible creator. Nobody believes that a car, a watch or even a button or a paper clip just happen. This is why Paul writes in the New Testament: "For since the creation of the world God's invisible qualities – his eternal power and divine nature – have been clearly seen, being understood from what has been made, so that men are without excuse" (Rom 1:20). Creation, however, only leads us to believe in the existence of a creator, allowing us to draw conclusions about His power and wealth of ideas, but not giving us any information as to His nature (e.g. love, life, mercy, goodness). The Bible has been given to us for this purpose.

**QG 2:** *Where is God?*

**AG 2:** We humans try to localize God. This is why we find so much on this in the heathen concepts of gods in ancient times as well as in neo-paganism. The Greeks believed that their gods lived on the mountain Olympus while the Teutons placed their gods in Valhalla. The French mathematician and astronomer *P. Laplace* (1749 – 1827) said: "I have searched the whole of space, but I didn't find God anywhere." Soviet cosmonauts commented in a similar vein: "I didn't meet God during my

## 2. Questions about the Bible (QB)

The following set of questions, dealing as it does with the validity and reliability of the Bible, is of a very fundamental nature. Thus, only five questions are dealt with in this chapter, and – as befits the importance of this subject – a very detailed appendix has been added.

**QB 1:** *The Bible was written by people: doesn't this make everything relative? How can you say that the Bible is from God and that everything in it is true?*

**AB 1:** We will answer this question concerning scriptural truth by means of a specific example, which has the advantage of being mathematically reproducible. The Bible contains 6,408 verses with prophetic statements, of which 3,268 have come to pass while the remaining prophecies concern future events. No fulfilment of a prophecy differed from the way it was described. This has not been equalled by any other book in world history. What we have here is a truth quota – also expressible in mathematical formulae – which has no equal anywhere else. We now want to ask: is it possible that so many prophecies came to pass by coincidence? i.e. can their fulfilment be explained without the intervention of God? In considering these questions, let us use a probability formula. In the calculation model below, two things have been ignored, namely that sometimes several verses in the Bible describe a single prophecy while, on the other hand, one verse sometimes contains several prophecies. Similarly, the fact that some prophecies are mentioned several times is not included in the calculation. This simplification of the model is compensated for, however, by the following formulation for the basic probability.



If one assumes the very high basic probability of  $p = 0.5$  for the *chance* fulfilment of a single prophecy, then the overall probability  $w$  for the 3,268 prophecies which have come to pass already can be accurately calculated. This is  $w = 2^{-3268} = 1.714 \times 10^{-984}$ . The prophecies are actually such that the chances of their occurring as described can be formulated mathematically to be from 1 : 1,000 to 1 : several millions. With the formulation 1 : 2 ( $= 0.5$ ) we would thus certainly err on the safe side. To compare numbers for  $w$  let us look at several imaginary lottery systems. Taking the probability for a 'jackpot' in the commercial '6 in 49' number lottery (i.e. 6 correct numbers in 49 blocks with consecutive numbering) as about 1 : 14 million, let us then ask: How many more blocks would we need to add onto another lottery ticket (where 6 correct numbers would also be a 'jackpot') in order for the probability of winning on such a ticket to be the same as that for the chance fulfilment of 3,268 prophecies? What would we estimate the size of such a ticket to be?

- a) the size of a table tennis table?

On an area of  $A = 1.525 \times 2.74 \text{ m}^2 = 4.1785 \text{ m}^2$ , the number of blocks (L) of the same size as on a standard commercial lottery ticket which could be accommodated would be 167,140 blocks.

- b) the size of a soccer field?

Where  $A = 7,350 \text{ m}^2$ , L would be 459,375,000 blocks.

- c) or even the surface of the entire earth?

If  $A = 510 \text{ million km}^2$ , L would be  $31.3653 \times 10^{18}$  blocks, where  $10^{18}$  is a quintillion or a million million million.

If one were to calculate the probabilities of having six correct numbers for L number of blocks, then the probability ( $w$ ) in each of the above examples would be as follows:

### 3. Questions about Creation, Science and Faith (QC)

**QC 1:** *Can inanimate matter change into living organisms?*

**AC 1:** The historically sharp division between inorganic and organic chemistry was based on strong grounds: organic compounds were known to occur in nature only through the activity of living organisms. Once an organism dies, the process is reversed: the organic materials decay into their inorganic components. When, in 1828, the German chemist *F. Wöhler* (1800–1882) transformed the clearly inorganic ammonium cyanate into the organic compound urea (carbamide), this fundamental difference disappeared. One can synthesize numerous organic compounds nowadays through goal-oriented, planned effort. But to be able to do this, knowledge of chemistry and process engineering is required. In short, information is required. If we look at life forms we note that, at the physico-chemical level, there are no processes in plants, animals or people which contradict the physical and chemical processes operative outside of them. I.e., the known laws of nature fully apply here, too. Thus, in principle, there is no difference between inanimate matter and matter in living things in terms of physics and chemistry. Neo-Darwinian speculations on the origins of the first living things in a primordial atmosphere go even further in claiming a relatively smooth and uncomplicated transition from inanimate matter to living organisms. A living organism, however, should not be confused with the matter in living things. We will not have an adequate understanding of an organism by understanding its individual components in isolation. Organisms have one important ingredient, **information**, a mental quantity, which unaided matter is incapable of producing. Information is responsible for the fact that each living being develops to

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## **QUESTIONS**

### ***I HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO ASK***

Everyone who starts to take interest in the Christian faith is confronted by numerous questions. For each person searching for God, there is a remarkable tendency to ask the same questions.

There was therefore a need to collect these questions and to answer them in a short but adequate form. All the questions which have been dealt with in this book have one thing in common – they are genuine questions. It is not a book of cross-section answers for Christian insiders, but tries instead to take each problem seriously, which occupies the minds of those who are doubting, questioning and searching.

It is not at all a collection of hair-splitting theological or constructed theoretical points, but instead it handles basic questions which have been the result of a series of lectures given by the author of this book. Unusual questions have also been dealt with.