

Stoa Apologetics Questions 2018-2019

Category 1: EXISTENCE AND NATURE OF GOD

Definitions

1. What does it mean that God is triune? Why does this matter?
2. What does it mean that God is omniscient? Why does this matter?
3. What is the meaning of God's omnipotence? Why does this matter?
4. What is the meaning of the omnipresence of God? Why does this matter?
5. What does it mean that God is eternal? Why does this matter?
6. What is the meaning of the sovereignty of God? Why does this matter?
7. What does the grace of God mean? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Does God reveal Himself to man?
2. If God is holy, why did He allow sin in the world?
3. What is your response to the following statement: "God set the universe in motion, but He has no interest in it"?
4. Can God be both merciful and just?
5. Christians often argue for God's existence by suggesting the universe needs an initial cause. But what caused God?
6. Why is there evil and suffering in the world if God exists?
7. Can morality exist without God?
8. What is the role of the Holy Spirit? Why does it matter?

Statement Analysis

1. How would you respond to someone who told you, "The Old Testament God is a God of hate, while the New Testament God is a God of love"?
2. How would you respond to Voltaire's statement: "If God did not exist, it would be necessary to invent Him"? Voltaire. *Épître à l'Auteur du Livre des Trois Imposteurs*. Paris: Garnier, 1770.
3. How would you respond to the Karl Marx quote? "Religion is the opium of the people." *
4. What is your response to this statement by Richard Dawkins? "Yet the living results of natural selection overwhelmingly impress us with the appearance of design as if by a master watchmaker." Dawkins, Richard. *The Blind Watchmaker*. New York: W.W. Norton & Co.1996, p.21.
5. What is your response to this statement by astrophysicist Paul Davies? "There is for me powerful evidence that there is something going on behind it all...It seems as though somebody has fine-tuned nature's numbers to make the Universe." Davies, P. *The Cosmic Blueprint: New Discoveries in Nature's Creative Ability To Order the Universe*. New York: Simon and Schuster, 1988, p. 20.

New questions marked with *

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Category 2: SCRIPTURES

Definitions

1. What does the sufficiency of Scripture mean? Why does this matter?
2. What does the unity of Scripture mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does the uniqueness of Scripture mean? Why does this matter?
4. What does the inspiration of Scripture mean? Why does it matter?

General Questions

1. Is the New Testament historically reliable?
2. Is the Old Testament historically reliable?
3. Can the Bible be trustworthy when it has been translated so many times?
4. Does science contradict the Bible?

Statement Analysis

1. What is your response to this statement: “The Bible is simply the work of a great conspiracy where people sought to create a religion of their own”?
2. How would you respond to the following criticism: “The Bible supports oppression of slaves and women”?
3. What is your response to this statement: “The Bible is a guidebook. It was never intended to be taken literally”?
4. What is your response to the following observation by Noam Chomsky: “The Bible is probably the most genocidal book in the literary canon”? <http://www.chomsky.info/interviews/20040917.pdf>
5. What is your response to the following Richard Dawkins quote: “The Bible should be taught, but emphatically not as reality. It is fiction, myth, poetry, anything but reality. As such it needs to be taught because it underlies so much of our literature and our culture”? Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006
6. What is your response to this statement: “The Bible is full of contradictions”?

New questions marked with *

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Category 3: THE NATURE, PURPOSE, AND DESTINY OF MAN

Definitions

1. What does it mean that man is totally depraved? Why does this matter?
2. What does sanctification mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does it mean to repent? Why does this matter?
4. What does it mean to be “born again”? Why does this matter?
5. What does the resurrection of the body mean? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Do all men have a longing for God?
2. Did a loving God create Hell?
3. Does God hate the sin but love the sinner?
4. Why am I here?
5. When does human life begin and why does it matter?

Statement Analysis

1. What is your response to this statement: “Heaven is only a state of mind”?
2. What is your response to the following Martin Sheen quote: “I still believe in the nonviolent Jesus and the basic human goodness present in all of us”? http://progressive.org/mag_intvsheen
3. What is your response to someone who asks: “Is there life after death?”
4. What is your response to this statement by Bertrand Russell? “The centre of me is always and eternally a terrible pain – a curious wild pain – a searching for something beyond what the world contains.” Russell, Bertrand. *Autobiography Vol. 2* Routledge: New York, 1968, p. 303.
5. What is your response to this statement by C.S. Lewis? “What I call my 'self' now is hardly a person at all. It's mainly a meeting place for various natural forces, desires, and fears, etcetera, some of which come from my ancestors, and some from my education, some perhaps from devils. The self you were really intended to be is something that lives not from nature but from God.” Lewis, C.S. BBC Radio Talk: “Beyond Personality -- Mere Men.” Broadcast March, 21, 1944.

New questions marked with *

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Category 4: SALVATION

Definitions

1. What does justification mean? Why does this matter?
2. What does propitiation mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does redemption mean? Why does this matter?
4. What is the meaning of eternal life? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Can a person know God?
2. Can a person become right with God by keeping the Ten Commandments?
3. Why does man need salvation?
4. Can a Christian have assurance of his salvation?
5. What will happen to the innocent people who have never heard about Jesus and the Gospel?
6. Are all persons children of God?
7. How many ways are there to heaven?
8. Is praying to God a rational way to live?

Statement Analysis

1. What is your response to the statement from Linus (Peanuts, comic strip): “It doesn’t matter what you believe as long as you are sincere”? Schulz, Charles.
<http://www.ramblingweb.com/search/label/peanuts>
2. How would you respond to someone who told you, “I commune best with God when I am out in nature; I don’t need organized religion to feel close to God”?
3. How would you respond if someone told you, “Religion is a private personal matter”?
4. How would you respond to John 14:6: “Jesus said to him, ‘I am the way, and the truth, and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me’”? The Holy Bible, English Standard Version (ESV). Crossway 2001
5. What is your response to the popular wisdom, “God helps those who help themselves”?
6. How would you respond to someone who asks, “Isn’t Christianity all blind faith with no logical, scientific, or intellectual basis?” *
7. What is your response to this criticism: “Christians are all hypocrites. Why would I want to become one of them?” <http://www.crosswalk.com/church/pastors-or-leadership/ten>
8. How would you respond to this statement by Michael Shermer? “Play hard, work hard, love hard. . . The bottom line for me is to live life to the fullest in the here and-now instead of a hoped-for hereafter.” Michael Shermer, quoted in Johnson, Chris. *A Better Life: 100 Atheists Speak Out on Joy & Meaning in a World Without God*. Cosmic Teapot, Inc., 2014.

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Category 5: THE PERSON OF CHRIST

Definitions

1. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is God? Why does this matter?
2. What does the Virgin Birth of Jesus Christ mean? Why does this matter?
3. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Mediator? Why does this matter?
4. What does it mean that Jesus Christ is the Messiah? Why does this matter?
5. What does John 1:1-3 mean when it says that Jesus is the Word? Why does this matter?
6. What does it mean to call Jesus Christ the Lamb of God? Why does this matter?

General Questions

1. Why is it important that Jesus Christ be both fully God and fully man?
2. Is there evidence for the historical existence of Jesus? Is this evidence necessary for the Christian faith?
3. How do we know that Jesus really died?
4. Is there evidence for the Resurrection of Jesus? Is this evidence necessary for the Christian faith?

Statement Analysis

1. How would you respond to the common observation: "Jesus was a good man and a good teacher, but certainly not the Son of God"?
2. If Jesus came so that we may have life and have it more abundantly (John 10:10), why does it often seem like those who don't follow Jesus have more fun and enjoyment in this life?
3. What is your response to this statement by A.W. Tozer? "The love of Christ both wounds and heals, it fascinates and frightens, it kills and makes alive, it draws and repulses." Tozer, A.W. *That Incredible Christian: How Heaven's Children Live on Earth*. Compiled by Anita M. Bailey. Christian Publications, Inc., 1964.
4. What is your response to this statement by Francis Frangipane? "Most of us...are more comfortable what Jesus has done than accepting who He desires to be to us. We sing of His victories and teach of His mercies, yet rarely do we quiet our hearts and surrender to His Presence. We want Him near enough to protect us, but not so close that our consciousness is captured by His Presence." Frangipane, Francis. *The Days of His Presence*. Charisma House, 2012, p. 114.

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Category 6: CHRISTIANITY COMPARED

Definitions

1. Compare and contrast the Biblical view of Jesus with the Islamic view of Jesus.
2. Compare and contrast the Muslim view of God with the Christian view of God.
3. Compare and contrast the origins of the Quran and the origins of the Bible.
4. Compare and contrast the Hindu view of the nature of man with the Christian view of the nature of man.
5. Compare and contrast the book of Mormon's Jesus with that of the Bible.
6. Compare and contrast the Christian view of man's destiny with that of Buddhism.

General Questions

1. Is the environmental movement in conflict with Christianity?
2. Are Christians intolerant?
3. Is karma a Biblical concept?
4. Do Christians, Jews, and Muslims worship the same God?
5. Are Jehovah's Witnesses Christian?
6. Are Mormons Christians?
7. What are unique features of Christianity that set it apart from all other religions of the world?

Statement Analysis

1. Respond to this quote from the Quran, Surah 28:67: "However, the one who has repented in this life, and believed, and done good deeds may hope to be among those who will achieve salvation." <http://www.alim.org/library/quran/surah/english/28/MAL>
2. Respond to the following Richard Dawkins statement: "Religious fanatics want people to switch off their own minds, ignore the evidence, and blindly follow a holy book based upon private revelation." Dawkins, Richard. *The God Delusion*. Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 2006
3. Respond to this statement by Buddha: "No one saves us but ourselves. No one can and no one may. We ourselves must walk the path." Translation of Dhammapada. No. 165. *Karma: A Story of Buddhist Ethics*. Chicago: Carus Publishing Co. 1984
4. How would you respond to this tweet from Bette Midler? "Men and religion are worthless." Midler, Bette (BetteMidler). June 3, 2017, 4:15 pm, Tweet.

New questions marked with *