

BELIEVING IN GOD

Christians believe that the God of the Jews, and the God of the Old and New Testament is one God.

- This God is sometimes described as God the Father, the Creator of all life, this is the God to whom Jesus was praying in the Lord's Prayer.
- Sometimes he is God the Son, Jesus Christ, who chose to take on the form of a human being and to teach people God's will. Jesus of Nazareth, the Messiah of Christianity, is important because although he was innocent he willingly died on the cross to save people from their sins. When Jesus rose from the dead three days after he was killed, he showed that death was not the end and that God had power over death. Because of this, people have a chance to go to heaven when they die.
- Sometimes he is God the Holy Spirit who inspires people and gives them strength.

The God who appears in the Old Testament seems different from the God whom Jesus speaks of as 'Father'. However, Christians believe that the whole Bible is the revealed Word of God and that these differences show the changing relationship between God and humanity over thousands of years.

All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.

(2 Timothy 3:16-17)

In the Bible God and God's teachings are revealed through the Prophets such as Isaiah, Jeremiah and John the Baptist. In the Old Testament there are references to a Messiah who will come from God to lead the people:

For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the increase of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and for ever.(Isaiah 9:6-7)

In the New Testament, Jesus is seen as this Messiah, the Son of God:

Today in the town of David a Saviour has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. (Luke 2:11)

Christians describe God in many different ways: as a judge and ruler, as a great and mysterious power, as a friend and saviour and, particularly, as love. All these are aspects of the Christian God. Rather than showing that this God is inconsistent, however, they indicate that God is so much beyond humanity's understanding that it is impossible for people to know how to describe him.

For centuries people have tried to answer questions about God and there are several arguments which have been put forward in an attempt to decide whether God exists or not:

Ontological

Anselm (1033-1109) said that because people described God as 'that than which nothing greater can be conceived', God must exist otherwise we could not produce this description.

Cosmological

Thomas Aquinas (1225-74) argued that something cannot come from nothing. Because there is a universe, someone or something must have brought it into existence. Aquinas said that this 'first cause' was God.

Design (Teleological)

William Paley (1734-1805) produced a theory which has become known as the Divine Watchmaker. If you found a watch in the street, you would assume that its parts had not come together by chance, but that someone had designed it. He then applied this argument to the world and so to God.

Experience

Some people have argued that, because people claim that miracles have happened and that they have had experience of God, God must exist.

Morality

How can we know the difference between right and wrong unless God has told us this?

** You need to know the Design argument and Cosmological argument thoroughly**

Miracles and Experience are also important

THE CASE FOR GOD

1. The 'design' argument

This view was developed by William Paley (1743-1805). Paley argued that if you found a watch on the ground (never having seen a watch before), a quick look at the watch would show a very complex piece of machinery, which had obviously been carefully put together. A watch could not exist by chance, but is obviously designed. The universe is far more complicated than a watch (for example, the human eye is far more complex than any human invention, such as the telescope, which can only help the eye). Therefore the universe must have been designed. The only possible designer of something as complex as the universe must be God, therefore God must exist.

2. The 'universe' argument (sometimes called the 'cosmological' argument)

This viewpoint was developed by Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century. Aquinas argued that it is impossible for something to come from nothing, therefore the universe must have been caused by something which existed before it. No matter how far you go back, there must be a cause that began everything. Something had to start the whole process. Aquinas went on to say that, with the universe, the first cause must be eternal – without beginning or end – otherwise it would have needed something to bring it into existence. The first cause therefore must be God.

3. The argument from 'experience'

Some people talk about God in terms of personal experience. They believe that they can know God personally by prayer. Within religion, believers sometimes talk about 'encountering God' through prayers and worship. Within the world of religion, some people believe that miracles are events which, because of their faith, demonstrate that God is alive and active.

4. The argument from 'morality'

Many people argue that all human beings have a sense of right or wrong and a conscience which helps them to decide what is the right thing to do. Our CONSCIENCE is a sign of the existence of God, because human beings have been given the ability to make choices and they therefore choose good or evil.

5. The argument from 'people'

There are many people who have lived in an incredibly SACRIFICIAL way which stems from the faith they hold. In this century alone, Mother Teresa, Mohandas Gandhi and Martin Luther King have provided living examples of how a person's beliefs can affect the world in a positive, caring way.

It is clear that most major world religions believe that the demand: 'prove to me that God exists' is unrealistic. The Creation stories found in most of the Holy Scriptures do not concern themselves with where God came from but simply state that God is. At the heart of all their teaching is the emphasis that the wonders of the world and the beauties of nature are not there by accident but rather by design. It is surprising to note that the attributes of God in all these faiths are surprisingly similar (B and C).

THE CASE AGAINST GOD

1. The design faults

The world has got some major faults in its design and structure. The number of earthquakes, volcanoes, floods, droughts and diseases seriously calls into question the skill of a creator God. A much more likely explanation is that the universe is eternal in its own right and simply exists in a state of growth and change.

2. The Darwinian Theory

Charles Darwin (1809-82) was the scientist responsible for the THEORY OF EVOLUTION. He has, for some people, destroyed the argument of a designer God. His theory is that life has developed and evolved from very simple structures to reach the complex universe we now have. Through the process of natural selection, species have adapted to new and changing environmental conditions. Those species unable to adapt, such as the dinosaurs, have become extinct.

3. An 'unfair' God?

Some psychologists claim that religious 'experiences' are tricks of the mind, that if we want to really believe in something, then we will. With regard to miracles, even if some were 'true', then what kind of God is it that allows some people to be healed, but not others? This hardly seems a God who is fair and just.

4. The good conscience

Religion does not have a monopoly on MORALITY! Many people who do not have any religious beliefs lead good lives and provide help and support for others. The existence of a conscience does not prove the existence of God. In fact it could be argued that religion has been responsible for more bloodshed and human suffering than any other human activity.

One world faith, Buddhism, strongly rejects a God who has created all things. It challenges any reconciliation between a creator God and a creation so full of suffering (E).

Questions

1. Of the arguments for and against the existence of God, which do you find the most convincing? Explain your answer.
2. Can you think of any other points either for or against?

Fact sheet E: The Cosmological Argument

This argument states that the universe operates to the existence of God. Here are three forms of the argument:

The way of Motion – St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1270

1. Everything is changing or moving.
2. Whatever is changing or moving is being changed or moved by something else (e.g. one snooker ball by another, and that by a cue etc.).
3. An infinite regress (going back in time) of movers or changers is impossible, because something must have started it off.
4. Therefore, there must be an Unmoved Mover – something which moves everything else without itself being moved by something. This unmoved mover is what people understand to be God.

The 'First Cause' Way – St Thomas Aquinas, Summa Theologica, 1270

1. Everything has a cause.
2. Nothing can cause itself, because to do so it would have to exist before it existed.
3. Therefore everything is caused by something else.
4. An infinite regress of causes is impossible, because something must have started it off.
5. Therefore there must be an Uncaused Cause, or First Cause, which is eternal and itself has no cause. This people understand to be God.

The Principle of Sufficient Reason – Leibniz, Theodicy, 1710

1. If we accept an infinite regress of causes, movers or changers, the universe is eternal, and if it is eternal it has no explanation.
2. Science and experience tell us that everything has an explanation – this is the way we learn and make progress: looking for explanations.
3. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that the universe has an explanation.
4. The only explanation of the universe would be an eternal Unmoved Mover or First Cause, which could only be God.
5. Therefore it is reasonable to assume that God exists.

You probably won't need this much detail but it's a useful reference

Fact sheet C: Miracles

Problems with miracles

1. All miracles require you to believe in the evidence of eyewitnesses. We all know that people can be mistaken about what they have seen and heard and that some very responsible people do tell lies if it is to their benefit.
2. Science can now explain many miracles, so perhaps it will be able to explain all miracles in the future.
3. It seems more sensible to look for a natural explanation than to think God must have done it.
4. Illusionists like David Copperfield and Paul Daniels can do wonderful things which seem to have no explanation, but they tell us they are tricks. Maybe miracles are just tricks.
5. If God performs miracles, he must be evil, because if he could feed 5,000 people with five loaves and two fishes, for example, why doesn't he use a miracle to feed all the starving people? If God can save one child from dying, why didn't he stop the Dunblane massacre of children?

Positive things about miracles

1. Miracles are always going to convince the people who witness them. If you pray for your friend who is dying from cancer, and she recovers, you will believe it was a miracle and it will help you to believe in God.
2. Miracles could be signs from God to help us to believe in him.
3. To believe that miracles are possible can help people to get through very bad times.
4. Most people do not blame God when things go wrong. They believe that God only uses miracles as signs and that bad things happen because humans refuse to follow God's commands.

Miracles

Many people have asked the question: if God created the world, why did he then allow miracles to happen which break the natural laws of the universe?

A 'miracle' is a marvellous event which cannot have been brought about by humans or by nature, and so is said to be performed by God. Usually a miracle shows control over the laws of nature.

There are many instances in the New Testament of Jesus performing miracles: he turned water into wine, he walked on the sea, he healed the sick, raised the dead, and calmed a storm.

The question that miraculous events raise is: would God willingly break the natural laws of the universe which he created? While it could be said that God would of course break the laws if there was *sufficient reason*, it is difficult to say now that events such as turning water into wine were *sufficiently important* for him to do so.

Some Christians have argued that it does not matter whether the miracles of the New Testament really happened or not. What is important is the spiritual message about God's love for humanity which lies behind these miracles.

Miracles – Come into the category of 'experience'.

Question:

1. What is your considered opinion on miracles?

Fact sheet D: The Design Argument

Paley's Watch

(BASED ON NATURAL THEOLOGY, WILLIAM PALEY, 1802)

1. If you were walking across an uninhabited heath and came across a stone on the ground, you would have no reason to ask where the stone had come from.
2. If you were walking in the same place and came across a watch on the ground, you might well ask where it have come from, because even if you had never seen one before and did not understand its workings – its complex mechanism would suggest to you that it have been designed; - no complex mechanism can be produced by chance.
3. The universe is a far more complex mechanism than a watch (a small example of this is an ecosystem, where everything works according to laws which support the life of everything else).
4. Therefore, just as the complexity of the watch forced you to believe that it had been designed, so the complexity of the universe forces people to believe that it too has been designed. (Paley gave many examples to illustrate this; e.g. the eye is obviously designed for sight and is much more complex than a telescope which humans have designed to assist the eye).
5. Therefore, the universe has been designed, and everything which is designed must have a designer.
6. The only possible designer of something as fantastic as the universe is God.
7. Therefore God must exist.

Creation or evolution?

For many years people believed that the theory of evolution 'disproved' God. Christians nowadays believe that evolution explains HOW but God explains WHY. This passage shows that there is no conflict and evolution WAS considered years before Darwin.

As early as the fourth century, St Augustine has anticipated this when he said: 'In the beginning were created only germs or causes of the forms of life which were afterwards to be developed in gradual course'.

His ideas about Creation are very similar to the theory of a gradual evolution. The biblical account is not wrong, therefore, as it does show the process of gradual evolution. It is simply that it is not to be interpreted literally.

The account of Creation in Genesis is designed to explain the relationship between God and nature. Like many of the accounts of Creation in other religions, it explains the relationship without entering into a scientific debate. Nevertheless, some fundamentalist Christians have found it impossible to accept that humans evolved and are related to apes, even though scientific research proves that this is so.

Christians believe that the world is not an accident: there is a Creator. They believe that the world itself – in its beauty and detail – points to a Creator who designed it all. This belief is expressed in the first words of the Bible:

"In the beginning, God created the heavens and the earth."

Genesis 1:1

Everything that exists, including plants, animals and humans, is God's creation.

Richard Cooling is a doctor. He points out the delicate balance in the way the human body works:

"The thyroid is a small organ in the front of the neck. It produces a hormone. Too much of the hormone and your eyes stick out, you sweat heavily and you rapidly lose weight. Too little of the hormone and your body slows down. I once had a patient who stopped moving altogether!"

"The incredible thing is that the difference between having too little and too much is very, very small. The normal amount is equal to one grain of sand in all the blood in the body. The equivalent of two grains would be far too much."

"As a Christian I find it impossible to believe that the human body is the result of chance. Our health depends on delicate balances like that of the hormone."

The human body is just one example: Christians point to many others.

Where does everything come from?

Three students asked other people this question. Here are some of the answers they received:

- **Someone designed it**

"Look at the wings of this dragonfly – it's such a delicate design. There must be a master designer who brought everything into existence."

- **It started with a big bang**

"I believe that it all started off when all the matter in the universe was concentrated into a hot ball. By chance this exploded in a big bang. Matter flew apart, and cooled – forming atoms, then gases and then galaxies."

- **It's no accident**

"Even if it did all start off with a big bang, I can't believe it all happened by accident. What made the matter in the first place? It's like the saying – 'what came first, the chicken or the egg?'"

Summary

Christians believe that the world was created and designed by God.

SUFFERING

You have probably already experienced both physical and mental suffering in your life. Suffering is part of life – no human being can escape it. Different people respond differently to others suffering. Some typical responses might include: 'It's nothing to do with me'; 'I must try to help'; 'It's their own fault anyway'; 'It is through suffering that we learn to grow as human beings'. Many people are driven to ask the questions 'Why is there so much suffering in the world?', 'Why if there is a God does he allow such suffering?'

****LEARN THIS!****

THE PROBLEM OF EVIL

For theists (people who believe in God) the problem of suffering and evil poses some serious questions. Why does God allow evil? Why doesn't God do something about it? If God is all-powerful he must be able to prevent evil. If God is all-loving he must be willing to prevent evil. But if God is both able and willing to prevent evil, then why does evil exist?

For some people, the existence of suffering, and in particular suffering which has not been caused by humans, is the main reason why they find it difficult to believe in God and for disliking religion altogether.

One teenager who finds it difficult to believe in God wrote this:

"It seems cowardly to both attack God for the existence of suffering whilst at the same time not quite believing in him with my heart. One must believe in God before one can pin the blame on him, and in the process of coming to believe in him the need to pin the blame lessens. I'm not saying that if I believed in God, life would suddenly become so much more understandable, but I think I would be able to trust enough that understanding wouldn't be so essential. I would feel safe in the belief that I can never see things as God sees them, that I can't understand everything."

Nick, 17

Copy this!

Traditionally Christian thinkers have said that there are two types of suffering:

- moral – caused by human sin, ignorance and selfishness.
- natural – caused by natural phenomena like earthquakes, disease, floods, etc.

Some Christian responses to the problem of evil might include the following.

- A traditional Christian response to suffering is to say that after death all the suffering of this world will be forgotten in the joy of a new life.
- Suffering is caused by selfishness and self-centredness. This selfishness is sin. Sin is part of human nature and affects everyone. Sin does not mean simply doing something wrong, it is a whole attitude that leads people away from God.
- Human beings have free will: they are free to choose between good and evil, knowledge and ignorance. It is not God that causes suffering but rather human attitudes to life.
- Suffering is part of life. It is only through suffering that people learn to grow into better people. In a world without suffering there would be nothing to struggle for or against, nothing to strive for. 'Suffering is part of your training' (Hebrews 12:7).
- Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was tortured to death. Yet Christians believe that he rose from the dead. Out of the darkness and death came light and hope.
- Suffering is part of life. It is a challenge and because it is energy, it can be transformed into something positive.
- Suffering is built into the birth process of the universe. By suffering we can recognise the pain of others.

THINKING POINT

- 'We must learn that to expect God to do everything while we do nothing is not faith but superstition.'
(Dr Martin Luther King)

Do you agree? Why?

Suffering

It is almost impossible to pen a newspaper or watch the news on television without seeing some report of disaster or cruelty. The causes of suffering from such events are normally divided into two categories:

- Natural evil – when the normal patterns of nature are disrupted. Humans have little or no control over such events.
- Moral evil – suffering caused by the way people act towards each other and inflict pain by selfish or cruel actions.

The twentieth century has probably witnessed more of man's inhumanity to man than any previous time. In world history, millions have died in wars – an evil on a vast scale. Then there is the untold suffering which happens behind closed doors. All this can be blamed upon mankind. We may ask why God allows us to do this to each other. For many people the responses from the world religions are clearly inadequate. Look at the ideas in A.

A.

- Some pain is good – it can be a warning.
- God works in mysterious ways.
- Suffering is a test of faith.
- Suffering is the result of sin.
- Suffering is due to human thoughtlessness.
- Suffering is a battle between good and evil.
- God is not all powerful.
- Suffering helps character formation.
- If there was no evil in the world, there would be no good.
- Evil is an illusion.
- God created the universe and then stood aside.

In the period 1970 to 1985, over 825 major natural disasters were recorded. To label a disaster as 'natural' often leads people to throw up their hands and declare that there is nothing they can do. Quite often, people are forced to live in situations where they are exposed to more frequent 'natural hazards'. Bangladesh, for example, has had 14 major floods this century. The most devastating of these occurred in 1988 when 46 per cent of the country was flooded, over 2,000 people died, and over 45 million were made homeless. Such incidents hold people back from belief. If there is a God, he does not make it easy for us.

1. Write and learn the 'problem of evil and suffering'.
2. Define both MORAL and natural EVIL.

Suffering and religion

Religions cannot be accused of ignoring the issue. The problem of suffering is particularly acute for the world religions such as Christianity, Judaism and Islam, which believe in a good, just and all powerful God. The evidence of evil and suffering appears to lead us to one of three conclusions:

1. God cannot do anything about suffering and evil, which means that God cannot be described as all powerful.
2. God does not mind that evil and suffering exists, which means that God is not good or these things are really good things in disguise.
3. God does not exist.

Christianity

In the Christian GOSPEL, the death of Jesus is followed by the RESURRECTION, which gives hope to all who suffer. The suffering and death of Jesus is central to the Christian faith. The main religious symbol for Christians is the cross, a representation of death in its most hideous form.

Where is God in the midst of suffering?

- Where is God in the midst of suffering? What kind of God is it that allows people to suffer? Does God care?

Have you ever asked these questions? If so, you are not alone. People have struggled with them for centuries. The Bible records a number of people who have demanded of God an explanation for all the suffering in the world. For example, King David had trouble understanding where God was in times of need. In one of his psalms he cries out, 'My God, my God, why have you forsaken me? Why are you so far from saving me? Sometimes it's hard to understand what God is doing in the world. Is God absent? Doesn't he have the power to control things?

In this unit you will be examining a number of beliefs which Christians have about God and suffering.

God suffers with people

Christians believe that God understands our suffering. For example, Jesus, God's Son suffered at the hands of both his friends and enemies.

Christians believe that all people fall short of the perfect ideal for us but that some rebel against God so completely that they become evil. However, they also believe that all people, even people like Hitler and Frederick West, can be rescued by God and given a fresh start if they turn away from their sins – the Bible says, 'There is nothing ... that will ever be able to separate us from the love of God.' (Romans 8:38) Christians are called to forgive their enemies.

War does not respect personal belongings. How would you feel towards people who had destroyed your house and all your possessions?

Summary

Christians believe in a God who understands what suffering is because he has also suffered in the person of Jesus. However, God created people out of love and with freedom of choice. This means that God will not intervene in every case to stop people from suffering.

Bible file

The Bible gives clues as to why suffering came into the world. The story of God creating a world that is good is told in the first two chapters of the Bible. However, the third chapter describes how people rebelled against God and are forced to bear the consequences – conflict, suffering and death.

Jesus develops this teaching when he says: 'From the inside, from a person's heart, come the evil ideas which lead him to do immoral things, to rob, kill, commit adultery, be greedy, and do all sorts of evil things.'
(Mark 7:21)

"I can remember very well people of ex-Yugoslavia – people like me, men who were friends of mine, who went out and did terrible things, killing others. But they are the same people who offered me water-melon on the beach when I was a child. How could they have changed so much? It is for this reason that I believe each of us has the potential to do evil things. You can see this in small children. They can be more cruel with each other than adults."
(Monique, 18)

Summary

One Christian response to explain suffering is the belief that the Devil tempts people to do evil things to others.

"God created people with free will. God shares in the agony of people's suffering like a mother watching her druggie son destroy his own life. The love of God is suffering love."
(James, 16)

REVISION FILE 3: BELIEVING IN GOD

Keywords

Awe	the feeling you get when you are in a great cathedral or look up at the stars and feel there is something much greater than you.
Numinous	very similar feeling to awe.
Conversion	when your life is changed by giving yourself to God.
Mystical	gaining direct contact with God through things like visions and trances.
Miracle	something which seems to break a law of science and makes you think only God could have done it.
Big Bang	the explosion which scientists believe began the universe.
Moral evil	actions done by humans which cause suffering.
Natural evil	things like earthquakes and floods which cause suffering and have nothing to do with humans.
Benevolent	the belief that God is good/kind.
Omnipotent	the idea that God is all powerful/can do anything.
Omniscient	the belief that God knows everything that has happened and that is going to happen.

Religious upbringing and belief in God

If a child is not brought up like this – how can they choose?

If you are brought up by religious parents, then you will believe in God from the beginning of your life.

You will be taken to worship God with your parents; you will be taught to pray to God every day; you will be expected to thank God and remember God's good gifts at various religious festivals; you are likely to go to school where everyone believes in God and so you are expected to believe in God.

With an upbringing like this, it is natural to believe in God; and you will never even think that God might not exist.

Do you agree with this last sentence? Why?

Religious experience and belief in God

You will need ALL (3) in a 6/8 mark question.

Religious experience means the ways in which people come into direct contact with God.

- It can be just a feeling you get when you are in a holy building or say your prayers, or even look up at the stars. It can be a more definite feeling of God's presence which makes you much more religious (often called conversion experience).
- It can be believing that a miracle has happened e.g. when someone you know is cured of an incurable disease after prayers or something connected with religion.
- It can be having a direct experience in which you believe God speaks to you in a dream or a vision or a mysterious experience like a trance.

Any of these experiences are almost certain to make the person who experiences them believe in God.

Experience of the world and belief in God

Some people think the way the world works shows that God must exist:

1. The world seems to be designed – the way the Big Bang worked with the laws of science to produce a universe of order, the way humans grow from a tiny blueprint of DNA etc. if something is designed, it must have a designer. The only possible designer of the universe is God, therefore, they believe, God must exist.
2. Science says everything has a cause or an explanation, therefore the universe itself must have a cause and only God could be the cause of the universe, therefore God must exist.
3. Life seems to have a meaning and purpose and there must be a God to give it meaning.
4. The fact that there are religions which seem to believe a lot of the same things about God shows that God must exist to be discovered by religion.

Evil and suffering

Many people find it hard to believe in God because there is evil and suffering in the world. If God is good, he ought not to want evil and suffering in his world. If God is all-powerful, he must be able to get rid of evil and suffering. There is evil and suffering in the world therefore God is not good, or God is not all-powerful, or God does not exist.

Christian Responses

1. Many Christians respond to the problem by believing that God knows the answer, but we cannot. However, Jesus showed us that God wants us to fight against evil and suffering, so they follow the example of Jesus and pray for those who suffer, and give them practical help wherever possible.
2. Some Christians think that God could not give us free will unless we had the chance to do evil things (being free is part of being made in God's image). Humans have used their free will to do evil things and this has brought suffering into the world. So evil and suffering are the fault of humans not God.
3. Other Christians believe that this life is a sort of test in which we prepare our souls for heaven. If there was not evil and suffering, then we would not be able to develop as good people, because being good involves helping those who suffer and fighting against evil. If we follow the Christian way, then our souls will become good and God will send us to heaven when we die.
4. The existence of natural evil is more difficult. However if there were no earthquakes then we would not be challenged to help others in that way. Sometimes it isn't easy to say where the dividing line occurs e.g. in Ethiopia, the famine has 2 causes:
 - a) failed rain (natural)
 - b) civil war (man made).

FACT SHEET F: BELIEVING IN GOD

Why people find it difficult to believe in God

1. The world has major design flaws which cause earthquakes, volcanic eruptions, disease, floods and droughts. These cause massive amounts of human suffering which make it seem that, if God did create the universe, he is either evil or useless or, more likely, does not exist.
2. Science explains the world and the universe much better than religion. For example, evolution is much more believable than the story of Adam and Eve, and it does not need God.
3. Science makes it difficult to believe in the Bible, which talks about God above the sky, records miracles (which we know have natural explanations) and often contradicts itself.
4. Some psychologists claim that religion and religious experiences are just our minds deceiving us (e.g. when a murderer claims that God appeared and told him to kill a prostitute, we assume that he is mad).
5. God is supposed to care and answer prayers, but people are praying for peace and an end to starvation all the time, yet these things still exist.
6. Most miracles can now be explained, and even if they cannot be explained, why would God just help one or two people with miracles and not all the other people who deserve that miracle just as much?
7. The discoveries of astronomy and the fact that astronauts have gone into space, make it difficult to think of anywhere God could be – this also applies to the idea of life after death and where heaven could be.
8. Most people in Britain do not bother much about religion, but lead just as good lives as those who are religious. If religion makes no difference to how you treat other people, it can't be true, so God does not exist.
9. There are several different religions each claiming to have the truth about God. They say different things about God and about religion. They cannot all be true, but how do we choose between them? If God existed, there would be only one religion.
10. It is easy nowadays to live your life without ever thinking of God, but if God existed, you would not be able to ignore him.

How do you think a Christian would answer each of these points? Refer to any information you have from any units.

Learn benevolent and omnipotent.