

This book is dedicated to all the men and women
who devote their lives to healing, caring and
supporting the millions who are suffering
through man's inhumanity to man.

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The Questions Within

J O H N S A H L



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Introduction

“If God is the creator of the world and loves everyone, how do you explain pain and suffering?”

That is a good question. How do we answer other basic questions or objections to belief and practice of the Christian life in following Jesus Christ?

That opening Question relates to one of seven subjects in this book for which I attempt to give some guidance, explanation and thoughts for you to consider. This is not a scholar’s book for we have hundreds, if not thousands, of those already available, often giving somewhat complex answers to questions which Jesus dealt with in simple terms.

Complexity was not a feature of Christ’s teaching as He preached the ‘Good News’ of the Gospel. When 3000 people committed their lives to following Christ on one day after His resurrection (Acts 2 v.41), loving God, each other and their neighbours, it was not because they had all gained a scholar’s degree in theology.

There are, however, many great Christian authors who have contributed so much to my own understanding, beliefs

and trust in the faith we share and to whom I owe a great debt. You will find relevant quotations from them as you read through the book.

This book is non-denominational. I write simply as a Christian trying to follow Jesus who offers us truth, forgiveness, hope and a love that has the power to change our lives forever.





1. Which Love Makes the Real Difference to Life?

“Many years ago, when I worked as a volunteer at a hospital, I got to know a little girl named Liz who was suffering from a rare & serious disease. Her only chance of recovery appeared to be a blood transfusion from her 5-year old brother, who had miraculously survived the same disease and had developed the antibodies needed to combat the illness. The doctor explained the situation to her little brother, and asked the little boy if he would be willing to give his blood to his sister.

I saw him hesitate for only a moment before taking a deep breath and saying, “Yes I’ll do it if it will save her.” As the transfusion progressed, he lay in bed next to his sister and smiled, as we all did, seeing the color returning to her cheeks. Then his face grew pale and his smile faded. He looked up at the doctor and asked with a trembling voice, “Will I die right away, or how soon?”⁽¹⁾

True love can be measured by what we are prepared to sacrifice for the people we love. This small five-year old boy thought the doctor had meant that he would lose his

“...learning is not even knowledge because facts have to be experienced to be known, whereas love can teach in an instant what a hundred volumes cannot.”

ST FRANCIS OF ASSISI



3. Why Would You Believe in Jesus Christ?

The ‘Spectator’ magazine published an article in 2012 written by Matthew Parris which took my interest because it compared the position of the corporate ‘church’ in his mind with the person of Jesus Christ with these words:

“One of the reasons we can be pretty sure Jesus actually existed is that if He had not, the Church would never have invented Him(...) As an unbeliever my sympathies are with the fundamentalists. They seem to me to represent the source, the roots, the essential energy of their faiths. They go back to basics. To those who truly believe, the implicit message beneath ‘never mind if it’s true, religion is good for people’ is insulting. To those who really believe, it is because and only because what they believe is true, that it is good. I find David Cameron’s remark that his faith, ‘like Magic FM in the Chilterns, tends to fade in and out’, baffling. If a faith is true it must have the most profound consequences for a man and for mankind. If I seriously suspected a faith might be true, I would devote the rest of my life to finding out”. (1)

“What Christians need is
a little *more* of Christ’s Christianity,
and a little *less* of man’s.”

A RELIGIOUS HINDU’S OBSERVATION AFTER VISITING ENGLAND AND AMERICA
IN THE LATE 19TH CENTURY TO EXAMINE CHRISTIANITY

*“How can a mother
trust and love a God
who let her baby die.”*

PETER KREEFT, PROFESSOR OF PHILOSOPHY IN USA



4. How on Earth Does a Loving God Allow Pain and Suffering?

Our 27 year old son, Martin, and his wife, Sue, were staying with us after our Christmas celebrations. It was about 5am in the morning on the 28th December, 1991 when our daughter, Deborah, burst into our bedroom to wake us.

‘Come quickly’, Debs shouted to us, ‘Martin has stopped breathing!’ My wife, Margaret, immediately rang for an ambulance whilst I rushed to their bedroom. Sue and I gave Martin artificial respiration, whilst waiting for the ambulance men to arrive, but with no result. They gave him shock treatment, again with no result, before taking him to the hospital where the staff confirmed, as kindly as they could, that Martin had been dead on arrival. The cause had been sudden death resulting from heart failure. Our hearts broke then and will never mend because we loved him so much and still do.

I have related the loss of our dear, truly wonderful son, brother, and loving husband to Sue, because we, as a family, experienced such a tragic loss. We share that suffering and pain with so many others who have experienced the