

Perhaps we can address this concern by asking ourselves some pointed, searching questions, and by giving ourselves frank, honest answers. Maybe you have asked yourself at least some of these questions from time to time. Let's begin with the most basic question of all:

Is God really real? Does He really exist, and is He present and active everywhere in the world? Hebrews 11:6 says "anyone who comes to Him must believe that He exists."

Is God really in control in the world? Is God really in charge of the direction in which human history is moving in Somalia? In Russia? In Bosnia? In Haiti? In the United States? Are floods and hurricanes and earthquakes really under His authority? Does God really work all things together so that sooner or later they result in good to those who love Him? Of course, any assessment of natural calamities must take into account the curse that sin has brought on the world, as well as the fact that God rules and overrules to remediate the terrible effects of man's sin.

Are all human beings really spiritually dead and destined for everlasting destruction? What about my loved ones, my friends, my neighbors, my co-workers who have never trusted Christ? Are they spiritually dead and in need of the new birth? In the original version of Charles Darwin's autobiography, Darwin wrote: "I can hardly see how anyone ought to wish Christianity to be true; for if so, the plain language of the text seems to show that the men who do not believe, and this would include my Father, Brother, and almost all my best friends, will be everlastingly punished. And this is a damnable doctrine." Well, the plain language of the text does indeed teach the everlasting punishment of the finally impenitent. Am I really convinced of this awful truth and its implications?

Did Christ really live and die and rise again? It all seems such a long time ago, and so distant from and alien to the modern outlook, that it sometimes seems hardly real!