

God Answers the Hard Questions of Life

Isaiah 55:8-9, "*For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways and My thoughts than your thoughts*"

John the Baptist was confronted with a question to which he could find no answer, so he sends his disciples to Jesus to ask, "*Are You He that should come, [that is, the Messiah] or should we look for another?*" John the Baptist was asking, "*Were we wrong? You don't fit the pattern we had in mind for the Messiah?*" John the Baptist was asking, "*Jesus, Why don't You help me? Why does God appear to be so helpless or unconcerned?*"

Men ask the same questions today? Why does God allow the righteous to suffer? Why does God permit wars, or some demented individual to strangle a young girl? Why did God allow the tragedy of World Trade Center being blown up? What about miscarriages of justice? Isn't God able to prevent such things?

Note, that Jesus' answer to John the Baptist in Matthew 11:4-5, "*Jesus answered and said unto them, `Go and show John again those things which ye do hear and see, the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, and the poor have the gospel preached to them.*"

THIS WAS NOT THE ANSWER JOHN THE BAPTIST WAS SEEKING

Jesus' answer was, "*The power of God is truly manifested, can't you not see this?*" Then, Jesus asks John the Baptist to "*take a leap of faith.*" Jesus said, "*Blessed is that man who does not take offense at Me*" [Matthew 11:6].

There is a problem in understanding some things in life, to be sure, therefore, the believer learns to live with unanswered - even unanswerable - questions!

Faith is like learning a foreign language. The student looks at a page and understands only a word or two, here and there. He does not say the book doesn't make sense, but, rather, he says, "*Since I recognize a word or two, I am sure the rest of the book makes sense as well and, someday, when I know the language better, I will be able to understand the rest of the book.*"

God does not answer all the problems the believer's minds can pose, however, He will answer the central questions of which the believer must have an answer.
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The answer which God does give, gives the believer a "*leverage point*" to move all the unanswered questions. When the believer has a certainty that God is well disposed toward him - that God so loved him that He gave His Only Begotten Son for his salvation - he can easily commit *all* unanswered questions to Him.

This the believer can know, **God is for him!** God stooped to be with man in the Person of Jesus Christ.

God's answer to Job's questions is quite a revelation. After 39 chapters of questioning, the first time when God finally speaks the only infallible answer to Job's dilemma. The others spoke *some* truth, but God's words were all truth.

What God has to say (Job 40:1-2) does not seem to answer Job's questions, nor does it seem to have anything to do with the issue of why Job had to suffer so severely when he has done everything humanly possible to maintain a good relationship with God.

GOD ANSWERS WITH A DELUGE OF COUNTER-QUESTIONS

God answers Job – by asking questions of His own. God seems too side-step the issues that have dominated the Job's experience. God's answer seem, not only puzzling but evasive, and even, at times, to be insulting.

WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF THESE QUESTIONS?

Rhetorical questions have a way of making a pronouncement. They are meant to be an invitation about discoveries Job can make as he finds his own answers. Job's knowledge was not being tested. God was not "*proving Job's ignorance*" by these questions, nor was He intending to humiliate him.

No! God was taking Job into His school of Wisdom, leading him into *His* world, and giving Job knowledge about himself as well as about his God. There is knowledge to be gained by thinking about the world around us. The selection of creatures, which God parades before Job's eyes, is remarkable.

How important it is to notice that God does not come forward with a list of Job's sins, as did his friends. The fact that God speaks at all is enough for Job. ***All Job needs to know is that everything is still all right between himself and God.*** Knowing that, he does not care what happens to him!

GOD FOUND VINDICATION IN JOB

The story of Job is a test of God, as well as of Job. It is God's answer to Satan's cynicism. Job had proven himself - and God - true! Job, stripped of everything, had clung to God, proving that man can love God simply for being God, rather than for any rewards he may receive from God.

One of the most revealing insights is that Job is brought to contentment without ever knowing all the facts of the case. In fact, the "test" would work only if Job **did not know what the test was for!** The test brought Job into an experience where he could enter into a life of "naked faith" - to love God for Himself alone. To withhold the full story from Job - even after the test was over - keeps him walking by faith rather than by sight.

It is true that, "*Next to Jesus - Job must surely be the greatest believer in the whole of the Bible.*"

GOD'S ANSWERS (OR QUESTIONS)

After the opening words, with questions about the world, there are rapid sketches of twenty different creatures. Inanimate and living things pass in review, showing the range and

complexity of the works of God. The list is but a sample of God's works: **the Earth** (38:4-7; **the Sea** (38:8-11); **Morning** (38:12-15); **the Under-world** (38:16-18); **Light** (38:19-20); **Snow** (38:22-23); **Storm Clouds** (38:34-38); **the Lion** (38:39-40); **Ravens** (38:41); **the Ibex** (39:1-4); **the wild ass** (39:5-8); **the wild ox** (39:9-12); **the Ostrich** (39:13-18); **the Horse** (39:19-25); **the Hawk** (39:26); **the Falcon** (39:27-30).

This arouses a sense of awe at the beauty and order of the world around us.

God begins by speaking one's "lack of knowledge." The Bible does not consider this to be sin! Nevertheless, Job, while true to God, is still in the dark about some counsel and knowledge, which God supplies!

GOD TELLS JOB THAT KNOWLEDGE AND COUNSEL CAN BE ACQUIRED FROM:

1. The world of waters = 38:8-11
2. The interchange of day and night = 38:12-15
3. The hidden abysses of the world = 38:16-21
4. The meteorological and astronomical phenomena = 38:22-38
5. The animal life = 38:39-41, and
6. The study of Zoology = 39:1-30

Just what is God's meaning with all these references to creatures?

One begins to see what all the apparently irrelevant excursions into nature are leading up to. God says, in essence, "*Could you take over the management of the universe?*" God says, "*You must hand the whole matter completely over to Me, and you must do so without insisting that I first answer all your questions, or, that I even give you a formal acquittal.*"

THE HEART OF GOD'S ANSWER

God gives a rebuke for those who, by complaining about particular events in their life, implies that they could propose a better way than God's way of running the universe . . . a way which is better than the way God is currently using.

The believer must not, by his questioning, appear to usurp the role of God. God is not only a Creator – He can also destroy *creatively*. Only God can transmute evil into good. He is the Creator and, hence, responsible for all that happens in His world. God is able to make everything, even bad things, work out together for good. God's goodness lies beyond what appears to be beyond justice to man.

Beginning in Job 40:15, strangely, God enforces His answer by two monstrous animals, who are altogether beyond man's power to tame. There was a time when the mighty dinosaur roamed the earth freely, displaying his power and majesty to all. The graphic description given here, coming from the mouth of God Himself, does not apply to any animal known today, therefore, it must be that of creatures now extinct.

The Behemoth, and the description given, could very well be the "land" dinosaur, the Tyrannosaurs.

The Leviathan, and the description we have in Job 41:1-34, could very well be the "marine" dinosaur, Brontosaur. After all, God is calling attention to His great power in creating and sustaining all things, (A message that is needed today, I might add!)

Whatever these creatures are, God is saying, He is in control and is quite capable to manage the affairs of the whole world - even these monstrous, terrible, creatures.

It is time that the believer learns the lesson well that *Christian faith is not mathematics or a scientific experiment, nor is it an exercise in logic!* In these areas of life men can prove and demonstrate their truth, however, **Christian faith lies beyond proof!**

Minor things men can prove, however, much more important things men can never prove! Can a child prove that his parents love him? How can a husband prove to his wife that he loves her? He may "*act as though he does, or say that he does,*" however, these are not proof. One can "*act*" as though certain things are true, when indeed, they are not, or say things that are not true.

REAL PROOF IS IMPOSSIBLE

This is true of the believer's walk with God that the Christian walk is by faith - and faith alone!

Almost invariably, when God is asked a question, He answers by referring to His glory, His majesty, and His grandeur. **Why?** God answers in this manner because of man's inability to comprehend the answer!

God knows something you don't know

*He knows all the facts - All the facts about your situation.
At best you know relatively few facts regarding yourself.
God sees the whole picture - past, present and future.
You're in the middle -
He views from the outside - with transcendent wisdom.
He knows you in the total context of your life.
He knows you from top to bottom - inside and out.
Your future is as plain to Him as your past.
As no sparrow can fall to the ground without His knowledge,
So He is aware of every microscopic detail of your existence.
Even "the hairs of your head are numbered," Jesus said.
And He loves you! With an everlasting love,
an unquenchable love, an unremitting, unchanging love.
Of course you have sinned - and failed - and vacillated.
But His love is infinitely greater than your weakness.
Commit your way to the One who will guide you according to all the facts.
Nothing would please Him more.*