

WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT GOD?

6-1-09

Questions we will be asked:

1. Why do you believe in God?
 - 1) *No Bible argument for God's existence, just the assumption that thinking people know it. Psalm 14:1*
 - 2) *God reveals Himself in convincing ways. See Psalm 19; John 3:16; Romans 1:18-20*

2. How do you know that God is a personal God?
 - 1) *References to personal thoughts and actions.*
 - 2) *God sees, speaks, hears, answers, grieves, etc. See Genesis 1:27; 6:6; Ephesians 4:30; Hebrews 1:5-14; 1 John 5:14*

3. How do you know that God hears our prayers and is able to answer?
 - 1) *God is all-powerful, all-knowing, and present everywhere at once. Thus God is capable of answering prayers. Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-14; Ephesians 1; Colossians 1:1-20; Job 40.*
 - 2) *This hope is expressed in 1 John 5:14; Romans 8:26-27; Luke 11:11-13.*

4. Why do you believe that God will forgive us when we sin?
 - 1) *Because He sent Jesus to save us from our sins. Matthew 1:21; 26:27-29*
 - 2) *Because Christ died for sinners so that those who turn to Christ can be saved. Romans 5:6-11.*
 - 3) *Because in sending Christ to die, God guaranteed salvation for those who believe in Christ. 1 John 4:7-10.*

5. Why does God permit suffering in the world?
 - 1) *Toughest question about God. This question is the reason for the Book of Job. The theme of Job is why does God allow a righteous man to suffer?*
 - 2) *The Bible gives several reasons for suffering in the world—sinful world, personal sin, testing, Satan's strategies against us. Genesis 3:14-19; Romans 5:3-5; 8:18-25; 2 Corinthians 11:14; 12:7-10; *Luke 13:1-3*

6. Does God override my free choice in salvation?
 - 1) *Never. See all the examples of converts who respond freely to the gospel in Acts—Philippian jailer (Acts 16); Cornelius (Acts 10); Jews on Day of Pentecost (Acts 2); Ethiopian (Acts 8).*
 - 2) *Is salvation predetermined? Some say "yes" because of Romans 9:14-24 (Jeremiah 18:1-10); John 10:27-28.*
 - 3) *Calvinism: T = total depravity
U = unconditional election*

L = limited atonement

I = irresistible grace

P = perseverance of the saints (“once saved always saved”)

- 4) *John Wesley opposed Calvinism fiercely, arguing for personal responsibility in salvation.*
7. Does God send some to hell no matter what they do right or wrong?
1) *Calvinism says “yes.” It is called double predestination.*
2) *The Bible teaches that humans have a choice in the matter. See Revelation 3:20.*
8. Does God bring troubles on me as a way to punish me?
1) *Perhaps. See Acts 5:1-11. But more often God does not prevent all suffering we might experience. Compare James 1:13-15.*
2) *Even believers suffer from this corrupt world. See Romans 8:18-25.*
9. Does God expect me to live sin-free?
1) *God wants us to live as if we are children of God. Leviticus 11:44-45; 19:2; 20:7; 1 Peter 1:15.*
2) *God understands that we are sinners and in need of His grace. Romans 6:19-23.*
10. Does the Bible teach that God exists as a trinity?
1) *The Bible does not use the term “trinity”, but teaches the concept.*
2) *In the Great Commission, Jesus spoke of the three in one. Matthew 28:19-20.*
3) *In creation the Bible speaks of the three in one. Genesis 1-2; John 1:1-14; Colossians 1.*
4) *In Christ’s baptism, Matthew speaks of the three in one. Matthew 3:16-17.*
5) *In the source of spiritual gifts, Paul speaks of the three in one. 1 Corinthians 12:4-6.*
6) *BUT IN ALL OF THIS, THERE IS BUT ONE GOD. Deuteronomy 6:4-6.*
7) *How to resolve this conflict? Analogies: water/ice/snow; physical body; a united family???*
8) *Why important? Evangelism, especially to Jews and Muslims.*

WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT PREDESTINATION?

Augustine, AD 354-430 (“Augustinianism”) – original sin; humans predestined by God

Pelagius, AD 354-440 (“Pelagianism”) – free of Adam’s sin and to avoid sin/please God

Semi-Pelagianism – born corrupt; guilty for our own sins; free to respond to God

John Calvin, 1509-1564, Reformer in Geneva:

- T – total depravity: humans too sinful to freely respond to the gospel
- U – unconditional election: God’s election of believers unconditionally
- L – limited atonement: Christ’s sacrifice limited to those God has elected
- I – irresistible grace: God’s irresistible application of His grace to save His elect
- P – perseverance of the saints: “once saved always saved”

Jacob Arminius, 1560-1609 (“Arminianism”) -- Dutch professor at Leiden:

- that the divine decree of predestination is conditional, not absolute;
- that the Atonement is in intention universal;
- that man cannot of himself exercise a saving faith;
- that though the grace of God is a necessary condition of human effort it does not act irresistibly in man and
- that believers are able to resist sin but are not beyond the possibility of falling from grace.

John Wesley, 1703-1791 (“Wesleyanism” and “methodism”) – Anglican cleric/evangelist

- In 1739 Wesley preached a sermon on *Freedom Of Grace*, attacking the Calvinistic understanding of [predestination](#) as blasphemous, as it represented "God as worse than the devil."

Scripture verses to check: Psalm 51; 1 John 2:2; Hebrews 2:1; Romans 9-10; Acts 16

WHAT DO I BELIEVE ABOUT JESUS CHRIST?

1. Do I believe that Jesus is the Son of God? What do I mean by that?
2. Do I believe that Jesus was the promised Christ?
3. Do I believe that Jesus was born to a virgin?
4. Do I believe that Jesus performed miracles of healing?
5. Do I believe that Jesus taught the truth about God?
6. Do I believe that Jesus died on the cross and rose the third day?
7. Do I believe that salvation comes through Jesus Christ and no other?
7. Do I believe that the Gospels are an accurate record of Jesus' ministry?
8. Do I believe that there are secret documents that reveal that Jesus was married and not crucified?
9. Do I believe that public prayers should be said "in Jesus' name"?
10. Do I believe that Jesus is coming again personally?

Read Psalm 22; 110; Isaiah 53; Mark 1-16; Matthew 1-2; Luke 1-2; Ephesians 1; Colossians 1; Acts 2; Revelation 4-5.