

July Questions and Answers

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
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AM Worship

Introduction:

During this lesson, we will look to the Bible to answer five questions that have been submitted by members of this congregation. Please, remember that you can submit questions by filling out a form by my office door and placing it in the appropriate box outside my office.

Discussion:

- I. Question #1—If God commanded Israel not to kill, then why did He allow, and, in fact, help them to physically destroy their enemies?
 - A. According to **Exodus 20:13**, God, as one of the Ten Commandments, told the Israelites that they were not allowed to kill. However, in passages such as **I Samuel 15:3**, God helped Israel kill a multitude of people. Why this seeming inconsistency?
 - B. In **Exodus 21:12-16**, we learn that God was not condemning every possible form of killing. In these verses, two forms of killing were allowed. One was an accidental killing, which God provided for in **Number 35**. The second was putting someone to death as a punishment for violating the law. This was not only allowed, but commanded.
 - C. If we go back to **I Samuel 15:2-3**, we will note that the Israelites were not attacking Amalek just out of a sense of enmity or hatred. Rather, God was punishing Amalek for their sins against Him and His people. When God used Israel to conquer a nation, it was always an issue of punishment for sin. Remember **Deuteronomy 32:35**, “Vengeance is mine.” God, as the ultimate sovereign of the universe, has the right to take vengeance and it is His reserved right. At times, He used Israel as the tool of His vengeance. At times, He used other nations as tools of His vengeance against Israel. Whatever the case, when God takes vengeance on sinners, it is not a violation of His law.
- II. Question #2—Why was Satan with the angels in **Job 1:6**?
 - A. We must first note that “sons of God” in this passage may not refer to angels. In **Genesis 6:2**, “the sons of God” took wives from among the daughters of men. However, according to **Matthew 22:30**, the angels neither marry nor are given in marriage. Therefore, in **Genesis 6:2**, “sons of God” cannot refer to angels, but must refer to the ones on earth who were followers of God, thus His children. It is possible then that “sons of God” in **Job 1:6**, does not refer to angels but simply to worshippers like Job.
 - B. Having said that, we also note **Job 38:7**, where “sons of God” almost certainly refers to spiritual beings, probably angels, who were present at the creation, since no men were present when God laid the foundation of the earth. Thus, in the context of the book, this phrase may well mean angels or other spiritual beings.
 - C. Typically, a person’s view on this passage will come back to the idea of sin being allowed in heaven. We wonder, “If sin is not allowed in heaven, then how could Satan present himself before God in heaven?” However, notice that Job did not say where this meeting took place. Further, when dealing with an omnipresent God and spiritual beings, can we really ask “where” in the same sense that we might ask where you and I might meet for lunch. “Place” seems a little out of place when speaking of spiritual beings.
 - D. About all we can determine for sure from this passage is that in some way, God allows Satan to speak to Him. Why does God allow it? We do not know. Yet, there it is. However, the great thing we really learn from this context is that while Satan might use these meetings as a means to separate us from God, God places limits on Satan. As taught in other passages, He will not allow us to be tempted beyond what we are able (**I Corinthians 10:13**). Further, Satan cannot separate us from God so long as we continue to love God and lean on Him (**Romans 8:38-39**).
- III. Question #3—God said Job was a perfect and upright man, I thought only Jesus was perfect?
 - A. The struggle here comes from translation. Some translations say Job was “perfect.” One even says he was “without sin.” Others say “blameless.” What exactly does this mean? According to Strong’s Enhanced Lexicon the Hebrew word translated here means, “complete; usually (morally) pious; specifically, gentle, dear:--coupled together, perfect, plain, undefiled, upright.” It

is used only 13 times in the entire Old Testament, 7 of which are found in Job. The Greek equivalent “amemptos” is used 5 times in the New Testament. Interestingly, not one of these cases ever refers to Jesus.

- B. The above demonstrates the second issue. We struggle with the passage because we carry with it our ideas about “perfect.” Because we know only Jesus was sinless and, therefore, perfect, anytime we see the word “perfect,” we automatically think, “Jesus.” However, that is not what these passages are talking about.
- C. Instead, in this context and in other similar ones, I believe we find an expression to demonstrate the difference between those who faithfully served God versus those who did not. For instance, **Job 8:20; 9:22; Proverbs 29:10; Philippians 2:15**. Job was clearly not perfect in the sense that he never, ever sinned. But he was perfect or blameless in the sense that he followed God’s will faithfully. What sins he had committed, because of his service to God, were cleansed by God’s grace. Consider what God does for us through His grace as demonstrated in **I Thessalonians 3:13**.

IV. In **Genesis 1:2**, if the earth was without form and void, how did God move upon the face of the waters?

- A. The terms “formless and void” do not mean that nothing was in existence. Something was in existence, the heavens and earth that God had created in **Genesis 1:1** were there. However, the earth had no form, that is, it was not ordered into what we know now. It was void, that is, it was empty of all that exists on the earth today. In the verses that follow, God explained how he took the formless and void earth and gave it order and filled it with life. But before the time that He formed and filled the earth, God was still in existence moving along the face of waters that He had created even before He formed that creation into what now exists as our universe.
- B. To understand this further look at **Jeremiah 4:23**. In a vision, Jeremiah saw the earth and he described it using these same terms, “formless and void.” Yet his vision had mountains and hills. Thus, we learn that the phrase does not mean there is nothing in existence. Rather it simply means that the order which we presently know is absent. In **Jeremiah 4:23-26**, it specifically referred to instability and emptiness. In **Genesis 1:2**, it simply means that God, while having created something, had not made it into the universe in which we now live.

V. If a “good work” is only one sanctioned by the Bible, does that make other works outside of the church sinful, for instance, working at a homeless shelter, volunteering for the March of Dimes, etc.?

- A. This question has come out of the lessons and sermons we have had lately on issues of authority. As we have consistently pointed out from **II Timothy 3:16-17**, the Bible is written to equip us for good works. Thus, a good work is something the Bible equips us to do. It is not any work the Bible does not specifically condemn. From there, we have reasoned that the church’s work is to hold up the truth (**I Timothy 3:15**). It is not a welfare society given to provide good works for every need under the sun. The only exception can be seen by examples like **Acts 11:27-30**. In this passage, congregations used their treasury to help other Christians in need.
- B. Does that mean that Christians, as individuals, are not authorized to participate in any endeavor other than teaching the Gospel or providing benevolent aid to Christians? No. Consider **Galatians 6:10**. While the individual Christian has a special responsibility to his brethren, he is still to do good for all people. We need to understand that the issue of the church’s work and the debates we have over that are not about whether homeless shelters, food kitchens and welfare organizations are good works. The question is whether or not the church should be distracted from the work it was given to do those things. It should not. But individuals are to do good to all people, as we have opportunity.

Conclusion:

I hope these answers have helped. Please, do not take my word for any answers to any questions. Always go back to the Bible. Certainly, if you find something different in the Bible from what I have taught here, let’s get together and discuss it. If you would like to have a Bible question discussed during our sessions, please, fill out a form by my office and drop it in the box.