

Hard Bible Questions

Franklin Church of Christ
Edwin Crozier
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PM Worship

Introduction:

Have you ever stumbled over any hard Bible questions? I know I have. Perhaps the question had to do with seeming Bible discrepancies. Perhaps with something I didn't understand. Perhaps with figuring out where to draw lines and maintain consistency. Perhaps with something God did not specifically reveal, but I thought was important to whatever I was studying. Perhaps with a question of logic that I thought called some scriptural point into question. Whatever the case, we all have questions. During Jesus' ministry on earth, people were constantly asking Him questions. Some were sincere, others were meant to trap Him. **Luke 20:27-40** provides an example of the latter. The Sadducees came asking a question. They were unprepared, however, for Jesus' wisdom. Examine this occurrence, not for the specific question and answer, but to consider the nature of tough Bible questions. My hope is this study will strengthen our conviction in God's word even while we continue to deal with hard questions.

Discussion:

- I. We can think of some tough questions.
 - A. In **Luke 20:28-33**, the Sadducees asked a hard question. The Sadducees did not believe in a resurrection. Much of their time was spent trying to prove that the Law did not teach one. For all their study, their best argument was what they believed was an unanswerable question. **Deuteronomy 25:5** said if a married man died childless, the man's brother was to take his sister-in-law as wife and raise up seed to his brother. This particular woman had gone through seven husbands this way and never had a son. Whose wife would she be in the resurrection? The Pharisees, who had debated the question of resurrection with the Sadducees for years were stumped. The Sadducees posed it to Jesus to stump Him as well.
 - B. The fact is we can come up with some hard questions. Even this week, I have been dealing with a question regarding how long Israel stayed in Egypt (which is not as simple a question as some might think). I have known people to lose their faith because of hard questions. Once I studied with two brothers and their wives who left the faith because they had a hard question about **Genesis 3**. God said that if Adam and Eve ate from the tree they would die. They ate, but they did not die. What is up with that? That is an interesting question. I believe **Romans 5-6** provides the answer. But the point here is they found a hard question only three chapters into the Bible. They were convinced that meant the Bible just couldn't be true.
 - C. We have to understand something about the Scriptures. God did not reveal the Bible in order to spoon feed us His will. He gave us the Bible to challenge us to maturity. Do you remember what Peter, an apostle, said about the writings of Paul in **II Peter 3:15-16**? He said Paul's writings contained some things hard to understand. If an apostle thought some scriptural teaching was hard, why should we be shocked if we find something hard? There are lots of hard questions. The reality is if you have never found a difficult question, you just haven't been studying enough.
- II. There are even some questions we are unable to answer.
 - A. Jesus answered the Sadducees' question in **Luke 20:34-36**. However, what intrigues me most is where He got His answer. Jesus said there is no marriage in the resurrection. Where did Jesus get His answer? No passage in the Old Testament gives the answer. He knew it because He was God in the flesh (**John 1:14ff**). He taught something completely new in these verses.
 - B. When we realize this, we understand why the Pharisees were unable to answer this question. The Law never answered it. The Israelites could not answer it. But Jesus, God in the flesh, could. We will never be able to answer some questions, because God has not revealed their answers. According to **Deuteronomy 29:29**, God has not revealed everything to us, but kept some things secret.
 - C. Some people get very upset if they ask a question and the person answering says, "Well, it could be one of three possibilities." They think the respondent is a hypocrite. After all, don't we always say the Scripture can only mean one thing? How can we respond that there are multiple possibilities? Take the differences in the genealogies of Jesus found in **Matthew 1:1-17** and **Luke 3:23-38**. That is a hard question. However, I recognize both of these books were written during the lifetimes of Jesus' physical brothers. Christians who saw a discrepancy could actually

ask the brothers and get a solid answer. We can't. We can only notice several possibilities that would reconcile them. Some suggest one provides the legal lineage, while the other provides the biological. Some suggest we see the results of a leviratic marriage (one that was based on **Deuteronomy 25:5**). Some suggest one lineage is Joseph's, the other Mary's. We can find possibilities that reconcile these two passages, but we do not know which one is the right one. We have a question we cannot answer because God has not given us the exact answer.

- D. Do not get me wrong. I am not saying we are unable to answer any hard questions. We will answer many of the hard questions through continued study. As Peter said in **II Peter 1:19**, if we continue to study the prophetic word, on many issues the day will dawn and the morning star will arise in our hearts. That is, when we keep studying we will finally answer some of the hard questions. But there are some questions we just can't answer. That does not mean there is no answer. It just means the answer is one of the secret things of God. Who knows, maybe when we get to heaven God will answer all those questions for us—then again, maybe not. That is another one of those questions God has not answered for us.
- E. By the way, can I point out that preachers are no different from anyone else on this issue? While preachers, by the nature of their work, may have more time to study and more time to dig deep and answer a lot of tough questions, we are just like you. A man doesn't become a preacher, or a Bible class teacher, deacon or elder for that matter, and suddenly know all the answers. We have to study just like everyone else. Many times we have to respond, "I just don't know." Many times we have to change our answers after more study. Please, don't hold that against us.

III. Hard questions do not change the plain Scriptures.

- A. Jesus went further than answering the Sadducees' question. In **Luke 20:37-39**, Jesus cut straight to the heart of the matter. He knew this question was not about marriage in the resurrection, but an attempt to deny the resurrection. He closed the door on this error by going back to the Scriptures. In fact, in the **Matthew 22:29**, Jesus explained that the Sadducees problem was that they did not understand the Scriptures. Then He quoted **Exodus 3:6**. God told Moses, "I am the God of your father, the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Jesus pointed out that Jehovah was, at the time of Moses, the God of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob. God is not the God of the dead, but of the living. Therefore, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob must have continued on after they died in the flesh. There is a resurrection.
- B. We may come up with really difficult questions we cannot answer. However, none of those questions change what is revealed. Look again at **Deuteronomy 29:29**. God has kept some information secret, however what He has revealed, He has revealed to govern us. We must obey. He has not given us everything we want to know, but He has given us everything we need to know to be equipped for every good work, to be useful to Him (**II Timothy 3:16-17; 2:20-21**).
- C. I remember studying with a denominational pastor on whether or not baptism is for the remission of sin. After looking at several scriptures, his response was basically, "Look, I have been studying this issue since before you were born and I could ask questions about baptism that would make your head spin. You can't convince me baptism is essential to salvation." At the time, my response was, "Let me hear some of the questions." He refused. Now, I think I would turn to this passage and point out, "You may have all kinds of really hard questions about baptism. You may have questions I have never heard or could never answer. However, no amount of tough questions can change what **Acts 2:38** says." We can come up with really hard questions we will never answer. But in the end, what God has revealed is true and our questions do not change that. We must simply study, learn and obey.

Conclusion:

Ecclesiastes 3:11 is an interesting passage. If I understand it correctly, it teaches that God has made us insatiably curious—we have eternity in our hearts. That challenges us to keep pushing, keep asking and keep growing. Yet, at the same time, He has made it impossible to know everything. Questions and curiosity are great. God made us that way. However, just because we have a question we still can't answer doesn't mean God has no answer. Further, it doesn't mean the Bible is faulty. It just means God has not revealed everything. We must obey what He has revealed. At least, that was the conclusion of the Preacher in **Ecclesiastes 12:13-14**.