

The Great Questions Of Life #1

Introduction. Can you answer some questions? In Proverbs 22:20-21, God reveals the importance of being able to defend your belief, and Christians should never have to fear engaging the culture of disbelief with the truth of God's purpose and vision for mankind. Our plan will be to examine five great questions of life this morning and five tonight.

I. **Why Am I Here?**

- A. If most people were asked about the purpose of life, young people might say it is to finish college and get a good job; middle-aged people might say it is to raise good children and build your career; older people may say it is to enjoy retirement and try to hold off bad health for as long as possible. But the Bible has a greater purpose in mind.
- B. Genesis 1:26-27 states that we are created in the image of God. After man sinned, God cursed man and the earth. He put a plan of redemption into action. God's love compelled Him to send His Son Jesus to the world (John 3:16).
- C. Once someone becomes a Christian, they embark on a lifelong mission to become conformed to Christ (Romans 8:29). This means that we cannot be conformed to the world, but are transformed by the renewing of our minds (Romans 12:1-2).
- D. Because life is not permanent, and death is sure, we will all be judged at the end of time (2 Corinthians 5:10; Revelation 20:11-15). If a Christian has been faithful, they will be rewarded with eternal life. This inheritance is something for which we hope while we are here (Romans 8:24-25; 1 Peter 1:3-4). At that point, God will remove the curse and return the faithful back to perfect fellowship with Him (Revelation 22:1-4). This is God's purpose for your life.

II. **Who Is God?**

- A. God is an eternal Being (Isaiah 40:28; Jeremiah 10:10; Habakkuk 1:12). The Bible claims that His activity predates the earth (Matthew 25:34; John 17:24; Ephesians 1:4; 1 Peter 1:20). God is not a created Being. To pose the question, "Who created God?" is to presuppose that time is infinite in the past, and that God is bound by time. However, time is finite; it has a beginning. This is confirmed by Einstein's general theory of relativity which demonstrates a beginning to the universe, linking time to space and matter.
- B. God did not come into existence at some point within time. He is "the beginning and the end" (Revelation 22:13).
 - 1. To illustrate, consider these questions: "On what page of Hamlet could I find Shakespeare?" or "Which page of Hamlet comes before

- Shakespeare?" These questions are invalid because Shakespeare wrote the book and is not confined to it. Now let's apply this to God.
2. When God created everything physical, it included time (Genesis 1:1). Yet people ask, "Who created God and where did God come from?" The question assumes that God is bound by time. When someone says that God is bound by time, they are saying that God is bound inside of what He created. This is a fallacy. God had no beginning, and thus does not have a cause.
 - C. God is not only eternal, but He also possesses a character of unrivaled beauty. His dealings with man show love, mercy, goodness, and patience. But this is balanced by attributes of wrath, justice, and judgment for those who rebel against Him.

III. *How Does One Determine The Value Of A Human Life?*

- A. God's word makes it clear that human life begins at the moment of conception (Psalm 139:13-16; Jeremiah 1:5). Nonpersonhood is perhaps the trickiest of the contemporary pro-abortion arguments. Pro-abortionists once argued that the preborn baby was not fully human. Now most concede that the "product of conception" is human life. Their argument, however, has become more sophisticated: "It may be human life, but it does not possess personhood."
 1. Even President Clinton has argued that, since learned theologians and scientists cannot agree on when "personhood" begins, abortion should remain unrestricted.
 2. Dr. Francis J. Beckwith exploded this myth when he wrote, "From a strictly scientific point of view, there is no doubt that the development of an individual human life begins at conception. Consequently, it is vital that the reader understand that she did not come from a zygote, she once was a zygote; she did not come from an embryo, she once was an embryo; she did not come from a fetus, she once was a fetus; she did not come from an adolescent, she once was an adolescent."
- B. Because man was created by God, his soul is worth something; in fact, it is worth more than everything (Matthew 10:31; 16:26; Luke 12:20). The story of Job recounts how he refused to "curse God and die" (Job 2:9-10). Job feared God and understood that only God has the right to give life at conception, and only He has the right to say what is acceptable when life terminates. Even if all joy is taken out of life, as was the case with Job, that would not justify the taking of life. Even in the depths of suffering, God's image remains, and life remains an intrinsic good, and worthy of protection.

IV. **Why The Bible And Not Other "Holy Books"?**

- A. The world is filled with other religious writings that claim divine origin or that have been treated as equal to or higher than the Bible regarding truth or guidelines for living. In other words, these writings are treated as a final authority over the Bible.
- B. Any religious writing that claims divine inspiration or authority equal to the Bible cannot be from God if it has any contradictions: contradictions with the Bible, contradictions within itself, or contradictions with reality. It really is a question of evidence. How does the evidence for the Bible compare to other writings?
- C. A religious writing can be tested by comparing what it says to the Bible (1 Thessalonians 5:21). God will never disagree with Himself because He cannot lie (Hebrews 6:18).
 1. When the Bible was being written and Paul was preaching to the Bereans, he commended them for checking his words against the scriptures that were already written (Acts 17:11; cf. John 10:35; Romans 15:4; 2 Peter 3:16).
 2. There were other religious writings in Paul's day just like now, but he did not encourage the Bereans to search them because he believed them to be good alternatives to the Old Testament.
 3. If someone claims that a book is of divine origin, then we need to be like the Bereans and test it to see whether it agrees with the New Testament.
- D. Religious books, such as Islam's Qur'an and Mormonism's Book of Mormon, contradict the Bible; therefore they cannot be scripture.
 1. The Qur'an says that God had no son (Surah 4:171; 23:91), but the Bible is clear that Jesus is the only begotten Son of God (Matthew 26:63-64).
 2. These religious writings also contain contradictions within themselves that are unanswerable without "logical gymnastics". In the Qur'an, one passage says Jesus will be with God in paradise (Surah 3:45) and another states that He will be in hell for being worshiped by Christians (Surah 21:98).
 3. The Book of Mormon, prior to 1981, said that American Indians would turn white when they converted to Mormonism (2 Nephi 30:6). If these writings were truly from God, discrepancies and untruths would not exist.
- E. If alleged "holy books" are not from the perfect God, who are they from? They are from deceived, imperfect mankind. Mankind's fallible logic is not the absolute authority (Proverbs 3:5; 19:21). Other books may have tremendous value, such as historical insight; but they are not the infallible word of God.

F. The Bible warns that false philosophies will be used to turn people from the Bible (Colossians 2:8). The Bible, God's word, is superior to all other alleged "holy" books (2 Timothy 3:16-17). People need to stand firm on the Bible, which is sustained by strong evidence, and not be swayed (1 Corinthians 15:58; 2 Thessalonians 2:15).

V. ***Who Is Jesus And Why Is He The Only Path To Salvation?***

A. Jesus was the most unique person in the history of the world.

1. Jesus was a man.

a) The Jesus of the New Testament was truly human. He was conceived in a mother's womb, grew up, learned, and developed as a man (Luke 2:52). He got tired, slept, was tempted, and did everything else that a human would do -- except sin. He even died. He truly identified with the human race by becoming one of us.

b) If Jesus were not a man, He could not have suffered and died. If Jesus were not man, His righteous life could not have been offered for our sins (Isaiah 53:10). If Jesus were not a man, He could not qualify to be our priest who provided eternal salvation (Hebrews 2:9-10; 4:14-15; 5:8-9). The humanity of Jesus is absolutely essential to the gospel.

2. Jesus is God.

a) But the Jesus of the New Testament was not simply a human. He is also the infinite God of the universe. Jesus makes this claim Himself (John 10:30). When He said this, the Jews wanted to stone Him because they understood Him to be equating Himself with God. Did Jesus say, "No, you misunderstood Me. I am not really God"? No! Jesus accepted their interpretation of His words as accurate.

b) When Jesus said, "Before Abraham was, I am," He was claiming to be the God of Israel, the self-existent God of the universe, who called Himself "I Am" (Exodus 3:14; cf. John 8:58). The Jews tried to stone Him for this claim too.

B. As far as Jesus being the only way of salvation, He preached this consistently (John 10:9; 11:25; 14:6). It was also taught by the apostles (Acts 4:12; 1 Timothy 2:5; 1 John 5:11-12). If you were asked if you believed Muslims are going to hell, what would you say? Our authority is the Bible. God tells what it takes for someone to wear the name "Christian" (John 3:3; Romans 10:9). So no matter what you call yourself, if you are not born again as the New Testament says, you will not spend eternity in heaven with our Creator and Savior. You will be in hell, separated from Him forever.

Conclusion. Man can never achieve his full potential unless he understands God's plan. This plan recognizes the existence of God and holds Jesus to be the only path to salvation, as explained in God's word. In our next lesson we will explore five more great questions of life. But you need now to deal with the fact that your soul is valuable. If you would like to obey the gospel, then acknowledge to us your desire to repent, confess, be baptized while we sing.