

Questions Asked By Mid-Schoolers – Part 17

Michael R. Daily, February 2020

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These questions were submitted anonymously by a group of 30 mid-schoolers who regularly attend church & AWANAs.

Does the Bible have unicorns in it?

The Bible, in its original languages, never mentions unicorns. However, the word *unicorn* is found nine times in the King James translation of the Bible (**Num 23:22, Num 24:8, Deut 33:17, Job 39:9-10, Ps 22:21, Ps 29:6, Ps 92:10, Is 34:7**).

Unicorn: *a mythical, usually white animal generally depicted with the body and head of a horse with long flowing mane and tail and a single often spiraled horn in the middle of the forehead* **b:** *an animal mentioned in the Bible that is usually considered an aurochs, a one-horned rhinoceros, or an antelope*

In the KJV, the word translated *unicorn* is not referring to the mythical horse-like animal with a horn in its forehead. Its really an issue with translation from the Hebrew that was done in the early 1600s. The Hebrew word the KJV translators translated into *unicorn* was the word *re'em*. This word is actually referring to a horned animal such as the aurochs. The aurochs was an ancestor of today's domestic cattle which roamed Europe and Asia in ancient times. Aurochs were untamable, ferocious, powerful, wild animals that stood over six feet tall, but became extinct in the 1600s. What appears to have happened is the original Hebrew word *re'em* was translated *monokeros* ("mono" meaning "one") in the Greek Septuagint and *unicornis* in the Latin Vulgate. This apparently influenced the KJV translators toward using the word "unicorn". In reality, the original Hebrew word just means "horned beast". The intent in the original Hebrew Bible is the comparison of something or someone to a very powerful, ferocious, wild animal that has horns. Many newer Bible translations will use terms like *wild ox* or *wild bull* in their versions. The Bible also mentions a symbolic animal – a male goat with one horn. This was not a real animal but a prophetic vision God gave Daniel representing the future coming (at the time) of the world kingdom of Greece. Looking back from today we know that this male goat symbolized Alexander the Great who conquered the world around 325 BC. (**Numbers 23:22, Numbers 24:8, Deuteronomy 33:17, Job 39:9-10, Ps 22:21, Ps 29:6, Ps 92:10, Is 34:7, Daniel 8**)

Daniel 8:5,21 - While I was observing, behold, a male goat was coming from the west over the surface of the whole earth without touching the ground; and the goat had a conspicuous horn between his eyes. ²¹ The shaggy goat represents the kingdom of Greece, and the large horn that is between his eyes is the first king.

Why isn't the Old Testament in chronological order?

Its not possible to arrange the Bible in strictly chronological order without breaking each of the books into pieces and interposing the sections. This is true for both the Old and New Testaments but it is more prominent in the Old Testament. For example, if you were to lay out the Bible in strictly chronological order you would have to break up and intersperse sections from the following books

- 1) I Chronicles, I Samuel, and Psalms
- 2) I Chronicles, I Kings, II Samuel, and Psalms
- 3) I Kings, II Chronicles, Psalms, and Proverbs
- 4) I Kings, II Chronicles, and Ecclesiastes
- 5) II Kings and II Chronicles
- 6) II Chronicles and Jonah
- 7) II Kings and Amos
- 8) Isaiah, II Chronicles, II Kings, Hosea, Psalms, and Proverbs
- 9) Micah, II Chronicles, II Kings, and Isaiah
- 10) Jeremiah, II Kings, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, and II Chronicles
- 11) Daniel, Jeremiah, and II Kings
- 12) Ezekiel, Jeremiah, II Kings, and II Chronicles
- 13) Lamentations, Obadiah, Jeremiah, II Kings, I Chronicles, and Daniel
- 14) I Chronicles, Ezra, and Daniel
- 15) Ezra, Haggai, and Zechariah
- 16) Esther and Ezra
- 17) Nehemiah and I Chronicles
- 18) Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John
- 19) Acts interspersed with most of the New Testament letters

As a result the books of the Bible were kept intact by author with the books grouped together by the type of literature each book was written in. For example, Genesis to Esther are historical books, Job to Song of Solomon are written as poetry, Isaiah to Malachi are prophecy. In the New Testament, Matthew to Acts are historical books, Romans to Jude are letters, and Revelation is prophecy. Within these groupings the books are arranged in roughly chronological order. The good news is that scholars have actually broken apart the books of the Bible and arranged the sections in them in chronological order. These Bibles, called Chronological Bibles, are available for purchase anywhere regular Bibles are sold.

Will we have closer relationships with some people in heaven - like best friends?

Its important to remember what our primary focus will be in eternity. Once there, eternity will be real and full and rich and beautiful and Earth will be a memory. In eternity we will have new, perfected bodies as well as hearts (**Matthew 5:48, I Peter 5:10, I Corinthians 15:42-44**). In eternity we will, for the first time, have a full appreciation for what God has done for us and an overwhelming desire to praise, worship, and serve Him. In fact, the Bible tells us that our relational focus in eternity will be on God Himself (**I John 3:2-3**). In eternity we will finally fulfill the foremost commandment to love God with all our heart, soul, mind, and strength (**Mark 12:28-31**). This same passage puts our relationship with people second. It's a close second but its second place, nevertheless. To reverse the order is a problem (**Matthew 10:37-39**). Having said that, we will know other people in eternity just like we do now. The difference, of course is that we will all have been perfected and sin will no longer affect our relationships. There are really only two reasons why we are not close friends with someone – sin and time. Some sin or artifact of sin gets in the way and causes us to not be close to another person. Either their values conflict with ours or we can't trust them. In eternity, sin is gone, everyone has been perfected, and the relational problems and barriers created by sin no longer exist. The other issue is time. Because our time is limited today, we can't be close friends with everyone, even if there was no sin. But in eternity (notice I keep using that word) time is infinite. So, time will no longer be a barrier to being close friends. Therefore, even though the Bible is silent on the issue, I would assert (i.e. to insist without evidence) that we will probably be close friends with everyone in heaven! Let's use some math to see if we can get a feel for how this might work. First, how much time would you need to become best friends with someone? A year, two years? Let's be conservative and assume it takes 10 years to become best friends with someone. OK, now using a creation model based on the Biblical record, it is estimated that approximately 51 billion people have lived on the Earth from Adam to today. Based on that and the fact that we don't know when Christ will return, lets assume 90 billion people will live on the Earth before the end of the age. According to National Geographic, about 1/3 of people on the Earth today claim to be Christians. Many of them are not but let's be conservative and assume they all are. If we also assume that that percentage has remained essentially constant throughout history then that means that in eternity there will be about 30 billion people in heaven. In order for you to become close friends with everyone in heaven it would take 30 billion x 10 years = 300 billion years. Is that a problem? No. You will be in heaven for eternity. After the first 300 billion years you will just be getting started! So, you will have more than enough time to become best friends with everyone in heaven! (**Matt 5:48, I Peter 5:10, I Corinthians 15:42-44, I John 3:2-3, Mark 12:28-31, Matt 10:37-39**)

If someone believes in God but later does not will they still go to heaven?

The Bible tells us that believing in God does not enable a person to go to heaven (**Matthew 7:22-23**). In fact, even fallen angels believe in God (they have seen Him face-to-face) but they will spend eternity in the Lake of Fire, not heaven (**James 2:19**). There are many people who will say they believed in God at one point in their life and then later say they changed their mind. These people never were going to heaven (**I John 2:18-19**)! The issue is not believing in God, its believing that God's Son, Jesus Christ, shed His blood on the cross to pay for your sins (**John 5:24**) and making the decision to receive Christ as your Savior and Lord (**John 1:12**). Once that decision is made it is not possible to lose your salvation because God transfers you into His Kingdom and that transfer cannot be undone (**Colossians 1:13-14**). God has given us the gift of eternal life by His grace alone, without contribution from us (**Ephesians 2:8-9**). God has taken away any option of our contributing to our eternal life, otherwise we might have a basis for taking some credit for it. As a result, eternal life is a gift, fully paid for by God, then given freely to us (**Romans 11:6, Galatians 2:21, Romans 3:28**). Our eternal life was 100% done by God. Because He is completely faithful and reliable, this means that we cannot lose our eternal life (**I John 2:25**). But what if our eternal life depended 99% on God and 1% on us? How would that change things? Since we are not 100% faithful and reliable, it would mean that there would always be a possibility that our eternal life could be lost. But we cannot lose this eternal life since we did nothing to earn it, not even 0.00000001%! The reason that the Bible tells us we can know right now that we have eternal life (we don't have to wait until we die to find out) is because we can't lose it (**I John 5:11-13**). Paul describes our regeneration and seating with Christ in the heavenly places in the past tense. In other words, this has already happened. Our eternal life started the day we became a Christian (**Ephesians 2:4-7**). *Eternal: having infinite duration, continued without intermission, valid or existing at all times, timeless.* Since eternal life is infinite in duration and is also valid and existing at all times, and it started the day we became a Christian, that means it can never be lost. For more information on this topic please see the following studies, "Eternal Life: Why We Can't Lose It Once We Get It", "How To Interpret Passages That Seem To Indicate Salvation Can Be Lost", and "Salvation By Grace Alone" at: <http://qciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/> (**Matthew 7:22-23, James 2:19, I John 2:18-19, John 5:24, John 1:12, Colossians 1:13-14, Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 11:6, Galatians 2:21, Romans 3:28, I John 2:25, I John 5:11-13, Ephesians 2:4-7**)

Why are Christians so divided on everything?

Christians are not divided on everything. For example, real Christians all agree that Jesus Christ paid for their sins by dying on the cross and rising from the dead three days later. By accepting Him as their Savior and Lord they receive the gift of eternal life. That's a big thing to have in common! Having said that, Christians (and those claiming to be Christians) don't agree on everything and there are multiple factors that contribute to that. In fact the Bible teaches that there are some things we should be divided on and other things that we should not be divided on. On top of that there are some situations where the Bible supports more than one possible response depending on the circumstances of a particular situation and different people interpret the circumstances differently.

Not all "Christians" are Christians!

One cause of division among Christians is that not everyone who claims to be a Christian actually is one. As a result the non-Christian perspective of these people (who are members of churches) will be at odds with what the Bible says. Jesus described this situation as "tares among the wheat" in a parable (**Matthew 13:36-43**). When the landowner discovered the tares (i.e. undesirable weeds) among the wheat his servants asked if he wanted them removed. He told them to leave the tares among the wheat and let them all grow until the harvest. At the harvest the tares would be burned. As a result, we will always have some non-Christians in our churches, some who are in the process of becoming Christians (yay!) and some who are going to be divisive (**Jude 1:17-21**). The antidote to this problem is to use the Bible to guide our decisions as our ultimate authority.

The failure mode that can occur in these situations is that a church leader may be pressured to "restore unity" by compromising with those who are being doctrinally divisive. But unity is not our top priority, obedience to Christ is (**Luke 12:51-53, Matthew 10:34-39**). We can compromise on style and implementation details but not on core doctrine. If we try to compromise on core doctrinal issues the people not following the Bible will stay in the church and continue to cause disruption. The Bible suggests a different approach where the spiritual leader provides a clear doctrinal basis for the church's position on something (**II Timothy 4:1-2**) and the factions in the church that are approved (in agreement with the Bible) then become evident (**I Corinthians 11:17-19**). What will then happen is the factions that are in disagreement will have to make a decision either to repent (change their mind) or leave that church (**I John 2:18-19,22**).

Another problem with non-Christians in the church is when they achieve positions as leaders in the church. The Bible describes these people as false apostles, false prophets, and false teachers (**Matthew 7:15-23, Revelation 2:1-3**). This is a very serious situation because of the amount of damage they can cause and the Bible directs us to take actions to move these people out of the church (**Revelation 2:18-20, II Timothy 3:1-5**). Unfortunately, some people will want the false teacher to stay (**II Timothy 4:3-5**) because they find the false teacher to be entertaining or to be saying things they like hearing. Again, the antidote to this conflict is to refer to the Bible to validate whether or not the teachings of these leaders is in agreement with the Bible, regardless of how much we may personally like them.

Christians who Cling to Sins of the Flesh

In addition to non-Christians, churches also have some Christians who have sins of the flesh they really like and are unwilling to repent of. The result of this is: immorality, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, sorcery, enmities, strife, jealousy, outbursts of anger, disputes, dissensions, factions, envying, drunkenness, and carousing (**Gal 5:16-26, James 4:1-10**). In these cases the best thing to do is take the actions specified by the Bible that will lead them to repentance in **Romans 13:12-14** and **I Corinthians 5:9-13**.

Empty Chatter, Foolishness, and Ignorant Speculations

There are some Christians who just seem to want to argue about things that are not worth the damage the argument causes. The Bible describes these things as worldly and empty chatter based on false knowledge, foolish and ignorant speculations and controversies, and disputes about words and genealogies. These are people who take a strong and insistent position on something where the Bible does not, or where there is no strong evidence one way or the other. These are people who want to spend their time arguing over the definition of a word instead of just looking up the definition in a dictionary! Although these problems may seem like nothing more than a waste of time, the Bible tells us that, if left unchecked, these things can lead to people going astray from the faith (**I Timothy 6:20-21**), people not becoming Christians (**II Timothy 2:23-26**), envy, strife, abusive language, evil suspicions, and constant friction between men (**I Timothy 6:3-10**). The Bible provides instructions on how to handle these people in **Titus 3:9-11**.

Some Christians View Obedience to God as a Low Priority

There are some Christians who work hard at not only understanding God's will but also at putting it into action. There are other Christians who attend church and go to Bible study but they never really put much effort into putting what they learn into action. The Bible teaches that the accumulation of knowledge without action results in arrogance (**I Corinthians 8:1**) which leads to conflict in the church. Measuring how we are doing by measuring actions instead of Bible knowledge will counteract this arrogance problem and reduce conflict in the church.

Some Christians Love Other Things More Than God

We are commanded to love God above everything else (**Mark 12:28-30**) but some Christians love other things more than God. This creates conflict in the church. For example some Christians are more concerned about money or other things of the world and put these things as a higher priority in life which causes them to be unfruitful and in conflict with others who are being fruitful (**Matthew 13:18-23**). Some Christians love the approval of men more than God's approval so they change their behavior to satisfy men and not God (**John 12:42-43**). Even strong Christians can occasionally fall to this temptation. Paul had to publicly rebuke Peter for doing this (**Galatians 2:11-14**). A related problem is selfish ambition. There are some in the church who serve because they feel that it gives them recognition or honor. If this is taken away and given to someone else they get jealous which causes conflict in the church (**James 3:13-16, Philipians 1:15-17**).

Some Christians are Divided Due To Differences in Spiritual Maturity, Faith, and Experiential Understanding of the Bible

We are all at different points in our spiritual maturity and this can lead to focusing on the wrong thing. For example, some Christians will focus on a particular spiritual leader and will come to believe that the style and emphasis of that particular person is the only right way of following Christ. This leads to divisions and quarrels (**I Corinthians 1:10-13**). The Bible also indicates that people who do this are spiritual infants (**I Corinthians 3:1-7**) and need to grow in their personal reading and study of the Bible. A similar problem can occur when it is not recognized that there are a variety of spiritual gifts, ministries, and effects and the church has ministries that may seem weaker than others or other ministries that have more honor given to them (**I Corinthians 12:4-7, 11-12, 22-25**). None of this indicates that one ministry is better than another.

We Wrestle with Incomplete Knowledge and Partial Understanding

Another source of conflict among Christians is that we struggle with incomplete spiritual knowledge and understanding and we can come to different conclusions as we struggle with these challenges in understanding. For example, spiritual truth is often not intuitive. In other words, what God says is right is often not what we would naturally assume is right (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). In fact, what we would naturally assume to be right is often quite dangerous (**Prov 14:12, Prov 16:25**)! In addition, the Bible tells us that spiritual truth has only been partially revealed to us through the Bible and that it will be more fully revealed after this life is over (**I Corinthians 13:12-13**). Even Peter stated that some of the Bible written by Paul was difficult for Peter to understand (**II Peter 3:14-16**) even though Peter had no trouble with the language or an understanding of cultural issues of the time that can confuse us.

Some Christians Have Legitimate Differences in How They View Circumstances of a Situation

There are some situations where there is no obvious right answer. In these cases, we each do our best to understand what the Bible has to say and use our experience and judgment to determine the best path forward. For example, there was a disagreement between Paul and Barnabas about whether to take Mark with them on a missionary journey they were planning (**Acts 15:36-41**). Paul felt very strongly that Mark should not be allowed to come because he had not been faithful and had deserted them in the middle of a previous mission trip. Paul was right to do this because the Bible teaches that we are to select men to work with and serve with who are faithful (**II Timothy 2:2, I Timothy 1:12**). Paul had been deserted before by people ministering with him (**II Timothy 4:10**) and he knew from experience how damaging this type of behavior was while on a mission trip. On the other hand, Barnabas felt strongly that Mark should be allowed to come. Barnabas felt that Mark had repented from his previous unfaithfulness and would be faithful this time (**Lk 17:3-4**). In reality no one, including Mark, knew if he would really be faithful or not this time, so the right answer was not obvious. So they made a decision to split up. Paul took Silas with him and Barnabas took Mark on a separate trip. The end result was two separate mission trips instead of one! Even with this disagreement, God's work was getting done.

Conclusion

We put obedience to Christ and His Word (the Bible) first. We take the actions defined by the Bible to address the specific situations previously discussed when the Bible speaks to them and we defend issues of Biblical doctrine that are non-negotiable. After having done that, the Bible gives us clear instructions on how to maintain unity in the negotiable areas. For example, we ask ourselves, is this non-doctrinal issue worth fighting over knowing that the fight will hinder people from becoming Christians (**John 17:20-23**)? We are also to take the following approach with non-doctrinal issues: act with humility, gentleness, patience, kindness, compassion, tolerance, love, peace, forgiveness, thankfulness, help equip other Christians so they can be more effective servants of Christ, help other Christians grow into maturity, teach correct doctrine, and speak the truth in love (**Ephesians 4:1-6, 12-15, Colossians 3:12-17**). Be devoted to one another, give preference to one another in honor, be diligent, fervent in spirit, persevering in tribulation, devoted to prayer, contributing to other financial needs, being hospitable (**Romans 12:9-11**), serving one another (**Galatians 5:13**), being of the same mind, avoid selfishness and conceit, and look out for the interests of others (**Philipians 2:1-4**).

(**Matt 13:36-43, Jude 1:17-21, Lk 12:51-53, Matt 10:34-39, II Tim 4:1-2, I Cor 11:17-19, I Jn 2:18-19, 22, Matt 7:15-23, Rev 2:1-3, Rev 2:18-20, II Tim 3:1-5, II Tim 4:3-5, Gal 5:16-26, James 4:1-10, Rom 13:12-14, I Cor 5:9-13, I Tim 6:20-21, II Tim 2:23-26, I Tim 6:3-10, Titus 3:9-11, I Cor 8:1, Mark 12:28-30, Matt 13:18-23, Jn 12:42-43, Gal 2:11-14, James 3:13-16, Phil 1:15-17, I Cor 1:10-13, I Cor 3:1-7, I Cor 12:4-25, Is 55:8-9, Prov 14:12, Prov 16:25, I Cor 13:12-13, II Ptr 3:14-16, Acts 15:36-41, II Tim 2:2, I Tim 1:12, II Tim 4:10, Lk 17:3-4, Jn 17:20-23, Eph 4:1-15, Col 3:12-17, Rom 12:9-11, Gal 5:13, Phil 2:1-4**).

Why does guilt give you stress?

First, let's define the terms in the context of this question. **Guilt:** *a feeling of deserving blame for offenses.* **Stress:** *a state of bodily or mental tension resulting from factors that tend to alter an existent equilibrium.* Feelings of guilt are the result of being guilty of committing offenses or crimes. **Guilty:** *justly chargeable with or responsible for a breach of conduct or a crime.*

Guilt is the spiritual equivalent of physical pain. Pain is a physical indicator that there is something wrong with our bodies and that we need to stop what we are doing and fix the problem. If we don't, the pain and its associated stress will continue and may get worse. If the pain did not cause us any stress we would not be motivated to take corrective actions. So, the stress is necessary for getting the problem resolved. In the same way, guilt is a spiritual indicator that there is something wrong with us spiritually and that we need to stop what we are doing and fix the problem. If we don't, the guilt and its associated stress will continue and may get worse. If the guilt did not cause us any stress we would not be motivated to take corrective spiritual actions. So, the stress is necessary for getting the spiritual problem resolved.

When we sin we are guilty of committing offenses against God. As a result, we then have feelings of guilt. If we don't take action to fix it we will continue to experience stress. This is true for both Christians and non-Christians. The Bible tells us that one of the continuous, on-going ministries of the Holy Spirit is that He convicts non-Christians that they are sinners, that God is righteous, and that judgment is coming (**John 16:7-8**). **Convict:** *to convince of error or sinfulness.* This drumbeat goes on everyday in the spirit of non-Christians. As a result, they experience a sense of guilt and the associated stress that goes with it (**Romans 2:14-16**). Because it is a spiritual conviction and the Bible says that non-Christians are spiritually dead (**Ephesians 2:1-7**) they are not consciously aware of exactly what it is that is causing the stress until someone shares the gospel with them. According to Psychology Today magazine, stress levels in the United States are at historically high levels even though the standard of living today is better than it has ever been in history. This increase in stress has been happening at the same time that other surveys show the US population is becoming less religious and less Christian. It may be that the root cause of the stress increase is actually spiritual in nature as people reject Christ and live for other things. Christians also struggle with the guilt and stress of their sin but because they are spiritually alive they usually understand that the stress is caused by their sin. King David described the stress and anxiety he felt because of sin he had not repented from in **Psalms 38:1-4,18** and **Psalms 32:1-5**. Both of these passages also reveal the corrective action that needs to be taken to relieve the stress and guilt which is to acknowledge and confess our sin to God and ask for His forgiveness (**I John 1:9**).

(John 16:7-8, Romans 2:14-16, Ephesians 2:1-7, Psalm 38:1-18, Psalm 32:1-5, I John 1:9)

Why does God love us?

When answering this question we have to remember that, although we are made in God's image, He is quite different from us in many ways (**Isaiah 55:8-9**). For example, when it comes to loving someone, most people develop love for someone for reasons related to the following:

- 1) Similarity: the other person is a lot like you in terms of values, beliefs, and standards of conduct
- 2) Reciprocating Feelings: we tend to be attracted to those who like us
- 3) Mysteriousness: although the person has similar values and standards they also have a style or approach that differs from you in such a way that it makes them interesting.
- 4) Excitement: participating in emotionally exciting events together can add to the attraction.
- 5) Social Influences: being with the other person is viewed as a social plus for you by others.
- 6) Fills a Need: the other person has the ability and desire to fill a real need that you have.

OK, now let's see what happens if we apply these human reasons for loving someone else to God.

Similarity & Reciprocating Feelings

The Bible says that God loved us before we loved Him (**Romans 5:8**). This means that reciprocating feelings played no role in God loving us. In addition, **Romans 3:10-12** tells us that before God loved us we did not love Him, we did not seek Him, we did not desire Him, and we had rejected his values and standards. In fact, we were God's enemies (**Rom 5:10**). So, similarity also played no role in God loving us.

Mysteriousness & Excitement

Is there something mysterious about us that God was not aware of before He loved us? No. God designed you and created you. There is nothing about you that is mysterious to Him (**Jeremiah 1:5**). In fact, before you were even born He already knew about all the times that you would betray Him and turn to sin (**John 6:64**)! So, mysteriousness played no role in God loving us. Related to that God foreknew you (**Romans 8:29-30, Psalm 139:1-16**). In other words, God knew ahead of time everything that you would ever think and do before you were even born! So excitement played no role in God loving us.

Social Influences

Does having a relationship with us make God look good to other people? No. I saw a bumper sticker on a car once that said, "I've got nothing against God, its His fan club I can't stand". The Bible says that most of God's followers are not people that the World thinks highly of (**I Corinthians 1:26-31**). So, social influences played no role in God loving us.

Fills a Need

Does God have a need that you can fill? No. God does not have any needs (**Acts 17:24-25**). If God had needs He would not be God! So, filling a need played no role in God loving us.

From the exercise above we see that none of the reasons for why people love other people apply to God! (If you can think of another reason not listed above for why people love other people take the same approach and apply it to God and see what happens). OK, so why does God love us?

The reason God loves us is because of the nature and essence of who He is. The Bible says that "God is love" (**I John 4:8-9, 16-19**). Compare this to the nature and essence of Man. **Jeremiah 17:9 says, "The heart is more deceitful than all else And is desperately sick; Who can understand it?"** Man sins because that is his nature. Sin comes as easily to Man as drinking a glass of water (**Job 15:16**). Man can't not sin any more than God can't not love (i.e. sacrificial love). Because this is a fundamental aspect of who He is, God must demonstrate that sacrificial love just as He demonstrates all of His attributes. Why? Because the demonstration of His attributes through actions results in God being glorified. To be glorified means for others to give honor, praise, and admiration to someone by common consent. In other words, God's demonstration of His attributes in action results in people voluntarily choosing to praise Him, honor Him, and admire Him. While we were busy sinning and being God's enemies, God sent His Son to die on the cross and sacrificially pay for our sins (**I John 4:10**). When we get to heaven we will fully realize and understand the penalty we avoided and the paradise and inheritance God has given us, down to the very core of our beings. On that day we will be overwhelmed with a desire to praise and honor God for His love for us. Why does God love us? Because God is Love.

(Isaiah 55:8-9, Romans 5:8-10, Romans 3:10-12, Jeremiah 1:5, John 6:64, Romans 8:29-30, Psalm 139:1-16, I Corinthians 1:26-31, Acts 17:24-25, I John 4:8-19, Jeremiah 17:9, Job 15:16)

In Genesis when He separates the waters was the top expansion literally water or clouds?

The passages relating to this question are **Genesis 1:1-19** and **Genesis 2:4-6**. The Genesis 2 passage tells us that rain did not exist until after Adam and Eve were created.

Genesis 2:4-6

This is the account of the heavens and the earth when they were created, in the day that the LORD God made earth and heaven. ⁵ Now no shrub of the field was yet in the earth, and no plant of the field had yet sprouted, for the LORD God had not sent rain upon the earth, and there was no man to cultivate the ground. ⁶ But a mist used to rise from the earth and water the whole surface of the ground.

Therefore, the earlier passages about water in Genesis 1 are unlikely to be referring to clouds. Also, note in Genesis 1 that the Earth starts as a large ball of water that is then split into two masses of water, one being the oceans. The way this is written indicates that the other mass of water was also quite large. Larger than what would be expected for clouds. So, what we know for sure is that there was an extremely large mass of formless water that was then split into two smaller, but also large masses of water.

Genesis 1:1-2,6-10,14-19

In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth. 2 Now the earth was formless and empty, darkness was over the surface of the deep, and the Spirit of God was hovering over the waters.

6 And God said, "Let there be a vault between the waters to separate water from water." 7 So God made the vault and separated the water under the vault from the water above it. And it was so. 8 God called the vault "sky." And there was evening, and there was morning—the second day. 9 And God said, "Let the water under the sky be gathered to one place, and let dry ground appear." And it was so. 10 God called the dry ground "land," and the gathered waters he called "seas."

14 And God said, "Let there be lights in the vault of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark sacred times, and days and years, 15 and let them be lights in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth." And it was so. 16 God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. 17 God set them in the vault of the sky to give light on the earth, 18 to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. 19 And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.

The Bible does not give us enough information to know exactly what this “water above the vault of the sky” is referring to. But there are at least two models about what the “water above the vault of the sky” is. We call them models because they are speculative ideas about what might have happened but since there was no one there to observe it while it was happening these models cannot be proven to be true or false. In other words, if the Bible does not give us the information and the event was not observed while in progress, we can't know for sure what actually happened. One model, called the Canopy Model, imagines that a very large body of water vapor was suspended around Earth and its atmosphere until the flood of Noah's time. During the flood of Noah's time it is theorized that the water vapor condensed and fell to Earth as liquid water and disappeared. The problem with this idea is that as water vapor condenses into liquid water it releases a significant amount of latent heat. A quick calculation shows that, given the amount of water vapor needed for this model to work, the latent heat released during the Flood would have cooked the planet!

But also notice that in verses 14 to 19 that the Sun, Moon, and Stars are also located in the vault of the sky, perhaps indicating that this water extends far beyond the Earth. This leads us to another model proposed by Dr. D. Russell Humphreys (*Starlight & Time: Solving the Puzzle of Distant Starlight in a Young Universe*, Master Books, 2006) referred to as a White Hole Cosmology Model. In this model all of the mass of the known universe starts in the form of liquid water and is located together as a single mass of water. This model requires the Earth to be the central location of the universe's creation (which is supported by Genesis 1:1) and is based on the physics of gravitational time dilation as discovered by Albert Einstein in 1915 (*The Field Equations of Gravitation*, Preussische Akademie der Wissenschaften, *Sitzungsberichte*, 1915 (part 2), 844-847). Gravitational time dilation is the observed effect where time flows more slowly in the presence of a gravitational field (we've taken measurements with atomic clocks in different gravitational fields and seen the difference). The stronger the gravitational field the more time slows down. At the event horizon of a black hole, where gravity is so strong that even a beam of light cannot escape, time slows to a complete stop. Einstein's equations of relativity also allow for the operation of a white hole – a black hole running in reverse. Although a white hole has not been observed in the current universe, black holes have been. If God used a white hole approach in creating the universe, as matter passed through the event horizon of the white hole it would have encountered massive gravitational time dilation resulting in the stars and galaxies experiencing billions of years of time and physical processes while only a few days transpired on the Earth. Once all the material passed out of the event horizon of the white hole the white hole would no longer exist. This model seems to fit both the Biblical record and our observation of distant starlight.

For a detailed study on this topic please see, “Starlight and the God of the Universe” at:
<http://gciweb.org/2011/04/youth-bible-study-materials-michael-r-daily/>

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Does the Bible have unicorns in it?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Numbers 23:22, Numbers 24:8, Deuteronomy 33:17, Job 39:9-10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 22:21, Psalm 29:6, Psalm 92:10, Isaiah 34:7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Daniel Chapter 8*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Will we have closer relationships with some people in heaven – like best friends?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 5:48, I Peter 5:10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 15:42-44, I John 3:2-3*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mark 12:28-31, Matthew 10:37-39*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If someone believes in God but later does not will they still go to heaven?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 7:22-23, James 2:19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 2:18-19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Colossians 1:13-14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *If someone believes in God but later does not will they still go to heaven?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 2:8-9, Romans 11:6, Galatians 2:21, Romans 3:28*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 2:25, I John 5:11-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 2:4-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 13:36-43*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jude 1:17-21*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Luke 12:51-53, Matthew 10:34-39*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 4:1-2, I Corinthians 11:17-19, I John 2:18-19&22*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Matthew 7:15-23, Revelation 2:1-3*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Revelation 2:18-20, II Timothy 3:1-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 4:3-5*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Galatians 5:16-26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 4:1-10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 13:12-14, I Corinthians 5:9-13*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 6:20-21, II Timothy 2:23-26*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Timothy 6:3-10, Titus 3:9-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 8:1*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Mark 12:28-30, Matthew 13:18-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 12:42-43, Galatians 2:11-14*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *James 3:13-16, Philippians 1:15-17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 1:10-13, I Corinthians 3:1-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 12:4-7&11-12&22-25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 55:8-9, Proverbs 14:12, Proverbs 16:25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 13:12-13, II Peter 3:14-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 15:36-41*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *II Timothy 2:2, I Timothy 1:12, II Timothy 4:10, Luke 17:3-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 17:20-23*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 4:1-6&12-15*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why are Christians so divided on everything?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Colossians 3:12-17*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 12:9-11*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Galatians 5:13, Philippians 2:1-4*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why does guilt give you stress?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *John 16:7-8, Romans 2:14-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Ephesians 2:1-7*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Psalm 38:1-4&18, Psalm 32:1-5, I John 1:9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why does God love us?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Isaiah 55:8-9*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Romans 5:8-10, Romans 3:10-12*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Jeremiah 1:5, John 6:64, Romans 8:29-30, Psalm 139:1-16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *Why does God love us?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I Corinthians 1:26-31*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Acts 17:24-25*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *I John 4:8-19, Jeremiah 7:9, Job 15:16*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

QUIET TIMES ALONE WITH GOD

JEREMIAH 15:16

THEME: *In Genesis when He separates the waters was the top expansion literally water or clouds?*

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis 2:4-6*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis 1:1-10*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?

PASSAGE FOR MEDITATION: *Genesis 1:14-19*

How does this passage relate to the theme?

When I reflect on this passage, does it primarily convict, encourage or challenge me? Explain why:

How will I apply this passage to my life in the coming week and is there anything I can do today to make this passage a part of my Christian life?