



Who Can Question God?

A Teaching Outline

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Questioning God

Who answers back to God?

Romans 9:20

On the contrary, who are you, O man, who answers back to God? The thing molded will not say to the molder, "Why did you make me like this," will it?

Paul quotes from Exodus 9:16, where God foretold how Pharaoh would be used to declare God's power. Paul uses this argument to show that salvation was God's work, not peoples. God's judgment on Pharaoh's choice to resist God was to confirm that sin and harden his heart. The consequences of Pharaoh's rebellion would be his own punishment.

Paul is not saying that some of us are worth more than others but that the Creator has control over the created object. The created object, therefore, has no right to demand anything from its Creator—its very existence depends on him. Keeping this perspective removes any temptation to have pride in personal achievement.

The King questions God's prophet concerning God.

2 Kings 7:2

The royal officer on whose hand the king was leaning answered the man of God and said, "Behold, if the LORD should make windows in heaven, could this thing be?" Then he said, "Behold, you will see it with your own eyes, but you will not eat of it."

When Elisha prophesied God's deliverance, the king's officer said it couldn't happen. The officer's faith and hope were gone, but God's words came true anyway (7:14-16)! Sometimes we become preoccupied with problems when we should be looking for opportunities. Instead of focusing on the negatives, we should develop an attitude of expectancy. To say that God *cannot* rescue someone or that a situation is *impossible* demonstrates a lack of faith.

Jesus questions Peter concerning his identity.

Mark 8:29

**And He continued by questioning them, "But who do you say that I am?"
Peter answered and said to Him, "You are the Christ."**

Jesus asked the disciples who other people thought he was; then he asked them the same question. It is not enough to know what others say about Jesus: You must know, understand, and accept for yourself that he is the Messiah. You must move from curiosity to commitment, from admiration to adoration.

God declares his presence.

Exodus 3:12

And He said, "Certainly I will be with you, and this shall be the sign to you that it is I who have sent you: when you have brought the people out of Egypt, you shall worship God at this mountain."

The Egyptians had many gods by many different names. Moses wanted to know God's name so the Hebrew people would know exactly who had sent him to them. God called himself I AM, a name describing his eternal power and unchangeable character. In a world where values, morals, and laws change constantly, we can find stability and security in our unchanging God.

The God who appeared to Moses is the same God who can live in us today. Hebrews 13:8 says Jesus Christ is the same "yesterday, today, and forever." Because God's nature is stable and trustworthy, we are free to follow and enjoy him rather than spend our time trying to figure him out.

Jesus is asked to find out what is good.

Matthew 19:17

And He said to him, "Why are you asking me about what is good? There is only one who is good; but if you wish to enter into life, keep the commandments."

In response to the young man's question about what good deed he needed to do in order to be assured of eternal life, Jesus told him to keep God's Ten Commandments. Jesus then listed six of them, all referring to relationships with others.

When the young man replied that he had kept the commandments, Jesus told him that he must do something more—sell everything and give the money to the poor. Jesus' statement exposed the man's weakness. In reality, his wealth was his god, his idol, and he would not give it up. Thus, he violated the first and greatest commandment (Exodus 20:3; Matthew 22:36-40).

Has God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

1 Corinthians 1:20

Where is the wise man? Where is the scribe? Where is the debater of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?

God's way of thinking is not like the world's way (normal human wisdom). And God offers eternal life, which the world can never give.

We can spend a lifetime accumulating wisdom and yet never learn how to have a personal relationship with God. We must come to the crucified and risen Christ to receive eternal life and the joy of a personal relationship with our Savior.

The people stopped asking Jesus questions.

Mark 12:34

When Jesus saw that he had answered intelligently, He said to him, "You are not far from the kingdom of God." After that, no one would venture to ask Him any more questions.

This Pharisee had grasped the intent of God's law—that true obedience comes from the heart. Because all the Old Testament commands lead to Christ, his next step was faith in Jesus himself. This, however, was the most difficult step to take.

We do not know if this Pharisee ever became a true believer, but we must remember that being "close" to being a Christian is infinitely far away if a person never commits to Christ. Salvation cannot rest on intellectual knowledge alone. You must repent, follow Christ, and be made a new person by his Holy Spirit. Don't be content with being close; take the step and make the commitment.

You must ask in faith without doubting.

James 1:6

But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind.

We must believe not only in the existence of God but also in his loving care. This includes relying on God and expecting that he will hear and answer when we pray.

We must put away our critical attitude when we come to him. God does not grant every thoughtless or selfish request. We must have confidence that God will align our desires with his purposes.

The High Priest questions Jesus.

Mark 14:61

But He kept silent and did not answer Again the high priest was questioning Him, and saying to Him, "Are You the Christ, the Son of the Blessed One?"

To the first question, Jesus made no reply because it was based on confusing and erroneous evidence. Not answering was wiser than trying to clarify the fabricated accusations. But if Jesus had refused to answer the second question, it could have been taken as a denial of his mission. Instead, his answer predicted a powerful role reversal. Sitting at God's right hand in the place of power, he would come to judge his accusers, and they would have to answer *his* questions (Psalm 110:1; Revelation 20:11-13).

King Zedekiah asks Jeremiah concerning a battle.

Jeremiah 37:17

Now King Zedekiah sent and took him out; and in his palace the king secretly asked him and said, "Is there a word from the LORD?" And Jeremiah said, "There is!" Then he said, "You

Zedekiah teetered between surrender and resistance. Too frightened and weak to exercise authority, he asked Jeremiah to come secretly to the palace, perhaps hoping for some better news from God. Zedekiah was desperate. He wanted to hear a word from the Lord, but he feared the political ramifications of being caught talking to Jeremiah.

The serpent questioned Eve concerning the forbidden tree.

Genesis 3:1

Now the serpent was more crafty than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said to the woman, "Indeed, has God said, 'You shall not eat from any tree of the garden'?"

Disguised as a shrewd serpent, Satan came to tempt Eve. At one time, Satan had been a glorious angel. But in pride, he rebelled against God and was cast out of heaven. As a created being, Satan has definite limitations.

Although he is trying to tempt everyone away from God, he will not be the final victor. In 3:14, 15, God promises that Satan will be crushed by one of the woman's offspring, the Messiah.

What is not of faith is sin.

Romans 14:23

But he who doubts is condemned if he eats, because his eating is not from faith; and whatever is not from faith is sin.

We try to steer clear of actions forbidden by Scripture, of course, but sometimes Scripture is silent. Then we should follow our consciences.

"If you do anything you believe is not right, you are sinning" means that to go against a conviction will leave a person with a guilty or uneasy conscience. When God shows us that something is wrong for us, we should avoid it. But we should not look down on other Christians who exercise their freedom in those areas.

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness.

1 Timothy 3:16

By common confession, great is the mystery of godliness: He who was revealed in the flesh, was vindicated in the Spirit, Seen by angels, Proclaimed among the nations, Believed on in the world, Taken up in glory.

In this short hymn, Paul affirms the humanity and divinity of Christ. By so doing he reveals the heart of the Good News, "the great mystery of our faith" (the secret of how we become godly). "Revealed in a human body"—Jesus was a man; Jesus' incarnation is the basis of our being right with God. "Vindicated by the Spirit"—Jesus' resurrection showed that the Holy Spirit's power was in him (Romans 8:11). "Seen by angels" and "taken to heaven"—Jesus is divine.

We can't please God on our own; we must depend on Christ. As a man, Jesus lived a perfect life, and so he is a perfect example of how to live. As God, Jesus gives us the power to do what is right. It is possible to live a godly life—through following Christ.

Do not pass judgment on those weak in the faith.

Romans 14:1

Now accept the one who is weak in faith, but not for the purpose of passing judgment on his opinions.

Who is weak in faith and who is strong? We are all weak in some areas and strong in others. Our faith is strong in an area if we can survive contact with worldly people without falling into their patterns. It is weak in an area if we must avoid certain activities, people, or places in order to protect our spiritual life. It is important to take self-inventory in order to find out our strengths and weaknesses. Whenever in doubt, we should ask, Can I do that without sinning? Can I influence others for good, rather than being influenced by them?

In areas of strength, we should not fear being defiled by the world; rather we should go and serve God. In areas of weakness, we need to be cautious. If we have

a strong faith but shelter it, we are not doing Christ's work in the world. If we have a weak faith but expose it, we are being extremely foolish.

Work without grumbling or disputing.

Philippians 2:14

Do all things without grumbling or disputing;

Our lives should be characterized by moral purity, patience, and peacefulness, so that we will "shine brightly" in a dark and depraved world. A transformed life is an effective witness to the power of God's Word.

Are you shining brightly, or are you clouded by complaining and arguing? Don't let dissensions snuff out your light. Shine out for God. Your role is to shine until Jesus returns and bathes the world in his radiant glory.

Do not judge the servant of another.

Romans 14:4

Who are you to judge the servant of another? To his own master he stands or falls; and he will stand, for the Lord is able to make him stand.

Rather than questioning God, believe in faith never doubting, and receive eternal rewards.

An invitation is given to open your heart's door.

Rev. 3:20

Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

To ask Jesus to come into your heart please pray this Prayer:

Dear Lord Jesus, I believe you are the Christ, the Son of the Living God. I ask you to forgive me of my sins and coming into my heart. I accept you as savior and will follow you as Lord. Amen.

References:

Holy Bible: King James Translation

Holy Bible: Living Bible Translation

Additional comments and charts are taken from: *Life Application Study Bible*. Illinois: Tyndale House 2007. Print