

s and Doctrine :: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and means o

Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and means of salvation? - posted by Reviva

My dear brothers and sisters in Christ,

Greetings! . . . My name is Nathan. I am writing because I have been really struggling with some theological questions that are beginning to affect my ability to praise God and trust his love. I was hoping that I might find some insight or encouragement by hearing from other Christians, especially those who may have already dealt with these questions.

I just want to mention that I accepted Christ 14 years ago (when I was 18 years old) and have been walking with Him since then. I am an active member of a healthy local church (named Harvest Bible Chapel) and I have also greatly appreciated the ministry of Sermon Index. In fact, I have listened to hundreds of sermons and posted in the forum on a few occasions.

I mention these things just to clarify that I am not questioning if Christianity is true. It's simply that these theological questions continue to return to my mind and make it difficult for me to freely worship the Lord.

I also hesitated to share these questions because I do not want to be offensive to the Lord or to be ungrateful for my salvation in Christ. I also don't want to cause any doubt or confusion in other believers. And yet I feel that if I do not address these questions then I am going to continue having difficulties in my personal spiritual life. I realize it may not be possible to get complete answers to these questions, but I hope I could at least address them and know how other Christians have coped with them. . . .

The main question that I struggle with is this:

Why did God let mankind fall into sin and condemnation and then provide salvation through Christ instead of preventing the fall from happening in the first place?

I am assuming that we all agree that God is the ultimate Creator and thereby fully sovereign over all things. Nothing in all the universe can happen without his control or permission (otherwise He is not truly omnipotent). So we know that He had the choice not to allow sin and the fall of man in the first place. Yet he allowed the fall to happen. As a result of the fall, mankind suffers on earth (war, disease, starvation, etc.) and then suffers eternal torment in hell forever. However, God stepped into the world as Savior and provided salvation through Christ. For this reason the saints praise Him and thank him for this salvation.

But the problem I have with this is that it seems analogous to the idea of a parent allowing his child to drink poison and then after the child drinks it and is dying, the parent comes to the rescue by providing the child with the antidote that saves him. Then the parent receives praise and adoration from the child for being saved. However, the entire scenario could have been avoided if the parent simply kept the child from consuming the poison in the first place. This leaves me with the impression that I am praising God for saving me from sin and death when in actuality He could have prevented sin and death in the first place.

So my dilemma happens often times when I am singing songs in church that thank God for this salvation. The question comes to mind: "Are we praising God for saving us from something that He could have prevented in the first place?" Again, I feel so bad to say this because I don't want to be unthankful toward God or to doubt his love. It's simply the logical side of me that seems to rise up and question things. (Or maybe it's the sinful side of me that resists giving glory to God.)

I have asked other Christians before about this question but I can't seem to find an explanation that will quiet my mind and make it possible to just happily praise God. My logical mind continues to beckon me with questions.

One answer that I used to hold to is that God had to allow the fall of man because man had to be given freewill and the o

opportunity to choose to love God. With the option of disobedience, man's obedience and love would be meaningless. Then man chose to disobey God and this was simply the "risk" that God had to take for man to have free choice.

However, it seems to me that God not only gave man freewill but he arranged the environment in the garden in such a way as to make man's disobedience very likely or even guaranteed. God placed the tree with the forbidden fruit right in the middle of the Garden of Eden next to the tree of life. Every time Adam and Eve went to eat from the tree of life (which was allowed), they would have the tree of the knowledge of good and evil right there next to them as a source of temptation. The fruit was very easily accessible and required nothing more than reaching out one's hand to take some and eat it. Day after day, it would always be there. Even if they lived for ages and ages, eventually it would only take one failure. Even a momentary impulse to eat it would be enough to plunge the entire human race into complete death and destruction, both on earth and in hell forever.

In addition, God cast Satan to the earth to be in the presence of Adam and Eve which furthered tempted them to disobey God and eat the forbidden fruit. (I assume there are other places God could have cast Satan such as to another planet or directly to hell.) Therefore, it seems that God not only placed the object of temptation amidst Adam and Eve for very easy access at all times, but he also placed there a powerful and clever entity who would further enhance the temptation and drastically increase the likelihood that sin would occur. Therefore, it's hard for me to believe that God intended that Adam and Eve would never sin and that salvation through Christ would not be necessary.

So this leads me back to the question . . . Why would God let mankind fall into sin and condemnation and then provide salvation through Christ instead of preventing the fall from happening in the first place?

Another answer that I thought was helpful is that God allowed the fall and then provided salvation through Christ in order to demonstrate his sacrificial love for mankind. It is true that God demonstrates his love for mankind through Christ's sacrifice. However, is this the only way that God could demonstrate his love? Does demonstrating love require God to allow all of mankind to plummet into destruction and then rescue only some of them?

Here I return again to the parent-child analogy. What if a parent chose to show his love to a child by allowing the child to consume poison and then reviving the child? This would probably be considered improper parenting in our society. I think the parent would be deemed as unfit to be a parent and would lose the right to have guardianship of the child. I think most of us would agree that a parent should demonstrate his love for his child by caring for and protecting the child, not by allowing the child to approach destruction and then rescuing the child. It seems that preventing tragedy to begin with would probably be the most loving thing to do.

So this leads me back to the question . . . Why would God let mankind fall into sin and condemnation and then provide salvation through Christ instead of preventing the fall from happening in the first place?

More recently in my Christian life, I began to understand that God's glory is the supreme purpose for all the things that God does. Therefore, even if all the human race and all of creation should suffer to the greatest extent, it would be worth it as long as God is ultimately glorified. In other words, there is nothing as valuable or as important as God's glory so this should be our measuring rod of how the universe should be run.

However, at the same time I know that God is the most loving and benevolent being that exists. This means that he desires the greatest good and happiness of the subjects in his kingdom. So the only reason that he allows calamity and suffering is because it will ultimately bring him glory (such as by exhibiting his righteous wrath against the wicked) or because the suffering will ultimately bring the greatest good (such as when his children suffer but are ultimately refined through it and bring glory to God by trusting him through it).

At the same time, I also know that God is infinitely wise and creative. So I assume that he could have chosen to have the universe and the human race operate in an infinite number of ways. So the ultimately question would be this:

If God is infinite in wisdom and creativity, and infinite in love and good-will, why wouldn't He be able to design and implement a universe and a human race that would bring him the greatest glory and yet not require earthly suffering and even eternal suffering for his creatures ?

As it stands, the current universe (physical and spiritual) operates in such a way that the entire human race must suffer in various forms while on earth and the vast majority of the human race will suffer extreme torment for all eternity in hell. It is difficult to conceive that this the only plan that would bring God the greatest glory and yet be the most loving and kind manner in which to establish His creation and treat His creatures.

So I guess that if I had to summarize my question into one statement it would be this:

Why did God (who is infinite in love and wisdom) have to allow mankind to fall into sin and eternal destruction and then provide salvation through Jesus Christ in order to be most glorified and express his love to the greatest degree?

I sincerely appreciate anyone's input on the matter. . .

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by jimp, on: 2012/2/20 15:22

hi,the two trees in the garden were the same two trees you are struggling with in your life today. the first is the tree of the knowlege of good and evil.knowlege is the key word and is a dangerous thing for this is the tree of religion which they ate of and paid the price for. the second is the tree of life ,which they never ate of(lest they live forever)is Jesus.they rejected the truth and the life for religion.and if you reject Jesus for answers to your search for the whys instead of living by faith ,you are putting yourself in a dangerous position.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/20 16:

Quote:

Why did God (who is infinite in love and wisdom) have to allow mankind to fall into sin and eternal destruction and then provide salvation through Jesus Christ in order to be most glorified and express his love to the greatest degree?

God created man with free will. God gave man the Choice to choose either to obey him or to disobey him. But Man choose to disobey him. It is not God's mistake that Man disobeys him. Now you may ask why should God give man a free will first place.
In your post you compare God to an earthly father, so let us consider an earthly father example, if you have a Robo that does everything that you want it to do, can you accept the Robo as your child? You cannot because the Robo does what you say because it does not have a will to choose anything of its own. Look at the mountains, stars and all heavenly bodies that God created, they obey him all the time but they cannot be his son. Instead a son of yours when he listens to you and obeys you, it pleases you much more than what this Robo offers, why because your Son who can do anything he wishes is willfully doing his Dad's will.

God wants to fellowship with man, he can only fellowship with someone who chooses to do God's will not out of lack of choice but because of his love for him. Even in our day today life, we are to make so many choices, we can either listen to spirit or flesh nature and make our choice. But Romans 8 says the mind that listens to flesh nature is hostile to God and cannot please God and hence cannot fellowship with him. Every Christian irrespective of whether he is saved or unsaved is left with this choice in day today walk, either to listen to Holy Spirit or to his own flesh.

We who originally made a mess of our life because of listening to our flesh nature (either because we did not know God's will or we willfully ignored it), is now given the son-ship in Jesus when we just turned away (repented) from our past life. This son-ship is a gift and not because of anything that we did in our disobedient days. Now that we are his son, we need to be very careful in making our day today choices, because we are to live worthy of our Father to fellowship with him. For this purpose God gave us Holy Spirit so that we can partake his divine nature.

Re: - posted by jimp, on: 2012/2/20 16:49

hi sree, you always turn the grace back into works, and therefore take a big bite out of the forbidden fruit.your good works are a growing natural proression because you are in Christ and are a new creationand because He has plzced the Holy Spirit within you. He said to labor to enter into rest. we are to rest in the finished work of Jesus;the tree of eternal life.jimp
p

Re: , on: 2012/2/20 17:34

revivalist-

Jonathon Edwards preached a sermon on this topic that the Lord used to bring in the great new england awakening. The subject text is:

That every mouth may be stopped."

I would read it prayerfully and I believe your questions will be answered and you will have a far different view of man (including yourself) and Christ afterwards.

<http://www.biblebb.com/files/edwards/je-justice.htm>

-Jim

Re: , on: 2012/2/20 17:38

"However, it seems to me that God not only gave man freewill but he arranged the environment in the garden in such a way as to make man's disobedience very likely or even guaranteed. God placed the tree with the forbidden fruit right in the middle of the Garden of Eden next to the tree of life." -revivalist

"That such is God's sovereign power and right, that he is originally under no obligation to keep men from sinning; but may in his providence permit and leave them to sin. He was not obliged to keep either angels or men from falling. It is unreasonable to suppose, that God should be obliged, if he makes a reasonable creature capable of knowing his will, and receiving a law from him, and being subject to his moral government, at the same time to make it impossible for him to sin, or break his law. For if God be obliged to this, it destroys all use of any commands, laws, promises, or threatenings, and the very notion of any moral government of God over those reasonable creatures. For to what purpose would it be, for God to give such and such laws, and declare his holy will to a creature, and annex promises and threatenings to move him to his duty, and make him careful to perform it, if the creature at the same time has this to think of, that God is obliged to make it impossible for him to break his laws? How can God's threatenings move to care or watchfulness, when, at the same time, God is obliged to render it impossible that he should be exposed to the threatenings? Or, to what purpose is it for God to give a law at all? For according to this supposition, it is God, and not the creature, that is under the law. It is the lawgiver's care, and not the subject's, to see that his law is obeyed; and this care is what the lawgiver is absolutely obliged to! If God be obliged never to permit a creature to fall, there is an end of all divine laws, or government, or authority of God over the creature; there can be no manner of use of these things." - Jonathon Edwards (minutes before the power of God fell in the great awakening)

Re: , on: 2012/2/20 17:49

For by him all things were created, in heaven and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities--all things were created through him and for him. -Collosians 1:16

All things were created for Jesus, in God's eternal wisdom and love. God permitted man to sin so that Christ could be glorified. Christ is worth more than all men ever created. All things were created for and through Him.

Amen.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/2/20

QUOTE:

"Why did God let mankind fall into sin and condemnation and then provide salvation through Christ instead of preventing the fall from happening in the first place?"

Dunno, brother. I am almost 65 years old and still have a lot of questions, including the one you just asked.

Know what I do with unanswerable questions? Quit asking. Why? If God chose to not reveal it He did it for a reason and some day He may tell us, and if not that is OK, too.

Let me ask you a question: could you worship, admire someone you could fully understand? Could you trust someone whose intelligence is only as good as yours? I couldn't. God is mysterious, but I trust Him because he has proven himself to be so much wiser than any human being I know or have ever read about.

In life there will be events that will not make sense at all and the questions come. Will my lack of understanding impact my willingness to trust Him? Are we not placing ourselves on equal footing with God by demanding he can not act without our permission or understanding?

May I suggest you read the book of Job. The Holy Spirit led me to read it one day. Until this point I got exasperated with these windbags who appeared to be educated beyond their intelligence. But I noticed something: we do not understand the workings of God and He is not obligated to explain it to us, either. A couple months later our only daughter was diagnosed with brain cancer and the LORD took her home. Make sense? No. But I am glad she won the race and made it home.

My two cents....and God bless.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and - posted by twayneb (), on: 2012/2/20

Revivalist: I can give you my opinion. Others may disagree, and that is perfectly OK with me, but what I have studied about this matter has really helped me.

When God created Adam and Eve, he established them in the garden with dominion and authority over this earth. (See Psalm 8 and Hebrews 2 for example.) In that sense we can say that God made Adam the "god" of this world, or the one on whom God bestowed the right and responsibility of dominion and ruler-ship. This type of dominion and authority was not given to the angels (See Hebrews 2).

I believe after studying Isaiah 14 and Ezekiel 28 that Lucifer's fall was not at some time prior to the creation of man. I believe Lucifer was in the garden as an angel that had not rebelled. Yet I find that he said, "I will be like God. I will have authority." I believe it would have been utter insanity for Lucifer to believe that he could storm heaven with a third of the angels and try to wrest the kingdom of heaven from God's hands. I think the passage in Revelation used to teach this has been misapplied.

So Satan decided that he would take the authority that man had been given, not by force, but by deceit. And so he did. This is why, I believe, we find that scripture describes Satan as the god of this world. It is also why we find the writer of Hebrews focusing on the fact that all things are not under the dominion of man at this time, but we see Jesus....

Now I am not implying that God had no foreknowledge of this event. We read that Jesus was slain from the foundation of the world. God desired to create man for His pleasure, for fellowship, for worship. All of these Adam supplied. All of these we can also supply. But what kind of fellowship exists if the one with whom we are intimate has no choice in the matter? In fact, intimacy and fellowship are without definition if there is no choice in the matter for both terms imply a choice of the will.

But the question, "Why did God not step in and stop the whole affair?", can be answered. God gave man the earth, the dominion and ruler-ship. I believe this is evidenced by the fact that God brought the animals to Adam and asked him what they should be called rather than simply introducing them to Adam and saying, for example, "This is a tiger." So when Adam gave away that dominion, God would be unjust to wrest it back. If I give you a new car and you decide to take a hammer to it and destroy it, I would be totally unjust to try to take it back from you. I gave it to you, it is yours to destroy if you will.

It also answers the question of the significance of Abraham's sacrifice of Isaac. It was not simply divine typology. It was a real covenant that opened the door to God intervening in the matter through the flesh of Jesus Christ. In the New Testament we read that since it was man in flesh and blood that brought sin into the world it was only man in flesh and blood who could redeem us from sin. (See 1 Cor. 15). When Abraham made covenant with God and did not withhold his son of promise, he bound God by covenant, by God's design, to do the same. Read all of the New Testament references to Abraham and Isaac and this sacrifice. Jesus told the pharisees that Abraham rejoiced to see His day, and saw it, and was glad. In Hebrews 9 we find that Abraham had already received his son from the dead in a figure. I believe that God showed Abraham the significance of this covenant and of the request that he sacrifice Isaac. Apparently God showed Abraham Jesus Christ and His sacrifice made legally possible by Abraham's obedience.

This also explains the time gap between the original sin and the savior.

I know some may disagree with specific points here, specifically the timing of the rebellion, as it goes against what many have always been taught, but it has answered far more questions for me.

Hope that helps.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by UntoBabes (), on: 2012/2/20 20:32

Hello revivalist,

You said" it seems to me that God not only gave man freewill but he arranged the environment in the garden in such a way as to make man's disobedience very likely or even guaranteed."

You are right about God giving man a free will but the second part of your sentence makes God a tempter. God does not tempt anyone. However, God tests man to prove his love. Even the Lord Jesus was tested by His own Father and passed the test. We know that nothing happens without God permission. That must invoke the question why did the Father allow His Son to be tempted by the Devil to create bread when He finally hungered after fasting forty days and forty nights, why didn't He hinder the Devil from doing it until the Lord Jesus was full, but unless the test is in its severest form it can never prove if love and surrender is real and perfect.

God did the same with Abraham when He asked him to offer His only son, the dearest thing to him. Do not think for a minute that Abraham knew about the ram waiting in the bushes, if that was the case the test would never have been real.

Well, it is the same way with every one of us. If Satan the enemy of God and our souls did not exist in the world to tempt us, we can never prove to God the sincerity of our devotion and love when we choose to resist the Devil and refuse to follow the path of sin.

Grace comes into play in the fact that we are not doing that in our own power nor could we do it if we wanted to. When we look to God by faith, He imparts to us the power to resist the Devil and overcome the world and the flesh.

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2012/2/20 20:32

Quote:

""Well, it is the same way with every one of us. If Satan the enemy of God and our souls did not exist in the world to tempt us, we can never prove to God the sincerity of our devotion and love when we choose to resist the Devil and refuse to follow the path of sin.""

This shows the Glory of God even in a clay pot. His glory, in man, which is "Christ in you the Hope of Glory".

Colossians 1:25-29 Whereof I am made a minister, according to the dispensation of God which is given to me for you, to fulfil the word of God; Even the mystery which hath been hid from ages and from generations, but now is made manifest to his saints: To whom God would make known what is the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles; which is Christ in you, the hope of glory: Whom we preach, warning every man, and teaching every man in all wisdom; that we may present every man perfect in Christ Jesus: Whereunto I also labour, striving according to his working, which worketh in me mightily.

This fulfillment of the Word of God, none knew until it was revealed to the Gentiles and His saints.

I almost allowed my flesh to agree with this questioning God of; Why did you make me this way?

Until I remembered the scripture in Romans 9; Romans 9:19-21 Thou wilt say then unto me, Why doth He yet find fault? For who hath resisted His will? Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed it, Why hast thou made me thus? Hath not the potter power over the clay, of the same lump to make one vessel unto honour, and another unto dishonour?

Who am I who took the Potters clay and by the breath of life and my mind will and emotions made a vessel unto destruction out of it, my will not His. Ezekiel 18:23 Have I any pleasure at all that the wicked should die? saith the Lord GOD: and not that he should return from his ways, and live? By His hand; Joh 3:15 That whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have eternal life.

Joh 5:39 Search the scriptures; for in them ye think ye have eternal life: and they are they which testify of me.

1Jo 1:2 (For the life was manifested, and we have seen it, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life, which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

1Jo 5:13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God. He has by His Grace and the Life of His only Begotten Son chosen to make a vessel of Glory and Grace of it by putting His own life in it, Jesus Christ who is the express image and likeness and Oneness with the Father, put in this vessel headed for destruction and make it a vessel of Glory, Even the Glory of God the Potter who is Now a Father to a son, This I don't understand, I should be in hell, but God in His own will chose to birth His own Son in me to make me a son of God also, There are no words to show why, all I can do is by Faith say Thank You Father for your perfect Glory and Grace that is in me, Jesus Christ The Son of God who has made me a son to His Father who is now My Father. By Him I have faith to believe.

Galatians 2:16-21 Knowing that a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified. But if, while we seek to be justified by Christ, we ourselves also are found sinners, is therefore Christ the minister of sin? God forbid. For if I build again the things which I destroyed, I make myself a transgressor. For I through the law am dead to the law, that I might live unto God. I am crucified with Christ: nevertheless I live; yet not I, but Christ liveth in me: and the life which I now live in the flesh I live by the faith of the Son of God, who loved me, and gave himself for me. I do not frustrate the grace of God: for if righteousness come by the law, then Christ is dead in vain.

Words fail me, only tears of Joy.

In Christ: Phillip

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/2/20 21:50

Wonderful little post jimp! You got it!!

The sin of the Christian is good works because we turn the grace of God back into works. That was Paul's problem with the Galatians.

Revivalist,

You jumped way ahead to a child being fed poison. First of all, you cannot liken God allowing man to exercise free choice with giving him poison. Stick with me now and you will see where I am going. But first we have to back up a bit. So first of all, why did those parents have a child? Because they wanted an expression of their love to share with and they wanted to grow their circle of fellowship. Now, if they keep their baby in a plastic bubble all his life then they will surely protect him. If they see to all of his needs and are always there to make him laugh and entertain him then he will never feel any lack. They have essentially made him his own little plastic garden of eden.

But this is not what happens is it?

Enter the Adversary, the Serpent. Yes, he is part of God's plan and design, too. Lucifer did not catch God by surprise. Did you ever wonder how Lucifer chose to be evil since there was no one to model it after? Where did Lucifer get those thoughts to rebel against God. We know where Adam and Eve got their thoughts (from Satan) but where did Satan get his thoughts? We can talk about this later. Anyway, continuing...

God who alone has absolute free will made a choosing creature. Absolute free will means that you can do absolutely anything you want, anytime. We don't have that. If we are in prison, we cannot will ourselves out. That is what I mean by absolute free will. But we do have free choice. God gave man free choice and love demands that he give that creature the opportunity to exercise his ability to choose. But all along the way we must ask ourselves, what is God after? Well, what is a parent after, Revivalist? A parent wants to bring a child to maturity and wholeness and healthy, loving fellowship with them. Can this be done in a bubble? Oh it is fun for a while. We all protect our little babies and keep them sheltered but if we love them we will allow them to make choices as they grow up.

God is also after something. He surely does want to express His love and share it. He chooses to do this by allowing His creatures to have free choice. If you were looking for a race of people to fellowship with for all eternity and desiring that a rebellion would never again take place in heaven, how would you go about bringing these sons and daughters to maturity (mutual trust)? How would you go about bringing sons and daughters to a place of complete trust in you?

Do you know how God goes about bring many sons to glory?

Through pain and suffering (and Christ in us). And dare I say, by allowing evil into our lives.

God doesn't do the evil, He can only do good (James 1:13). The devil is the doer of evil, not God. However, the scripture says that, "God created evil" (Isa. 45:7). and to agree with the scriptures, we must say, "Amen." Yet in what sense did He create evil? God created freedom with the possibility of His creatures going the evil way of unbelief, so in a direct sense, He created evil by creating us free beings. So now let us see how God uses the devil's misused freedom, which is evil, for His higher eternal purposes, yet still reins sovereign over His creation—(Daniel 2:19-22; 4:32):

This is Joseph's statement of faith after being treated unfairly by his brothers.

Genesis 50:20 "As for you, you meant evil against me; but God meant it for good, to bring it about that many people should be kept alive, as they are today."

God chastises His disobedient sons by using the Assyrian who were Israel's enemy, yet they are the rod of God's anger.

Isaiah 10:5 "O, Assyria, the rod of my anger, the staff of my fury! And the staff in their hand is my indignation."

God will take us through deep valleys to cause us to discover great treasures.

Isaiah 45:3 "I will give you the treasures of darkness and the hidden riches in secret places, that you may know that it is I, The Lord, the God of Israel, who call you by your name."

God created free beings with the possibility of going the evil way of unbelief.

Isaiah 45:6-7 "That men may know, from the rising of the sun and from the west, that there is none besides me; I am the Lord, and there is none other. I form the light and create darkness, I make peace, and create evil, I am the Lord, who do all these things."

The greatest evil in all history was when Satan put Jesus on the Cross, yet God meant it for our greatest good.

Isaiah 53:10-11 "Yet it was the will of the Lord to bruise him; he has put him to grief; when he makes himself an offering for sin, he shall see his offspring, he shall prolong his days; the will of the Lord shall prosper in his hand; he shall see the fruit of the travail of his soul and be satisfied; by his knowledge shall the righteous one, my servant, make many to be accounted righteous; and he shall bear their iniquities."

Nothing can be against us, everything is created for our greatest good.

Isaiah 54:16 "Behold, I have created the smith who blows the fire of coals, and produces a weapon for its purpose. I have also created the ravager to destroy;"

God meant the consequences of the fall to drive us to childlike trust.

Mercy sent Satan to Job for Job to know that he was only complete in God, and not in himself.

Job 2:3 "And the Lord said to Satan, "Have you considered my servant Job, that there is none like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, who fears God and turns away from evil? He still holds fast his integrity, although you moved me against him, to destroy him without a cause."

Job, himself never saw his evil circumstances coming from Satan, but from God. We see through evil to God only. Kind

of like what you are doing now and what we all are doing or have done.

Job 2:10 “But he said to her, “You speak as one of the foolish women would speak. Shall we receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?” In all this Job did not sin with his lips.”

Can the creation be wiser than God, and does God not control all things.

Job 12:16 “With him are strength and wisdom; the deceived and the deceiver are His.”

Job keep his eyes on God alone, even in the negative.

Job 16:12 “I was at ease, and He broke me asunder; He seized me by the neck and dashed me to pieces; He set me up as his target.”

Even Jobs family said that God was responsible for all that happened to Job.

Job 42:11 “Then came to him all his brothers and sisters and all who had known him before, and ate bread with him in his house; and they showed him sympathy and comforted him for all the evil that the Lord had brought upon him; and each of them gave him a piece of money and a ring of gold.”

God chastens whom He loves.

Deuteronomy 8:5 “Know then in your heart that, as a man disciplines his son, the Lord your God disciplines you.”

Psalms 66:11 “Thou didst bring us into the net; thou didst lay affliction on our loins;”

Psalms 102:9 “For I eat ashes like bread, and mingle tears with my drink, because of thy indignation and anger; for thou hast taken me up and thrown me away.”

Jeremiah 42:10 “If you will remain in this land, then I will build you up and not pull you down; I will plant you; and not pluck you up; for I repent of the evil which I did to you.”

Seeing God Only

Lamentations 3:1-18 “I am the man who has seen affliction under the rod of His wrath; He has driven and brought me into darkness without any light; surely against me He turns his hand again and again the whole day long. He has made my flesh and my skin waste away, and broken my bones; he has besieged and enveloped me with bitterness and tribulation; He had made me dwell in darkness like the dead of long heavy chains on me; though I call and cry for help, He shuts out my prayer; He has blocked my ways with hewn stones, he has made my paths crooked. He is to me like a bear lying in wait, like a lion in hiding; he led me off my way and tore me to pieces; He has made me desolate; He bent His bow and set me as a mark for his arrow. He drove into my heart the arrows of his quiver; I have become the laughingstock of all peoples, the burden of their songs all day long. He has filled me with bitterness, He has made me drunken with wormwood. He has also broken my teeth with gravel stones, He has covered me with ashes. And you have removed my soul far off from peace; I have forgotten prosperity. And I said, My strength and my hope is perished from the Lord.”

I Peter 4:12 “Beloved, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal which comes upon you to prove you, as though something strange were happening to you.”

II Samuel 12:11 “Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up evil against you out of your own house.”

Joel 2:25 “I will restore to you the years which the swarming locust has eaten, the hopper, the destroyer, and cutter, my great army, which I sent among you.”

Amos 3:6 “Is a trumpet blown in a city, and the people are not afraid? Does evil befall a city, unless the Lord has done it?”

Jesus would not give Pilate, Herod, nor the devil any power. He saw their evil work, but gave it no power. There is only one power in the universe.

John 19:7 “Then said Pilate unto him, Speak thou not unto me? Know thou not that I have power to crucify thee, and have power to release thee?”

Jesus answered, Thou could have no power at all against me, except it were given thee from above.”

God’s sovereignty reigns

Acts 2:23 “Him, being delivered by determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God, you have taken, and by wicked hands have crucified and slain.”

Acts 4:26 “The Kings of the earth stood up, and the rulers were gathered together against the Lord, and against his Christ. For a truth against thy holy child Jesus, whom thou hast anointed both Herod, and Pontius Pilate, with the Gentiles, and the people of Israel, were gathered together, For to do whatsoever thy hand and thy counsel determined before to be done.”

1 Peter 2:21 “For even hereunto were you called; because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example, that you should follow his steps.”

Romans 8:32 “He spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us ALL things?”

ALL means good, as well as evil.

Romans 8:36 “For thy sake we are killed all the day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter. Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him that loved us.”

Do you see what God is up to now? Maybe just a little bit?

He is after something in each one of us. ALL OF OUR HEART.

Pilgrim

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and, on: 2012/2/20 22:40

Dear Revivalist, you're not the first nor will you be the last to sweat bullets wrestling with these type of questions. Some of the greatest men that ever lived, have.

I too went through this and more.

I do believe in freewill but don't believe that our GOD predestined anyone to Hell - but He does know who will 'choose' to go there - because they don't want any part in loving Him nor others.

I think the easier we keep this, the better. I know that Satan's IQ far exceeds any of ours and that truth should never be forgotten. Satan is quite capable to cause us to struggle with this question until The LORD returns, if we don't just take Him at His Word.

I do not believe that man's chief end is to bring Glory to GOD. He is Self-sufficient in Glory without us.

He wanted a Bride to love and be with, for all of Eternity. That is the answer.

If one puts themselves in the place of an omnipotent, omniscient, omnipresent GOD that 'is' Love, and wanted a Bride to love and to spend ALL of 'ETERNITY' with - what would you look for?

Even as just a man - if you wanted to love, far beyond human love, and to spend eternity with a woman as 'your' wife -

looking at eternity, beginning for you and her from the view of Revelation 21 - what type of bride would meet 'your' requirements?

I've known some folks that have asked Him if they could have a taste of the full strength of His Love, but their human body caused them to cry out - "ENOUGH, I can't contain it, LORD - I'll die or something - it's FAR TOO MUCH! - and He did pull back enough for them to resume a normal life again. I only say 'somewhat' because they never were the same as they were before 'it' happened.

Makes one smile.

GOD BLESS you with His Love.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an, on: 2012/2/20 23:43

You have partly answered your question Revivalist.

God is not only Just but He also does everything legally so that know one can say that God is unfair.

Whether man was given free will, free choice or what have you, it was imperative that he eat of that tree.

Think about it, if Eden was a perfect sinless place where there is absolute bliss, what good would a set of laws be to us who are sinless? The law entered so that the transgression would increase. It was necessary that man should fall. Why? Because, long before man was created from the earth, there was a being that disrupted the courses of which God had ordained. Satan rebelled. How he rebelled and by what authority and source we don't know. All we know is that he rebelled and God who is Just needed a legal precedent to bind Satan and cast him in a place where he would not be able to rise again.

When God handed over the keys to the earth to Adam, Satan no doubt was furious that such a low being would be granted that much power so he went to work on him through the serpent which then spoke to Eve. How Satan became the prince of the power of the air from the time that man fell is a mystery, but he was able to do obtain that right.

Having that right he was able to go freely to and fro the earth going up and down in it seeking whom he may devour. Even when God had a meeting in heaven, Satan showed up and without restriction, because he had that right.

Again, God who is Just does everything legally. God began to work on a select few and made covenants and promises to man to bring about His SEED. He spoke through the prophets His word through similitudes and shadows the plan that He would bring about to dethrone Satan LEGALLY and to put him in his place once and for all and to reconcile everything back together that was fallen down before the fall and after so that God could install His King of Kings and Lord of Lords over the whole universe. Once all the WORDS were spoken into existence through His prophets then Christ would manifest in the likeness of sinful flesh. God in His wisdom was drawing up a legal document that only He and the Angels knew about. All it needed was blood to bring it into affect. And not just any blood, it had to be from the spotless lamb of God. Once the blood was spilt, God now could bring His plan into affect that would redeem man for the "whomsoever will" and to bruise the head of Satan.

I took a stab at it.

I have often wondered too brother, but there is a lot of silence in the scripture concerning this. The best thing to do with this information is to try to piece some of it together in your mind with what scripture best supports it and leave the rest to God.

Re: God's dilemma - posted by Sidewalk (), on: 2012/2/21 0:31

I hope this isn't too far afield, but we have had an interesting demonstration of the difference between forgiveness and pardon. Haley Barbour is a fine Christian man, who was serving as the governor of Mississippi. As he left office, he gave pardons to some inmates he'd met and believed should be forgiven and released. This didn't go so well.

Forgiveness is personal, man to man. But pardon is governmental. The obligation of those who govern is to ensure justice. The governor may give pardons when it is safe to do so, but his personal feelings may be troubled when he must punish those he would want to release. This is exactly God's dilemma and why He must have a substitute to satisfy the demands of law. It is why He cannot prevent a man from choosing a path to Hell.

Governor Barbour's attempt to bypass the obligation resulted in at least one murder. In the same way God cannot just let people off the hook despite the fact that He loves each one so intensely. He has given His Son to deal with the terrible dilemma He faces, He cannot save any soul that doesn't come into salvation in Jesus.

God will not make Governor Barbour's mistake.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and, on: 2012/2/21 1:47

Hi Nathan,

Just wanted to comment on something you said.

"But the problem I have with this is that it seems analogous to the idea of a parent allowing his child to drink poison and then after the child drinks it and is dying, the parent comes to the rescue by providing the child with the antidote that saves him."

I have that problem too. I see it more like this though: the parent allows the child to drink the poison and while the child is dying, the parent doesn't come to the rescue to save him but watches the child die.

God allows mankind to sin. Yeah He sends Christ to save the world but a vast majority of the entire world that has ever lived dies and goes to hell forever because they didn't even stand a chance of hearing about Christ. So in essence God doesn't save that vast majority but lets them die and go to hell forever.

Re: , on: 2012/2/21 2:40

Hi paulmcg1. Do you understand what these verses are saying?

Rom 1:19 Because that which may be known of God is manifest in them; for God hath shewed it unto them.
Rom 1:20 For the invisible things of him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal power and Godhead; so that they are without excuse:
Rom 1:21 Because that, when they knew God, they glorified him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened.
Rom 1:22 Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools,
Rom 1:23 And changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and fourfooted beasts, and creeping things.
Rom 1:24 Wherefore God also gave them up to uncleanness through the lusts of their own hearts, to dishonour their own bodies between themselves:
Rom 1:25 Who changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed for ever. Amen.

There is not a person of age of accountability that will be able to stand before GOD at the judgment and say, "I didn't know that You existed." -- because GOD is "Just" and will show each human being 'when'; either their conscience or a passing word from some other human or a thought of there being a Righteous Creator; that they had a choice of whether they should Seek Him or not. He 'is' Love and Just in all of His Ways. Much more "Just" than we have ever been to our fellow human beings.

A true story of a native village that had a Chief with a conscience. He'd go alone to a certain mountain and look up into the sky and talk to the only God that he figured would be "up there". He asked this God that He would show him how to be a good Chief over his people and to show him how to. He was given a vision of a cross and told that a man will come with that image.

Some time after, a Missionary came, bearing a Bible with a cross on the cover and the Chief knew this was the answer of the God that gave him that vision on the mountain.

He couldn't judge anyone on that day, if "they didn't know any better." The Word of GOD is true.

Rev 20:11-13 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away; and there was found no place for them. And I saw the dead, small and great, stand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is the book of life: and the dead were judged out of those things which were written in the books, according to their works.

And the sea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them: and they were judged every man according to their works.

GOD is GOOD. Amen! :)

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love and, on: 2012/2/21 3:51

Hello Nathan

Your question is a very common one amongst believers and even amongst unbelievers. Several facts, if you believe them, come to mind.

God did not allow Adam and Eve to sin. In fact He commanded them not to sin.i.e. to eat of the tree of Knowledge, of good and evil. This is not allowing, this is a commandment.

Adam and Eve were both innocent. Which is to say they had no knowledge of Good and evil when they were created.

Niether Adam or Eve actually ate of the tree of life. Had they done they would have lived forever.

In their innocence they would not have chosen to eat that fruit of eternal life, as they were already living souls and at that time could not die.

Adam was with Eve when the tempter discussing himself and communicating through a serpent came to tempt them. Eve was genuinely deceived into eating, though she affirmed that she should not do so. Whereas Adam was not deceived. Sin is accounted or reckoned through Adam. So although the act of both Adam and Eve was disobedience it is only Adam's action which counts before God.

This is why the Scripture tells us that sin came in through one man Adam, and obedience or righteousness through the one man Christ.

Free will is undoubtedly an important consideration. However, when God says, 'of the tree in the midst of the garden you cannot eat' , you don't have a free will to disobey God, only the power of that free will to choose to disobey.

The power to choose is not the same as the right to choose.

The pertinent question ought to be why if Adam was not deceived did he exercise his will and eat.

The key to this is in the new testament when Paul' says' know you not that when a man loves his wife, he loves himself'. Adam chose to follow Eve and thereby he chose himself. This may seem a little difficult to accept. But self choosing is at the root of all sin. Including that of Satan and the angels which fell previously.

God does not put temptation into the paths of His creatures. And He never allows them to choose to sin. Adam chose his wife and thereby he disobeyed God. Jesus said that a man would need to love Him (Jesus) more than even the members of his own family, to be counted worthy of Him at His coming kingdom. This is the same meaning. And whilst eternal life is a free gift of God, being counted worthy of the Lord return would be a matter of choosing.

I would encourage you to take those thoughts, which disturb you, captive to the obedience of Christ. May the Lord bless you and give you peace and rest to worship Him without being disturbed in your mind.

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by rnieman, on: 2012/2/21 10

Hello Revivalist, I hope this might help. God created Adam and Eve knowing they would fall. But in my opinion, true love cannot exist without choice. So God created Adam and Eve with free will to choose. And they chose evil. God could have created Adam and Eve and not allowed them the ability to choose to disobey. Now if He did create them without choice then they would not be obeying from the heart but rather out of robotic obedience. If you have children you will know that parents don't desire, in the long run, that their children obey just because we say obey. We desire them to obey from the heart in the setting of choice to obey or disobey, thus true love, not robotic love..... I hope this helps... russ

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by ginnyrose (), on: 2012/2/21 10

Revivalist,

You got a lot of good answers. Anbody answer your question to your satisfaction?

Just wondering..

Re: - posted by pilgrim777, on: 2012/2/21 11:55

2Ti 2:10 Therefore I ENDURE all things for the elect's sakes, that they may also obtain the salvation which is in Christ Jesus with eternal glory.

2Ti 2:11 It is a faithful saying: For if we BE DEAD with him, we shall ALSO LIVE with him:

2Ti 2:12 IF WE SUFFER (deny the flesh, pick up our cross), we shall also REIGN WITH HIM: if we deny him (refuse to suffer and bear our cross, in essence, refuse to be associated with Him and His sufferings), he also will deny us:

God is looking for a people that will choose to suffer for his sake and turn away from all that is not of Him. He is looking for a people that willingly follow and trust Him no matter the cost. Jesus is our example and even will abide in us by the Holy Spirit to will and to work in us.

We deny Jesus by walking in our own righteousness and strength which avoids suffering because it pleases the flesh.

Adam and Eve, did not choose to suffer (deny self), but they gave in to their flesh via a lie by the lust of the flesh (Eve saw that the tree was good for food), lust of the eyes (fruit pleasant to the eyes) and pride of life (a tree desired to make one wise).

Today, we still mistake bad fruit for good fruit.

Like Ginny, hope you got some answers.

Pilgrim

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/21 12:

Brother Zac Poonen answers all these questions in his book called Real Truth, one can find the ebook of this here.

http://www.cfcindia.com/web/mainpages/book_window.php?book=the_real_truth

This is a great book to share to unbelievers and even to believers who have no idea what is Sin. This book is very small and can be read completely in a night or 2. Most of the contents that I have included in my post are inspired from this book.

Also the day today choice that a believer (Christian) makes between his sinful nature and the Holy Spirit is the essence of Romans 7 and 8. If anyone feels this is against the grace of God then they need to complain this to Paul and also to Jesus who told us to Carry our cross everyday. The cross is the symbol of doing God's will ignoring our flesh desires and it should be done everyday. Good news is we have Holy Spirit to share the burden of this cross.

Re: - posted by Sree (), on: 2012/2/21 15:02

Here is a Youtube video of Zac Poonen talking on the origin of Evil and why God allowed it to happen.

http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wVbN-AF_To

Re: - posted by Christinyou (), on: 2012/2/21 18:19

The Cross is the symbol of death. Our Cross is His Cross, which we were crucified with Him, our dying to self and sin every day. Gal 2:20 "I am crucified with Christ". "The life we now live we live by the Faith of the Son of God".

If I had a cross to die on it would mean nothing but death and hell. By His Cross which is the only Cross in my life that takes away the death of sin and gives me life unto God. Paul says we were with Jesus when He was on the Cross and that is our cross also, dead to sin and alive unto God By the completed work On The Cross of Christ for me. We must see ourselves on that cross with Him also or we don't understand, "It is finished".

In Christ, dead on the Cross with Him and alive unto God in Him and Him in us: Phillip

Re: Does anyone else struggle with this theological question about God's love an - posted by gamma-light, on: 2012/2/21 19:02

Nathan how else can the love of God be proved to be the most powerful thing above and beyond all created things to man, more personally to YOU? Look at the universe as created for relationship enhancement with the God of creation. See....All things were designed by God in such a way for us, mankind His idea and creation, to know Him and experience Him personally in the fullest.

Ponder this:

How else can you know Him personally as your deliverer if there is nothing for you to be delivered from?

How can you know Him as your personal healer if there is nothing from which you need Him to heal you?

How can you know Him as your personal provider unless you need HIM to provide for you what man can not?

How can you know Him as the one who forgives unless you need Him to forgive you?

All the names of God will give you clues as to who He desires YOU to know Him as, to you personally and in your life experience.

All this that is created, is all about KNOWING who God is... and who He desires to be to each one of us individually in our life!!!!!! Because until you experience Him, the true knowledge is not yours. See, I can tell you about.... but you must experience for yourself before you can truly know, because He is a very intimate God. He didn't create masses of humanity the fact that He created ONE in the beginning shows you the first clue to who He desires to be to you.

You can never know Him as greater than all unless there is the negative there to express the means for the revelation and thru that your fellowship and relationship with Him deepens.

The creation DECLARES His glory!

gamma-light