

## Pastor Jim Jackson, 11/13/16

### Questions and Answers

*Why are people born with defects or allowed to suffer—If God is good, why do people I love die, including babies?*

Because God is good, he originally created a good creation without birth defects or death or suffering or evil (Gen. 1:31). Sin entered the world through human rebellion and God cursed the physical universe and spiritual realities of people afterward (Gen. 3:16-18). Evil and the resulting suffering brings about hate, pain, and genetic defects but God can even bring good out of human suffering so it is not valueless (John 9:2, 3; Rom. 8:28). Some of highest human values come from fighting evil/suffering (justice, bravery, sacrifice, forgiveness).

We expect a good God to do something—and He is, by restraining a certain amount of evil, though not all, to allow freedom of choice (2 Thess. 2:6, 7). Or else He would have to stop every form of evil; rape, lying, cheating, thoughts—it would be a robotic utopia of no suffering, but have no choice or love. Someday, God will correct all evil, suffering and defects, to be no more in eternity (Rev. 21:4) The Bible is not clear on the eternal realities of babies/children though we trust in the goodness of God.

*If Jesus is God is He in the OT?*

Christophany—As no one can see God and live, yet God walks and talks with people and gave Moses the Law face to face, as well as God refers to Himself in the plural (Heb. *el-o-heem*, Gen. 1:26), the divine-human connection was probably a pre-incarnate Jesus in the form of an angel or ‘messenger’ (Heb. *mal-awk*) of the LORD (YHWH). This messenger can forgive sin and acts like God as opposed to angels who just do God’s will (Gen. 3:8; 11:11-13; Ex. 23:20-21; John 8:58; 12:41).

*Does the mode of baptism matter?*

We are baptized because Jesus commanded it (Matt. 28:19, 20). The word ‘baptism’ (Gr. *baptidzo*, ‘to immerse’) signifies a cloth being plunged into a dye to change its color. It was always used of a repentant believer making a public statement of conversion. Because conversion is spiritual and invisible to the eye, baptism is an outward demonstration of an inward work of God.

Baptism pictures: 1. **Dying** with Jesus to your sin—being submerged in the water 2. **Rising** with Jesus to new life—coming up out of the water 3. **Declaring** public allegiance to Jesus—leaving the water to follow Him. Sprinkling or pouring water on adults or infants does not accurately picture the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus and was not done by Jesus or the apostles. Though not connected to salvation, child dedications are meaningful times of blessing parents and children as Jesus demonstrated (Matt. 19:13-15).

*Can't I just be a Christian without a church—Is membership in the Bible?*

God does not save people to leave them in isolation or His child to be orphaned. The Holy Spirit connects believers to each other (Eph. 4:11, 12). The Greek word for ‘church’ *ekklesia* means ‘assembly or gathering’. So, to ‘join a church’ means to commit to a local assembly that gathers for the specific purpose of glorifying God by serving Him and each other.

A numerical record of salvations, baptisms, widows, godly men and discipline/excommunication were kept (Acts 2:37–47; 5:9-11; 6:1-6; Matt. 18:15–20; Gal. 6:1; 1 Tim. 5:3–16; 1 Cor. 5). Elders will be held accountable for the church they oversee (Heb. 13:17). **A body part does no good without a body** (1 Cor. 12:27, 28)!

*Do those who have never heard about Jesus go to hell?*

All people are permanently, morally corrupt and deserve to be separated from a perfect God for eternity (Rom. 1:18-32; 3:23; Eph. 2:3). Yet, God loves all of humanity and wants to save them (John 3:16, 17; 1 Tim. 2:4; 2 Pet. 3:9). Most will not come to Him, but to those He calls and respond, He provides Christians, scripture, or possibly dreams to bring them to salvation (Is. 45:22; Acts 9:5; 17:27; Rom. 10:13, 14). Everyone is judged by the amount of light they have been given (Rom. 2:15).

*Should Christians play fantasy card/video games?*

Christians should be careful what fills their minds and their time as it influences how they think and act (Prov. 4:23; Phil 4:8). Anything that rules your time and mind and behavior needs to be curbed or removed, especially if it draws you away from God (Eph. 5:16). *How does it affect you when you can't do it?* Scripture→Holy Spirit→godly council

*What will happen in the end times?*

Jesus Christ (Messiah) is not yet physically ruling on the earth as is promised in the OT (Ps. 2:6-9; 22:27-30; 110:1-7; Is. 2:1-4). Eventually, the church is raptured and Jesus returns in his ‘second coming’ after the 7-year Tribulation with resurrected believers and destroys the world’s armies at Armageddon (1 Thess. 4:14-17; 2 Thess. 2:1-4; Rev. 16:12-16).

After victory, Jesus, resurrected believers, and non-believers who are left, will enter a peaceful 1000 year reign where Jesus will rule the nations, as Satan is bound and death is possibly suspended (Is. 65:20-25; Rev. 2:26, 27; 20:1-6). However, at the end of the Millennium, Satan is released and deceives unbelievers to battle Jesus, but yet again He destroys the nation’s armies (Rev. 20:7-10). Afterward, Jesus resurrects and judges everyone who has ever lived, sending them, and Satan, to their eternal destinies—heaven or hell (Great White Throne/sheep-goat judgment; Matt. 25:31-46; Rom. 14:10-12; 1 Cor. 3:11-15; 2 Tim. 4:1; Rev. 20:11-15). God then dissolves this decaying universe, recreates it and dwells with believers forever on the new earth called ‘heaven’ (2 Pet. 3:10; Rev. 21:1-5).