

Don't Preach Religion to Me!

Have you ever wondered about some of the following questions?

If there is only one God, how come there are so many religions?

Everyone has his or her own philosophy. Does it really matter what I believe? Who are we supposed to believe anyway?

If there really is a God and He did care about us, why wouldn't we see Him down here on earth?

I could understand "bad" people going to hell, but what kind of a god would condemn the rest of us to such punishment?

How do we know who wrote the Bible? Can we actually believe such an ancient book?

I learned about the origin of the universe in school but what is the origin of knowledge and wisdom?

Is there really such a guy as the devil or is this just a story to make us turn to religion?

If there is a God, what does he require of me?



I have been very disappointed by some “religious” people; is it possible to be a Christian without being religious?

Many have asked these same questions at some point in their lives so take time to read this e-booklet and let us show you what we have learned from a lifetime of researching and real-life testing of religions and spirituality.

When I was a young man, my father taught me to avoid religion at all cost. I grew up with the mindset that religion was a crutch, a philosophy for those with weak minds and weak wills. I did, in fact, enjoy a successful life without religion, proof for me that my father was obviously right.

I don't need religion! Why would I ever need a saviour? I am a pretty good person, I don't lie, steal or cheat and I've certainly never killed anyone!



Life moved blissfully on until one day the Navy transferred me to a land base for training. The move also brought a new acquaintance, someone who promptly and effectively challenged the security of my personal belief system. Suddenly and surprisingly, my father's anti-religious arguments seemed to lack the necessary foundation. Please notice, that I was not looking for help, nor had I become disenchanted with the beliefs I was following. My life was good, I was happy and successful, so what had happened to change the way I looked at my beliefs?

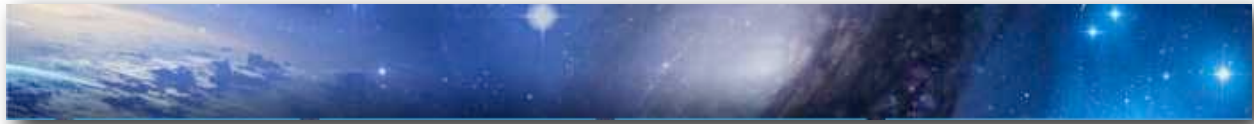
It was simply this; I was clearly presented with challenges that my personal philosophy could not adequately address. The questions of life after death, the origin of knowledge and wisdom, and more importantly, my own moral accountability,

were subjects that I could do little to defend with any authority. Oh, of course, I had many quick and shallow responses to argue with, as I had been taught. The basic problem with my arguments, however, was the credibility of the root knowledge on which my beliefs were founded. As surely as light dispels darkness, the flaws in my understanding of God and spirituality were dissolved and slowly replaced with logical and practical knowledge. This knowledge finds its foundation in the very wisdom that created the universe and is recorded in the oldest, most credible book on the planet. Some forty different men scribed this ancient, yet modern book during a period of over four thousand years. Despite the fact that most of these writers had never met each other, the Scriptures all agree from beginning to end, simply because these writings were all inspired by the same spiritual author, God. A great many non-Christian historical writings and archaeological finds are further confirmation of the validity of these Bible Scriptures.

Now here I was, a professional man who considered myself a scientific and logical thinker, considering that there might actually be a God after all, an inconceivable notion at the time! You can be very certain that, had my new friend been presenting me with some nebulous philosophy or a “superficial” religious belief system, I would not have given him a second thought. But, since he made his presentation based on the authority and knowledge of the Creator’s original Scriptures (those God inspired writings), I listened. I had a lot to learn, a great deal of inaccurate understanding to replace, and a new world view to embrace.

What happened to my old belief system? “It is written, that there is a way that seems right to a man, but in the end it leads to death.” I discovered that I had based my beliefs upon someone else’s theories that seemed right at the time, but in fact turned out to be false.

There are many theories regarding the origin of the universe, many theories regarding life after death, and several ways of justifying man’s morality. Having studied the religions of the earth in my



younger days, I found that humans are so varied and disconnected in their religious beliefs that they give atheists like my father good reason to scoff at religion.

So, I first asked, “How can I be condemned as a moral sinner when, as humans, none of us seem to be perfect?” and secondly, “Why? Why is it that there are so many different religions?”

According to the Bible itself, we are born with sin. Now think about it, would a just or fair God really condemn us for being born this way? That would be similar to being condemned for our skin colour or race!

The answer to these two critical questions, I discovered, lie together in recorded history. It is only when we muster our courage to take the challenge that God presents us that we are able to clearly see what He is really offering to the people of the earth. What is that challenge? It is to seriously read the pages of the Bible for yourself, to see what it actually says. “Taste and see that the Lord is good,” because “All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction and for instruction in righteousness.”

As we read the book of Genesis in the front of the Bible, we find God enjoying a walk in the garden with His newly created people, Adam and Eve. Notice that God walked freely with His people on the earth in those days, enjoying their company and the beauty of creation. You and I may never know how precious those days were for God’s first people as they walked with Him, because...

They were originally created with a pure mind and moral soul like their Creator. Today, we are still made in the image and likeness of God, but our Creator no longer walks in person on the earth with us. What went wrong?

At this point, we must also understand that God is not human. He is a powerful being that did not originate from this planet. His very nature, soul fibre and intelligence are so highly developed that He is in fact, absolutely pure.

As we read further in Genesis we discover that God had an enemy that imposed imperfection and impurity upon His beloved creation. He did this by successfully enticing Adam and Eve to disobey their Creator. It seems that Satan wanted to gain control of God's creation for himself and separate them from Him. Satan knew that once the purity of God's creation was spoiled, the Creator would no longer walk with his people on the earth in person.



Today, far in the future, we use the word "sin" to describe that separation as the disparity between our present human nature and that of our Designer.

Originally, the word "sinner" was used to describe a person who had missed the mark, such as an archer who had missed with his arrow.

So what is it that we modern humans have missed? Clearly, we have lost the purity, or that moral part of us that God designed to be like Himself. In other words, God's highest goal for us is that we could still have His pure character within us; He calls this purity "Holiness or Christ likeness."

Sin, on the other hand, is exactly the same as the impurity of a disease, a kind of cancer that spreads from human to human. God tells us that the penalty (or the result) of sin is spiritual death and eternal separation from Him. He also tells us that “None of us are pure (righteous), not even one. All have sinned and fall short of the glory (perfection) of God.”

What is God saying here? Simply this, that no one in His world (the heavenly world) is impure. Nobody has this disease of sin and they don't want it up there!

I used to think I was a good enough person that God would never condemn me. I had not realized that the resident sin I was born with was enough to prevent a personal relationship with God here on earth and in eternity.

Consider for a moment, a child who is born to a mother with AIDS. The child has no power over the fact that he is born with a disease that will cause his death. This child, like us, is born under the judgement of death, a result of the disease passed down from his mother. Sin is the same, in that it is passed down from Adam and Eve, our original parents, to all humankind so that we are also born under a judgement (curse) of death. God's own law teaches that we cannot be free of sin without the cleansing of a blood atonement, (a compensation or kind of purchase).

Yes, we are all born into sin BUT we are also free to seek God and His righteousness (rather than more sin). The simple fact is, that we don't look for God!

The point at which we assume responsibility for our sin and become accountable for it, happens the moment we are capable of making an intellectual choice of whether to entertain that sin or not.

Sadly, “Men loved the darkness of sin rather than the light of doing right.” We have all rebelled against our Creator in this way, which

again keeps us from our loving God, our blessing, and our inheritance in Him.

Now, because of the sin we are born with along with the sin we consciously choose to do, people are barred from heaven and separated from God. In reality, we are quite simply being quarantined here upon the earth until a time when the world is finally destroyed by fire! This is not God's fault and it is not our choice.

What do we do? Can we then earn our salvation?
Or have we no hope at all? Read on, God has a plan.

The word of God (The Bible) states, "There is no remission (payment) for sin without the shedding of blood" and that "it is appointed for man, once to die, and then the judgement!" Now you may understand why people throughout history have practised blood sacrifice for the things they did wrong. The basis for this thinking is actually found in the very laws of God.

Sacrifice, however, was never actually something that God wanted, but He does yearn for the purity and cleanliness of His beloved creation so that He may once again walk with us. Now, however, bound by His own laws, God must provide a blood sacrifice that will free His people from this disease of sin. God sadly states, "There are none who are righteous (pure), no, not even one. All have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." Our Father in heaven tells us that it is only "By grace (His unmerited favour) that we can be saved, through faith, which is not even from ourselves; it is the gift of God, not of our own doing, so we cannot boast."

Thankfully, our loving Father provided a way for our penalty to be paid, as He reminds us that, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him will not perish but have everlasting life." He also says that, "While you and I were yet sinners, Christ died for us." "Christ died for

our sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you and me to God.”

So what is the bottom line here?

We are unable to work for our salvation and we cannot pay for it, because God has already paid our penalty for us, so that we don't have to remain on the earth when it burns!

You might say, “Is there nothing we have to *do* to be saved? That doesn't seem right, either!

YES, there is something we have to do,
God is calling you, surrender to that call!

“There is no other Name given under heaven by which we must be saved.”

God speaks of our complete submission and desire to follow Him when He says, “Behold, I stand at the door of your heart and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with him and he with Me.”

“Therefore, submit to God. Resist the devil and he will flee from you.” (Remember, it is the devil that initiated and continues to encourage sin.)

“Draw near to God and He will draw near to you.” He says, “Come unto Me all you who labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take My yoke upon you (join with Me) and learn from Me, for I am gentle and lowly in heart, and you will find rest for your souls, for My yoke is easy and My burden is light.”

“If you will confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will then be saved.

“For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth, confession is made unto salvation.”

“And as many as believed in Him (Jesus), to them He gave the right to become the children of God, to those who believe on His name.”

God has impressed upon us in the Scriptures, “Those who have the Son of God have life; those who do not have the Son of God do not have life.” “These things I have written to you who believe in the name of the Son of God, that you may know that you have eternal life.”

You say, “This spiritual stuff is kind of confusing. I’m not sure what happens to my own sin.”

The Scriptures tell us that when we believe in Christ Jesus and invite Him into our lives, the original curse of sin and spiritual death is now broken! The Scriptures say, “The law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus has now made us free from the law of sin and death.” By taking our sins upon Himself when He was crucified on the cross, Christ has made our cleansing possible by removing the curse that separated us from Him. Do you remember God saying, “While you and I were yet sinners, Christ died for us?” “Christ died for our sins, once for all, the righteous for the unrighteous, to bring you and me to God.” Then, because Jesus was resurrected (raised to life) and now sits at the right hand of the Father in heaven, His children can also be assured of life after death.

The Scripture says, “Whoever believes on Him will not be put to shame.”

“Okay,” you might say, “but I have not been very impressed with the attitude of some “religious” people. Do I really have to be religious to be a Christian?”

Surprisingly, as you read through the first four chapters of the New Testament in the Bible, Jesus, when He walked on the earth, did not speak highly of religious people either! The fact is, Jesus had a great deal to say about people who were hypocrites, or “pretenders” just “practising” religion without His spirit resident within them.

The Lord does, and always has, wanted a loving relationship with His people that must be nurtured aside from the practice of religion. God said, “If you want to do something religiously, look after orphans and widows in their need!”

By saying that, I believe He is telling us that “the true meaning of religion” is actually the work we do as a *result* of the association we have with Him.

God has made many exciting promises to those who have surrendered their lives to Him, wonderful and encouraging guarantees for “His beloved children.” I hope you will enjoy the following statements from Scripture, just a few of the promises the Lord has given us.

“If God is for us, who can be against us!”

“He who did not even spare His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how will He not also, with Him, freely give us all things!”

“Whoever calls on Me, I will answer him, and honour him, and with a long life I will satisfy him and show him My salvation.”

“God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of sound mind.”

“Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed for I am your God. I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with My righteous right hand.”

“God will supply all your need according to His riches in glory (Heaven) by Christ Jesus.”

“Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication (request), with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God, and the peace of God which surpasses all understanding will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

“All things work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose.”

“I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me.”

“He is able to do exceedingly, abundantly, above all we could hope or ask or think.”



“all right, that sounds very convincing” you say, “but you forgot to answer your second question.” “If there is only one God, why, then, are there so many different religions?”

The answer to that lies in the fact that the devil, God’s old archenemy, is still quarantined here on the earth and struggling for control of God’s people. Knowing that every soul he steals from God helps prolong his life, Satan selfishly blinds and traps as many unsuspecting people as he can into whatever endeavour he can find to distract them from a relationship with their loving Creator.

Quite honestly, if every person on the earth today would receive the teaching and belief in Christ, the game would be up for Satan and tomorrow he would face the fire!

Genetically, God has put within the consciousness of every human, a desire to know about spiritual things and to search for Him. Capitalizing on this knowledge, Satan has created all kinds of religions and cults for us to follow, to lead us away from the truth. Some are far fetched, some are very close to the truth, but each is a lie and a deviation from the original intention of God the Creator.

“Oh,” you say, “but look at all the different kinds of Christian churches there are; is this from the devil as well?”

Yes, and no! In some cases, churches are divided because of interference from unclean spirits. Division then occurs so that a true body of believers may retain a more pure doctrine. The most common reason is that because there are many kinds of people, you will find many kinds of worship settings. Some are conservative; others are very lively; some adhere to extremely strict teaching while others are more liberal. God knows that our understanding of Him and our desire to please Him are directly related to our own spiritual maturity and understanding. This, in turn, is directly related to the time we spend with Him in prayer and studying His Scriptures. The Lord actually refers to the reading of the Scriptures as “food” for our spirit. He tells us that, “We are not to live by bread alone but by every word that proceeds out of the mouth of God.”

In closing, we wish to encourage you with the following Scripture...

“For I know the thoughts I think toward you,” says the Lord, “thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you hope and a future.”

We gave our lives to Christ, Jesus, the Son of God well over thirty years ago. Like you, we were not sure what to expect from the Lord when we first invited Him in, but it didn't take long to find out that He was a pleasure to know. Getting to know God is an experience that we are sure you will enjoy. He is gentle, kind, understanding, very forgiving and always faithful. As a Father, He has treated us better than any earthly parent could, and as friend, He has never been a disappointment. As our Saviour, He has readily forgiven us and washed us clean of all our sins. As the Holy Spirit, He gives us free access to His power and promises to enrich our new lives. It took us a few years to learn just how much He really loves us and what He actually wants for us, but it has been a journey that we would recommend to you if you are serious about a joyful and abundant life.

The only aspect of being a Christian we would caution you to avoid is that of being a “pretender.” If you are not very serious about inviting Jesus into your heart and life, don't “play Christian.” A real Christian, with real power, is a person who is a willing host for the Spirit of God, having surrendered your whole life to Him.

Now, if you have become aware that you are in need of God's saving grace and have believed that Jesus paid for your sin, pray and ask Him for forgiveness and invite Him to be your own personal Lord and Saviour (He wants to be personal). Once you have made that commitment, you are then a Christian. Congratulations, you are one of the sons or daughters of God, part of the family of God and of the glorious inheritance that we are promised from our Heavenly Father!

Read your Bible every day, find a good Bible teaching church and join your church family for worship on Sunday. Study to please the Lord; He paid a great and terrible price for you. It is the least we all can do for Him.

May the Lord bless you in your journey as you walk with the King of kings.

Douglas W. Greenfield.
Editor: Maggie Greenfield
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It is written, “He is no fool, who seeks for the living God!”

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