

Clouds of Doubt

Why is it so hard for some people to believe in God and His Son, Jesus Christ?

Is it Not Logical to you? What God does and how He does it, does not fit into our feeble abilities of reason. Isaiah 55: 8-9 says 8. For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the Lord. 9. As the heavens are higher than the Earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts. So, we couldn't possibly understand how God thinks nor completely understand His reasons for doing what He does.

Do you need Scientific proof? I remember being in school and being taught this Theory of the Big Bang which was followed up with the Theory of evolution. Remember what a theory is, it's a hypothetical guess that has not been scientifically proven. But these theories are taught as facts with absolute certainty. So let's look at this big bang theory for a few minutes. It all started with an explosion, okay what exploded and where did it come from? There's no answer to that. What happens in an explosion? Pieces of whatever exploded go flying away from each other at hypersonic speeds. They don't somehow mysteriously swirl around and come back together to form a ball of mass like the earth. If they did, what caused the magnetic force to draw it all back together? There's no answer to that. How about this evolution theory? It indicates that over a very long period of time after the Big Bang that a single cell organism somehow formed, then kept growing and mutating which eventually turned into every sort of plant, animal and human that exists today. How could that happen? Well, there's no answer to that. If you look at the complexity of a single cell, there are 16 parts to each cell. From the membrane that holds it all together and all of the different proteins and various other parts that make it a functioning cell. If only one of those 16 parts are removed, the whole cell dies immediately. These parts are so dependent on each other to survive that if one is not present, it can't exist as a living organism. Even with the incredible technology that we have today, we cannot create a single cell. We can watch them duplicate themselves but we can't create one. They have tried taking the different parts of various cells to create another but once the pieces are separated, those pieces die and don't function when assembled together again. A cell will duplicate everything within the cell membrane and then divide into two cells and have the perfect parts in each cell. No necessary components are left in one side, that the other side needs to sustain life. How did it know to do that or how to do that, it doesn't have a brain. Each cell has a nucleus which contains DNA. This DNA is a specific code for a specific function and it doesn't change. With the theory of evolution this should continue to change but it doesn't. It is estimated that several hundred thousand new cells are formed in the human body each day just to sustain our life. If these cells can duplicate themselves at this rate, why aren't we continuing to evolve into new things. We read in Genesis that God created everything and designed it to reproduce after its own kind. We hear people say, "follow the science!" I believe in science, but there's no scientific facts that could ever prove these theories, that's why they remain theories.

I choose to believe in a divine creator, one who created and organized this whole miraculous universe. The more that scientist learn and investigate our marvelous planet and universe, the more they prove the complexity of creation and that the chances of all this happening by accident or chance is virtually impossible. Now we could do a whole series on apologetics to debate the validity of creation over evolution to overcome the doubt that there's a God who created everything but I want to focus on some other aspects of why people doubt.

Do people doubt because this whole salvation and eternal life thing sounds too good to be true? It is pretty incredible and we'll get into that in a little while. What else causes doubt? How about... A persons' Pride, their Selfishness, a need to be in control over their destiny? What causes a persons' thoughts and feelings to hold onto these things which provides fuel to doubt in believing in God? I'll give one other thing that is a source that causes people to doubt and then I'll talk about the root of the problem. Maybe, you've seen the behavior of other people who called themselves Christians and their behavior was no different than anybody else's that you know (not like Christ) and it all seems like a bunch of hypocrisy?

I've seen and heard of various groups of Christians going out to protest against things like abortion or homosexual gatherings. During these protests the Christians are yelling things like "you live a horrible sinful life and you're going to hell for it." OR, "You're a bunch of murderers killing un-born children, and you're going to hell." I understand the point they're trying to convey but the method of delivery is not of God. I can't see God's love being demonstrated this way. Think about it, if you're sitting next to and having a conversation with a person who wants to identify as a transgender person, if you tell them hateful things in angry tones of voice, judging and condemning them; what kind of response do you think you'll receive from them in return? More anger and hate, which escalates in intensity. In the same situation, if you have a gentle conversation with the person by asking about their story and how they came to this decision in their life, you'll see opportunities to speak the love of Jesus into their life. You may not change their ideas that day but it will be something they remember and reflect on. That's called planting seeds in someone's life and has a much greater chance in drawing them to Christ. The angry way is guaranteed to harden their hearts to remain in a position to reject believing in Jesus. Does that make sense?

Let me reveal to you who our enemy is. Mmmm, Satan? I'm going to use the Bible as a source of information but chances are, that if you don't believe in God; you don't believe the bible to be a credible source of information. I urge you to listen anyway. In 1 Peter 5:8 - Be sober-minded; be watchful. Your adversary the devil prowls around like a roaring lion, seeking someone to devour. The word devour here, is the same word used to describe what happened to the Egyptian Army that pursued the Israelites through the Red Sea. They were drowned and swallowed up and that's exactly what Satan wants to do to every believer and non-believer. He wants to destroy you and I. He'll use any means necessary to do it as well. The scripture also says this of Satan, John 8:44, In this passage, Jesus is talking directly to a group of Pharisees while they argued with Him. 44 You are of your father the devil, and your will is to do your father's desires. He was a murderer from the beginning, and does not stand in the truth, because there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks out of his own character, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Satan produces so many lies and then prompts those he uses to repeat them. These lies are seen throughout our societies and cultures. As I've talked about, the theory of the big bang and evolution are some of those. What are some other lies he's put into the world? Things like, (There are many ways to get to heaven. All religions are the same, they just call God by a different name. There is no God. You are free to believe anything you want and that is what's right for you.) There are all kinds of phrases or sentiments in the world that cast a shadow of doubt in believing in God. All of them have been started by Satan. Another name Satan is called is "The Great Deceiver" He'll use deception to cause doubt in the hearts and minds of people. His goal is to take as many people down with him as possible. He uses people that have chosen to hate God to spread lies and cause fear in others. Lets read Jude, verses 17 through 23. 17 But you must remember, beloved, the predictions of the apostles of our Lord Jesus

Christ. 18 They said to you, “In the last time there will be scoffers, following their own ungodly passions.” 19 It is these who cause divisions, worldly people, devoid of the Spirit. 20 But you, beloved, building yourselves up in your most holy faith and praying in the Holy Spirit, 21 keep yourselves in the love of God, waiting for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ that leads to eternal life. 22 And have mercy on those who doubt; 23 save others by snatching them out of the fire; to others show mercy with fear, hating even the garment stained by the flesh. When the scripture says to show mercy with fear, it’s not telling us to tremble with fear while we are being nice to someone. It’s telling us to be cautious when we are helping a person who is living in sin; that we don’t end up being drawn to that sin or trapped in a bad situation. When the scripture says “hating even the garments stained by the flesh” it’s telling us to hate the sin and the results of it. In a broader phrase, hate the sin, not the sinner.

These Scoffers in verse 18 are people who do and say things to direct you away from the truth. These people will attack your beliefs with hate, to scare you or intimidate you into not seeking whether to believe in God or not. They’ll try and convince you that there are flaws and inconsistencies in the Bible. They point to the four Gospels and say that each one is different and don’t share the same details. In reality, when you understand the documentation of eye-witness accounts of the same event, by each one including different details some the same others different; it only adds credibility. Four people can watch an accident or crime happen, each will tell the same basic story but each will remember different details of the event. It doesn’t make their testimony invalid but when put together, it creates a more complete account of the events. The next time you watch a movie for the first time with a friend, pick a particular scene and tell each other what happened and what you noticed in the scene. You’ll see that you both tell the same basic thing but you’ll also realize that you each saw some of the details that the other did not. Or the way you explain what you saw will be said in different words and even order. So the differences in the four Gospels help to create a better understanding of the events of Jesus’ walk here on Earth as a human. Read them all for yourself, you’ll see the heart and compassion of Christ.

Now I want to talk about doubt in the believer. Does that really happen? Yes it does and usually in a professing believer who has not been a believer for very long. While this may seem inconceivable to some, it can be a natural part of a person’s walk with Christ as they grow and mature in their faith. A new Christian doesn’t have all the answers, they haven’t had a lot of time in the Word, reading the Bible. That’s when Satan our enemy, the liar, the deceiver starts throwing the scoffers at us. The good thing about this, is that it inspires a person who’s chosen to believe in Christ to investigate more and to seek the truth. Being disciplined, studying the Word and spending time with God cements the truth and faith in our hearts and minds. Doubt often creeps into our minds when we are not focusing on our relationship with Jesus. Pastor Joe talked a lot last week about our relationship with Christ and spending time in prayer to Him and spending time listening to what He reveals to us. As we read Gods word, there’s passages of assurance, encouragement all throughout it. There’s scriptures on Gods grace and mercy that illustrates His love and promises to us.

1 Peter 1: 3-9 is a wonderful Doxology of praise to the Father but illustrates His grace and assurance to those that believe in Him.

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! According to his great mercy, he has caused us to be born again to a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, 4 to an inheritance that is imperishable, undefiled, and unfading, kept in heaven for you, 5 who by God's power are being guarded through faith for a salvation ready to be revealed in the last time. 6 In this you

rejoice, though now for a little while, if necessary, you have been grieved by various trials, 7 so that the tested genuineness of your faith—more precious than gold that perishes though it is tested by fire—may be found to result in praise and glory and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ. 8 Though you have not seen him, you love him. Though you do not now see him, you believe in him and rejoice with joy that is inexpressible and filled with glory, 9 obtaining the outcome of your faith, the salvation of your souls.

If you read on in 1 Peter, there's a lot more about God's grace that He gives to us.

Acts 16: 30-31 When Paul and Silas were in prison and God shook the place with an earthquake and the doors flew open. Remember that Paul and Silas had been talking non-stop about Jesus and singing praise songs all night. So when this all happened the guard came to them. The scripture states 30 Then he brought them out and said, "Sirs, what must I do to be saved?" 31 And they said, "Believe in the Lord Jesus, and you will be saved, you and your household." Believe, that is it, that is all that is required, nothing else. Different religions will tell you that you have to do other things as well. To commit to giving things. That you have to serve in certain ways to make your faith secure. Or that you have to endure pain or complete various other ways of penance. But God's Word doesn't say any of that. All we have to do is believe that Jesus Christ is the Son of God, That HE died for us to take on the punishment for our sins, and that He rose again and is seated next to God right now. Believe that with all your heart and you get the eternal rewards that God gives freely. Now about serving God, we do that because we love Him. All of our acts of service are to accomplish one goal, that goal is to show and tell others about the love of Jesus Christ so that they will believe also. We serve Him because we love Him and no other reason.

Knowing this, the next scripture is awesome in demonstrating the security of God's promise to us.

Romans 8: 38-39, 38 For I am sure that neither death nor life, nor angels nor rulers, nor things present nor things to come, nor powers, 39 nor height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God in Christ Jesus our Lord.

That sounds pretty secure to me. But then a scoffer comes along and says, "you're not good enough or not doing enough". Or we fall back into a sin of our past and we're told if we are sinning like this you'll lose your salvation or you weren't saved at all. Then doubts arise in our minds. People will use scripture to make you believe this but those scriptures are directed to people who never truly believed. 1 John 3: 4-6, 4 Everyone who sins breaks the law; in fact, sin is lawlessness. 5 But you know that he appeared so that he might take away our sins. And in him is no sin. 6 No one who lives in him keeps on sinning. No one who continues to sin has either seen him or known him. The person described in verse 6 never stopped their life of sin, they never changed how they acted and had no remorse for their sins. They may have said they believed but really did not mean it. You may ask how can I know, "I'm not that guy?" This can be confusing and complicated but know this, When you believe, the Holy Spirit comes to live in you. When a believer sins, the Holy Spirit convicts you over the sin. You feel bad you know it was wrong and you have a desire to repent and change the behavior. The person who did not truly believe, does not have the Holy Spirit and has no remorse for sinning.

Look at 1 Corinthians 3: 10-15, Paul says, 10 By the grace God has given me, I laid a foundation as a wise builder, and someone else is building on it. But each one should build with care. 11 For no one can lay any foundation other than the one already laid, which is Jesus Christ. 12 If anyone builds on this foundation using gold, silver, costly stones, wood, hay or straw, 13 their work will be shown for what it is, because the Day will bring it to light. It will be revealed with fire, and the fire will test the quality of each person's work. 14 If what has been built survives, the builder will receive a reward. 15 If it is

burned up, the builder will suffer loss but yet will be saved—even though only as one escaping through the flames. These things are the way we live our lives. From works of service and our motives for doing them to the sins we commit as Christians. Regarding works, and our motive, was it to bring honor to ourselves or Christ? At the believer's judgment, it will all be revealed. The sins we held onto will be revealed. We don't lose our salvation, we lose our rewards. We are still saved and we still escape the flames of hell but we remained saved. That does not mean we get to just live in sin with a fire insurance policy. There are earthly consequences to sin in a believers life.

So don't doubt your salvation if you are a believer in what Christ did for you. Believing that HE is the Son of God. 1 John 5: 10-13, 10 Whoever believes in the Son of God accepts this testimony. Whoever does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because they have not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. 11 And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 12 Whoever has the Son has life; whoever does not have the Son of God does not have life.13 I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life.

As a believer, and as you grow in your faith; which comes only by spending time reading His Word, spending time in prayer and fellowshiping with other believers, you will have questions that you will want to get answered. Periods of doubt as you grow should prompt you to dig deeper into His Word. Don't be distracted or lead astray by the scoffers who spread Satan's lies. Seek the Lord and He will show you the truth in all these things. If you haven't decided to believe in God and what He's done for you through His Son, Jesus. I welcome you to come and ask any questions you may have. If I don't have the answer, then we'll find it together. If God's calling you to Him, don't keep resisting Him, the hope and assurance He freely gives us is a great place to be in.