

# “Why Was God Sorry He Made Man?”

*“Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He created man on the earth and He was grieved in His heart.”*(Gen. 6:5&6 NKJV)

When I read this passage three things stood out to me and seemed contradictory to everything that I have been told about God and have read in other parts of the Bible.

1) God is perfect and infallible. Why then was He “sorry that He created man”? In my mind “sorry” indicates some admission of error.

2) God is pure good. The Word says that all things were created through Him (*logos* the Word) and there is nothing that exists on the earth which He did not create (my summation of John 1). Therefore evil exists, but who created evil: Satan or Lucifer? In my understanding he is the author of rebellion and all kinds of “evil.” OK, so who created Lucifer who is later called “adversary”? Well, God did. The universe and in fact all reality was conceived by God and given life by the Word (please correct if I am wrong, I truly want to believe). So evil had to have been conceived first by God in order for Lucifer to have the ability to rebel. Follow? Nothing exists that God did not create.

3) God is omniscient. If God created time and knows all then why did he create man when He knew man would turn their hearts to evil? Taking that thinking further, why did he make Lucifer knowing he would rebel? Therefore, why did God create rebellion?

The term “sorry” doesn’t necessarily carry the connotation of

admitting to an error. For instance, I can be “sorry” that a good friend has been stricken with a terminal illness. But this doesn’t mean I’m taking responsibility for the illness, or that I’ve committed an error of some kind. Similarly, God was “sorry” and “grieved” by man’s wickedness (to continue our analogy, the “illness” of sin). But God was not directly responsible for this wickedness rather, man was responsible. God created man in His image and endowed him with genuine libertarian freedom. Thus, man not only had the freedom to do good, he also had the freedom to do evil. Unfortunately, man exercised his will to do what was evil in God’s sight. Hence, God was “sorry” that he made man. But the evil was not done by God, but by man whom God had created with genuine freedom (part of “the image of God”).

It’s true that no “thing” exists which God did not create. But most philosophers and theologians do not consider evil to be a “thing” (i.e. something which exists in its own right). Rather, moral evil is a corruption, perversion, or defect in some good thing created by God. Everything created by God was good. Moral evil entered the picture when the angel now known as Satan freely chose to exercise his will in defiance of God. This angel was created good, not evil. But he chose to do evil, and he did this freely. God did not force him to sin, or tempt him, or anything of the sort. Satan freely chose to rebel against God and was thus corrupted by sin. I personally think the fall of Satan is described in Ezekiel 28:11-19 (for reasons that I don’t have time to get into here).

I think it’s a mistake to say that God created rebellion. God did not create rebellion. Rather, God made rational moral agents (like humans and angels) and endowed them with genuine moral freedom (which necessitates the genuine freedom to do good and/or evil). God’s creatures some of them, at any rate chose evil. God did not. Of course, God knew the creatures would choose evil. So why did He create them? Apparently, He considered it worthwhile to create such free creatures even

knowing ahead of time that they would sin. He provided a means, at His own expense, for man to be redeemed and saved from his sins. Satan and the demons will simply be destroyed.

At any rate, it's important to assign blame to whom it is due. God created free creatures and thus the possibility of moral evil. But it was the creatures themselves, not God, who actualized this possibility by freely choosing moral evil. God did not tempt them to sin, nor did He force them to sin. They freely chose to sin.

Hope this helps. By the way, an excellent website which you may want to visit is [bible.org](http://bible.org). They have thousands of helpful resources for studying the Bible.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“How Do You Answer the Claim That Jesus Was 100% Man Emptying Himself of God?”**

I recently heard a pastor speak about some things that really bothered me. First, he said that Jesus was 100 percent man that emptied himself of God. He said that the miracle of God becoming man would not be taken away if you do not believe this. His term was, “Jesus was 100% man that was God.” He also threw in the comment that Jesus and the Father are one, not as in the Trinity but that Jesus was God and for instance in the garden when He was praying, He was praying to Himself. He also

believed that in the temple when Jesus was young, when it says he grew in wisdom and stature that means he was learning, hence that he did not know everything.

Secondly—he does not believe that the serpent in the garden was Satan. He actually seemed that he didn't believe that there is a Satan. He used the meaning of Satan as tempter and not an actual creature. This has really been bothering me and I would like your answers and some advice in where to study this myself.

Thanks for your letter. It sounds like you have some good reasons to be concerned about the pastor. The orthodox doctrine of Christ holds that Jesus was fully God and fully man. He was not a man who "emptied Himself" of God, for in that case He would no longer be divine. What Philippians 2:5-11 rather tells us, I think, is that He "emptied Himself" by becoming human and temporarily (and voluntarily) giving up the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Jesus was fully God, but He voluntarily submitted, for a limited time, to a limitation in the independent exercise of His divine attributes (e.g. omniscience, omnipresence, etc.). Jesus could still exercise these attributes, but only insofar as it was consistent with the Father's will during His earthly sojourn. This, I think, is a better explanation of Philippians 2:5-11.

A good analogy is to imagine the world's fastest sprinter running in a three-legged race. He would voluntarily restrict and limit himself for a time, but even while running much more slowly than he was capable of, he never stops being the world's fastest sprinter. Jesus never stopped being divine even while He voluntarily limited Himself concerning His omniscience, His omnipresence, His omnipotence, etc.

In the garden of Gethsemane, Jesus prayed to the Father. Christian orthodoxy believes in the Trinity. God is one in essence, but subsists as three distinct Persons. The Father is not the Son and neither are the Holy Spirit. Rather, each is a

distinct Person, but all share mysteriously in the One divine essence. This pastor sounds like he rejects Trinitarianism, or holds to some form of what is known as "[modalism](#)." Some people have described modalism as "the swapping hats" theory: God swaps out the Father hat for the Son hat or the Holy Spirit hat, depending on who He wants to "be" at any given moment. According to orthodox Christianity, rejecting the Trinity or embracing modalism are heretical viewpoints.

Your pastor is correct, however, to say that Jesus grew in knowledge. But He did so as a human being. As God, He is all-knowing. However, as I said above, in the incarnation Jesus voluntarily surrendered the independent exercise of His divine attributes. Jesus Himself confessed that there were some things that He did not know during His time on earth; see Mark 13:32; etc.

Finally, while it is certainly true that Genesis 3 does not identify the serpent with Satan, this identification does seem to be made explicitly in Revelation 12:9. Also, a careful study of what the Bible teaches about Satan reveals that personal attributes are consistently applied to him. The Bible views Satan as a personal being, not as a metaphor for temptation, etc.

Hope this helps a bit. If you would like more information about biblical and theological issues, please visit The Biblical Studies Foundation website at [Netbible.org](http://Netbible.org). They have lots of great information about the Bible.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

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# “Where Should We Give Our Tithe?”

Is there any specific biblical instruction that we give our tithe to where we regularly hear God’s word or the church we belong to? What if I feel like giving my tithe to churches that are in need even though I’m attending there?

Galatians 6:6 and 1 Timothy 5:17-18 seem to suggest that we should certainly help support those who teach and preach the word of God to us. Usually, this will be our local church. However, in 2 Corinthians 8-9, Paul urges the Corinthians to share with the church in Jerusalem, which was currently in great need. The Bible also urges us to help support traveling missionaries, evangelists, pastors and teachers. Generally, I think that believers should give FIRST to those who are helping them grow in the faith and teaching them the Word of God, etc. Afterward, they should also give to other Christian organizations that they believe in and respect. However, there may also be occasions when the Lord moves His people to help other believers in other parts of the world.

The key issue, in my opinion, is first the readiness to give in obedience to God’s word. And second, a sensitive spirit that is open to the Lord’s leading in one’s giving. Of course, as good stewards of God’s resources we should also check out (as best we can) the churches or organizations receiving our money. Are they faithfully preaching and teaching God’s word? Are they genuinely concerned to advance the cause of Christ in the world? Are they good stewards of the gifts they receive? Are they genuinely in need?

It’s helpful to remember that the Old Testament pattern of giving was one of both tithes AND offerings. Offerings were

gifts above and beyond the tithe (one-tenth of one's income). The circumstances of your question would suggest that if the Lord is calling you to give to struggling churches, making an offering on top of your regular giving to your local church would be an excellent solution.

There are other issues to consider, but these are some to keep in mind.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn  
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**See Also:**

- [Probe Answers Our E-Mail: "What Does the Bible Say About Tithing?"](#)
- [Probe Answers Our E-Mail: "What's the NT Understanding of Tithing?"](#)

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## **“Does Jesus’ Vine/Branches discourse in John 15 Mean You Can Lose Your Salvation?”**

**Does John 15:1-7 have anything to do with losing your salvation? I would like your input. Personally I believe it does not.**

Thanks for your letter. John 15:1-7 definitely presents the interpreter with some difficulties. Nevertheless, I personally tend to agree with you and do not think that this passage teaches that a genuine believer (and this, of course, is

important) can lose his/her salvation. Since my own studies are informed by the expertise of others, and since I share the viewpoint presented in the NET BIBLE, I have pasted their comments on this passage below:

The Greek verb *airo* (airo) can mean lift up as well as take away, and it is sometimes argued that here it is a reference to the gardener lifting up (i.e., propping up) a weak branch so that it bears fruit again. In Johannine usage the word occurs in the sense of lift up in 8:59 and 5:8-12, but in the sense of remove it is found in 11:39, 11:48, 16:22, and 17:15. In context (theological presuppositions aside for the moment) the meaning remove does seem more natural and less forced (particularly in light of v. 6, where worthless branches are described as being thrown out an image that seems incompatible with restoration). One option, therefore, would be to understand the branches which are taken away (v. 2) and thrown out (v. 6) as believers who forfeit their salvation because of unfruitfulness. However, many see this interpretation as encountering problems with the Johannine teaching on the security of the believer, especially John 10:28-29. This leaves two basic ways of understanding Jesus statements about removal of branches in 15:2 and 15:6:

(1) These statements may refer to an unfaithful (disobedient) Christian, who is judged at the judgment seat of Christ through fire (cf. 1 Cor 3:11-15). In this case the removal of 15:2 may refer (in an extreme case) to the physical death of a disobedient Christian.

(2) These statements may refer to someone who was never a genuine believer in the first place (e.g., Judas and the Jews who withdrew after Jesus difficult teaching in 6:66), in which case 15:6 refers to eternal judgment. In either instance it is clear that 15:6 refers to the fires of judgment (cf. OT imagery in Ps. 80:16 and Ezek 15:1-8). But view (1) requires us to understand this in terms of the judgment of believers at the judgment seat of Christ. This



concept does not appear in the Fourth Gospel because from the perspective of the author the believer does not come under judgment; note especially 3:18, 5:24, 5:29. The first reference is especially important because it occurs in the context of 3:16-21, the section which is key to the framework of the entire Fourth Gospel and which is repeatedly alluded to throughout. A similar image to this one is used by John the Baptist in Matt 3:10, And the ax is already laid at the root of the trees; every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. Since this is addressed to the Pharisees and Sadducees who were coming to John for baptism, it almost certainly represents a call to initial repentance. More importantly, however, the imagery of being cast into the fire constitutes a reference to eternal judgment, a use of imagery which is much nearer to the Johannine imagery in 15:6 than the Pauline concept of the judgment seat of Christ (a judgment for believers) mentioned above. The use of the Greek verb *meno* (meno) in 15:6 also supports view (2). When used of the relationship between Jesus and the disciple and/or Jesus and the Father, it emphasizes the permanence of the relationship (John 6:56, 8:31, 8:35, 14:10). The prototypical branch who has not remained is Judas, who departed in 13:30. He did not bear fruit, and is now in the realm of darkness, a mere tool of Satan. His eternal destiny, being cast into the fire of eternal judgment, is still to come. It seems most likely, therefore, that the branches who do not bear fruit and are taken away and burned are false believers, those who profess to belong to Jesus but who in reality do not belong to him. In the Gospel of John, the primary example of this category is Judas. In 1 John 2:18-19 the antichrists fall into the same category; they too may be thought of as branches that did not bear fruit. They departed from the ranks of the Christians because they never did really belong, and their departure shows that they did not belong."

The NET Bible is a really great site. If you're interested in exploring the topic of salvation, they have a number of articles at [www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic\\_id=13](http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic_id=13). Articles specifically on the topic of "Assurance" can be found at [www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic\\_id=31](http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic_id=31).

Hope these resources prove helpful.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“The Bible is Full of Errors, So Why Do You Trust It?”**

As a Christian fundamentalist group you believe the Bible is the Inerrant word of God and this highly prized book of canonized scripture is your infallible authority and source of truth. (Please correct me if I'm wrong.) Now, with that thought in mind, read what Christian scholars are publicly saying about the sacred canon of biblical scripture, and not just a few. [Link to document called "The Apparent Inerrant Word Of God" included in letter] (Understand, as a Christian Latter-day Saint, I strongly value the Bible too.) Here, you have some serious credibility issues to overcome in making the Bible everything you want and clam it to be. Christian scholars are now reaching the same conclusion about the Bible that faithful Latter-day Saints have known all along and they are finally speaking out. The truth is, the Holy Bible has errors – lots of them! Obviously, God did not intervene and

“supernaturally” protect the sacred canon of biblical scripture, as some people erroneously believed.

Our primary focus for understanding these errors in the biblical record is the result of discovering ancient manuscripts, like the Dead Sea Scrolls, that have recently been found in our time. These ancient biblical and historical texts, lost in antiquity, have recently come forth from out of the dust and date back in time to around the Common Era, (CE). All of these early documents predate any of the canonical writings of the New Testament by hundreds of years. There are NO original autographs existing from the New Testament record. All that remains today are generational copies of earlier manuscripts that were handed down throughout the centuries.

So, as I understand the common biblical record, the early Christian Saints should never have been separated or divided from their original apostolic teachings. Nevertheless, through the centuries of time and by a multitude of religious concepts that crept into the early church, this apparent division among the early Christian believers actually happened and today's Christian religious world is deeply divided.

But, whenever the Bible is being presented as authoritative, infallible, or Inerrant, I scratch my head and think to myself – Hold On – Now wait just a minute! From everything that we know and with the myriads of scientific and archeological evidence, your particular views on biblical authority, inerrancy, and infallibility don't exactly add up with all the facts. Infallible or Inerrant? Well, that's hardly the case, because errors exist in the copied manuscript records! And, as for biblical authority? Just look around the Christian community and you will see a staunch Bible expert standing on nearly every street corner. Only, which one is right?

The common thread running through the biblical Christian community is the canonized Holy Bible and that's where the problem is. So, if the Bible is guilty of doing all that, I

would strongly suggest that the highly prized biblical canon is anything but authoritative.

Christian scholars have sufficiently demonstrated that you have reached the wrong conclusion for your erroneous “supernatural” biblical beliefs and who among you can dispute the facts? Anyone attempting to believe such nonsense is going to eventually look like an idiot and that’s not good for the image! But, the choice is freely yours to believe whatever you want; although, truth will be truth and error will be error, regardless of the disguise or package it comes in.

Thanks for your letter. Although your comments about the Bible are definitely weighted toward the moderate to liberal perspective of biblical scholarship, I would generally agree with much of what you wrote. Indeed, while I would disagree with some of the specifics in your letter, the general ideas expressed therein are well known to all of us here at Probe.

When conservative Christian theologians speak of “inerrancy,” they are speaking with reference ONLY to the original writings—not the copies. Of course there are many variants in the copies we possess, but this can give a misleading picture of biblical reliability. Part of the reason there are so many variants is simply because we have so many copies. And this wealth of manuscript evidence allows us, through the science of textual criticism, to accurately reconstruct the original documents with a high degree of accuracy. New Testament textual critics maintain that we can reconstruct the original documents to about 95-99% accuracy. The Old Testament is slightly less than this, but it can still be reconstructed with a high degree of accuracy.

It’s important to realize how variants are counted. If a particular “error” occurs in 3,000 manuscripts (e.g. a definite article written twice rather than once), this counts as 3,000 errors. Most of these variants are quite insignificant (e.g. spelling differences, a word left out, an

extra word inserted, etc.) and can be easily corrected on the basis of many other manuscripts which have the correct reading. None of these variants affects a significant doctrine of Scripture. Discoveries like the Dead Sea Scrolls actually reinforce the notion that the Masoretic scribes were very faithful copyists. The manuscript evidence for the NT is far, far superior to any other book from the ancient world (e.g. Tacitus, Livy, Pliny, Herodotus, etc.).

Archaeological evidence has repeatedly verified the reliability of the biblical accounts. And no responsible scholar would say otherwise. Although there may still be questions about some issues, archaeology has overwhelmingly served to confirm the Bible, not disconfirm it.

Thus, while I generally agree with what you've written, I certainly don't think your letter gives the whole picture concerning biblical reliability. An excellent, comprehensive resource on this issue (from a conservative Christian standpoint) is *A General Introduction to the Bible: Revised and Expanded Edition* by Norman Geisler and William Nix (Chicago: Moody Press, 1986). This text has numerous chapters and delves into great detail on such issues as the inspiration of the Bible, canonization, transmission of the text, and translation. Conservative scholars have repeatedly responded to the charges of those who would like to discredit the general reliability of the Bible. I hope you'll give such scholars a chance to offer you another perspective on this crucial issue.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

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# Why We Shouldn't Hate Philosophy: A Biblical Perspective

*Michael Gleghorn examines the role of philosophy in a Christian worldview. Does philosophy help us flesh out our biblical perspective or does it just confuse our understanding?*

## A Walk on the Slippery Rocks

For many people in our culture today, Edie Brickell and the New Bohemians got it right: "Philosophy is a walk on the slippery rocks." But for some in the Christian community, they didn't go far enough. Philosophy, they say, is far more dangerous than a walk on slippery rocks. It's an enemy of orthodoxy and a friend of heresy. It's typically a product of wild, rash, and uncontrolled human speculation. Its doctrines are empty and deceptive. Worse still, they may even come from demons!

Such attitudes are hardly new. The early church father Tertullian famously wrote:

*What has Jerusalem to do with Athens, the Church with the Academy, the Christian with the heretic? . . . I have no use for a Stoic or a Platonic . . . Christianity. After Jesus Christ we have no need of speculation, after the Gospel no need of research. [\[1\]](#)*

Should Christians, then, hate and reject all philosophy? Should we shun it, despise it, and trample it underfoot? Doesn't the Bible warn us about the dangers of philosophy and urge us to avoid it? In thinking through such questions, it's important that we be careful. Before we possibly injure

ourselves with any violent, knee-jerk reactions, we may first want to settle down a bit and ask ourselves a few questions. First, what exactly is philosophy anyway? What, if anything, does the Bible have to say about it? Might it have any value for the Christian faith? Could it possibly help strengthen or support the ministry of the church? Are there any potential benefits that Christians might gain from studying philosophy? And if so, what are they? These are just a few of the questions that we want to consider.

But let's begin with that first question: Just what *is* philosophy anyway? Defining this term can be difficult. It gets tossed around by different people in a variety of ways. But we can get a rough idea of its meaning by observing that it comes from two Greek words: *philein*, which means "to love," and *sophia*, which means "wisdom." So at one level, *philosophy* is just the love of wisdom. There's nothing wrong with that!

But let's go further. Socrates claimed that the unexamined life was not worth living. And throughout its history, philosophy has gained a reputation for the careful, rational, and critical examination of life's biggest questions. "Accordingly," write Christian philosophers J.P. Moreland and William Lane Craig, "philosophy may be defined as the attempt to think rationally and critically about life's most important questions in order to obtain knowledge and wisdom about them."<sup>2</sup> So while philosophy may *sometimes* be a walk on slippery rocks, it may also be a potentially powerful resource for thinking through some of life's most important issues.

## **Beware of Hollow and Deceptive Philosophy**

In their recent philosophy textbook, Moreland and Craig make the following statement:

*For many years we have each been involved, not just in scholarly work, but in speaking evangelistically on*

*university campuses with groups like . . . Campus Crusade for Christ . . . Again and again, we have seen the practical value of philosophical studies in reaching students for Christ. . . The fact is that there is tremendous interest among unbelieving students in hearing a rational presentation and defense of the gospel, and some will be ready to respond with trust in Christ. To speak frankly, we do not know how one could minister effectively in a public way on our university campuses without training in philosophy.* {3}

This is a strong endorsement of the value of philosophy in doing university evangelism on today's campuses. But some might be thinking, "What a minute! Doesn't the Bible warn us about the dangers of philosophy? And aren't we urged to avoid such dangers?"

In Colossians 2:8 (NIV), the apostle Paul wrote, "See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ." What does this verse mean? Is Paul saying that Christians shouldn't study philosophy? Let's take a closer look.

First, "the Greek grammar indicates that 'hollow and deceptive' go together with 'philosophy.'" {4} So Paul is not condemning *all* philosophy here. Instead, he's warning the Colossians about being taken captive by a particular "hollow and deceptive" philosophy that was making inroads into their church. Many scholars believe that the philosophy Paul had in mind was a Gnostic-like philosophy that promoted legalism, mysticism, and asceticism. {5}

Second, Paul doesn't forbid the *study* of philosophy in this verse. Rather, he warns the Colossian believers not to be *taken captive* by empty and deceptive human speculation. This distinction is important. One can *study* philosophy, even "empty and deceptive" philosophy, without being *taken captive*



by it.

What does it mean to be “taken captive”? When men are taken captive in war, they are forced to go where their captors lead them. They may only be permitted to see and hear certain things, or to eat and sleep at certain times. In short, captives are under the *control* of their captors. This is what Paul is warning the Colossians about. He’s urging them to not let their beliefs and attitudes be *controlled* by an alien, non-Christian philosophy. He’s not saying that philosophy in general is bad or that it’s wrong to study philosophy as an academic discipline.

But doesn’t Paul also say that God has made foolish the wisdom of the world? And doesn’t *this* count against the study of philosophy?

## **Is Worldly Wisdom Worthless?**

In 1 Corinthians 1:20 (NIV) the apostle Paul wrote, “Where is the wise man? Where is the scholar? Where is the philosopher of this age? Has not God made foolish the wisdom of the world?” Some Christians think this passage teaches that the study of philosophy and human wisdom is both foolish and a waste of time. But is this correct? Is that really what Paul was saying in this passage? I personally don’t think so.

We must remember that Paul himself had at least some knowledge of both pagan philosophy and literature – and he made much use of reasoning in personal evangelism. In Acts 17 we learn that while Paul was in Athens “he *reasoned* in the synagogue with the Jews and the God-fearing Greeks, as well as in the marketplace day by day with those who happened to be there” (v. 17; NIV). On one occasion he spent time conversing and disputing with some of the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers (v. 18). Further, when it suited his purposes, Paul could quote freely (and accurately) from the writings of pagan

poets. In Acts 17:28 he cites with approval both the Cretan poet Epimenides and the Cilician poet Aratus, using them to make a *valid theological point about the nature of God and man* to the educated members of the Athenian Areopagus. Thus, we should at least be cautious before asserting that Paul was opposed to *all* philosophy and human wisdom. He obviously wasn't.

But if this is so, then in what sense has God made foolish the wisdom of the world? What did Paul mean when he wrote this? The answer, I think, can be found (at least in part) in the very next verse: "For since in the wisdom of God the world through its wisdom did not *come to know God*, God was well-pleased through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (1 Cor. 1:21; NASB). In other words, as Craig and Moreland observe, "the gospel of salvation could never have been discovered by philosophy, but had to be revealed by the biblical God who acts in history."[\[6\]](#) This clearly indicates the *limitations* of philosophy and human wisdom. But the fact that these disciplines have very real *limitations* in no way implies that they are utterly *worthless*. We need to appreciate something for what it is, recognizing its limitations, but appreciating its value all the same. Philosophy by itself could never have discovered the gospel. But this doesn't mean that it's not still a valuable ally in the search for truth and a valuable resource for carefully thinking through some of life's greatest mysteries.

In the remainder of this article, we'll explore some of the ways in which philosophy *is* valuable, both for the individual Christian and for the ministry of the church.

## **The Value of Philosophy (Part 1)**

Moreland and Craig observe that "throughout the history of Christianity, philosophy has played an important role in the life of the church and the spread and defense of the gospel of

Christ.”{7}

John Wesley, the famous revivalist and theologian, seemed well-aware of this fact. In 1756 he delivered “An Address to the Clergy”. Among the various qualifications that Wesley thought a good minister should have, one was a basic knowledge of philosophy. He challenged his fellow clergymen with these questions: “Am I a tolerable master of the sciences? Have I gone through the very gate of them, logic? . . . Do I understand metaphysics; if not the . . . subtleties of . . . Aquinas, yet the first rudiments, the general principles, of that useful science?”{8} It’s interesting to note that Wesley’s passion for preaching and evangelism didn’t cause him to denigrate the importance of basic philosophical knowledge. Indeed, he rather insists on its importance for anyone involved in the teaching and preaching ministries of the church.

But *why* is philosophy valuable? What practical benefits does it offer those involved in regular Christian service? And how has it contributed to the health and well-being of the church throughout history? Drs. Moreland and Craig list many reasons why philosophy is (and has been) such an important part of a thriving Christian community.{9}

In the first place, philosophy is of tremendous value in the tasks of Christian apologetics and polemics. Whereas the goal of apologetics is to provide a reasoned defense of the truth of Christianity, “polemics is the task of criticizing and refuting alternative views of the world.”{10} Both tasks are important, and both are biblical. The apostle Peter tells us to always be ready “to make a defense” for the hope that we have in Christ (1 Pet. 3:15; NASB). Jude exhorts us to “contend earnestly for the faith which was once for all delivered to the saints” (v. 3; NASB). And Paul says that elders in the church should “be able both to exhort in sound doctrine and to refute those who contradict” (Tit. 1:9; NASB). The proper use of philosophy can be a great help in fulfilling

each of these biblical injunctions.

Additionally, philosophy serves as the handmaid of theology by bringing clarity and precision to the formulation of Christian doctrine. “For example, philosophers help to clarify the different attributes of God; they can show that the doctrines of the Trinity and the Incarnation are not contradictory; they can shed light on the nature of human freedom, and so on.”[{11}](#) In other words, the task of the theologian is made easier with the help of his friends in the philosophy department!

## **The Value of Philosophy (Part 2)**

Let’s consider a few more ways in which philosophy can help strengthen and support both the individual believer and the universal church.

First, careful philosophical reflection is one of the ways in which human beings uniquely express that they are made in the image and likeness of God. As Drs. Craig and Moreland observe, “God . . . is a rational being, and humans are made like him in this respect.”[{12}](#) One of the ways in which we can honor God’s commandment to love him with our minds (Matt. 22:37) is to give serious philosophical consideration to what God has revealed about himself in creation, conscience, history, and the Bible. As we reverently reflect on the attributes of God, or His work in creation and redemption, we aren’t merely engaged in a useless academic exercise. On the contrary, we are loving God with our minds—and our hearts are often led to worship and adore the One “who alone is immortal and . . . lives in unapproachable light” (1 Tim. 6:16; NIV).

But philosophy isn’t only of value for the individual believer; it’s also of value for the universal church. Commenting on John Gager’s book, *Kingdom and Community: The Social World of Early Christianity*, Drs. Moreland and Craig write:

*The early church faced intellectual and cultural ridicule from Romans and Greeks. This ridicule threatened internal cohesion within the church and its evangelistic boldness toward unbelievers. Gager argues that it was primarily the presence of philosophers and apologists within the church that enhanced the self-image of the Christian community because these early scholars showed that the Christian community was just as rich intellectually and culturally as was the pagan culture surrounding it.*[{13}](#)

Christian philosophers and apologists in our own day continue to serve a similar function. By carefully explaining and defending the Christian faith, they help enhance the self-image of the church, increase the confidence and boldness of believers in evangelism, and help keep Christianity a viable option among sincere seekers in the intellectual marketplace of ideas.

Of course, not all philosophy is friendly to Christianity. Indeed, some of it is downright hostile. But this shouldn't cause Christians to abandon the task and (for some) even calling of philosophy. The church has always needed, and still needs today, talented men and women who can use philosophy to rationally declare and defend the Christian faith to everyone who asks for a reason for the hope that we have in Christ (1 Pet. 3:15). As C.S. Lewis once said, "Good philosophy must exist, if for no other reason, because bad philosophy needs to be answered."[{14}](#) These are just a few of the reasons why we shouldn't hate philosophy.

## **Notes**

1. Tertullian, "The Prescriptions Against the Heretics," trans. S.L. Greenslade, in *Early Latin Theology* (Vol. V in "The Library of Christian Classics"; Philadelphia: Westminster Press, 1956), 31-32; cited in Hugh T. Kerr, ed., *Readings in Christian Thought* (Nashville: Abingdon Press, 1989), 39.

2. William Lane Craig and J.P. Moreland, *Philosophical Foundations for a Christian Worldview* (Downers Grove, Illinois: InterVarsity Press, 2003), 13.
3. Ibid., 4-5.
4. Ibid., 18.
5. Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Baker Books, 2000), 487.
6. Craig and Moreland, 19.
7. Ibid., 12.
8. John Wesley, "An Address to the Clergy," delivered February 6, 1756. Reprinted in *The Works of John Wesley*, 3d ed., 7 vols. (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Baker, 1996), 6:217-31; cited in Craig and Moreland, 4.
9. See Craig and Moreland, 14-17. I have relied heavily on their observations in this, and the following, section of this article.
10. Ibid., 15.
11. Ibid.
12. Ibid.
13. Ibid., 16.
14. C.S. Lewis, *The Weight of Glory* (Grand Rapids, Mich.: Eerdmans, 1949), 50; cited in Craig and Moreland, 17.

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# History and the Christian Faith

*For many people in our world today "history," as Henry Ford once said, "is bunk." Indeed, some people go so far as to say that we really can't know anything at all about the past! But*

*since the truth of Christianity depends on certain historical events (like the resurrection of Jesus, for example) having actually occurred, Dr. Michael Gleghorn shows why there is no good reason to be so skeptical about our knowledge of the past.*

## **The Importance of History**

Can we really know anything at all about the past? For example, can we really know if Nebuchadnezzar was king of Babylon in the sixth century B.C., or if Jesus of Nazareth was an actual historical person, or if Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg Address? Although these might sound like questions that would only interest professional historians, they're actually important for Christians too.

But why should Christians be concerned with such questions? Well, because the truth of our faith depends on certain events having actually happened in the past. As British theologian Alan Richardson stated:



The Christian faith is . . . an historical faith . . . it is bound up with certain happenings in the past, and if these happenings could be shown never to have occurred . . . then the . . . Christian faith . . . would be found to have been built on sand.[\[1\]](#)

Consider an example. Christians believe that Jesus died on the cross for the sins of the world. Now, in order for this belief to even possibly be true, the crucifixion of Jesus must have occurred in history. If the account of Jesus' death on the cross is merely legendary, or otherwise unhistorical, then the Christian proclamation that he died on the cross for our sins cannot be true. As T. A. Roberts observed:

The truth of Christianity is anchored in history: hence the . . . recognition that if some . . . of the events upon which

Christianity has been traditionally thought to be based could be proved unhistorical, then the religious claims of Christianity would be seriously jeopardized. {2}

What actually happened in the past, therefore, is extremely significant for biblical Christianity. But this raises an important question: How can we really know what happened in the past? How can we know if the things we read about in our history books ever really happened? How can we know if Jesus *really* was crucified, as the Gospel writers say he was? We weren't there to personally observe these events. And (at least so far) there's no time machine by which we can visit the past and see for ourselves what really happened. The events of the past are gone. They're no longer directly available for study. So how can we ever *really* know what happened?

For the Christian, such questions confront us with the issue of whether genuine knowledge of the past is possible or whether we're forever doomed to be skeptical about the historical events recorded in the Bible. In the remainder of this article I hope to show that we should indeed be skeptical, particularly of the arguments of skeptics who say that we can know nothing of the past.

## **The Problem of the Unobservable Past**

It shouldn't surprise us that the truth of Christianity depends on certain events having actually happened in the past. The Apostle Paul told the Corinthians: "if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith" (1 Cor. 15:14). For Paul, if the bodily resurrection of Jesus was not an actual historical event, then faith in Christ was useless. What happened in the past, therefore, is important for Christianity.

But some scholars insist that we can never *really* know what happened in the past. This view, called radical historical



relativism, denies that real, or objective, knowledge of the past is possible. This poses a challenge for Christianity. As the Christian philosopher Ronald Nash observes, “. . . the skepticism about the past that must result from a total historical relativism would seriously weaken one of Christianity’s major apologetic foundations.”[\[3\]](#)

But why would anyone be skeptical about our ability to know at least some objective truth about the past? One reason has to do with our inability to directly observe the past. The late Charles Beard noted that, unlike the chemist, the historian cannot directly observe the objects of his study. His only access to the past comes through records and artifacts that have survived to the present.[\[4\]](#)

There is certainly some truth to this. But why does the historian’s inability to directly observe the past mean that he can’t have genuine knowledge of the past? Beard contrasts the historian with the chemist, implying that the latter does have objective knowledge of chemistry. But it’s important to remember that individual chemists don’t acquire *all* their knowledge through direct scientific observation. Indeed, much of it comes from reading journal articles by other chemists, articles that function much like the historical documents of the historian![\[5\]](#)

But can the chemist really gain objective knowledge by reading such articles? It appears so. Suppose a chemist begins working on a new problem based on the carefully established results of previous experiments. But suppose that he hasn’t personally conducted all these experiments; he’s merely read about them in scientific journals. Any knowledge not directly verified by the chemist would be indirect knowledge.[\[6\]](#) But it’s not *completely* lacking in objectivity for that reason.

While historical knowledge may fall short of absolute certainty (as most of our knowledge invariably does), this doesn’t make it completely subjective or arbitrary. Further,

since most of what we know doesn't seem to be based on direct observation, our inability to directly observe the past cannot (at least by itself) make genuine knowledge of history impossible. Ultimately, then, this argument for historical relativism is simply unconvincing.

## **The Problem of Personal Perspective**

I recently spoke with a young man who told me that he gets his news from three different sources: CNN, FOX, and the BBC. When I asked him why, he told me that each station has its own particular perspective. He therefore listens to all three in order to (hopefully) arrive at a more objective understanding of what's really going on in the world.

Interestingly, a similar issue has been observed in the writing of history. Historical relativists argue that no historian can be completely unbiased and value-neutral in his description of the past. Instead, everything he writes, from the selection of historical facts to the connections he sees between those facts, is influenced by his personality, values, and even prejudices. Every work of history (including the historical books of the Bible) is said to be written from a unique viewpoint. It's relative to a particular author's perspective and, hence, cannot be objective.

How should Christians respond to this? Did the biblical writers reliably record what happened in the past? Or are their writings so influenced by their personalities and values that we can never know what *really* happened? Well, it's probably true that every work of history, like every story in a newspaper, is colored (at least to some extent) by the author's worldview. In this sense, absolute objectivity is impossible. But does this mean that historical relativism is true? Not according to Norman Geisler. He writes:

Perfect objectivity may be practically unattainable within the limited resources of the historian on most if not all topics.

But . . . the inability to attain 100 percent objectivity is a long way from total relativity.[\[7\]](#)

While historians and reporters may write from a particular worldview perspective, it doesn't follow that they're completely incapable of at least some objectivity. Indeed, certain safeguards exist which actually help ensure this. Suppose a historian writes that king Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon did not capture Jerusalem in the sixth century B.C. His thesis can be challenged and corrected on the basis of the available historical and archaeological evidence which indicates that Nebuchadnezzar did do this. Similarly, if a newspaper runs a story which later turns out to be incorrect, it might be forced to print a retraction.

While complete objectivity in history may be impossible, a sufficient degree of objectivity can nonetheless be attained because the historian's work is subject to correction in light of the evidence. The problem of personal perspective, then, doesn't inevitably lead to total historical relativism. Therefore, objections to the historical reliability of the Bible that are based on this argument are not ultimately persuasive.

## **Problems with Historical Relativism**

We've seen that historical relativism denies that we can know objective truth about the past. While this poses a challenge to biblical Christianity, the arguments offered in support of this position aren't very convincing. Not only are the *supporting* arguments unconvincing, however, the arguments *against* this position are devastating. Let's look at just two.

First, there are many facts of history that virtually all historians agree on – regardless of their worldview. For example, what responsible historian would seriously deny that George Washington was the first president of the United States, or that Abraham Lincoln delivered the Gettysburg

Address? As one historical relativist admitted, “there are basic facts which are the same for all historians.”[{8}](#) But consider what this means. If a Christian, a Buddhist, an atheist, and a Muslim can all agree on certain basic facts of history, then it would seem to follow that at least some objective knowledge of history is possible. But in that case, total historical relativism is false, for it *denies* that such knowledge is possible.

Another reason for rejecting historical relativism is that it makes it impossible to distinguish good history from poor history, or genuine history from propaganda. As Dr. Ronald Nash observes, “If hard relativism were true, any distinction between truth and error in history would disappear.”[{9}](#) Just think about what this would mean. There would be no real difference between history and historical fiction! Further, there would be no legitimate basis for criticizing obviously false historical theories. This reveals that something is wrong with historical relativism, for as Dr. Craig reminds us, “All historians distinguish good history from poor.” For example, he recalls how Immanuel Velikovsky attempted “to rewrite ancient history on the basis of world-wide catastrophes caused by extra-terrestrial forces . . . dismissing entire ancient kingdoms and languages as fictional.”[{10}](#)

How did historians react to such ideas? According to Edwin Yamauchi, who wrote a detailed critical analysis of the theory, most historians were “quite hostile” to Velikovsky’s work.[{11}](#) They were irritated by his callous disregard for the actual historical evidence. In a similar vein, one need only remember the tremendous critical response to some of Dan Brown’s more outrageous claims in *The Da Vinci Code*. It’s important to notice that when scholars criticize the theories of Velikovsky and Brown, they tacitly acknowledge “the objectivity of history.”[{12}](#) Their criticism shows that they view these theories as flawed because they don’t correspond to

what really happened in the past.

Well, with such good reasons for rejecting historical relativism, we needn't fear its threat to biblical Christianity.

## **Determining Truth in History**

How can we determine what actually happened in the past? Is there any way to separate the "wheat" from the "chaff," so to speak, when it comes to evaluating competing interpretations of a particular historical person or event? For example, if one writer claims Jesus was married, and another claims he wasn't, how can we determine which of the claims is true?

Well as you've probably already guessed, the issue really comes down to the evidence. For information about Jesus, virtually all scholars agree that our most valuable evidence comes from the New Testament Gospels. Each of these documents can be reliably dated to the first century, and "the events they record are based on either direct or indirect eyewitness testimony."[{13}](#) They thus represent our earliest and best sources of information about Jesus.

But even if we limit our discussion to these sources, different scholars still reach different conclusions about Jesus' marital status. So again, how can we determine the truth? We might employ a model known as inference to the best explanation. Simply put, this model says that "the historian should accept the hypothesis that best explains all the evidence."[{14}](#) Now admittedly, this isn't an exact science. But as Dr. Craig reminds us, "The goal of historical knowledge is to obtain probability, not mathematical certainty."[{15}](#) To demand more than this of history is simply to make unreasonable demands. Even in a court of law, we must be content with proof beyond a reasonable doubt -- not beyond all possible doubt.[{16}](#)

Keeping these things in mind, does the evidence best support the hypothesis that Jesus was, or wasn't, married? If you're interested in such a discussion I would highly recommend Darrell Bock's recent book, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code*. After a careful examination of the evidence, he concludes that Jesus was definitely *not* married – a conclusion shared by the vast majority of New Testament scholars.[\[17\]](#)

Of course, I'm not trying to argue that this issue can be decisively settled by simply citing an authority (although I certainly agree with Dr. Bock's conclusion). My point is rather that we have a way of determining truth in history. By carefully evaluating the best available evidence, and by logically inferring the best explanation of that evidence, we can determine (sometimes with a high degree of probability) what actually happened in the past.

Christianity is a religion rooted in history. Not a history about which we can have no real understanding, but a history that we can know and be confident in believing.

## Notes

1. Alan Richardson, *Christian Apologetics* (London: SCM, 1947), 91, cited in Ronald H. Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding* (Dallas: Word Publishing/Probe Books, 1984), 12.
2. T. A. Roberts, *History and Christian Apologetic* (London: SPCK, 1960), vii, cited in Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*, 12.
3. Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*, 77-78.
4. This information comes from Ronald Nash's discussion of Charles Beard's essay, "That Noble Dream," in Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*, 84.
5. William Lane Craig, *Reasonable Faith: Christian Truth and Apologetics* (Wheaton: Crossway Books, 1994), 176.

6. Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*, 85.
7. Norman Geisler, *Christian Apologetics* (Grand Rapids, Baker, 1976), 297, cited in Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*, 88-89.
8. E.H. Carr, *What is History?* (New York: Random House, 1953), 8, cited in Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 185.
9. Nash, *Christian Faith and Historical Understanding*, 88.
10. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 186-87.
11. Edwin Yamauchi, "Immanuel Velikovsky's Catastrophic History," *Journal of the American Scientific Affiliation* 25 (1973): 134, cited in Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 187.
12. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 187.
13. Lee Strobel, *The Case for Christ*, (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Zondervan, 1998), 25.
14. Craig, *Reasonable Faith*, 184.
15. Ibid.
16. Ibid.
17. Darrell L. Bock, *Breaking the Da Vinci Code* (Nashville: Nelson Books, 2004), 31-45. Also see my previous article, "Redeeming The Da Vinci Code," at [probe.org/redeeming-the-da-vinci-code/](http://probe.org/redeeming-the-da-vinci-code/).

# “How Do I Deal with My Prof Who Hates Christianity?”

I'm taking a class on the history of Antisemitism, but it has turned into the history of why Christians are the most terrible people on the earth. Can you help me refute my teacher? A few points I need to know about are: Why did the gospel writers present a central conflict between the Pharisees and Jesus? Why was such a conflict extremely unlikely? What would a Christian historian say about this? How can I argue with an overly zealous antichristian? She thinks the New Testament is completely false, only made up to morph Jesus into the Messiah the gospel writers wanted him to be, so I need evidence outside of the NT. I have read *Case for Christ*, which is awesome, but there's still a lot of stuff from there that doesn't help because she says the NT is false; the evidence that it was written in too short of a time for legend to creep in is false to her. Please help me with this problem.

I would personally not recommend arguing with an overly zealous anti-Christian for the simple reason that they are not presently open to what you have to say. I would rather pray for that individual, asking God to enlighten them to the truth of the Gospel. However, there is certainly a place for confronting error with the truth and for healthy dialogue about whether or not Christianity is true. With professors, this is usually best done one-on-one, in a friendly way, outside of class. Your professor will not like being made to look foolish in front of the class. (Who would?)

As for the other questions you ask, they can be somewhat involved. For this reason, let me recommend some additional resources that will be helpful to you for future opportunities of this kind.



- F.F. Bruce, *Jesus and Christian Origins Outside the New Testament* (Grand Rapids, Michigan: Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1974).
- Gary Habermas, *The Historical Jesus: Ancient Evidence for the Life of Christ* (Joplin, Missouri: College Press Publishing Company, 1996).
- Craig Blomberg, *The Historical Reliability of the Gospels* (Downers Grove, Illinois: Inter-Varsity Press, 1987).

If you look under Probe's ["Theology and Philosophy"](#) section and our ["Reasons to Believe" \(Apologetics\)](#) section you can find many other helpful articles.

Also, bible.org has a number of excellent resources on their site. Articles on the Bible can be found at [http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic\\_id=5](http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic_id=5) and articles on Christology can be found at [http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic\\_id=6](http://www.bible.org/topic.asp?topic_id=6).

Finally, I have written a very short article dealing with some of the available evidence from Tacitus, Pliny the Younger, Josephus, the Babylonian Talmud, and Lucian which you can find at:

[www.probe.org/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources-2/](http://www.probe.org/ancient-evidence-for-jesus-from-non-christian-sources-2/). My article is just a summary, written at a popular level for radio, and I don't know if you would find it helpful or not.

I hope this information will be useful to you.

Best wishes,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

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# “Help Me Understand These Bible Contradictions”

I stumbled upon a website that has an exhaustive list of apparent contradictions in the Bible. Now, I can go through many of them and figure out that what is seen as an apparent contradiction is nothing of the sort, but many of them leave me searching vigorously for an answer. Can you help me on these?

God is tired and rests [Ex 31:17, Jer 15:6]

God is never tired and never rests [Is 40:28]

and:

God is the author of evil [Lam 3:38, Jer 18:11, Is 45:7, Amos 3:6, Ezek 20:25]

God is not the author of evil [1 Cor 14:33, Deut 32:4, James 1:13]

Let's begin with the first difficulty:

*God is tired and rests [Ex 31:17, Jer 15:6]*

*God is never tired and never rests [Is 40:28]*

This alleged difficulty confuses the issues of being tired, on the one hand, and resting, on the other. Exodus 31:17 does say that God “rested” or “ceased” His creative work on the seventh day. It does not say that God was tired. Jeremiah 15:6 (at least the relevant portion) might be translated, “I am weary of relenting” or “I have grown tired of feeling sorry for you”. The idea is not that God is “tired” in the sense of “fatigued.” Rather, God is weary of holding back His righteous judgment. Note what He says right before this phrase, “So I

have unleashed my power against you and have begun to destroy you” (Net Bible – [netbible.bible.org](http://netbible.bible.org)). These are not the words of a being who is tired in the sense of needing rest. These are the words of one who is tired of restraining His righteous judgment.

Thus, there is no contradiction with Isaiah 40:28, “He does not get tired or weary.” For Exodus 31:17 does not say that God was tired, and Jeremiah 15:6 does not mean that God was tired in the sense of being “fatigued.” The Bible does say that God rested, but it does not imply that this was due to tiredness on God’s part. The Net Bible comments on Gen. 2:2 as follows: “The Hebrew term (shabbat) can be translated ‘to rest’ (‘and he rested’) but it basically means ‘to cease.’ This is not a rest from exhaustion; it is the cessation of the work of creation.”

But what about the second alleged difficulty?

*God is the author of evil [Lam 3:38, Jer 18:11, Is 45:7, Amos 3:6, Ezek 20:25]*

*God is not the author of evil [1 Cor 14:33, Deut 32:4, James 1:13]*

Geisler and Howe have an excellent discussion of this issue in their book, *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties*. I would heartily recommend this book, along with Gleason Archer’s *Encyclopedia of Bible Difficulties*. Both books deal with just about every Bible difficulty which critics raise against the Bible. So what do they say about this difficulty?

God is NOT the author of evil in the sense of “sin” or “moral evil” – at least not directly. God created free morally responsible creatures (like human beings) who chose to misuse their freedom to do what was morally evil. However, God is not the author of this evil; human beings are. God made such evil possible (by creating free moral creatures), but the creatures

made such evil actual (by sinning, etc.).

However, God is sometimes the author of evil in the sense of “calamities” or “non-moral evil.” Such calamities might also be caused by Satan or demons (e.g. Job 1-2). However, God can also bring about calamities as a form of judgment against sin, etc. God does punish sin, sometimes through various calamities. But God is not the author of moral evil or sin.

I hope this makes sense. I would definitely recommend the books mentioned above by Archer and Geisler. I would also recommend the Biblical Studies Foundation website at [www.netbible.com](http://www.netbible.com). They have hundreds of articles on a variety of biblical and theological issues.

The Lord bless you!

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

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## **“Who Controls the World—God or Satan?”**

A friend and I were discussing whose rule the world was under, God’s or Satan’s. Of course we disagreed because I said God ruled the world and allows Satan to take us through suffering to make us strong and to test our faith. My friend feels that the world belongs to Satan because Eve succumbed to Satan in the Garden of Eden. Please clarify who controls the world today.

Thanks for your letter. Satan has been temporarily granted a tremendous amount of power over this world, as can be seen from the following passages:

*John 12:31 – Now judgment is upon this world; now the ruler of this world will be cast out.*

*2 Cor 4:4 – ...in whose case the god of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving so that they might not see the light of the gospel of the glory of Christ, who is the image of God.*

*1 John 5:19 – We know that we are of God, and that the whole world lies in the power of the evil one.*

But God is the One who ultimately rules and reigns over all things. He is the Creator of all that exists (other than Himself of course) and all things are ultimately subject to His will and power. Many passages of Scripture bear this out – e.g. Psalms 9:7; 22:28; 47:8; 59:13; 66:7; 97:1; 99:1; 103:19; 146:10, as well as passages such as Gen. 1-2; Job 1-2; John 1; Eph. 1; Col. 1; Rom. 9-11; Rev. 19-22; etc.

Satan is a creature; God is his Creator. Satan cannot do anything that the Lord does not permit him to do (see Job 1-2) and God will one day cast Satan into the lake of fire for all eternity (Rev. 20:10).

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

Probe Ministries