

# **“Is It Fair That People Born Into a Christian Home Become Christians and Everybody Else is Doomed to Hell?”**

Hey I just read your [article](#) on God judging people for sins they didn't know were wrong. It was very good and helped me a lot but I still have a question. My brother is an atheist and we have been having some friendly debates on God and such. And the point he always makes that I cannot get over is when he says that I am a Christian because I was raised in a Christian home (as was he, but he says he fell away when he looked at the facts himself instead of believing just what he was told) so I am Christian. If I was raised in a Muslim home then I would be Muslim. And the same goes for any other religion. He has a good point. If I was raised in an Islamic family I would believe that Allah was the true God. Why was I so lucky to be born into the one right religion? So what is a good counter argument? I would really appreciate your help.

Also, he makes the point that, let's say a kid in North Korea who has passed the age of accountability dies. Does he go to heaven? If so then that means God is letting a non-believer into heaven, right? If he doesn't and goes to Hell, then that seems a little unjust to let a kid who never heard of him go to Hell. Now I know Romans 1:18-32 says that everyone hears of God and I completely believe that and every other word of the Bible, but how can some kid in North Korea or any other given place have nearly as good of a chance as me to get into heaven? I would love any help that you can give me.

Thanks for your letter. These are very good questions. First, let me recommend a very good article by an excellent Christian philosopher that addresses some of your questions. It's

entitled, “‘No Other Name’: A Middle Knowledge Perspective on the Exclusivity of Salvation Through Christ”: [www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5220](http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5220).

Another helpful piece is this, called “Politically Incorrect Salvation”:

[www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5223](http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/News2?page=NewsArticle&id=5223).

These articles, which you should probably read at least twice, will help you think through many of these issues at a very sophisticated level.

Here is my own brief response to your questions. This response is not intended to be exhaustive; I’ve referred you to the articles for a more thorough response.

First, I think that you are quite right that passages such as Romans 1:18-23 clearly teach that God has made His existence evident to all men (we can except, of course, very young children and the severely retarded, etc. Please see an article by Probe’s Founder, Jimmy Williams, answering the question [if babies go to hell](#)). Since all men are the recipients of God’s revelation in nature and conscience, they are morally responsible and accountable to Him for how they respond to this revelation. Unfortunately, the vast majority of these people reject God’s revelation and they have no one but themselves to blame for this. It’s very important that we always bear this in mind. God has made His existence evident to all men, but the vast majority simply reject this evidence—and for this, each is personally accountable to God.

Now, although God is very gracious, and will often send more revelation even to those who reject the revelation they’ve already been given, He is under no obligation to do so. If people reject the revelation which God has given, He is not in any way obligated to give them more. They are responsible for what He has given, and what He has already given is more than sufficient for them to know that God exists and that they are morally accountable to Him.

But what if someone in an Islamic country or North Korea were to respond positively to God's revelation in creation and conscience? In that case, I think that we can safely say (on the basis of such passages as Acts 8:26-40 and Acts 10) that anyone who responds positively to God's general revelation, will be given yet more revelation (just as the Ethiopian eunuch and Cornelius the centurion were—both of whom became Christians, by the way!).

In other words, God has provided everyone with enough revelation to respond to Him in a positive way. For those who do, God will provide yet more revelation (including the gospel of Jesus Christ). But for those who do not, He is under no obligation to provide yet more light to those who reject what He's already given.

For a much more thorough explanation, please refer to the articles I mentioned. You can find more by William Lane Craig here: [www.reasonablefaith.org](http://www.reasonablefaith.org)

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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**“How Do You Answer a Person Who Says You Can't Take the Bible Literally Because It**

# Promotes Homosexuals?"

# Killing

How would you answer a person who says, "You can't take the Bible literally because it promotes killing homosexuals" (Lev 20:13)?

There are a number of things that one might say to this, but I will mention just a few. In addition, I will not only speak to the issue of interpretation, but will also address some of the issues which give rise to a statement like this. Of course, we must also remember that there is oftentimes a lot of anger behind a statement like this. Hence, it is important to remember that while we always want to speak the truth, we want to be careful to do it in love. This is the most important thing to bear in mind in responding to someone making such a claim. We want to be kind, gentle, and patient in our response. But concerning the response itself, here are a few things that occur to me as I think about this issue.

First, this particular law was only given to ancient Israel under the terms of the Old Covenant. But God is not relating to anyone under the terms of this covenant today. Rather, God is now relating to all men under the terms of the New Covenant (Hebrews 8). Hence, this is not a law which should be implemented today. In addition, I think it is also important to point out that this passage does not PROMOTE killing homosexuals. This is simply false—and it is important to say so. This particular law requires that those who engage in homosexual activity be put to death. Even under the Old Covenant, a person with homosexual inclinations or attractions, who refused to act on them, would NOT be put to death. What is at issue here is homosexual *activity*—not homosexual attraction. Hence, even interpreted literally, this law does NOT promote killing homosexuals. Rather, it stipulates that those who engage in homosexual *activity* are to

be put to death. But again, it is important to remember that God is no longer relating to mankind under the terms of this covenant.

Second, the law reveals the awful truth about human sinfulness and the holiness of God. God takes sin very seriously and his holiness and moral perfection require that He deal with it as it deserves. Under the terms of the Old Covenant, homosexual behavior was not unique in meriting the sentence of death. Adultery (Lev. 20:10), blasphemy (Lev. 24:16), murder (Exod. 21:12), striking one's father or mother (Exod. 21:15), kidnapping (Exod. 21:16), cursing one's father or mother (Exod. 21:17), and other acts as well, all merited the death sentence under the Old Covenant. Even Sabbath violations received the death sentence (Exod. 31:14). Hence, homosexual activity was not unique in meriting the death sentence under the terms of the Old Covenant.

Third, God disapproves of ALL sexual sin—not just homosexual activity. God disapproves of adultery, fornication, rape, incest, bestiality, as well as homosexual sin. Again, homosexual sin is not unique in being prohibited by God. All sexual sin is prohibited. The Bible allows for sexual activity only within the confines of one man/one woman heterosexual marriage. Any kind of sexual activity outside of this is sin—whether that sexual activity be homosexual, heterosexual, sex with animals, etc.

Fourth, the moral law is based upon the morally pure and morally perfect character of God. If the Bible really is the word of God, then homosexual behavior (along with all other sexual sin) is sin. All such activity, then, would constitute a violation of God's moral law.

Finally, I think we can agree that we should not ALWAYS interpret the Bible "literally." The Bible, after all, does contain a wealth of figurative and metaphorical language, and it would be inappropriate to interpret such metaphorical

expressions literally. The problem in this case, however, is that the verse in question is not making use of such figurative or metaphorical language. Indeed, the writer is quite explicit in spelling things out for us. It would strike me as dishonest to suggest that this passage should be interpreted non-literally or metaphorically. What would it be a metaphor of? What would be the literal truth behind (or underneath) the metaphor? In addition, why should anyone think that God does not disapprove of sexual sin? What sort of argument or evidence is there for believing that God's attitude toward sexual activity is essentially the same as that of a modern secular American? Why should we think that sin (all sin) is not a deadly serious issue to an utterly holy God? It seems to me that the statement you mentioned simply makes some unwarranted assumptions about God's attitude toward human sin.

Of course, the good news is that God has provided atonement for sin through the substitutionary death of His Son, and His resurrection for our justification. Anyone who is willing to turn from their sin, and trust Christ for salvation, can and will be forgiven and saved. No one needs to die for their sins (since Christ has already done so). But everyone who rejects Him and His sacrifice will have to pay for their sin themselves. Hence, we want to communicate, I think, that God takes sin very seriously. But He has also provided for our forgiveness through the sacrifice of His Son on the cross.

Hopefully some of this will be helpful to you as you continue to wrestle with an appropriate response to claims of this sort.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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# “Can You Recommend Apologetics Resources on Different Levels?”

As a Christian, I find it to be of invaluable importance to remain current and educated in fields of history, science, logic and philosophy, etc. At age 20, I'm confronting more and more difficulty sharing Christ with a generation in a secularized society that will less and less have Him. Any books you might recommend? Thank you!

There are many good books and websites which address the concerns you have in one way or another. However, let me recommend two books and three websites that have personally been very helpful to me over the years.

1. An excellent popular-level book on apologetics and evangelism is *I'm Glad You Asked* by Ken Boa and Larry Moody – available [here](#).
2. A superb intermediate-level apologetics book is *Reasonable Faith* (3rd edition) by William Lane Craig – available [here](#).
3. An excellent popular-level website on apologetics is the Probe Ministries website here: [Probe.org](#).
4. An excellent scholarly-level site (with some popular-level material) is the Reasonable Faith site here: [www.reasonablefaith.org](#).
5. Finally, a really great site for biblical and theological issues is [bible.org](#).

I hope these resources prove helpful as you continue to

prepare yourself to give an account to all who ask about the hope that you have in Christ!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“Does Sunday Church Violate the Sabbath Commandment?”**

Hello Michael, I read your [article](#) on why Christians go to church on Sunday instead of the sabbath. Our Sunday school teacher gave us an assignment to find out how this goes along with the commandment “Remember the sabbath and keep it holy.” Are we breaking this command? Is there any scripture I can share with the class that explains this?

The command to observe the Sabbath is rooted in both creation and redemption. It was a non-negotiable command for Israel under the Mosaic Covenant. However, it seems to me that this is no longer the case for Christians today, for we are now called to relate to God under the terms and conditions of the New Covenant. Hence, I personally don't think that Christians can violate this command for I do not think it is still in effect (at least not as it was under the Old Covenant).

That the Old Covenant has been made obsolete is stated explicitly in Hebrews 8:13. Paul recognizes that there will be difference of opinion among believers regarding how one observes (or does not observe) certain days like the Sabbath



in Romans 14:5-6, 13. He clearly indicates that such observance is not necessary for salvation in Galatians 4:8-11. In Colossians 2:16-17 he says that we are not to judge (or let ourselves be judged) with respect to things like Sabbath day observances, for these things are but "a shadow of what is to come; but the substance belongs to Christ." Finally, the author of Hebrews reminds us of that true Sabbath rest that remains for God's people today. This, I take it, refers to a "rest" that is available to us in some respects now, but will be fully and perfectly realized only in the future, in the new heaven and new earth. Insofar as this "rest" is available to us now, it is not limited to a single day of the week, but is rather a "perpetual" sort of "rest" that we can enter by surrendering ourselves completely to the will of God and trusting wholly in what Christ accomplished for us through His death and resurrection. In other words, we cease trying to earn God's favor by what we do and we "rest" in the fact that Christ has already done this for us! Properly understood, of course, this does not mean that we cease doing good works, which we are clearly told to do (see Ephesians 2:10 and Titus 2:14). It does mean, however, that we can get off the treadmill of trying to earn God's favor by what we do (and "rest" in the fact that Christ has done this for us).

The Sabbath day rest under the Old Covenant, then, is but a type or "shadow" of this fuller "rest" that we can enjoy in Christ—both now (through faith) and in the future new heaven and new earth.

Of course, there is nothing wrong with setting aside a day for rest each week, provided that one does not think that this gains them some sort of special favor with God, favor that is somehow not available to all who trust Christ for salvation. In other words, as I understand it, a Christian is free to set aside a day for rest, but is not required to do so. All Christians, however, are clearly commanded to set aside time for worship and fellowship with other believers (see Hebrews

10:23-25). This, as I see it, is the primary purpose for Christians to set aside Sunday each week. It is to be a day for worshiping the Lord and enjoying fellowship with one another, and encouraging one another to love and good deeds.

Of course, not everyone will agree with what I've written here. But this seems to me to be the New Testament teaching about this issue.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“Can You Recommend Resources for Sharing Christ in a Secular Society?”**

Hello, Mr. Gleghorn! I want to thank you for what you do. As a Christian, I find it to be of invaluable importance to remain current and educated in fields of history, science, logic and philosophy, etc. Age 20, I'm confronting more and more difficulty sharing Christ with generation in a secularized society that will less and less have Him. Any books you might recommend? Thank you!

Thanks for your letter. There are many good books and websites which address the concerns you have in one way or another. However, let me recommend two books and three websites that have personally been very helpful to me over the years.

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2. A superb intermediate-level apologetics book is [Reasonable Faith](http://www.reasonablefaith.org) (3rd edition) by William Lane Craig: <https://amzn.to/36sVinp>

3. An excellent popular-level website on apologetics is the Probe Ministries website here: [www.probe.org](http://www.probe.org)

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5. Finally, a really great site for biblical and theological issues is this: [bible.org](http://bible.org)

I hope these resources prove helpful as you continue to prepare yourself to give an account to all who ask about the hope that you have in Christ!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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**“What Do You Do When Your  
Pastor Preaches Other**

# People's Sermons?"

What do you do when your pastor is preaching other people's sermons week after week? No credit is given to the sermons he uses. I am starting to question the ease of obtaining other men's work. This has been going on for at least two years; sometimes the sermons are almost word for word. I am at the point where I google every sermon. Places like Sermon Central and Saddleback offer many choices, I am not sure if they are providing a service/help or providing an excuse for no personal study. I don't know where to go.

Thanks for your letter. This is an issue which (I suppose) would need to be taken up with the leadership of your local church. Since churches are governed differently, you would need to find out who the leaders of your local church are and take this matter up with them. Of course, you should first probably take the issue up with the pastor himself (Matthew 18:15-17).

Although the pastor should let the congregation know whose sermon he is preaching, there's nothing inherently wrong with his preaching another person's sermon. In fact, at various times in church history, when there have not been enough adequately trained leaders, men have read the sermons of others for the benefit of their congregation.

Charles Spurgeon tells how he was once away from his own congregation and attended a little country church only to hear one of his own sermons read from the pulpit! Of course, it's also true (as you point out) that the pastor should not be neglecting personal time in the diligent study of the Bible. That, as I see it, is part of his job description!

At any rate, as I see it, this is a matter that needs to be discussed by the leadership in your local church. At the very least, however, the pastor should credit the author of the

sermon he reads to the congregation.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“How Strong Does My Belief Need to be for Me to be Saved?”**

This may seem like a strange question, but how strong does my belief need to be in order for me to be saved? I have been living I guess what you would call a carnal life (not praying or even thinking about God) for around 20 years and am beginning to wonder if I have lost my salvation or if I cannot be reconciled. Please help me, something is missing. I am worried that some of the feelings I sometimes have mean that I don't want to serve The Lord.

If you have faith as small as a mustard seed you can be saved (Matt. 17:20). The issue really is not so much the “size” or “amount” of your faith, but the object of your faith. Are you trusting Christ for salvation? If so, then you are saved, for your faith is placed in the only One who is really able to save you.

Now I must say that it's really not surprising that you don't feel like you have much of a relationship with the Lord, for the fact is that (by your own admission) you don't. If, for the past twenty years or so, you haven't been seeking the Lord

in prayer, spending time in His word, enjoying fellowship with other believers, seeking to serve the Lord in your own sphere of influence, etc., then it's really not surprising that you would feel distant from Him. The truth is, at this point in your life, you *are* distant from Him! It would be as if you had a friend that you had not spoken to or thought about in twenty years. What sort of friendship would that be? Not a very close one, right?

The good news, however, is that you can always repent, turn away from sin and turn back to God, and let Him know that you would like to begin to have a "real" relationship with Him. If you have truly trusted Christ for salvation, then your relationship with God is still intact. However, you've been out of fellowship with Him for the last twenty years. You scarcely even know the One you're trusting with your eternal destiny! Nevertheless, if you confess your sins, the Lord is faithful and just to forgive your sins and cleanse you from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). So I would encourage you to go to the Lord in prayer, confess your sins, accept His forgiveness and cleansing, and get back in the game! You might want to read the story of the prodigal son in Luke 15:11-32. I think you would find this story helpful at this point in your life.

A couple of helpful tips:

1. Begin spending some time each day with God both in prayer and reading the Bible (find a good translation that you like and can read without too much difficulty). You may want to begin reading a chapter a day in the Gospel of John.
2. Find a good, conservative, Bible-believing church where you can get involved with other believers in studying the Bible and serving the Lord. If they have small groups for fellowship and Bible study, then get involved in one of those.

May the Lord bless you as you sincerely begin seeking Him

again!

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## “What Can We Know about Enoch?”

I did a search on your website on the Book of Enoch and found one of the [answers](#) being that it is fiction and made up. How do we know that though? I'm interested in his life, as he was mentioned in the word to have walked with God, which stood out to me among the other men mentioned as having only lived and died. Is there any way I could get info about his life, if indeed the Book of Enoch is a fallacy? Thank you for your time  
□

The book of Enoch is usually referred to as a pseudopigraphical work. That is, it is a book which has been falsely ascribed to the Enoch mentioned in Genesis 5:21-24 and Hebrews 11:5. He is also mentioned as prophesying in Jude 1:14-15—and this section of the work appears to actually go back to Enoch himself.

Nevertheless, there is scholarly consensus that the book of Enoch was written far too late to be attributed to the actual historical Enoch mentioned in Genesis 5. If you would like some more information on this book, there is a reasonably good discussion here: [en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book\\_of\\_Enoch](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Book_of_Enoch). A scholarly discussion of the book can also be found at Google

books [here](#).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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## **“Help Me Understand Biblical Inerrancy?”**

A friend of mine with teenage daughters asked me recently if I understood the concept of Biblical inerrancy well enough to explain/justify it for her children. Seems a “pastor” in their local church was attempting to explain the “errors” in the Bible to a group and they were a bit concerned that this leader would indicate the Bible had errors. I was unable to find much on the Probe Web site regarding the inerrancy of the Bible and wondered if you had a document or publication that would cover the topic rather completely yet simply enough for me to understand and to present to these kids. Also, how does the concept of the inspiration of Bible and the inerrancy of the Bible interplay? It seems to me that if we truly believe the Bible was inspired by God and given to men by the Holy Spirit, it would follow that the Bible in its original autographs would be inerrant.

An excellent resource for a variety of biblical and theological questions is [www.bible.org](http://www.bible.org). After reading your letter, I visited their website, typed “inerrancy” in the search engine, and the following resources came up (see [bible.org/search/apachesolr\\_search/inerrancy](http://bible.org/search/apachesolr_search/inerrancy)).



The above link will give you a lot of help with the question of biblical inspiration and inerrancy. Another good resource is *When Critics Ask: A Popular Handbook on Bible Difficulties* by Norman Geisler and Thomas Howe (Baker Books, 1992).

You are absolutely correct in observing that the [inspiration of Scripture](#) (2 Tim. 3:16; etc.) logically entails biblical inerrancy in the original writings. Although inerrancy cannot be extended to the copies, the science and art of textual criticism has been quite successful in restoring the original text from the thousands of manuscripts available for scholarly study.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn  
Probe Ministries

**See Also Probe Answers Our Email:**

- [“Why Do the Gospel Accounts Contradict Each Other?”](#)
- [“Why Do You Believe the Bible is Inspired and the Qu’ran is Not?”](#)

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# “If God is Immaterial, What

# is He Made Of?"

I got into a debate with an atheist on the existence of God. I used the Cosmological Argument, and then demonstrated how God is timeless, space-less, and immaterial. He countered my conclusion with this question. "If God does not exist inside of time, space, and is not made of material, then in what way does God exist, and what is He made of, nothing?" I don't know how to answer His objection, so I would appreciate it if you could help me out here. I hope that you will e-mail me your advice and direct me to some resources.

Probably the closest relevant biblical description we get of God comes from Jesus in John 4:24, "God is spirit." But God is a personal (or better, tri-personal spirit) characterized by intelligence, will, etc. In this respect, many Christian philosophers prefer to think of God as an unembodied Mind.

In either case, however, the important thing to realize is that God, as you already know, is not a material or physical being. God is spirit; that is, God is an immaterial, or spiritual being. We could also describe God as a spiritual substance. Obviously, this is a long way from saying that God is "nothing"! A spiritual being is not a physical being, but it is every bit as real as a physical being. Indeed, in the case of God, He is actually more "real" than the physical universe (which only exists because He created it and continually sustains it in being).

For some excellent resources on the cosmological argument, please see William Lane Craig's site here:

[www.reasonablefaith.org/site/PageServer?pagename=scholarly\\_articles\\_existence\\_of\\_God](http://www.reasonablefaith.org/site/PageServer?pagename=scholarly_articles_existence_of_God).

Craig is a top-notch Christian philosopher and is a world-recognized expert on the cosmological argument (as well as other issues).

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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