

“Why Did Jesus Have to be Baptized?”

If Jesus is truly God, then why did he have to be baptized?

You ask a very good question. Indeed, John the Baptist also wondered about baptizing Jesus (Matthew 3:14). John's baptism was a baptism of repentance for the forgiveness of sins (Luke 3:3). But Jesus had no need for repentance or forgiveness (2 Corinthians 5:21; Hebrews 4:15; 1 John 3:5). Why, then, did Jesus seek to be baptized by John?

There may be a clue in how Jesus responds in Matthew 3:15: “Permit it at this time; for in this way it is fitting for us to fulfill all righteousness.” Baptism is a form of identification. Although Jesus had no sin to repent of, He seems to have wanted to be identified with John's message of the need for repentance. This seems to be supported by Jesus' own message (Matthew 4:17; Mark 2:15; etc.). Also, Jesus probably wanted to be identified with those receiving John's baptism, namely, sinners. After all, Jesus came to be identified with us, and to die as a substitute for our sins (see 1 Corinthians 15:3; 2 Corinthians 5:21). Interestingly, Jesus' death and resurrection, which is the basis for our forgiveness, is linked with baptism in passages like Romans 6:3-4.

At any rate, these are some of the reasons why I think Jesus sought to be baptized by John. I hope this information helps a bit.

The Lord bless you,

Michael Gleghorn

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“Does God Really Know ALL?”

Ex 16:4 “Then the LORD said to Moses, ‘Behold, I will rain bread from heaven for you; and the people shall go out and gather a day’s portion every day, that I may test them, whether or not they will walk in My instruction.’”

Deut 13:3 “You shall not listen to the words of that prophet or that dreamer of dreams; for the LORD your God is testing you to find out if you love the LORD your God with all your heart and with all your soul.”

I have a problem responding to those verses; at first glance, they seem to make his point because they seem to imply that God tests people so that He “might know” if they love Him. Deut. 13:3 is especially difficult for me. This does not seem to change in the different versions of the Bible I have referred to. Is there something about the definition of the terms or something else that I might be missing in the text?

There are two primary ways of responding to this issue. First, we must point out that other passages of Scripture speak of God’s omniscience, including His knowledge of the future (see Psalm 139:1-4, 16; Psalm 147:5; Isaiah 46:9-10; Acts 1:24; Romans 8:29-30; Hebrews 4:13; etc.). If Scripture does not contradict itself, then there must be some way to reconcile these apparent discrepancies.

Second, as Geisler and Howe point out in *When Critics Ask*, “What God knows by cognition, and what is known by demonstration, are different.” The Bible often speaks from a human perspective. Consider Geisler and Howe’s analogy: “A math teacher might say, ‘Let’s see if we can find the square root of 49,’ and then, after demonstrating it, declare, ‘Now we know that it is 7,’ even though she knew from the beginning

what the answer was” (p. 52). I think it’s the same way with God.

Shalom,

Michael Gleghorn

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“Your Comments About Eating Animals Are Unintelligent and Illogical”

I read your response to the question [“Why Did God Allow Animals to be Eaten and Sacrificed?”](#) and found it to be one of the most unintelligent arguments on any subject that I have ever read. Your “logic” draws conclusions in very convoluted ways. Recognizing an animal’s right to life does not drag man down to the level of a beast. If ALL life is valued then human life is valued more. There would be no “‘open season’ on man to cure overpopulation problems...” as you suggest. There is no ultimate NEED for humans to get their diet from animals. Even Daniel recognized that he could be as healthy as [email ends here]

Thanks for writing. Jimmy isn’t able to respond to your email, so I’ll take a shot at it.

I’m really surprised you found this “the most unintelligent arguments on any subject [you] have ever read.” You should read some of the letters we get!

Upon what do you base an animal’s right to life? The answer to

that will depend in a significant way upon your worldview. We are Christians, so our authority is the Bible where we learn about the places of humankind and other living beings in God's order.

Because we're to be good stewards of God's creation, we are not to destroy life willy nilly. As Jimmy wrote in his article, there is a hierarchy. I think you'd probably agree that we needn't shed tears over pulling up plants when they are being a problem. Killing animals should be for good reasons, not just for killing's sake. You said we don't need to eat animals. Maybe not, but I don't see why we need to eat animals in order to do so. If God gave us that freedom, we can engage in it (Gen. 9:1-3).

Jimmy's concern about man being pulled down has historical precedent. The loss of a belief in the sacredness of human life has given us abortion and euthanasia. Can you imagine a hundred years ago having to pass a law to prevent doctors from sticking sharp objects into the skulls of partially-delivered babies to suck their brains out and kill them? That would have been unthinkable. But people think they should be able to do that. What does that say about the value of human life? And if Darwinism is correct, then there is no qualitative difference between humans and animals, just a difference of degree.

Yes, Daniel and his friends did well on a vegetarian diet. But there's no hint in the text that he did that because he thought it wrong to eat meat. The Babylonians' meat could very well have been obtained as a part of idol worship.

The bottom line is that we have been given permission to eat any living (non-human) thing. Animals don't have the same "rights" we have. To make a case that animals shouldn't be used for food because they have a right not to, requires a reason for such a right. On what do you base such a right?

Rick Wade

“Is Reiki Occultic?”

I recently pulled up your website when a friend of mine told me she has a counseling center that practices Reiki. Wondering what Reiki was, I began to search it out. Despite all the Christian voices that support it, I refuse to buy into it, and I feel it is the Holy Spirit working in me. I emailed my friend and told her of my concerns. One of her responses was, “In my mind healing is ultimately the result of God’s love, whether it is a doctor doing a heart transplant or a Reiki master transmitting love through themselves.” She feels it is “God’s action occurring in and through people.”

Is it the work of God to transport some energy through our hands to someone else? Doesn’t sound right. What it all sounds like to me is an occult type practice that people have tried to squeeze into a Christian box and it’s not quite fitting!

Thanks for your letter. I’m assuming you’ve already read my article on Reiki, but if not, here is a link to it: www.probe.org/reiki/.

I begin the article by briefly considering what Reiki is. I then look at whether or not there is scientific support for Reiki. I consider the success claims of Reiki, ask whether Christians should be concerned about it, and also whether all healing comes from God. If you haven’t yet read the article, I would encourage you to do so.

Like you, I think there are reasons for Christians to be concerned about Reiki. For one thing, as it’s often represented, it has a very different understanding of “God”

than biblical Christianity. Thus, when it claims that healing comes from "God," it is asserting something different from what a Christian would mean when he/she claims to have been healed by God. Second, the emphasis on spirit guides should cause us concern. The Bible never tells us to seek a spirit guide, but often warns us of deceptive and demonic spirits. Third, the Bible doesn't talk about a universal life force energy which we can learn to manipulate for health and healing. This sort of language is very foreign to a biblical worldview and is only at home (really) in an Eastern worldview, or one influenced by Eastern thought.

For these reasons and others (spelled out in my article), I think it's a mistake to get involved with Reiki. My perspective would really be the same as yours. Reiki sounds like "an occult type practice that people have tried to squeeze into a Christian box and it's not quite fitting."

I would gently challenge your friend to consider the many ways in which Reiki beliefs and practices seem so foreign (and even contrary) to the teachings of the Bible. For a bible-believing Christian, Reiki seems like a difficult practice to justify.

I hope this helps a bit. Please see my article for a bit more information.

Shalom in Christ,

Michael Gleghorn

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Rick Wade

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“What is the Role of the Church in Women Battering?”

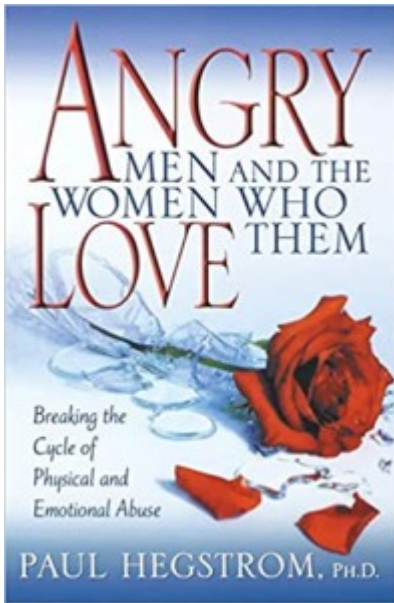
What is the role of the church in women battering?

First, let me recommend my colleague Kerby Anderson’s article [Abuse and Domestic Violence](#). The final section has a segment called “What the Church Can Do.”

Also, I would respectfully suggest that the role of the church is to challenge battering husbands that their actions are sin and hold them accountable for their behavior, and to provide emotional and physical support to the woman until the home is safe again. The woman and those in church leadership would know it is safe when the offender evidences a changed heart resulting in changed behavior. And a changed heart usually only happens in the context of community, in this case male community, where a small group of men will, in love and commitment, “get in his face” to challenge his wrong thinking, help identify the anger fueling his rage against his wife, and encourage him to move into a deeper relationship with God.

The best specific answer to this question I’ve heard is the policy of church leadership to meet with the husband and wife, to confront the husband in love: about his responsibility to love and cherish his wife as Christ loves the church (Eph. 5:25–29), about the importance of using his strength to serve his wife, not hurt or threaten her, and to live with her in an understanding way, honoring her as a weaker vessel (1 Peter 3:7). Then—and this is extremely important—the husband is warned that if he tries to retaliate in any way, whether by force or even threatening to hurt his wife, she is to call the elders and tell them. And they will take action, either removing her from the home to safety or moving his stuff out so she can stay in the home. And they promise that retaliation will not be tolerated: if she doesn’t press charges for the

domestic violence, they will. Assault and battery is not just a sin; it's a crime.



I know that in many (if not most) churches, those in leadership don't know what to do other than tell the wife "pray harder and submit." (If that had worked, she wouldn't need intervention!) An excellent resource for understanding the dynamics of an abusive husband is Paul Hegstrom's book *Angry Men and the Women Who Love Them*, which is written by a repentant, recovered abuser. And pastor, by the way!

I hope you find this helpful.

Sue Bohlin

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“What Does The Bible Say About Pregnancy Resulting from Premarital Sex?”

I have a question about premarital sex and marriage, and I would like to use Bristol Palin as an example. She and her boyfriend are both very young, and, of course, they had premarital sex. Now they are getting married. I think this is a good thing. But, I was wondering if the Bible has anything to say about this kind of situation? If a couple has a premarital sex and pregnancy follows, should the couple get

married, or is it different in each case?

If there's a verse or even a principle that addresses this topic specifically in the Bible, I've never come across it. I think that the solution will be different in each case. For example, it would be a disaster for some people to get married; in those cases, I think the best thing, the solution most honoring to God and to the baby, would be to give the baby up for adoption into a family who would provide a much more stable, loving home environment. Or, if there's a stable, loving extended family to help raise the baby, *that* can be the right solution. In other cases, the couple got the order of things wrong, but they marry and go on to create a healthy, God-honoring family.

So no, there is no biblical one-size-fits-all solution or principle. Living out the command to "love your neighbor as you love yourself," particularly the best way to love the "baby-neighbor," will look different in different situations.

Sue Bohlin

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"It's Unfair for God to Put Children in Muslim Families"

If salvation is free for anyone who receives Jesus Christ as his personal saviour, then how about a child who is born into a Muslim family. He or she will not have a chance to receive salvation because of the traditional faith from their parents. So it is not fair for God to put this child in the Muslim

family.

The timing of your question is one of those “God things” that make me smile. I was ready to reply with what I know to be true, that God is bigger than and not limited by the circumstances of someone’s birth, when I had the pleasure of sitting down to talk with a man who grew up in Iran, the son of devout Muslim parents, but who became a Christian. Let me tell you his story.

Ibrahim (not his real name) was very depressed, assaulted by what he calls “evil thoughts” pushing suicide as his solution. One night he lay in his bed, looking at the ceiling and said to God, “What have I done to You? I’ve lost my wife, my children, my business, my fortune. I’ve lost everything. What did I ever do to You to deserve this mistreatment?”

Immediately, he heard God’s voice inside his head: “Don’t you see? I rescued you from that woman. She was trying to take your life.” (And indeed, he found out later that this same woman, before taking him to the cleaners, had poisoned her first husband.)

Ibrahim knew beyond a shadow of a doubt that he had heard from God, and he sat bolt upright in bed, swinging his legs onto the floor. At that moment, a single drop of sweat trickled from the back of his neck down his spine, and as it traveled down his back he felt all the energy and power drain out of him. He was a limp dish rag, unable to stand, much less walk or do anything else. He was suddenly aware that he was physically as powerless and needy as he was spiritually.

He prayed, “I need help! Send me angels!”

Within days, as an answer to his prayer, he met a Christian woman who befriended him and shared her faith with him. She basically tutored him in Christianity, explaining that Jesus is the Son of God who died on the cross for Ibrahim’s sins and was raised from the dead three days later.

One night, he had a dream. He was standing in a room with several other people when Jesus walked in and stood about 12 feet away from him, radiating strength and love and acceptance. Ibrahim was so excited! He said, "Jesus! What are You doing here?" and Jesus said, "I came to talk to you." All Ibrahim could think about—in his dream—was that he wanted Jesus to hug him. So he asked Jesus if he could hold Him and hug Him, but Jesus disappeared. . . and Ibrahim woke up.

The moment he awakened, he knew he was washed. He opened his heart to Jesus and became a Christian. He told all his friends of his experience, and they laughed derisively at him. But the reality that he had met Jesus and had become a new man—"a new, *joyful* man," he told me—was so much stronger than his friends' ridicule that it truly didn't matter to him.

Ibrahim delighted to tell me the differences between Christianity and Islam, how Islam is a "religion of the sword," full of force and fear, but Christianity is a religion of relationship, of receiving and returning God's love and delight. He loves the freedom that we have as Christians, freedom to make choices that are absent in Islam. He loves how Jesus has changed his heart, enabling him to forgive the people who hurt him deeply and love the people God brings across his path.

This is an illustration of how and why a child who grows up in a Muslim home is not hopeless. God tells us in Ecclesiastes 3:11 that He has planted eternity in our hearts, and in Romans 1:19-20 He tells us that men are without excuse because He has given us clear evidence of Himself, both within ourselves (per Ecclesiastes) and in His creation.

So people are aware that there is a God to whom we are all accountable, and that God reveals Himself to people directly, through His children, and through His word.

In the Muslim world, we're hearing more and more stories of

people coming to faith in Jesus through dreams and visions.
Praise God!

Sue Bohlin

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“How Do I Fill the Void of Loneliness to Fight Sexual Temptation?”

When I saw the question: [“My Wife is Seriously Ill: Does That Mean No More Sex Forever?”](#) and the answer, it touched me deeply and filled me with great resolve to be celibate as God commands. When I read “when God has made it off limits for some people,” I knew that was speaking to me and it was a great blessing but it brought up a very important question.

I’ve lived a life of service and have come to accept that it is not in God’s plan for me to be married. But I’ve only recently come to understand that it was my deep loneliness that was instrumental in bringing me to sins of a sexual nature. Sins of masturbation, homosexuality and cross-dressing.

My question is: How can those of us who have sinned by doing things of a sexual nature fill the void of loneliness so we may better break free from the acts of homosexuality, masturbation, and other sexual sins?

You know, men like you are my heroes for your willingness to face the dark corners of your soul and invite God to be the God of Light in those dark corners so that you can bring glory

to Him in every place of your being!!

What I have learned from years of ministry to those dealing with unwanted homosexuality is that the aching void of loneliness is addressed by developing emotionally healthy relationships with other people (especially godly, non-erotic same-sex relationships) in the Body of Christ. God's plan is for us to experience connection with other believers, such as David and Jonathan, who experienced a deep, real, God-glorifying same-sex friendship (and of whom we are told, their hearts were "knitted together"—by God, presumably). If there is a men's ministry in your church, or if you can find a place to make connection with other men especially, and with other believers in your church, that will help with the loneliness issue.

At the same time, it's important to have a plan for something ELSE to do when your flesh is raging (and you will experience greater temptation during times of stress). The key is to pre-decide on an activity that is incompatible with masturbation, cruising and cross-dressing—something like going for a run. It makes a huge difference to have a plan PLUS an accountability partner that you can call when you're struggling with temptation. I pray you will find one.

Are you familiar with Joe Dallas' excellent book *Desires in Conflict*? He can help you understand the dynamics of the homosexual struggle and how God brings healing.

Also, there is a free online support group at Living Hope Ministries You can find connection with other men who are learning to be overcomers in the same struggle. Most are not cross-dressers, but all struggle with homosexual attractions. It's a safe place to be real and find strong support.
<http://forums.livehope.org>

The Lord bless you and keep you today!

Sue Bohlin

“Cloning Could Help So Many People”

I am intrigued by the possibilities of cloning. Is human cloning possible? Could we use it on nearly extinct animals? What would be the risks of cloning, and if it were a success what might be the outcome?

I am interested in this because I think that cloning should be allowed to go ahead because it could one day help a lot of people. I would like to know as much information as you have on genetic cloning, so that I can gain an understanding of it and how it works. We would also have the ability to feed the starving children in Africa and other third world countries.

I am intrigued by the possibilities of cloning. Is human cloning possible? Could we use it on nearly extinct animals?

Human cloning is not possible at this time. Cloning to preserve endangered species is counter-productive since cloning produces genetically identical organisms. Endangered species usually suffer from a lack of genetic diversity. Cloning only makes the problem worse.

What would be the risks of cloning, and if it were a success what might be the outcome?

Cloning produces a nearly identical genetic copy of the original by taking the nucleus of a cell from an organism and placing inside an egg cell of the same species. The egg needs

to “reprogram” the original cell’s DNA to perform embryonic functions. The risks currently are that this process is not always complete and the organism dies at various stages of development, or it is born deficient in some way. Some scientists believe that all clones are genetically handicapped in some way but some are able to survive, but marginally.

I am interested in this because I think that cloning should be allowed to go ahead because it could one day help a lot of people.

We don’t really know yet what cloning could do for anybody. At the moment there are only hopes and wild dreams.

I would like to know as much information as you have on genetic cloning, so that I can gain an understanding of it and how it works.

I have several articles on our website. Check there first:
<http://www.probe.org/faith-and-science/bioethics/>

If we were to be able to clone cows it would mean that we would not have a loss of meat production.

Cloning cows is more expensive than normal reproduction. Currently only bulls are cloned to make more copies of good genetic stock for normal animal husbandry purposes.

We would also have the ability to feed the starving children in Africa and other third world countries.

Unfortunately, cloning will not answer this problem.

I hope you find this helpful.

Respectfully,

Ray Bohlin, Ph.D.

