

Covenant Community Church
Teen Group SS 28 Aug 1994

SOME QUESTIONS ASKED BY TEENS

1. What about incest? Was it OK in the OT but not today?

OT in fact has major prohibitions against incest (Lev 18:1-18; Lev 20:10-21), which are carried on by implication in NT (note 1 Cor 5); not a great concern when there was no one but relatives to marry (early Genesis) and not always punished in narrative sections.

2. What about fossils?

They really exist; they give every appearance of being remains of plants and animals that once lived on earth. Xns debate over their age, but they do not look like they were laid down only a few thousand years ago in a one-year flood.

3. Do people die in the Millennium?

So it appears; see Isa 65:17-25, Zech 14:16-19; certainly at end, Rev 20:7-9.

4. Judgment: who is involved, when, where, etc.?

Xns debate exactly how many judgments there are and when they will occur. There is at least one, at the end of the millennium, sketched in Rev 20:11-15, usually called the "great white throne" judgment. I think this is the same event as narrated in Ps 50 and Matt 25:31-46. That Xns will have to answer for what they have done with their lives is indicated in 2 Cor 5:10.

5. Define "adultery."

The Greek word (*moicheuo*) usually translated "adultery" or "to commit adultery" refers to having sexual relations with someone else's wife. The broader term for sexual sin (*porneuo*) is usually translated "to commit fornication" or "to commit sexual immorality" and covers any sexual activity outside marriage and all the perversions forbidden by Scripture.

6. Assurance: can we lose our salvation?

Those who are really saved cannot lose their salvation (e.g., John 10:27-29; 5:24; Rom 8:28-30). However, it is possible for a person to think he/she is saved and be mistaken. So Scripture calls upon us to make our calling and election sure (2 Pet 1:4-11; 1 Jn 5:13).

7. Where did God come from?

God has always existed and therefore did not "come from" anywhere (Ps 90:1-2). Either something is eternal, or something can come into existence without a cause. The Bible indicates (and scientific evidence agrees) that the universe has not always existed.

8. Who is fighting the Battle of Armageddon? World vs. who? Is it nuclear?

The "battle of Armageddon" may be a bad name for a battle that actually takes place at Jerusalem. The staging area for Antichrist's troops is apparently at Armageddon (Rev 16:12-16). The battle appears to be at Jerusalem (Rev 19:11-21; Zech 14:1-15). The "kings of the earth" and "all the nations" are gathered against "the armies of heaven" (presumably both returning believers and angels) and Israelites. Don't know what the Antichrist and his armies will try to use, but Jesus will destroy them with a command (the sword coming from his mouth). Not sure what weapons angels and believers use.

9. Why does God talk in riddles, parables, and not in "black and white"?

Most of what God says is pretty straightforward. But when people want to play games with what he has said, God will oblige them by letting them get tangled up in trying to figure out his riddles, parables, etc. (see Matt 13:10-17).

10. Is it a sin to lie in order to save a life?

Depends on who is lying to save whose life. If we lie by denying we are Xns when telling the truth would endanger our life, we are certainly sinning. However, God instructed Samuel (1 Sam 16:1-5) to give a different reason for his visit to Bethlehem so that Saul would not find out. This is similar to what Rahab did at Jericho (Josh 2:1-21) and the midwives in Egypt Ex 1:15-20).

11. Garden of Eden: is it still here on earth? Will we be able to go there?

Not still here on earth; we have pretty detailed satellite photos of the whole place. Perhaps destroyed by the Flood, or just by passage of time. The tree of life will be restored to the New Jerusalem (Rev 22:1-2).

12. Can you go to hell and then change your mind and go to God?

Though a number of people would like to think this is the case, there is no biblical warrant for it. See Matt 25:46 and Lk 16:19-31. It may well be that people in hell will prefer to be there rather than repent and submit to God.

13. Who is going to rule the Lake of Fire?

God. Notice how God puts the fallen angels in hell awaiting the judgment (2 Pet 2:4); assigns an angel to put Satan in the bottomless pit (Rev 20:1-3); how He sends people to the Lake of Fire on the basis of His judgment (Matt 25:41-46; Rev 20:11-15). Certainly Satan will not rule there; he will be the chief person being punished.

14. Why did God create Lucifer, if he knew he was going to fall?

Taking "Lucifer" to be Satan (there is some argument about this), the reason for God creating Satan is presumably similar to his reason for creating Adam and Eve (whom he also knew were going to fall). God, like a good story writer, has purposes more important than the comfort of his creatures or even his own comfort. The story of this world tells us a great deal about (1) how terrible sin is, (2) what it is like to be in rebellion

against God, (3) what a cost God had to pay to be able to forgive us and still remain just, (4) how much he loved us in order to be willing to pay this cost, (5) how great it is to be forgiven...

15. If you live by faith, why did God perform miracles?

Faith is trust in God. Miracles function to show that a prophet (or such) is not just making up his story. They don't by themselves guarantee the prophet is from God, since Satan can do miracles of a sort. Miracles are not opposed to faith. Nor is faith opposed to reason. We should try to understand as much as we can about who God is and how he works, realizing at the same time that we won't understand it all. Faith is not only used to "fill in the gaps" where we don't understand, but also to trust God when he is taking us through difficult circumstances. In fact, the need for faith will apparently remain even after we see God face-to-face, when we understand far more than now, and when we will not be going through difficulties (1 Cor 13:8-13).

16. What do angels look like?

Don't really know what they actually look like. When they make appearances to humans, they have a human form. See the many incidents in OT and NT. The cherubim and seraphim of Exodus, Ezekiel and Revelation have wings and several different sorts of faces, but we don't know that these are angels. There is no explicit remark in Scripture that angels have wings.

17. Are you isolated in hell?

Don't know. The rich man seems to be isolated in Hades (Luke 16:19-31), but he can talk with Abraham. The nations in Sheol are pictured in Ezk 32:18-32 as responding to Pharaoh when he is cast down there. We don't know for sure what in these pictures is literal and what figurative.