

Miscellaneous Questions

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[0:00] Just make sure we understand in case some of these are you know maybe someone in here has asked one of these questions I'm not minimizing their importance.

! They're good questions and but I think they're answers that can be or questions that can be easily answered. Quickly answered. The first one is in reference to Isaiah 520 and you can go ahead and turn to that passage. I would like for you to because we're going to look at it and I want to say a few things about it so we understand the context of the passage in question and the question may seem a little odd to you.

But here it is exactly the way it was asked. When is sin good? Now that's going to make a little sense maybe once we look at the verse of Scripture and it's verse 20.

Let me just go ahead and read it and then talk a little bit about the context of the larger text, the chapter specifically.

Verse 20 says, Woe to those who call evil good and good evil or we might say sin good. Those who might call sin good and good sin would be saying the same thing.

[1:27] So you see where the question is coming from. Who put darkness for light and light for darkness? All right. Now, you know, it is an easy question to answer. And so I could answer it this way.

When is sin good? And I would say never, never. That's pretty, pretty quick answer, isn't it?

Let's go ahead, though, and just consider a little bit about the text, the larger text. Specifically, verses 8 through 25.

That's one block of the larger text that are usually referred to as the woe oracles. The woe oracles. Not woe as in stop, but woe as in you're in big trouble.

W-O-E. Woe. These are the woe oracles. And their reasons, actually what they represent are reasons why God is justified in destroying Judah or sending judgment upon God's people Judah.

[2:36] Judah, of course, being the southern kingdom. He's dealing with that time period of the divided kingdom, Israel in the north, Judah in the south. And he is going to send judgment upon them.

And here's why. And so he gives all these reasons in these chapters. In fact, if you look at verse 25, then you can see this very clearly.

Verse 25 says, Therefore the anger, therefore, therefore meaning everything I've said to this point. All these woes. Woe, woe, woe, woe. You can kind of spot those as you just glance through the scripture.

He says, therefore, the anger of the Lord is aroused against his people. He has stretched out his hand against them and stricken them. And the hills trembled. Their carcasses were as refuse in the midst of the streets.

For all this, for all this, all these things, his anger is not turned away, but his hand is stretched out still. So this is God's judgment upon Judah.

[3:39] And the woes, and there are many of them, we're not going to look at them, but there are many of them. The woes represent his justification for sending judgment upon them.

And one of the woes is there in verse 20. The one I just read a moment ago. Woe to those who call evil good and good evil. Alright?

Very clear, isn't it? It describes, obviously, the, I guess we might, it describes an immoral society. In fact, that is the quintessential definition of an immoral culture or society. A society that has evolved morally or immorally to a point where they call good evil and evil good.

Now, do you know any society like that in the world today? No, we're living more. Okay. Alright. In essence, it's simply redefining sin, isn't it?

[4:52] Or maybe even worse than that, obviously, it is explaining away what the Bible clearly teaches to be sin.

And instead of calling it sin, now we call it something good. Now, can you think of any examples of that in our society today?

Alternative lifestyle. Alright, alternative lifestyle. In fact, I just heard something today, some commentary on, you know, this don't ask, don't tell policy.

And, you know, that's one particular, quote, alternative lifestyle. Or, as it is commonly referred to today, those who have a certain sexual orientation.

Now, that's not calling it sin. Actually, it is defining it as something good. It may not be good for you, but it's good for so and so because they have a certain sexual orientation.

[6:00] That's a clear example of a particular moral activity or moral viewpoint that the Bible calls sin that many in our society are now calling good.

Right? Can you think of another? You know, I started watching the program and didn't realize I was watching, so I turned it off and I realized what was going on.

But the program where you deal with a couple and the husband and the wife had an agreement. If one of them wanted to have another sex part of it, it was fine and dandy.

And in this particular one, the husband brought another woman home and the wife was introduced to her. And she went up to another bedroom, another room, and left them too.

And they knocked it off, so I don't know what to transpire after that. But I couldn't believe that.

There's no telling. There's no telling. I can't believe that. That's practicing. There's nothing wrong with that, you know. Yeah. Well, of course not.

[7:03] All right. Well, the whole issue of, you know, let's call it the act of marriage taking place outside the bounds of marriage.

Or without, as I heard several years ago, in fact a bunch of years ago when I was just a young adult. And Sherry and I had joined a particular church, and it was even before we had any kids. And I'm sitting in there in a Sunday school class, and one of the fellows there was a lawyer. And we were talking about premarital sex.

But he used the term, without benefit of clergy. Without benefit of clergy. So now we have a good and a growing number of citizens in this society that have come to the conclusion that the act of marriage, all right, sex, is okay outside the context of lawful marriage.

That, in fact, it's not only okay if you choose that, it's even very healthy for you. And so there are those who would advocate that kind of activity taking place among teenagers.

[8:35] That this would be a good preparation for them. And they need to learn these things, experience these things. Ridiculous. That is, woe to them who call evil good.

All right, so there's another example. Whether it's outside the context of marriage or some weird kind of perverted type of mindset, even for those who are married.

It's ridiculous. You still haven't named some of the more obvious ones. Right to life. All right, right to life. On both ends. Euthanasia as well as abortion.

On both ends of that issue. And it is, in a sense, the same issue. The sanctity of human life. All right? It is a good thing to end a life if, in a set of circumstances.

Whether it's the unborn, or whether it is the aged, or not even aged, but those who are experiencing, you know, just a terminal type of illness and their quality of life is not only, not only has it no future, but it is filled with pain and affliction that it would be a good thing then to do what the Bible calls sin.

[9:59] All right, so those are two couple of obvious ones. And I'm sure we could come up with many, many others. But this is the issue here. Now, God dealt severely with His people, Judah.

He dealt very severely with His people, Israel, before them, when they got away from Him and began to call good, evil, and evil good.

Along with a lot of other things. And you can read all those woes some other time if you want to. So, the answer to the question is, when is sin good? Never. Never. Never. And God deals very, very deliberately, and He deals very severely.

If not in this life, certainly after this life is over, He deals severely with those who call good, evil, and evil good. The second question is related to the implications of 2 Samuel 12, 10-15.

You can go ahead and turn to that passage if you'd like to. And here's the question. You have it printed there for you.

[11:15] And this is exactly how it was written on my sheet. The story implies, actually it does more than implies, it says very explicitly, but that the baby of David in Bathsheba died as a punishment to the sinning pair.

How could a loving God do such a terrible thing, especially when God says children should not be put to death for their parents' sin? Alright, let's look at the passage. And right off the bat, just with the question itself, you're certainly familiar with the event here, what has happened here in chapter 12.

And you know that David sinned with Bathsheba, and of course the prophet Nathan comes to David and tells a little parable. Actually, it's not a parable, he tells it as if this was a real life thing going on in his kingdom, and David is angered.

And then Nathan points his bony finger, I just kind of imagine in my mind that he had a long bony finger, you know. He points it right in David's nose as you're the man.

And then David repents, he's very contrite. But there's judgment upon David, and not just direct judgment, and this is where we need to make a distinction.

[12:41] It's not always easy to make the distinction, but not only direct judgment upon him, but also the permission for the natural consequences to take place as a result of his sin.

And a sin, by the way, that was much deeper and broader than just simply the act of adultery and murder. Adultery of Bathsheba and his, you know, being the key instrument in the murder of Uriah, her husband.

The sin was much deeper than that in his life. And so here, let's just look at the passage real quickly. Starting with, well, verse 9.

Why have you despised, is what Nathan says to David, why have you despised the commandment of the Lord to do evil in his sight? You have killed Uriah, the Hittite, with the sword.

Now David didn't do that directly, but he's king. And he put Uriah up there at the front lines, and he knew that because he knew Uriah that he would likely be killed.

[13:48] And so he's responsible for his death, his murder. You've taken his wife to be your wife, and have killed him with the sword of the people of Ammon.

Now therefore, now therefore, here are the consequences. The sword shall never depart from your house, because you've despised me, and have taken the wife of Uriah, the Hittite, to be your wife. And we can just go ahead and remember how this was fulfilled. Not specifically, but I'll just remind you that David's sons, Amnon, Absalom, and Adonijah, they all died shortly after this, died violent deaths.

The sword will never depart from your house. And then he goes on, Thus says the Lord, Behold, I will raise up adversity against you from your own house.

And I will take your wives before your eyes, and give them to your neighbor, and he shall lie with your wives in the sight of this son. This is very severe.

[15:01] And this is fulfilled through his son Absalom. You can read about that in 2 Samuel 16, verse 21-22, where Absalom not only, of course, rebels against his father and attempts to take his kingdom, and really, in effect, does for a short period of time, take his throne.

And Absalom not only dies a terrible death, but before that happens, by the recommendation of one of his counselors, he also goes in and literally rapes David's concubines, obviously, his wives.

And so that all took place. Now, is this a direct judgment? That is, did God make Absalom do that? No, He didn't.

Of course not. Absalom's responsible for his sin, and he certainly came to a very violent end. And God's judgment was upon him. But God did allow the natural consequences of David kind of treating God's law willy-nilly.

And so David had a heart after God, and he was a great ruler, and so forth. He was kind of, you know, hit and miss on obeying God's law.

[16:28] He kind of bent the rules a little bit. And his sons, obviously, would be observing these things. And so the kind of the natural consequences of his sons going also the way of their father in some things, and specifically Absalom doing what he did, was a natural consequence of the father's sin.

And just as much as, in the same way that fathers today may make certain decisions in their lives, spiritual decisions, life decisions, that their families suffer, ultimately will suffer for, some of them severely.

And some family members and children will make decisions in life because they have observed the decisions their father made, and the effects of that.

And so these are not direct judgments in that God caused, directly caused these things to happen, but God allowed these natural consequences to take place as a part of His judgment.

And so David, well, in verse 12, for you did it secretly, but I will do this thing before all Israel, before the Son. As a matter of fact, that's almost verbatim, what is said in 2 Samuel 16.22, when Absalom raped his father's concubines.

[17 : 55] It was done before all Israel. They all saw this. Verse 13, So David said to Nathan, I have sinned against the Lord. And Nathan said to David, The Lord also has put away your sin.

You shall not die. I think that's an indication of the truth of David's repentance. And God had mercy upon him.

However, verse 14, and here's the passage primarily that the question comes from. However, because of this deed, what David did, he's king.

Now, let's set this squarely in our minds. David's king of all Israel. Great king. Mighty warrior king. And prior to this point, when he sinned with Bathsheba and so forth, David had won many, many battles.

In fact, at this point, the kingdom was pretty much in rest. They had peace. And because of the success of David as a king and as a military leader.

[19 : 05] And so, he's king, known by all the nations around. They know because they have heard of Israel's God, Yahweh.

And so, because of what David did, that also is known abroad. Because of that, that deed, you have, Nathan said, you have given great occasion to the enemies of the Lord to blaspheme.

To blaspheme. Blaspheme who? Not David. But God Himself. Now, ask yourself, how can God let that go?

Let the other nations see this king, King David. The other nations see what this king has done before his God and allow that to go unpunished.

To allow no justice to be served. That would give them occasion to blaspheme the one true God, Yahweh. So that's why this is put, what happens next, is put in connection with the occasion for Israel's enemies to blaspheme God.

[20 : 33] Why? Then he says, next, the child also who is born to you shall surely die. Those are put in connection here to prove, to be a testimony of the justice of God.

And you say, well, that's all fine and dandy, but my goodness, how could God do that to a poor innocent little newborn infant?

I don't really know how old the child was at the time, but very, very young. And we could go, you know, further in the text and remember the story how David fasted and prayed and he, you know, for the child to live and, but the child did not live.

We know that story. How could God do that? Well, the answer is I don't know. See, our problem is, and this is a very typical problem for us in our culture, in our day, to interject our thoughts on things, our cultural mores, and interject them, go back several thousand years and put them in the incident taking place here in the Bible, and it's difficult for us to reconcile the two.

And not only that, but because we're human and flesh and blood and we're not God, we try to put what seems fair in our minds and try to apply that to God and say, then, God is either not fair or He is fair.

[22 : 23] There's no clear answer. One thing is clear, at least to me, whereas these other elements of the justice, of God's judgment, are clearly consequential.

That is, God is allowing the consequences of His sin to take place. The death of this child born to Bathsheba, David and Bathsheba, it seems clear that this is a direct act of God.

And I just believe that because of how it's worded and its close connection with the concern that the enemies of Yahweh would blaspheme Him because of what David, his king, has done.

That God has exacted judgments so that they have no grounds to blaspheme Him. And apart from that, we'll just have to take it up with God when we get there.

You know, say, God, I don't understand this. And every one of us, you know, go back to the question, every one of us feels this same thing.

[23 : 35] You know, how could a loving God do such a terrible thing? And we could apply that same feeling to many other things we read about in the Old Testament especially, but even as we

go into some of the implications of biblical doctrine and how God acts and works.

And from an emotional standpoint and from a rational type of standpoint, especially coming from fallen human beings, we have a hard time reconciling.

That's why I believe or appreciate the word God that says without controversy, great is the mystery of godliness.

And quite frankly, we would really be in trouble if we understood everything about God. And we're never going to be able to do that. Alright, so maybe that answers that question.

Maybe not. But that's my answer anyway. Third, third question is a bit of I think a clarification of a disturbing passage of Scripture.

[24 : 51] Almost, if not more disturbing than the 2nd Samuel 12 passage, but in Psalm 137 verses 8 and 9, let me read it to you, where the psalmist writes, O daughter of Babylon, who are to be destroyed, that is, you're to be destroyed, happy, the one who repays you as you have served us, happy, the one who takes and dashes your little ones against the rock.

that's pretty disturbing. Well, you know what it's saying. Your little ones will be infants, your infants, your children.

And grabbing them by the ankles and whacking them against rocks and killing them, dashing them against the rocks. That's pretty serious.

And so what's going on here? Well, Psalm 137 as a whole context of it is a psalm written about really after the fact, but it's looking back to the time of Israel's captivity in Babylon.

You might guess that because Babylon is mentioned here and you know that Israel was a plundered and taken off into captivity and it was part of God's judgment of them.

[26 : 23] But that's what the psalm is about. And you can see it very clearly and some of this may be familiar to you by the rivers of Babylon.

There we sat down, yea, we wept. They're reflecting, the psalm is reflecting on the captivity in Babylon. We wept. when we remembered Zion. We remembered our land, our homeland.

We hung our harps upon the willows in the midst of it as we didn't play them anymore. For there those who carried us away captive asked of us a song, and those who plundered us requested mirth, saying, Sing us one of the songs of Zion.

And the answer, of course, is how shall we sing the Lord's song? In a foreign land. So you sense this, and then moving from there, the psalmist, this is not God speaking at this point, it's the psalmist speaking.

He says, If I forget you, O Jerusalem, let my right hand forget its skill. If I do not remember you, let my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth, if I do not exalt Jerusalem above my chief joy, it's kind of like Americans years ago said, remember the Alamo, you know, never forget that.

[27 : 50] Well, we have forgotten that, but we might say never forget 9-11, that kind of thing, but this is much deeper than that, of course.

So that's what psalmist saying, it says, remember, O Lord, against the sons of Edom. This is the first thing that he really is asking God to judge the Edomites.

The Edomites were Israel's next door neighbors. And prior to them being plundered by the Babylonians, they were allies together.

But when it looked like things weren't going to go well, the Edomites abandoned Israel, and in effect joined up with the Babylonians or at least they promised their support and the day of Jerusalem who said raise it, raise it, to its very foundation.

This is Edom talking, said, now they've defected to the Babylonians, get rid of these people, we'll let you go ahead and ransack them.

[28 : 58] And so the psalmist was saying, remember that. And then he moves to the Babylonians, daughter of Babylon, and I read this a moment ago, who are to be destroyed.

And you can turn to Jeremiah 51, don't turn to, I'm not going to go there, but there's a reference, Jeremiah 51, 54 is a reference to God's judgment, pretty lengthy reference to God's judgment of Babylon.

You know, someone might ask the question, well, I thought Babylon and their leading Israel, plunging them and taking them off into captivity was part of God's judgment.

Well, it was. God, God, God's doing there, but that didn't mean Babylon was going to get off scot-free with God.

God allowed them to do that. He could have stopped them, but He allowed them to do that. And God is going to exact tremendous judgment upon Babylon.

[29 : 58] Babylon. And we're just reading here at the end of the psalm just a little bit of the severity of that judgment on Babylon. Now, the point you need to see here or understand is this phrase, happy the one who repays you as you have served us.

And what the psalmist is referring to here is Deuteronomy 19:16, the principle of an eye for an eye, tooth for a tooth. And the implication here is that what's going to happen to you is what you did to us.

And so, it may seem terrible that someone would conquer the Babylonians and take their children and dash their heads against the rocks, but that's exactly what they did to Judah, to God's people. And God's going to require an eye for an eye on this. The other thing you need to notice is that the psalmist is not placing himself or Israel in the position of exacting this judgment.

They are deferring this judgment, this act of judgment to God. That God is going to exact judgment upon them.

[31 : 21] And so, don't get the idea that Israel is just going to be as wicked as the Babylonians. He says, happy the one who repays you. Not me, but the one who will repay you.

And I really believe the one here ought to be in capital O. I think it's a reference to Yahweh exacting this judgment. He's leaving the judgment to the Lord.

Alright? Now, one other thing I might add here is that, and this is kind of a side note, but it's interesting, that this rift between, severe rift between Israel, God's people, and Babylon, of course, is wrapped up in historical events, without a doubt, but it is symbolic, becomes symbolic, of the separation of the rift, or the conflict between the bride of Christ, and the great prostitute we read about in Revelation 17-21.

It really is symbolic of the rift between the church and the world, and the world. I think in the broader picture, and so it becomes symbolic of that.

But we get disturbed, and of course the one who was asking the question or clarification didn't really ask the question, just gave the passage. So I assume wanting clarification of what's going on here.

[33 : 04] We get all consumed. Here again, we make the same mistake. We interject our own sensibilities as civilized people, and we are.

I'm not debunking that, but we take those sensibilities and we interject them into a scripture that refers to an event that took place in a different culture, different time, and so forth.

But having said that, we are just as brutal in maybe a more sophisticated way, maybe in some sense if we really understand the processes of abortion today that take place, especially partial birth abortion, we are just as gruesome and uncivilized, if you want to put it in that way, just as wicked as this describes it, even more so, I think.

I don't know how many may have died in this fashion with Israel first and then with the Babylonians ultimately, but I dare say that as Americans we have brutalized countless millions more innocent children than ever would have taken place in this day.

So maybe our sensibilities, the problem of interjecting our sensibilities into Scripture is not the greater issue.

[34 : 43] The greater issue is for us to come to grips with our own modern day wickedness that is far worse than here. Alright, the last question, and it won't take long to answer this one.

The question is about the twelve disciples listed, and I've given you the passage list. There's where the list is given to us in those passages.

Here's the question, why don't we hear of any miraculous works from all the other disciples, i.e. Bartholomew, or later named Nathaniel, or referred to the Bible as Nathaniel, Thomas, Simon the Zealot, Philip, Thaddeus, and the other James, James the lesser.

And why don't we read about that during their time? It's kind of an interesting question. I might just point you to one of those lists, Matthew chapter 10, and verse 2, there's the list, not because I can prove anything necessary from the list.

But to answer the question in two ways. First of all, we know from Scripture that all of the apostles performed, were given power to perform many wonders and signs.

[36 : 15] All of them were. The fact that we don't read about it for all of them does not mean that it didn't happen. And we know that they did have that power from verse 1 of chapter 10.

And when he had called his 12 disciples to him, and later he lists them, he gave them power, we must assume all of them, he gave them power over unclean spirits to cast them out and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease.

And that's exactly what they did. And he commissioned them, sent them out a couple of occasions, and when they came back they even testified that even the devils were in subjection to them. Now, we don't read about all those instances. The Bible doesn't record it. But that doesn't mean that they didn't. The Bible is certainly a history book.

I mean, it is inaccurate in all of the history that it presents here, but it's not intended to be, first and foremost, a history book. The Bible is intended to detail God's plan of redemption and everything that's involved in that.

[37 : 35] So we need to consider that there's a plan. God, the Holy Spirit, has a plan from Genesis all the way through to the last word of Revelation, has a plan to unfold to redeem his lost children.

And so that's what the Bible is about. Also, you need to consider that the Bible is not about grandstanding of all the miraculous events that took place.

We must assume, you read through the New Testament, you read through the Gospels, and you have to assume that many, many things took place that were not recorded.

In fact, John even said that if even everything was written about Jesus, the whole world could not contain the book that it would require, in essence, is what he said.

Now, that's, I guess we would call hyperbole, in a sense. I mean, you don't write a book that's as big as the world. We understand the image there that's used, but the point is that not everything was written down.

[38 : 52] And the same thing would apply to all the apostles. And several of the apostles, well, two of them, were authors of Gospels.

of two of the Gospels. And they didn't write hardly, very much about their own experiences. Now, you would think that Matthew is writing his Gospel, and at that point when Jesus sent them out, you know, and then they came back, we don't know what they did during that time, and we understand some of what they did during that time, and many miraculous things were done, but Matthew didn't write a thing about it.

Now, if you and I were writing a Gospel, and we experienced that, we would most likely take up a good portion of our book to detail our exploits.

But these men were, of course, under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit, and they wrote as God guided them to write, and it wasn't about promoting themselves and the things they did. And so you have, you know, in the list of the apostles there, you know, you have James, well, you have Bartholomew, who's Nathaniel, you have James, the son of Alphaeus, you have Judas, here named, surnamed Thaddeus, which was probably a nickname, but his name was Judas, son of James, and you've got Simon the Zealot, or Simon the Canaanite, and the Bible, other than giving us their names, and with a couple of them, like Nathaniel, and I think even Simon, we have one little phrase of something they spoke, and that's all we have about them.

We don't know anything else about them, other than what we might surmise from their names, you know, like Simon the Canaanite, or Zealot, we know a little bit about his political affiliations, religious affiliations, which in those days were the same thing, we know some things like that, if you've ever read John MacArthur's book on the Twelve Apostles, what's the name of it, Twelve Extraordinary Men, and I recommend that book, it's a tremendous book, but even John MacArthur would be in several places that we just don't know a lot, and some of what he writes, some of it traditions, some of it we can kind of read between the lines, maybe some things we can figure out, but we don't have many details, and the point is, it's not about the Twelve Apostles, it's not about them, it's about Jesus, and about the plan to save the world through his sacrifice on the cross.

[41 : 49] Thank you.