



Contradictions (Part III): Does God Contradict Himself?

1 Corinthians 14:33: (NASB) *For God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.*



We all need foundational principles to believe in and solid ground on which to stand. Human nature thrives where such a firm base can be found. Achievement can flourish when there is unflinching belief in a relationship, the science of a matter or one's own talent. For Bible-believing Christians, this foundation does not get any more significant than the unwavering character of God Himself. All we stand for relies on the truth of who God is and what drives Him. It is this very foundation of God's own character that many critics boisterously attack. Accusations fly, claiming the Bible itself condemns our God. They claim it shows contradictions in His actions, flaws in His character and general confusion. Let's be honest. There are several Scriptures that certainly seem to reveal contradictory views about God. What do those texts really say, and are we willing to accept truth over opinion?

Our first two parts in this Contradictions series covered several important issues, including these pertaining specifically to God:

Episode 1072: Contradictions Part I - Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

- Does God change His mind or always keep it the same?

Episode 1076: Contradictions Part II - Does the Bible Contradict Itself?

- Does God promote or accept human sacrifice?
- Does God teach us to kill or not to kill?
- Does God justify lying? Does God make people lie? Does God send out lies to trip people up?

There are many people who spend a lot of time and energy trying to discredit the Bible. There are many videos, blogs and books highlighting supposed contradictions in the Bible that range from the academic to the laughable. Christian Questions has assembled a team of volunteers who search out these contradictions so we can address as many of them as we can in various episodes. We are doing a series over the next four weeks to bring to light what we found. This week is all about contradictions having to do with God. Next week will be issues around Jesus' resurrection. Then various contradictions found in the book of Genesis, and finally those about Jesus' life and teachings. If our listeners have contradictions they want discussed, please let us know by emailing us at inspiration@christianquestions.com or through our website.

We are not hoping to reach those hard-core atheists who look down on Christians for our beliefs. We want to present logic, reasoning and Scripture to an audience who can say, "I am willing to listen if it is logical. I am willing to pursue the information in order to understand."



What would you say, *Stephen Fry - On God, Friendly Atheist - Patheos*

- Suppose what Oscar believed in as he died, in spite of your protestations, suppose it's all true, and you walk up to the pearly gates and you are confronted by God. What will Stephen Fry say to him, her, or it?
- I will basically, I'll say, "Bone cancer in children? What's that about? How dare you? How dare you create a world in which there is such misery that is not our fault. It's not right. It's utterly, utterly evil. Why should I respect a capricious, mean-minded, stupid God who creates a world which is so full of injustice and pain?" That's what I'd say.

One would think his attitude would be less arrogant after being miraculously raised from the dead!



Answer: God is ultimately the God of order; however, He often allows and uses confusion to serve His ultimate ends.

1 Corinthians 14:29-30,33: (NASB) ²⁹Let two or three prophets speak, and let the others pass judgment. ³⁰But if a revelation is made to another who is seated, the first one must keep silent... ³³for God is not a God of confusion but of peace, as in all the churches of the saints.

The order and peace in this verse is NOT referring to the world. It is regarding proper Christian behavior. The context of this refers to speaking in tongues. The Apostle Paul is giving instructions on how to edify and build up the congregation in knowledge and not just noise. They were misusing the gifts of the Spirit.



Genesis 11:1-4: (NASB) ¹Now the whole earth used the same language and the same words. ²It came about as they journeyed east, that they found a plain in the land of Shinar and settled there. (Nimrod and his descendants.) ³They said to one another, Come, let us make bricks. ⁴They said, Come, let us build for ourselves a city, and a tower whose top will reach into heaven, and let us make for ourselves a name, otherwise we will be scattered abroad over the face of the whole earth.

God needed the people to spread out and start populating the earth. The people disobeyed, built a tall tower and wanted to stay within the range of the tower.



But critics point to this text one chapter earlier:

Genesis 10:5: (NASB) *From these the coastlands of the nations were separated into their lands, every one according to his language, according to their families, into their nations.*

The “contradictions” so far are:

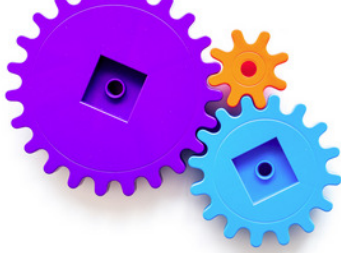
1. God is not the author of confusion, yet here He causes confusion by altering their languages, and
2. Genesis 10 says everyone had their own language and were separated. In Genesis 11 everyone has the same language and was staying together. It looks like it is out of sequence.

God was not pleased, as His instruction was for humanity to spread throughout the earth:

Genesis 11:7-9: (NASB) *⁷Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, so that they will not understand one another's speech. ⁸So the LORD scattered them abroad from there over the face of the whole earth; and they stopped building the city. ⁹Therefore its name was called Babel, because there the LORD confused the language of the whole earth.*

We will review some basic “Contradiction Principles.” We do not want people of faith to get thrown off their faith because someone comes up with a contradiction that does not make sense. We can use these when a similar situation comes up.

Contradiction Principle:



**Deduce when
FLASHBACK
is being used
as a literary device**

In literature, flashback is an occurrence in which a character remembers an earlier event that happened before the current point of the story. It fills in some details so we understand how they got where they are.

In chapter 10, we learn the nations were separated. In chapter 11, we learn how that was accomplished.

It is not out of order; it uses flashback to show the big picture, then the smaller details. This happens often in the Bible.

God used confusion to fulfill His will.

A God of confusion or order? Order! God’s mind and plan are profound and eternal. Let us be careful to NOT confuse a detail for a conclusion or a method for a result.

God used confusion because He told the people to spread out. This group did not. They were not doing what He said, so He made it so they would have to. He used confusion to accomplish spreading the people throughout the earth. Was this a bad thing? No. The people were in the wrong. They did not listen, and He corrected them. He is not a God of confusion, but confusion can be a tool.



The big picture about God would logically begin with the question, Is He a God of darkness or light?

Naturally as Christians, our response is God is unequivocally THE God of light. Having said that, there are Scriptures that can easily be seen as confusing what we consider to be a straightforward point. Our obligation and challenge is therefore simple - look at the Scriptures and find the harmony.



 **Wrong answer, Neil DeGrasse Tyson Mocks the Bible and God - Scientism Exposed by Celebrate Truth**

- *If you knew nothing about science and you read, say the Bible, the Old Testament, which in Genesis is an account of nature - that's what that is. And I say to you, "Give me your description of the natural world based only on this." You would say the world was created in six days and that stars are just little points of light, much lesser than the sun. And in fact, they can fall out of the sky, right, because that's what happens during the Revelation. The stars will fall out of the sky and land on earth. So, to even write that means you don't know what those things are. You have no concept of what the actual universe is. So, everybody who tried to make proclamations about the physical universe based on Bible passages got the wrong answer.*

(The original biblical language does not mean six literal 24-hours days. It means six periods of time. Revelation is a book of symbols and does not refer to actual stars.)



A scientist challenges God to a creation contest, as he believes he can create humanity in a better way. He comes before God and says, "I want to challenge you to a contest of creation." The scientist confidently reaches down to pick up a handful of dirt to get started. God says, "Use your own dirt."

God is light! Daniel, as he interprets Nebuchadnezzar's dream gives a powerful perspective:

Daniel 2:21-22: (NASB) ²¹*It is He who changes the times and the epochs; He removes kings and establishes kings...*²²*It is He who reveals the profound and hidden things; He knows what is in the darkness, and the light dwells with Him.*

God understands the dark and has the light of life come out from Him:

James 1:17: (NASB) *Every good thing given and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation or shifting shadow.*

This is clear, so where does the notion of dwelling in darkness come from?

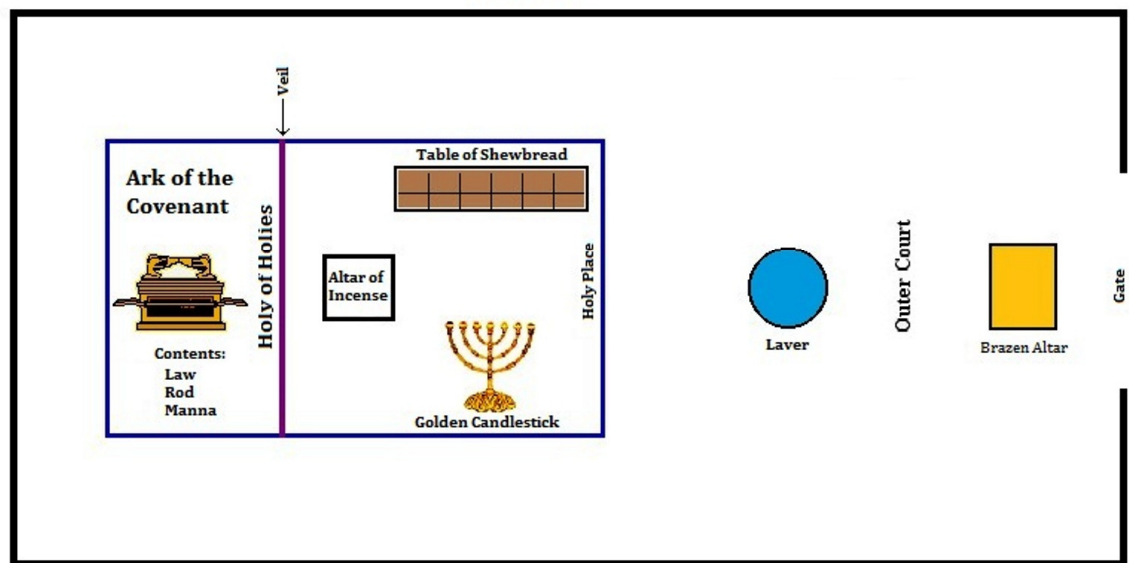
Leviticus 16:2: (NASB) *The LORD said to Moses, Tell your brother Aaron that he shall not enter at any time into the holy place inside the veil, before the mercy seat which is on the ark, or he will die for I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat.*

The Tabernacle was a portable tent-like structure where God dwelled with the Israelites. The Ark of the Covenant was in the room called the Most Holy or Holy of Holies. The smoke in that room came from the room next door, called the Holy. The high priest was to put incense on the Altar in the Holy and the smoke would rise up and go into the other compartment. The lid of the Ark was called the mercy seat and on it were two angels made from gold. There was only one source of light in the Most Holy - between the angels on the mercy seat.

The high priest would die if he looked at the light. The smoke obscured it, enabling him to offer the blood from the sacrifice. The smoke protected the priest from the brilliant light.

Moses' Tabernacle

Exodus 25



I will appear in the cloud over the mercy seat - this is not a cloud in the sky. It is a cloud from the smoke of the incense and was a protection for the high priest.

Solomon and others quote this particular manifestation of God's presence:

1 Kings 8:12-13: (NASB) ¹²*Then Solomon said, The LORD has said that He would dwell in the thick cloud. ¹³I have surely built you a lofty house, a place for Your dwelling forever.*

By this time, the portable Tabernacle was replaced by a permanent Temple structure. Solomon references this same cloud of protection.



This word *dwell* does mean to live - how do we explain it?

Exodus 13:21: (NASB) *The LORD was going before them in a pillar of cloud by day to lead them on the way, and in a pillar of fire by night to give them light, that they might travel by day and by night.*

Is God literally living inside the cloud? No. This is how He showed His presence. The cloud guided the Israelites by day, and by night it would turn into a pillar of fire so they would have light to travel the desert at night. This was a gift!

Nehemiah 9:19: (NIV) *Because of your great compassion you did not abandon them in the desert. By day the pillar of cloud did not cease to guide them on their path, nor the pillar of fire by night to shine on the way they were to take.*

The cloud was something visible they could see so they would know where to travel. It was the original GPS!

This was grace given to people who needed His direction. God is not three-dimensional. He was not "inside" the cloud. His presence was shown by these things as an assurance of His care.



God's presence is also shown by the clouds of trouble necessary to bring His kingdom:

Psalms 97:1-2,5-6: (NASB) *¹The LORD reigns, let the earth rejoice; let the many islands be glad. ²Clouds and thick darkness surround Him; righteousness and justice are the foundation of His throne....⁵The mountains melted like wax at the presence of the LORD, at the presence of the Lord of the whole earth. ⁶The heavens declare His righteousness, and all the peoples have seen His glory.*

This is not literal. This is a picture of trial and change. God will cause that change to bring about His kingdom. Trouble comes first. *The mountains melted like wax* - symbolically, mountains represent governments. The presence of God is coming upon the earth through great trouble. The present governments will fall so that Christ's government can take over.

More trouble:

Psalms 18:7,9,11: (NASB) (This Psalm also appears in 2 Samuel 22.) *⁷Then the earth shook and quaked; and the foundations of the mountains were trembling and were shaken, because He was angry...⁹He bowed the heavens also, and came down with thick darkness under His feet...¹¹He made darkness His hiding place, His canopy around Him, darkness of waters, thick clouds of the skies.*

Thick darkness under His feet - more trouble. God does not actually have feet hiding in darkness.

This is part of the misunderstanding people have when they try to pull apart Scripture. They take things grossly out of context leading to grossly inaccurate conclusions.

God is not "inside" darkness. He uses darkness and trouble as pictures of what will be necessary to permanently remove sin.



Through trouble God brings light:

Psalms 18:27-29: (NASB) ²⁷For you save an afflicted people, but haughty eyes You abase. ²⁸For You light my lamp; the LORD my God illumines my darkness. ²⁹For by you I can run upon a troop; and by my God I can leap over a wall.

God is the source of light.

Contradiction Principle:



PURPOSE

God uses various tools to accomplish His plan

People of faith can take heart that the Scriptures can hold up under examination. Have we ever hidden in darkness? Darkness is a tool for Him to use. It means He did not want to be seen. He is hiding in these cases because it is part of His eternal plan. There is nothing in these verses to imply God is evil or has a split personality.

A God of confusion or order? Order! God IS light. His presence is not bound by any earthly device. He does use the cover of darkness and trouble as a tool to bring ultimate righteousness and light.

God prohibits the creation of idols, yet in places He instructs His people to construct them. Why?

On the surface, this is a massive contradiction. We always talk about God's attitude towards His people as demanding their allegiance in a positive way. He wants us to be true to only Him because any other loyalty to any other higher power not in line with Him amounts to supporting corruption.

 **Fundamental or enlightened, Neil DeGrasse Tyson Mocks the Bible and God - Scientism Exposed by Celebrate Truth**

- So, what happened was when science discovers things and you want to stay religious, or you want to continue to believe that the Bible is unerring, what you would do is, you would say, "Well, let me go back to the Bible and reinterpret it." Then you say things like, "Oh, they didn't really mean that literally; they meant that figuratively." So, this whole sort of reinterpretation of how figurative the poetic passages of the Bible are came after science showed that this is not how things unfolded. And so, the educated religious people are perfectly fine with that. It's the Fundamentalists who want to say that the Bible is the literally literal truth of God and want to see the Bible as a science textbook. Enlightened religious people are not behaving that way. They're saying, "Science is cool; we're good with that," and, "Use the Bible to get your spiritual enlightenment and your emotional fulfillment."

We want to understand the Bible in the context and languages in which it was written, and the purpose of the writing. There are many scientific facts in Scripture that were not close to being known at the time of their writings. The list is long but includes the sun going around in an orbit and ocean currents.

CONTRADICTION -
or needing a
clear explanation?



Does God
Prohibit
Graven Images?

This next question is really good and at first glance definitely seems like a big contradiction. Does God prohibit graven images, or does He only allow certain ones that He likes? Is God arbitrary like we are?

NO IDOLS! Is there a difference between graven images and idols?

Exodus 20:3-6: (NASB) ³You shall have no other gods before Me. ⁴You shall not make for yourself an idol, or any likeness of what is in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the water under the earth. ⁵You shall not worship them or serve them; for I, the LORD your God, am a jealous God, visiting the iniquity of the fathers on the children, on the third and the fourth generations of those who hate Me, ⁶but showing lovingkindness to thousands, to those who love Me and keep My commandments.

Instruction for when the Israelites got to Canaan:

Deuteronomy 12:3: (NASB) You shall tear down their altars and smash their sacred pillars and burn their Asherim with fire, and you shall cut down the engraved images of their gods and obliterate their name from that place.

These false gods were to be obliterated.



What is the difference?
One is to make you smile
and the other is a false god!



In Exodus 20, the New American Standard Version says *idol*, but the King James calls it a *graven image*. A graven image is basically a carved thing; a representation. What is the difference between making a bobblehead of Rick vs. a golden calf? Are we allowed to make imagery as art? The Muslim faith will not use faces in their artwork; but rather, beautiful geometric patterns. Making artwork was not prohibited. The three verses need to be joined:

EXODUS 20:3-5

VERSE 3

**You shall
have no
other gods
before Me**

VERSE 4

**You shall
not make
for yourself
an idol or
any likeness**

VERSE 5

**You shall
not worship
them or
serve them**

We are not to make any representation of a god to be worshipped. The Canaanites in the previous Deuteronomy text were worshipping the goddess of fertility. They worshipped trees and poles representing the “queen mother.” This was forbidden for the Israelites.

Yet, God instructs the creation of a graven image here:

Exodus 25:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷You shall make a mercy seat of pure gold, two and a half cubits long and one and a half cubits wide. ¹⁸You shall make two cherubim of gold, make them of hammered work at the two ends of the mercy seat. ¹⁹Make one cherub at one end and one cherub at the other end; you shall make the cherubim of one piece with the mercy seat at its two ends.

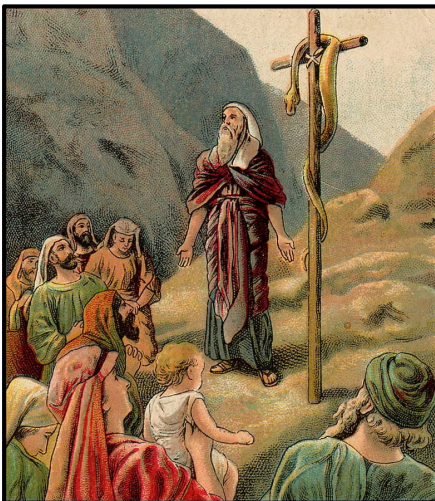


These angels were not made to be worshipped. The mercy seat showed God’s presence with His chosen people. At one time they brought the ark into a battle (1 Samuel 4:3) as a kind of talisman. Not only did they lose the battle, but the ark was taken by the enemy. God took it away from them because it was misused. The ark and its angels were not objects of worship. They were made as a representation of the presence of God.

God never intended for the people to see the Ark (but they knew it was there), and the priests were only to see it once a year when they entered the Holy of Holies. When the Tabernacle traveled through the wilderness, the Ark was under a very specific covering, as commanded by God. An idol is generally available for the masses to rally around. These beautiful likenesses were only intended to be seen by the priesthood but not as objects of worship. Are the angels on the mercy seat idols? They are there to represent something else, not as an object of idolatrous worship.



Idol Observations: The second commandment actually said that there was NO allowance for any image of anything to be worshipped in place of God. He is jealous for their fidelity! God did NOT say the Israelites could not fabricate an image as a tool or a symbol regarding His watch-care over His people. There is a huge difference between the two.



Idol? The people are miserable and complaining against God, even against the manna he gave them:

Numbers 21:6-9: (NASB) ⁶The LORD sent fiery serpents among the people and they bit the people, so that many people of Israel died. ⁷So the people came to Moses and said, We have sinned, because we have spoken against the LORD and you; intercede with the LORD, that He may remove the serpents from us. And Moses interceded for the people. ⁸Then the LORD said to Moses, make a fiery serpent, and set it on a standard; and it shall come about, that everyone who is bitten, when he looks at it, he will live. ⁹And Moses made a bronze serpent and set it on the standard; and it came about, that if a serpent bit any man, when he looked to the bronze serpent, he lived.

This bronze (perhaps better translated as “copper”) serpent was a tool for the people to refocus themselves. It was a tool of healing, NOT worship. They were to look to God for healing.

It is interesting to note the serpents were not removed. The people were still bitten by these venomous snakes. A way of escape was provided. Anyone



Some experts believe the “fiery serpents” were *echis coloratus*, a venomous viper species endemic to the Middle East and Egypt.

bitten who looked upon the bronze serpent was healed. This becomes important later...

Fast forward 700 years and see what happened to that tool. The good King Hezekiah in action:

2 Kings 18:4-5: (NASB) *“He removed the high places and broke down the sacred pillars and cut down the Asherah. He destroyed paganism from among the people. He also broke in pieces the bronze serpent that Moses had made, for until those days the sons of Israel burned incense to it; and it was called Nehushtan.*

The people of Israel kept that serpent all this time and were worshipping it, so Hezekiah destroyed it.

He destroyed the paganistic use of God’s sacred tools of healing from among the people:

⁵He trusted in the LORD, the God of Israel; so that after him there was none like him among all the kings of Judah, nor among those who were before him.

This was like removing the ark because it was misused. Hezekiah was godly and worshipped only God. THAT was the point of the second commandment.

Nehushtan - Hezekiah used this derogatory term to impress on them that it was worthless - meaning a brazen thing; a mere piece of brass. This was not a magic snake to bow down in front of.

(Source: Bible commentary by Matthew Henry) The brazen serpent had been carefully preserved as a memorial of God’s goodness to their fathers in the wilderness; but it was idle and wicked to burn incense to it. All helps to devotion, not warranted by the word of God, interrupt the exercise of faith; they always lead to superstition and other dangerous evils. Human nature perverts everything of this kind. True faith needs not such aids; the word of God, daily thought upon and prayed over, is all the outward help we need.

Its meaning got completely lost, making it an object of worship, regarding the serpent itself as having healing power.

But wait, there’s more! Jesus himself shows us a deeper and more profound meaning in that bronze serpent from the days of old:

John 3:14-16: (NASB) *¹⁴As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; ¹⁵so that whoever believes will in him have eternal life. ¹⁶For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life.*



Notice the next text is John 3:16 - one of the most often-quoted text in the world. Just as the people were granted life through looking upon the bronze serpent in Exodus, so all would be granted life through the believing in Jesus, the true healer.

The comparison between the bronze serpent in the wilderness with the son of man being lifted up was used by Jesus as a foreshadowing of his own execution. Remember how the snakes did not disappear and the people were still bitten? Likewise, our fiery trials and sin are not removed - our only escape for true healing is Jesus.

The bronze serpent was not replacing God as an object of worship. The true lesson is we are to place our faith in the sacrifice of Jesus.

A God of confusion or order? Order! God's commands were and are precise: Worship only Him and never worship any likeness of anything in heaven or in earth. Follow His word and direction only.

God did not say we cannot create images of anything; He said no image should ever be worshipped in place of Him. Any allegiance to anything other than God is corrupt.

Contradiction Principle:



PURPOSE

God uses various tools to accomplish His plan

Tools are merely tools. The serpent on the pole was a tool but could never be anything more than that. It showed the Israelites what Jesus would bring the rest of us later.

CQ Team Tricia asks: Don't we worship Jesus?



Yes, but because God said so. Jesus is not an image. He is the son of God. Worship is due to him for what he did. This has nothing to do with idolatry.

**God is love, yet He often seems to be angry.
Is anger a sin or is it acceptable? Is God forever angry?**

There are many Scriptures about God's anger. Because anger is such an out-of-control human problem, we easily assume it must be the same way with God: out of control and based on emotion. It is not. Let's establish the clear differences between God's anger and ours.



Does God consider anger a sin? If so, why does He seem so mad so often?

 **Not on his terms, Stephen Fry - On God, Friendly Atheist - Patheos**

- *And you think you're going to get in?*
- *But I wouldn't want to. I wouldn't want to get in on His terms. They're wrong. Now, if I died and it was Pluto, Hades, and if it was the twelve Greek gods then I would have more trust with it, because the Greeks didn't pretend not to be human in their appetites, and in their capriciousness, and in their unreasonableness. They didn't present themselves as being all-seeing, all-wise, all-kind, all-beneficent, because the God who created this universe, if it was created by God, is quite clearly a maniac. Utter maniac.*

This is a shallow approach to God.

Is God's anger forever?

Jeremiah 17:4: (NASB) *And you will, even of yourself, let go of your inheritance that I gave you; and I will make you serve your enemies in the land which you do not know; for you have kindled a fire in My anger which will burn **for <5704> ever <5769>**.*

For: Strong's #5704 *ad*; as far (or long, or much) as, whether of space (even unto) or time (during, while, until) or degree (equally with)

Ever: Strong's #5769 *olam*; concealed, i.e. the vanishing point; generally time out of mind (past or future), i.e. (practically) eternity; frequentative, adverbially (especially with prepositional prefix) always

These two words together can mean "as far as the vanishing point." In the context of these events, it looks like God's anger will always be there. But beyond the horizon...

God forgets sins after they are forgiven:

Jeremiah 31:34: (NASB) *They will not teach again, each man his neighbor and each man his brother, saying, Know the LORD, for they will all know Me, from the least of them to the greatest of them, declares the LORD, for I will forgive their iniquity, and their sin I will remember no more.*

This is a beautiful promise. This describes God's kingdom. Because of Jesus' ransom sacrifice, all will be awakened, make amends for their mistakes and will live life the way it was intended.

Isaiah 53:6: (NIV) *We all, like sheep, have gone astray, each of us has turned to our own way; and the LORD has laid on him the iniquity of us all.*



Psalms 103:12-14: (NASB) ¹²As far as the east is from the west, so far has He removed our transgressions from us. ¹³Just as a father has compassion on his children, so the LORD has compassion on those who fear Him. ¹⁴For He Himself knows our frame; He is mindful that we are but dust.

Here we see “beyond the horizon,” the results of the trouble and darkness. The end result is not evil, dark or selfish. It has eternal value.

God is jealous:

Deuteronomy 6:14-15: (NASB) ¹⁴You shall not follow other gods, any of the gods of the peoples who surround you, ¹⁵for the LORD your God in the midst of you is a jealous God; otherwise the anger of the LORD your God will be kindled against you, and He will wipe you off the face of the earth.

What provokes such anger? *The wellbeing of His people.* Looking at Jewish history, we see them leave and return to God many times. The point? God is forgiving and His plan is there for a purpose that will last for eternity. Anger and difficulty are for a moment.

God will NOT always be angry:

1 Corinthians 15:25-26,28: (NASB) ²⁵For He must reign until He has put all His enemies under His feet. ²⁶The last enemy that will be abolished is death...²⁸When all things are subjected to Him, then the Son himself also will be subjected to the One who subjected all things to Him, so that God may be all in all.

Even His eternal justice has compassion:

Matthew 25:46: (NASB) *These will go away into eternal punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.*

Eternal punishment is NOT torture in a burning hell; it is simply a final sentence of ceasing to exist. This is not being angry forever. It is passing a final judgment and moving on.



Observation about God's anger: God's anger is always pointed at sin and disloyalty. It is NOT arbitrary and NOT forever, as His plan will alleviate the very things He is angered about.

Contradiction Principle:



**Distinguish between
TEMPORARY EMOTION and
ETERNAL PURPOSE**

God created everything; the entire, giant, infinite universe all the way down to the infinite smallness of our molecular cellular structures. Yet humans would rather worship a rock. We keep getting way off the path. God has a plan that is being worked and is bigger than what we see. It involves faith to know it is being put in order.

Good parents have to let children make horrible choices so they can learn the consequences and be better. This is how God works.



Is human anger a sin? Perhaps:

Matthew 5:22: (NASB) *But I say to you that everyone who is angry with his brother shall be guilty before the court; and whoever says to his brother, You good-for-nothing, shall be guilty before the supreme court; and whoever says, You fool, shall be guilty enough to go into the fiery hell (Gehenna).*

This kind of anger is really deep and serious. Jewish culture simply did not allow such name calling, so the anger Jesus is referring to is a kind that brings character assassination. This anger is not justifiable.

Here human anger is controllable:

Ephesians 4:26-27: (NASB) *²⁶Be angry and yet do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, ²⁷and do not give the devil an opportunity.*

We are to have our anger either subside or conclude. We are not to live in anger. Our anger is not God's anger. His is built upon eternal purpose.

A God of confusion or order? Order! God's anger as our Creator cannot ever be confused with the anger of imperfect humanity. His anger is for the good of His creation, while our anger is reactive and most often destructive.

For more on the topic of anger, please search our archives for Episode 885 "What Are We So Angry About?"



Tricia contributes: What do you get with the parent who always rescues their child and never allows them to experience consequences? A child who never matures and cannot handle the difficulties of life. God is teaching His children the consequence of walking away from Him. His anger is for a good reason.

God is not dark and contradictory when it comes to reverence, nor is He irrationally angry. This is good news.

We speak of God as always being there for us, yet the Bible speaks of Him as unavailable. Which is it?

As Christians, we draw some of our greatest comfort from the assurance that God, through Jesus, is always with us. We also know that on a practical level there are countless individuals who have believed this and openly proclaim they have been abandoned by God. Are they right?



Does God Forsake His Children?



Does God ever forsake His children? Does He ever leave them alone and unprotected?

 **Banish him, Stephen Fry - On God, Friendly Atheist - Patheos**

- *Totally selfish, totally. We have to spend our life on our knees thanking him? What kind of God would do that? Yes, the world is very splendid, but it also has in it insects whose whole life cycle is to burrow into the eyes of children and make them blind. They eat outwards from the eyes. Why? Why did you do that to us? You could easily have made of a creation in which that didn't exist. It is simply not acceptable. So, atheism is not just about not believing there's a God, but on the assumptions there is one, what kind of God is he? It's perfectly apparent. He's monstrous, utterly monstrous and deserves no respect whatsoever. The moment you banish Him, your life becomes simpler, purer, cleaner, more worth living in my opinion.*

Why isn't Mr. Fry blaming what the Bible calls the *god of this world*, Satan, for the evils in it? He is allowed to reign and interfere with man for a certain time for a certain purpose. After that certain purpose has been accomplished, which is the knowledge of good and evil, Satan will be cut off.

The two sides of the issue:

Forsaken:

Psalm 10:1: (NASB) *Why do You stand afar off, O LORD? Why do You hide Yourself in times of trouble?*

NOT forsaken:

Psalms 145:17-19: (NASB) ¹⁷*The LORD is righteous in all His ways and kind in all His deeds. ¹⁸The LORD is near to all who call upon Him, to all who call upon Him in truth. ¹⁹He will fulfill the desire of those who fear (meaning reverence, respect) Him; He will also hear their cry and will save them.*

But look at how Psalm 10 ends:

Psalms 10:17-18: (NASB) ¹⁷*O LORD, You have heard the desire of the humble; You will strengthen their heart, You will incline Your ear ¹⁸to vindicate the orphan and the oppressed, so that man who is of the earth will no longer cause terror.*

Delivered not forsaken. We are not delivered out of this world by God, nor are we left to suffer in it. We are delivered through it. There is a difference. There are "fiery snakes" in our "wilderness," but with faith, there is a way of deliverance to get to the other side. Deliverance may not be the way we would like it, but He has designed it for our best benefit.

Should we therefore trust in God to always deliver us? Yes:

Psalms 46:1-2: (NASB) ¹*God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in trouble. ²Therefore we will not fear, though the earth should change and though the mountains slip into the heart of the sea.*

This does not mean nothing bad will ever happen to us.

But, what about this?

Psalm 22:1: (NASB) *My God, my God, why have You forsaken me? Far from my deliverance are the words of my groaning.*



Remember, Psalms 22 was written prophetically to reflect Jesus' personal experience and NOT for Jesus to fulfill the Psalm.

Throughout his earthly ministry, Jesus always addressed the Father as *Father*. It was here and only here that he addressed Him as *God*:

Matthew 27:45-46: (NASB) ⁴⁵Now from the sixth hour darkness fell upon all the land until the ninth hour. ⁴⁶About the ninth hour Jesus cried out with a loud voice, saying, *Eli, Eli, Lama Sabachthani? that is, My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?*

If anybody should not have been forsaken, it was Jesus who always did the will of his Father. This "forsaking" was necessary. It was not an ungodly, unfair or undeserved action on the part of the Father. It was a **REQUIRED** step so Jesus could utterly complete every last detail and requirement of the ransom and the offering for sin.

Jesus is now in the place of all of us. Have we been forsaken as a sinful race? Yes. He took our place on the cross and felt the same distance from his Father as we do.

Isaiah 53:6: (NASB) *All of us like sheep have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; but the LORD has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on him.*

Was Jesus completely abandoned? No. God turned His face from him temporarily so he could feel what it was like to not be in complete harmony with Him. In this moment, Jesus was alone. It was what the price required of him.

Here is how the Psalm 22 experience progresses:

Psalm 22:21-22: (NASB) ²¹You answer me. ²²I will tell of Your name to my brethren; in the midst of the assembly I will praise You.

God's deliverance is not on our timetable or for our reasons.

Here is how Jesus' earthly life ends:

Luke 23:46: (NASB) *And Jesus, crying out with a loud voice, said, Father, into your hands I commit my spirit. Having said this, he breathed his last.*

His last words were back to "normal," using the term Father.

Is there a contradiction within this contradiction? Some gospels end the last words with *My God, My God, why have You forsaken me?* Each gospel is not meant to be the whole story individually. There are four accounts putting together the story of Jesus' life and death. We put them together side-by-side to see how they fit together.

Contradiction Principle:



**Distinguish between
TEMPORARY EMOTION and
ETERNAL PURPOSE**



We may interpret "being forsaken" in a strong emotional state, like if we have a bad health issue or an accident. Perhaps we are not saved or are horribly hurt. But we have to look at it from the perspective of what is best for our highest spiritual welfare. We know there will be a resurrection, and we know there will be an opportunity for all to learn of God. We know there is a kingdom coming. We have to look at the larger eternal purpose and not just what is happening to ME right now.

It is good to look into these things so that our faith is strengthened and can withstand the arguments of those who would like to throw us off our path. The Bible can hold up to scrutiny and these discussions are profitable for our Christian walk.

A God of confusion or order? Order! God is visible in His way in his time and for His purposes. He will ALWAYS deliver those who serve Him in the way that best suits His eternal plan.

We believe the Bible is the inspired word of God that can be seen as a whole to learn of God's plan, showing us the God of compassion and mercy.



Join us next week for our podcast on September 2, 2019:

Ep. #1089: Contradictions Part IV:

Why So Many Contradictions Surrounding
Jesus' Resurrection?

***So, does God contradict Himself?
For Jonathan and Rick (and Julie!) and Christian Questions...
Think about it...!***

Bonus Material!

Honest communication is built on truth and integrity and upon respect of the one for the other. — Benjamin E. Mays

Further scriptures on God and light:

2 Corinthians 6:14: (NASB) *Do not be bound together with unbelievers; for what partnership have righteousness and lawlessness, or what fellowship has light with darkness?*

God is that unapproachable light:

1 Timothy 6:14-16: (NASB) *¹⁴That you keep the commandment without stain or reproach until the appearing of our Lord Jesus Christ, ¹⁵which He will bring about at the proper time—He who is the blessed and only Sovereign, the King of kings and Lord of lords, ¹⁶who alone possesses immortality and dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor and eternal dominion! Amen.*



Other texts on graven images:

Leviticus 26:1-2: (NASB) ¹You shall not make for yourselves idols, nor shall you set up for yourselves an image or a sacred pillar, nor shall you place a figured stone in your land to bow down to it; for I am the LORD your God. ²You shall keep My sabbaths and reverence My sanctuary; I am the LORD.

Deuteronomy 27:15: (NASB) *Cursed is the man who makes an idol or a molten image, an abomination to the LORD, the work of the hands of the craftsman, and sets it up in secret. And all the people shall answer and say, Amen.*

A few more Scriptures on God and anger:

God before Moses on Mount Sinai. Is God moody?

Exodus 34:5-6: (NASB) ⁵The LORD descended in the cloud and stood there with him as he called upon the name of the LORD. ⁶Then the LORD passed by in front of him and proclaimed, The LORD, the LORD God, compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, and abounding in lovingkindness and truth.

Is God waiting to be angry?

Hebrews 9:24-27: (NASB) ²⁴For Christ did not enter a holy place made with hands, a mere copy of the true one, but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us; ²⁵nor was it that he would offer himself often, as the high priest enters the holy place year by year with blood that is not his own. ²⁶Otherwise, he would have needed to suffer often since the foundation of the world; but now once at the consummation of the ages he has been manifested to put away sin by the sacrifice of himself. ²⁷And inasmuch as it is appointed for men to die once and after this comes judgment.

Jesus is angry:

Matthew 11:20-22: (NASB) ²⁰Then He began to denounce the cities in which most of his miracles were done, because they did not repent. ²¹Woe to you, Chorazin! Woe to you, Bethsaida! For if the miracles had occurred in Tyre and Sidon which occurred in you, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. ²²Nevertheless I say to you, it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment than for you.

Another text on God not forsaking us:

Hebrews 13:5-6: (NASB) ⁵Make sure that your character is free from the love of money, being content with what you have; for He Himself has said, I will never desert you, nor will I ever forsake you, ⁶so that we confidently say, The LORD is my HELPER, I will not be afraid. What will man do to me?

