

Q&A Service August 2, 2015

- **How can God live if he doesn't eat or drink?**
 - God is alive, but he does not have a body like we do as humans; God is spirit (Jn 4:24). God is not dependent upon anything - he is in control of everything. He does not need food to sustain himself like we do.
- **Why are we here? (PLAINLY)**
 - We are here to bring glory to God, and enjoy him forever (1 Cor 10:31, Rm 11:36, Ps 73:25-26). The gospel makes this possible: those who will glorify God will be with him forever, those who will not give glory to God will be separated from his presence for eternity.
- **Is cremation ok?**
 - In a word: yes. Scripture does not give specific directions regarding burial or cremation. Most examples given in Scripture were of burial - that was the common practice among Jews and Christians. There were a few examples of cremation: Saul and Jonathan, Achan. Everyone's body will eventually decompose, and God is able to resurrect a body regardless of it's state (fire / war / cremation / burial). Our focus as believers is on the body we will receive: Phil 3:20-21.
- **Why are important Biblical holidays, such as Pentecost / Ascension, not mentioned or put in Scriptures that week?**
 - Denominations celebrate and worship differently. Catholic, Episcopal and some Presbyterian churches lean more towards tradition (referred to as high church). They follow a church calendar and lectionary (what each church will preach on) based upon those special days. Other churches, ours included, tend to celebrate Christmas and Easter, but do not publicly recognize other special days - such as Pentecost / Ascension. No other reason other than a difference in tradition.
Similar to a family that celebrates Flag Day, May Day and other "minor" holidays, compared to a family that only celebrates the 'big ones' - Christmas, Easter, 4th of July, Thanksgiving.
- **Does God still give very specific promises to people?**
(similar to Zechariah/Elizabeth promised a son)
 - Yes, I believe he still does. I believe that God is still speaking. Scripture is full of examples of God giving instruction / warning / promises to people. I believe that Scripture is a record of God's revelation of himself to us. If God is a speaking God, which Scripture clearly portrays Him to be, why would He now stop speaking? I also believe that God is consistent in His character, so His promises of today will not contradict His Word.

In learning to listen for God's voice (see Jn 10 - Good Shepherd) it is important for us not to make assumptions about how God spoke to people in the past, and for us to learn how to discern His voice from all the other noise that calls for our attention. We also need to be patient and wait on His answer in His time. We are used to instant gratification, and often God works over time.

- **Why does God let babies die and illness into our lives?**

- Sickness and death are the result of sin (Rm 6:23). Many have a problem justifying God's goodness in allowing 'innocents' to suffer. If God took away the consequences of sin, he would cease to be loving/good. Because of His love for us, God allows us to choose - rather than being automated responders. Our choices come with circumstances that effect us and those around us. And even creation suffers because of sin (Gen 3:17, Rm 8:22). That is why the Gospel is so important. God, in his mercy, offers us a solution to our sinfulness that includes a promise of restoration and healing. And an ultimate existence free of pain, illness, and death (Rv 21:4).

- **Why do people judge others when the Bible says "do not judge or you too will be judged"?**

Matthew 7:1 is the reference. The answer to this question is clear: because of sin we don't obey God's word. I think the real question is "How do we respond when people quote this verse after we comment on and encourage correction in regards to sinful behavior?"

- People usually quote verse 1, but leave out verses 2-5. This passage says we are to take care of ourselves first, before we can help others. Many times we use the sinfulness of others to hide our own faults. Jesus tells us to take care of our own sin and then we are able to help others with their struggles. (see: Mt 7:5, 18:15, Lk 17:3, Gal 6:1)