



# Tough Questions

**The Journey – Fall 2017**

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**Christian Life Assembly**



# Class Fellowship Meal November 12<sup>th</sup>

Hoss's Mechanicsburg



# Tough Question #17



## Tough Questions

- **Even though God never changes, why does God in the Old Testament seem so different in the form of Jesus? (The OT God didn't seem to hesitate in wiping out entire tribes of men, women and children, but I couldn't imagine Jesus even suggesting such a thing. Yet, the people of Jesus time I don't believe were any different from the people of the OT.)**
- **The answer is found in the question when the words “seem so different”. It is all in timing and perception.**



# Tough Questions

- Let's start with the proof that God does not change – the theological term for this is God's immutability.
- James 1:17 17 Whatever is good and perfect is a gift coming down to us from God our Father, who created all the lights in the heavens. *He never changes or casts a shifting shadow.*
- Hebrews 13:8 Jesus Christ is the same yesterday, today, and forever. (this is not referencing his physical appearance)



## Tough Questions

- **Malachi 3:1** “Look! I am sending my messenger, and he will prepare the way before me. Then the Lord you are seeking will suddenly come to his Temple. The messenger of the covenant, whom you look for so eagerly, is surely coming,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. **2** “But who will be able to endure it when he comes? Who will be able to stand and face him when he appears? For he will be like a blazing fire that refines metal, or like a strong soap that bleaches clothes. **3** He will sit like a refiner of silver, burning away the dross. He will purify the Levites, refining them like gold and silver, so that they may once again offer acceptable sacrifices to the Lord. **4** Then once more the Lord will accept the offerings brought to him by the people of Judah and Jerusalem, as he did in the past.



# Tough Questions

- 5 “At that time I will put you on trial. I am eager to witness against all sorcerers and adulterers and liars. I will speak against those who cheat employees of their wages, who oppress widows and orphans, or who deprive the foreigners living among you of justice, for these people do not fear me,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. 6 “I am the Lord, and I do not change. That is why you descendants of Jacob are not already destroyed. 7 Ever since the days of your ancestors, you have scorned my decrees and failed to obey them. Now return to me, and I will return to you,” says the Lord of Heaven’s Armies. “But you ask, ‘How can we return when we have never gone away?’ 8 “Should people cheat God? Yet you have cheated me! “But you ask, ‘What do you mean? When did we ever cheat you?’ “You have cheated me of the tithes and offerings due to me. 9 You are under a curse, for your whole nation has been cheating me.



## Tough Questions

- **So from Malachi we learn that God judges sin wherever it occurs, and even on into the future, that does not change.**
- **He will even chasten His people when we do not obey Him – he does it for our good.**
- **Heb 12:7 As you endure this divine discipline, remember that God is treating you as his own children. Who ever heard of a child who is never disciplined by its father? 8 If God doesn't discipline you as he does all of his children, it means that you are illegitimate and are not really his children at all.**





## Tough Questions

- And then we also need to consider that God's revelation of Himself has been a progressive one. Adam, Noah, Abraham, Moses, and on could not have handled, all at one time, what we know today.
- And, furthermore, we could not handle today all that we will one day know of God!
- Eph 2:6 And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus, 7 in order that in the coming ages he might show the incomparable riches of his grace, expressed in his kindness to us in Christ Jesus.



## Tough Questions

- **So when we read about God's judgment in the O.T., we ought not isolate what we read as all there is to know about God. (many snapshots that all need to be sequenced together into a bigger picture)**
- **If God were so simple as to understand Him in one sitting, or one day, or one millenium, then He is not the God of the bible at all.**
- **Many crave simplicity, but that is not what we have in God – we have complexity and magnificence beyond measure!**



## Tough Questions

- **Another reason some say “the God of the O.T. is not the Jesus we see in the N.T” is because Jesus was on a very specific and particular mission.**
- **John 3:16 “For this is how God loved the world: He gave his one and only Son, so that everyone who believes in him will not perish but have eternal life. 17 God sent his Son into the world not to judge the world, but to save the world through him.”**
- **Luke 19:10 For the Son of Man came to seek and save those who are lost.**



## Tough Questions

- So, in the end there is zero difference between who God was in the O.T. versus who He is in the N.T. – it is simply matter of which “snapshot” you are viewing at the time.
- Exodus 34:5 Then the Lord came down in a cloud and stood there with him; and he called out his own name, Yahweh.  
6 The Lord passed in front of Moses, calling out, “Yahweh! The Lord! The God of compassion and mercy! I am slow to anger and filled with unfailing love and faithfulness. 7 I lavish unfailing love to a thousand generations. I forgive iniquity, rebellion, and sin. But I do not excuse the guilty. I lay the sins of the parents upon their children and grandchildren; the entire family is affected—even children in the third and fourth generations.”



## Tough Questions

- **Finally, let me say again something many of you have heard me say for years – when God wiped out entire cultures, He was merciful.**
- **What could possibly be loving about allowing godless cultures, that damned their citizens, to perpetuate themselves?**
- **Far more merciful and loving is to root out the sin and save all that He could.**



# Tough Question #18



## Tough Questions

- **How do we consider the Christian ethic when confronting prosperity preachers like Benny Hinn? Especially with older Christians looking for a spiritual "fix" to aging issues (illness / alzheimers / dementia).**
- **We confront them with truth – all believers will have perfect health and will have zero material, emotional, and spiritual needs; just not necessarily now!**



## Tough Questions

- So the question has to do with our ethical responsibility when a prosperity preacher is giving false hope to believers we know.
- Eph 4:14 Then we will no longer be immature like children. We won't be tossed and blown about by every wind of new teaching. We will not be influenced when people try to trick us with lies so clever they sound like the truth. 15 Instead, we will speak the truth in love, growing in every way more and more like Christ, who is the head of his body, the church.





## Tough Questions

- **Matt 22:29 Jesus replied, “Your mistake is that you don’t know the Scriptures, and you don’t know the power of God.”**
- **We often get ourselves into false thinking because we fall for false doctrine.**
- **There is no argument to be made that God cannot make you healthy and wealthy – but, we should object when someone guarantees it in this life.**



## Tough Questions

- **Given the fact that their message is false and the damage they do is great, we should confront them and their teachings when we can.**
- **Jesus confronted the false teachers of His day, and Paul did the same – why should we be quiet?**
- **Matt 7:15 “Beware of false prophets who come disguised as harmless sheep but are really vicious wolves. 16 You can identify them by their fruit, that is, by the way they act. Can you pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?”**



# Tough Question #19



## Tough Questions

- **How should Christians view paranormal activity?**
- **With great skepticism. (follow the money)**
- **For starters, there is no scriptural definition of paranormal activity, but I suspect the subject is foul spirits, ghosts, and apparitions.**



## Tough Questions

- **Clearly our culture has an interest in the unusual spiritual happenings that are seen and reported in our day.**
- **In 2007, the most profitable movie of all time was made – it was called “Paranormal Activity”.**
- **Other popular movies of the same genre were The Exorcist, and The Blair Witch Project – both were “blockbusters”.**



# Tough Questions

- Many believe that the dead can come back and interact with the living – this is demonstrably false.
- Heb 9:27 And just as each person is destined to die once and after that comes judgment, 28 so also Christ was offered once for all time as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people.
- Absent from the body, present with the Lord for the believer, and we have the Rich Man of Luke 16 for the unbelieving.



## Tough Questions

- **Luke 16:22** “Finally, the poor man died and was carried by the angels to sit beside Abraham at the heavenly banquet. The rich man also died and was buried, 23 and he went to the place of the dead. There, in torment, he saw Abraham in the far distance with Lazarus at his side. 24 “The rich man shouted, ‘Father Abraham, have some pity! Send Lazarus over here to dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue. I am in anguish in these flames.’ 25 “But Abraham said to him, ‘Son, remember that during your lifetime you had everything you wanted, and Lazarus had nothing. So now he is here being comforted, and you are in anguish. 26 And besides, there is a great chasm separating us. No one can cross over to you from here, and no one can cross over to us from there.’



# Tough Questions

- **2<sup>nd</sup> Cor 11:14** But I am not surprised! *Even Satan disguises himself as an angel of light.* 15 So it is no wonder that his servants also disguise themselves as servants of righteousness. In the end they will get the punishment their wicked deeds deserve.
- **People who claim to have seen the dead among us are either profiting from the claim, or have been duped the Deceiver.**
- **He shows them what they hope to see, and with that false hope comes a whole lot of false doctrine.**





# Tough Questions

- **After all, if Uncle Fred never trusted Jesus, yet he seems to be fairing just fine in the after life, well then, why should I bother with Jesus?**
- **Make no mistake about it, Satan does not create such illusions to comfort a mourning loved one – he does it to devour them.**
- **1<sup>st</sup> Peter 5:8 Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour.**



## Tough Questions

- **So what about Samuel and the witch of Endor?**
- **A passage that gives many theologians fits – did the witch of Endor actually bring Samuel back from the dead to speak to Saul?**
- **No, but God did – this is an important distinction that it was God at work to raise the dead, and not Satan.**



# Tough Questions

- **1<sup>st</sup> Sam 12:11** Finally, the woman said, “Well, whose spirit do you want me to call up?” “Call up Samuel,” Saul replied.  
**12** When the woman saw Samuel, she screamed, “You’ve deceived me! You are Saul!”
- **Notice two things – 1) the woman does not call up Samuel, that happens apart from any command or activity of hers.**
- **2) She is so surprised that she screams! – If nothing else this tells us how shocked she was that calling up the dead can actually be done!**



## Tough Questions

- **Paranormal activity is not to be trifled with – genuine demonic and Satanic activities are more prevalent in our world than we may realize.**
- **Eph 6:10 A final word: Be strong in the Lord and in his mighty power. 11 Put on all of God's armor so that you will be able to stand firm against all strategies of the devil. 12 For we are not fighting against flesh-and-blood enemies, but against evil rulers and authorities of the unseen world, against mighty powers in this dark world, and against evil spirits in the heavenly places.**