

# The Bulletin

## Meeks Street Church of Christ

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**June 26, 2022**

### ***“If I Miss Heaven, Who Can I Blame?”***

By Brian Meade

The question before us in this article is one that needs to be examined by all who know about the reward of heaven. Jesus said in John 14:2-4, *“In My Father’s house are many mansions; if it were not so, I would have told you. I go to prepare a place for you. And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, there you may be also. And where I go you know, and the way you know.”*

Many desire to go there, but with the given tendency to blame others for our failures— who can I really blame if I miss my opportunity to go to heaven? Many use this tactic all the time to excuse, or in an attempt to justify why something wasn’t their fault.

But does this really work with God?  
Will God allow our excuse or blaming of others to clear us of all wrongdoing? Or will God see right through this attempt to shift responsibility to someone or something other than ourselves. Imagine if we are standing before God with that as our only plea....  
Let’s look at what some may try to blame:



#### **I. Can I Blame God?**

Even though some may blame God for their failure to enter heaven, that is simply NOT the case! God has done so much on our behalf and for our salvation that this charge is completely without merit. It is usually the atheist or agnostic person who levels this blame toward God, but it can even be religious people who believe in Calvinism and other false views on salvation.

The atheist and agnostic blame God for creating them and then give us commandments to keep or perish. The Calvinist blame God for not saving them when they desire salvation; because they believe no one can come to God through obedience unless God sends them the ability to be saved. Thus, it is God’s fault for the lost being astray from God. And it is the immoral who say that God gives us all sorts of desires within man and then punishes us for fulfilling them. But they forget about practicing any sort of discipline or self control (Matthew 16:24; 1 Corinthians 9:27). Then there is the homosexual who says, “I was born gay.” Thus, blaming God for making them that way. But they forget that sin is a choice (Ezekiel 18:20).

But even more than that, God has expressed His desire, over and over in Scripture, that He wants us to be saved. *“For this is good and acceptable in the sight of God our Savior, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus, who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time,”* (1 Timothy 2:3-6). (See also John 3:14-16; 2 Peter 3:9). So truly, God cannot be rightfully blamed for someone’s failure to enter heaven.

#### **II. Can I Blame Jesus?**

Similar to blaming God, some try to blame Jesus for their disobedience by thinking Jesus sets the bar too high for everyone. When Jesus was here on the earth, He said, *“If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself, and take up his cross, and follow Me. For whoever desires to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake will find it. For what profit is it to a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”* (Matthew 16:24-26).

Jesus taught us the supreme level of commitment one should have for God in Matthew 6:24, that one cannot “*serve two masters.*” In Matthew 6:33, Jesus taught us that we must “*seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.*” And in Matthew 22:37, Jesus said, “*You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your mind.*” This is more than many want to pay to be a follower of Jesus, thus they blame Him for their lack of devotion.

But all Jesus is asking of us is the same kind of love and devotion that led Him to the cross to die on the cross as a supreme sacrifice (John 15:13; Luke 19:10; Hebrews 2:9). And beyond that Jesus prepared the way for us to enter heaven (John 14:1-6). So nope, no one can accuse or blame Jesus..

### **III. Can I Blame The Holy Spirit?**

Sadly, some do not consider the Holy Spirit a person, but the Scriptures refer to Him as “He” (John 14:26). He can be grieved (Ephesians 4:30), He can be jealous in a godly sense (James 4:5), He reveals God’s truth (1 Corinthians 2:10), and He teaches us (1 Corinthians 2:13). Having said that, should some who are seeking salvation blame the Holy Spirit for NOT giving them the ability to have faith, repent, and obey God?

This goes back to the false doctrine that John Calvin taught many years ago. According to Calvin, one must have a direct operation of the Holy Spirit to be saved. But even in this, it is arbitrarily given, meaning: God picks and chooses some to be lost and saved without any real criteria for choosing them. They often speak of God being “sovereign” and will do what He does, and we can’t change His decisions. But here is the main problem: someone who desires to be saved— can’t unless God picks them! And that right there flies in the face of so many Bible passages where God is appealing to us to come to Him (Isaiah 55:1-6; Matthew 11:28-31; 1 Timothy 2:3; 2 Peter 3:9).

But the Holy Spirit has done so much to help us to go to heaven. Jesus sent the Holy Spirit to the apostles “to guide them into all truth.” (John 16:13). In essence, the Holy Spirit has given us the word of God that leads to salvation (1 Corinthians 2:11-13).

The Spirit actually invites us to come to God of our own free-will, “*And the Spirit and the bride say, “Come!” And let him who hears say, “Come!” And let him who thirsts come. Whoever desires, let him take the water of life freely.*” (Revelation 22:17).

Thus, we cannot blame the Holy Spirit for our Not obeying God’s word.

### **IV. Can I Blame The Brethren (Church)?**

There are times and circumstances that arise among believers— that some want to blame the church when someone falls away from Christ. They may wrongly accuse the brethren of not being loving enough by practicing the discipline that is needed for sin (1 Corinthians 5:4-5; James 5:19-20).

But they forget that the SIN is the real problem among the church. They forget that the brethren would be negligent in their duty toward God and to brethren, if they did not act in good faith toward the unrepentant.

Then there is some who blame the preacher for not being eloquent enough; the song leading not being inspiring enough; the Bible studies not good enough to suit them; Or if the brethren just did more activities together— that maybe someone would not have stayed in unrepentant sin.

I know there are times when brethren have neglected their duties, and some who needed rebuke and disciple who did not receive it. But when the brethren are right and loving in their disciple, the blame still comes by those who misunderstand true Bible love. I also know that we all need to put our best foot forward and give our service to God 100%. But when fallible brethren are doing their best, sometimes that’s not good enough to suit some people.

The church, herself, is a perfect bride of Christ (Ephesians 5:27), but still filled with people who make mistakes, and are still improving to be more mature like Christ (Ephesians 4:12-13). We forget that only one perfect one has ever lived on the earth— Jesus (Hebrews 4:15; 1 Peter 2:22).

Having said all of that, unrepentant sin is never to be tolerated, ignored, or swept under the rug. That is clear from the Bible. But when people act out of frustration, bitterness, or even contempt for their brethren, that’s when blame for brethren never ends. It is actually a heart problem, not a brethren problem.

(Continued next week)

**News and Notes:** Sick and recovering: Tim Harris Sr, Tim Harris Jr, Chad Harris, Daniel Holloway, Debbie Keplinger, Janis Johnson, Sam Johnson, J F Dancer, Robbie, Sheila, Sherry Doles, Nannette Chancellor, Sandi Poole, Nathan Cox, Wesley Trimble, Greyson Reynolds (Nellie's classmate), Sandra Oliver, and Janis Johnson (Savannah), and Robert Howard (Doug and Pat's son in law), and John Curtis Hearn.

The Family of Tommy Thornhill (Passed away last week).

**Those Who Serve:**

**Sunday Morning 9:00 A.M. Service:**

**Opening Prayer:** Blake Briggs  
**Preaching:** Brian Meade  
**Sermon #1:** *"Tough Questions About Christianity Pt. 4 (Final)"*

**Auditorium Bible Class: 9:35am:**

**Workbook:** Jerry Kennemur  
Ephesians (Chris Reeves)  
**Starting Page & Question:** *Page #21, Question #2*

**Sunday Morning 10:30 A.M. Service:**

**Announcements:** Russell Briggs  
**Opening Prayer & Scripture Reading:** Danny Sheffield  
*Psalm 6:1-10*  
**Song Leader:** Adam Harris  
**Lord's Supper:** Russell Briggs  
**Assisting:** — —  
**Singing Service:** *Men of the Congregation Lead Singing*

**Invitation:** Brian Meade  
**Closing Prayer:** Doug George

**Wednesday Evening: 7:00 P.M.**

**June 29th:**

**Auditorium Bible Class:** Paul Busby  
**Workbook:** Jeremiah & Lamentations  
(John Humphries)  
**Starting Page & Question:** *Page #36, Question #13*  
**Invitation:** Paul Johnson  
**Song Leader:** Dan Cottrell  
**Closing Prayer:** Adam Harris

## ***“Tough Questions About Christianity Part 4”***

Lesson Text: **Judges 6:1-13 (vs. 13).**

### **VII. If God Exists, Why Is There So Much Wrong With This World?**

— **Assumption:** A good God wouldn't cause terrible things to happen. Because evil things do happen, God must not exist.

— **Challenge:** There are four things to keep in mind about how Christianity deals with this question:

1. God Does Not Make Evil Happen.
2. God Allows Humans To Choose Wrongly In Order To Allow Us To Choose Love.
3. Belief In Evil Presupposes God's Existence.
4. We Do Not Know All God's Reasons For Allowing Some Things.

#### **1. God Does Not Make Evil Happen.**

- God Is Often Accused Of Evil In Our Lives— The Story Of Job.
- What We Learn From The Friend's Questions:
  - (1) That They Made Many Assumptions With No Real Answers!
  - (2) All Of Them Were Wrong About The Source Of Job's Troubles.
  - (3) God Was Not The Source— The Devil Was- **Job 1-2; James 1:13-14; Vs. 17.**
- Evil And Suffering In The World Cause Many To Doubt That God Exists.
  1. Quote By Karl Sagan (1970-1980).
  2. Quote By Epicurus (300 B.C.).
- Allowing Evil To exist Is Not The Same As Promoting It.

#### **2. God Allows Humans To Choose Wrongly In Order To Allow Us To Choose Love.**

- A Loving Creator Gave Man Free-Will To Choose Good Or Evil (**Genesis 2-3**).
- Hitler's Invasion of Poland in 1939 (40,000—50,000 killed).
- Oklahoma City Bombing on April 19, 1995 (168 killed).
- Terrorist's Attacks On September 11, 2001 (2,750 NY; 184 Pentagon; 40 Pennsylvania).
- But Who Is Really To Blame For Our Wrong Choices To Do Evil? (**Ezekiel 18:20**).
- God Wants Us To Choose Good Over Evil; Peace Over War; Love Over Hate!
- **Deuteronomy 30:19; Joshua 24:15; 2 Corinthians 5:10.**

#### **3. Belief In Evil Presupposes God's Existence.**

- When Someone Speaks Of Evil In The World... Arguing The Existence Of God.
- What Reason Is Slavery, Stealing, Or Murder Considered Evil?
- We Appeal To A Higher Standard Of Good And Evil That God Has Created.
- **Genesis 9:3-6; Exodus 20:1-17; Galatians 5:19-21** (Works Of The Flesh).

#### **4. We Do Not Know All God's Reasons For Allowing Some Things.**

- We May Never Know Why God Does What He Does- **Romans 11:33; Job 38-39.**
- Paul's Thorn In The Flesh- **2 Corinthians 12:7-10.**
- Without Evil Or Suffering, Would We Ever Need Patience (Endurance), Bravery, Courage, Strength, or Steadfastness In Our Lives?
- Suffering And Evil Draws Us Nearer To God- **Psalms 91:1-6.**
- Evil In This World Makes Us Long For Heaven— **Revelation 21:27.**