

# **Did God Know?**

**Martyn Shenstone**

Unless otherwise indicated all Scripture quotations are taken from the New King James Version of the Bible © Nelson Word.

Quotations appearing as 'Strong's xxx' are taken from the New Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible and Lexicons © Nelson Word. The underlining of scripture verses in quotations is added at the discretion of the author for emphasis only.

DID GOD KNOW?  
ISBN 978-1-898824-03-9

Copyright © 2008 Martyn Shenstone

Published by:

Martyn Shenstone Ministries  
Folkestone  
United Kingdom

[www.martynshenstone.com](http://www.martynshenstone.com)

Printed in the United Kingdom

# Contents

Chapter 1	Didn't God See It Coming?	5
Chapter 2	Why Doesn't God Do Something?	13
Chapter 3	How Does God Do Things?	18
Chapter 4	Why Did God Have A Chosen People?	24
Chapter 5	Why Does God Apparently Do Bad Things?	29
Chapter 6	Hell – The Ultimate Injustice?	38

***Special thanks to all my faithful partners  
who have supported this ministry.***

***Every life that is changed by reading this  
book, has been changed by you and  
I working together.***

*And my God shall supply all your need according to  
His riches in glory by Christ Jesus.*

*Now to our God and Father be glory forever and  
ever. Amen.*

*Philippians 4:19-20*

# ***Chapter 1***

## **Didn't God See It Coming?**

The Bible says at the beginning of creation that God saw everything He had made and that it was very good. There was no suffering. There was no death. Animals did not die and people did not die.

**Then God saw everything that He had made, and indeed it was very good. So the evening and the morning were the sixth day.**

**Genesis 1:31**

If everything God has made is so good, why is there all the death and suffering we see in the world today?

Why did God create the first people, Adam and Eve, knowing that they would sin and fall away from Him? If God looked into the future and saw all the suffering of mankind, why did He still create us in the first place?

The answer, although many people refuse to accept it, is that God did not know any of it was going to happen.

**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually. And the Lord was sorry that He had made man on the Earth, and He was grieved in His heart. So the Lord said... "I am sorry that I have made them."**

**Genesis 6:5-7**

God regretted that He had made mankind because they became so evil.

Did God not realise that things would go so terribly wrong? No.

## *Did God Know?*

God did not know that Adam would sin. He never even thought about it. This was for the same reason that people everywhere still have children today. They never think that their children will become evil. The Bible tells us that God is love. Therefore all of His thoughts are only founded in love. Consequently it never entered God's mind that someone He created would choose evil.

### **Love... thinks no evil**

### **1 Corinthians 13:5**

At a dark point in their history some of the Israelites adopted a monstrous custom from their pagan neighbours. They sacrificed their children in fire to the devil. God says in Jeremiah chapter 19 and 32:

**They have filled this place with the blood of the innocents, they have also built the high places of Baal, to burn their sons with fire for burnt offerings to Baal, which I did not command or speak, nor did it come into My mind.**

**Jeremiah 19:5**

**And they built the high places of Baal which are in the Valley of the Son of Hinnom, to cause their sons and their daughters to pass through the fire to Molech, which I did not command them, nor did it come into My mind that they should do this abomination.**

**Jeremiah 32:35**

God plainly says twice that something never entered His mind. Why? It was so unexpected from His own people the Israelites, that God simply never thought of it. He couldn't believe that His children would ever do such a thing.

But can't God see the future? This is the wrong question.

The question should be: Does the future already exist and therefore can it be seen? The answer to this is no. The future does not already exist. If it did, there would be no end or

## Didn't God See It Coming?

beginning; but Genesis 1:1 says...

**In the beginning God created the heavens and the Earth.**

**Genesis 1:1**

It has been said that God exists outside of time and only created it for mankind. This cannot be true because the verses quoted earlier from Genesis 6:6 about God regretting He had made mankind contradict this. It is widely believed that God can not do something, and then later regret it, yet this is exactly what He is recorded as doing in Genesis 6:6.

The idea of the future pre-existing and being able to be seen by looking forward, originates from fortune telling, and not from the Bible.

Some Bible verses are misquoted to reinforce the belief that God knew mankind would fall before He created us.

These verses make reference to an event known as *the foundation of the world*. This event is the Fall in the Garden of Eden. This was when Adam committed treason and handed himself and all of mankind to follow him under the devil's dominion. All the foundations of the present fallen world system were laid down at that time. The event known as *the foundation of the world* should not be confused with the creation of the Earth. The Greek word for *world*, used in the New Testament, is *cosmos* and definitely does not translate in any way as Earth, but rather as *kingdoms* and *society*. When the Bible talks about the creation of the Earth, a completely separate and unrelated Greek word is always used to denote the Earth, this word is *ge*. The English translations of the New Testament also differentiate between the words for *world* and Earth. For example:

**You, Lord, in the beginning laid the foundation of the Earth.**

**Hebrews 1:10**

Please look at the Bible verses in question.

**He indeed was foreordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you who through Him believe in God, who raised Him from the dead and gave Him glory, so that your faith and hope are in God.**

**1 Peter 1:20**

This verse refers to Jesus. Jesus was foreordained as the eternal Son of God regardless of any fall by man. As the above verse says, Jesus has been revealed for a purpose in these last times. These verses do not say anything at all about Jesus being made ready to save anyone before the creation of mankind, because an upcoming fall had been foreseen.

**All who dwell on the Earth will worship him, whose names have not been written in the Book of Life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.**

**Revelation 13:8**

This verse says *from* and not *before* the foundation of the world. How was Jesus slain *from* the foundation of the world if He actually died 4000 years later on the cross? When God promised in Genesis 3:15 that One would come and finally defeat the devil, He was referring to Jesus and his sacrificial death - although the devil had no idea what God was talking about at the time. When God said it, it was as good as done. Hence Jesus is the Lamb slain *from* the foundation of the world and not *before* it. The same applies to similar words about the foundation of the world used in Revelation 17:8.

**Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us with every spiritual blessing in the Heavenly places in Christ, just as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world, that we should be holy and without blame before Him in love, having predestined us to adoption as sons by Jesus Christ to Himself.**

**Ephesians 1:3-5**

## Didn't God See It Coming?

Some say that these verses reveal that God predestined some people to be chosen and therefore redeemed, *before* He created them. This would certainly mean that God knew there would be a Fall, and all the catastrophes of mankind that would follow it, before He made anything. This is not the case. Everyone was chosen before the foundation of the world to be blameless before God in love. If they were not, then what were they chosen to? Sin?! Everyone was also chosen to be *in Him* before the foundation of the world, no one was created to be out of fellowship with God! All of this still applies without a Fall.

God's intention, with or without a Fall, was that everyone be holy and blameless in Him. Subsequent to the Fall, God's will became that all men be adopted by Jesus Christ and saved.

Some people believe that since only a few (a relative minority to the world's population) people are saved, then God must have only predestined a few people to be saved. They reason that if God had predestined all to be saved, then all would be saved. This is based on a wrong understanding of the word predestined. God predestines something, but you have to believe it and receive it for it to take place in your life.

**In Him also we have obtained an inheritance, being predestined according to the purpose of Him who works all things according to the counsel of His will, that we who first trusted in Christ should be to the praise of His glory. In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise...**

**Ephesians 1:11-13**

In verse 11 of Ephesians 1 Paul says that we have obtained an inheritance. In verse 12 of Ephesians 1 Paul says he got it because he *trusted* or *exercised faith* (the Greek word for *trust* is *pisteo* throughout all the New Testament, it is the same word translated as *faith* and *believe*). Verse 13 says we should also trust and exercise faith for our inheritance so that *having believed*, we would be sealed with the promise of the Spirit

## *Did God Know?*

guaranteeing our salvation.

Some people object saying that all of these actions of believing and trusting are also predestined by God and are therefore irresistible. If this is true then no one really trusts or believes anything. Life is all an illusion and we are all being pulled along by God's irresistible will. God is literally sat there winding two conveyor belts, with one He shovels millions into Hell and with the other He lovingly sends some to Heaven.

Some people say that this all reveals God's glory. He sovereignly chooses some to be saved and allows other to be lost because they deserve it anyway. Really?

Is God's purpose seen when a wicked person dies? No! The prophet Ezekiel says that God has no pleasure in the death of the wicked. So how can their death possibly reflect His will, if it is irresistible, when Ezekiel plainly says God has no pleasure in it? This is the same as saying God has no pleasure in His own will.

**"As I live," says the Lord GOD, "I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn, turn from your evil ways! For why should you die?"**

**Ezekiel 33:11**

Notice the last part says: "*why should you die?*." Not: '*I have sovereignly purposed that some of you should die.*' If God's will was irresistible then He would draw all men to salvation and no one would be lost.

**...God our Saviour, who desires all men to be saved and to come to the knowledge of the truth.**

**1 Timothy 2:14**

**The Lord is not slack concerning His promise, as some count slackness, but is long suffering toward us, not willing that any should perish**

Didn't God See It Coming?

**but that all should come to repentance.**

**2 Peter 3:9**

These verses clearly indicate that God wants all people to be saved, how could He not? However, we can all observe that sadly not all people are saved. Some people have erroneously said that no one ever chooses to be saved because all people are inherently depraved and incapable of choosing right. Yet Jesus said:

**If you then, being evil, know how to give good gifts to your children...**

**Matthew 7:11 and Luke 11:13**

Jesus said that even evil people know how to give good gifts to their children. If they were totally depraved they would not be able to do such a thing. Therefore according to the words of Jesus even wicked people are capable of choosing what is good and right. Nothing in Ephesians 1 says God knew there would be a fall before He created everything. What about Titus 1:2?

**...in hope of eternal life which God, who cannot lie, promised before time began.**

**Titus 1:2**

God's plan only included eternal life before creation. He wasn't planning death too! The Greek literally reads here, *'before the ages began.'* What ages? The ages of humanity. This verse proves nothing about God foreknowing a fall or that there was a time when there was no time.

What about the famous Isaiah chapter 46?

**For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, 'My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure,' Calling a bird of prey from the east, The man who executes My counsel, from a far country. Indeed I have spoken it; I will also bring it to**

**pass. I have purposed it; I will also do it.**

**Isaiah 46:9-12**

Please read the words carefully and note that the whole thing is a process. God says He will do it, not that it has already happened in the future and that He saw it. God declares by faith what He wants and intends to bring to pass. God declares the end from the beginning. He sees it with His intentions and then works to bring it to pass. It will happen sooner or later because God is motivated by an enduring love for people which never fails and therefore He never gives up. Furthermore He has limitless understanding.

**Great is our Lord, and mighty in power;  
His understanding is infinite.**

**Psalms 147:5**

If God's understanding is infinite, surely that means God can see the future by understanding the present and extrapolating it? Yes and no. God sees, by comprehending all the possible outcomes of every decision we will ever make, every *possible* future. He sees clearly the results of every decision that you *may* ever make. What He does not see is what decision you will *actually* make.

This does not demean God's abilities in perception or knowledge. It exalts His abilities in creation. He created you in His image, with the ability to **create** through decision making. The human spirit is the greatest wonder and achievement in all of God's creation.

**The Angel of the Lord called to him from Heaven and said, "Abraham, Abraham!" So he said, "Here I am." And He said, "Do not lay your hand on the lad, or do anything to him; for now I know that you fear God, since you have not withheld your son, your only son, from Me."**

**Genesis 22:12**

I think this is as plain as it can be.

## ***Chapter 2***

### **Why Doesn't God Do Something?**

So even if God didn't see it coming, why didn't He do something when it became obvious that things were going badly wrong? Why, over 6000 years after creation, do we still have everything from natural disasters to child abuse?

**Then God said, "let us make man in Our image and in Our likeness... let them have dominion... over all the Earth.... then God blessed them and said, Be fruitful and multiply, fill the Earth and subdue it; have dominion...over every living thing that moves on the Earth...and to everything...in which there is life."**

**Genesis 1:26-30**

God made man like Himself. He gave man full self determination. He gave man dominion over all the Earth and everything that lives and grows on it. In others words, there was nothing left on the Earth that was outside of man's dominion.

**What is man that You are mindful of him... You have crowned him with glory and honour. You have made him to have dominion over the works of Your hands; You have put all things under his feet.**

**Psalm 8:4-6**

Psalm 8:4-6 tells us that man has dominion over the works of God's hands. Psalm 115:16 says we have been given the Earth.

**The Heaven, even the Heavens, are the Lord's; But the Earth He has given to the children of men.**

**Psalm 115:16**

## *Did God Know?*

This may all seem very nice and generous of God but how does it explain all the suffering in the world? It simply means that the affairs of mankind on the Earth, as passed on to Adam upon his creation in the garden of Eden, were not directly ruled or controlled by God at all. God gave them to Adam. Adam, being the bozo that he chose to become, then gave them to the devil.

**“But like Adam they transgressed the covenant; there they dealt treacherously with me.”** (See NIV and NKJV translations)

**Hosea 6:7**

Adam committed treason and gave the rulership of mankind away to the devil. The devil then ruled the world legitimately with the authority of man. Sounds all a bit bizarre? Read this excerpt from the temptations of Jesus in the Gospel of Luke.

**...the devil, taking Him [Jesus] up on a high mountain, showed Him all the kingdoms of the world in a moment of time. And the devil said to Him, “All this authority I will give You, and their glory; for this has been delivered to me, and I give it to whomever I wish. Therefore, if You will worship before me, all will be Yours.”**

**Luke 4:5-7**

The devil said that all the kingdoms of the world were given to him. Who gave him them? God? Err, no! Adam of course! Moreover the devil specifically refers to their *authority*. This is the whole point of what I am writing about. God gave man, in this case the first man Adam, authority over the Earth and his own affairs. Adam then gave that authority to the devil. God found Himself trapped outside the affairs of mankind. While mankind plummeted into sin and every other destructive vice, God had to find a way in to sort the mess out.

Many people erroneously think that God is and always has been in complete control of everything happening on the Earth. That every natural disaster is something God has at the worst caused and at the best allowed - when He could have used His

## Why Doesn't God Do Something?

power to stop it from happening. This is not true.

Thanks to Adam, mankind was placed under the direct rule of the devil.

**...whose minds the god of this world has blinded, who do not believe...**

**2 Corinthians 4:4**

Notice that in the Bible the devil is called *the god of this world*. Jesus even calls the devil the *ruler of this world* three times: in John 12:31, John 14:30 and John 16:11. The devil, who is a fallen cherubim (some kind of high ranking angelic being), had started a rebellion in Heaven. God had made the devil perfect but the Bible says he invented iniquity.

**You were the anointed cherub who covers...  
You were perfect in your ways from the day you  
were created, till iniquity was found in you.**

**Ezekiel 28:15**

The rebellion went badly wrong for the devil and the angels who followed him. They were defeated and thrown out of Heaven by the Archangel Michael and angels loyal to God.

**And war broke out in Heaven: Michael and his angels fought with the dragon; and the dragon and his angels fought, but they did not prevail, nor was a place found for them in Heaven any longer. So the great dragon was cast out, that serpent of old, called the Devil and Satan, who deceives the whole world; he was cast to the Earth, and his angels were cast out with him.**

**Revelation 12:7-9**

Some of the devil's fallen angels may have been captured and imprisoned, Jude 6. Some, including the devil himself, made it to the Earth where they evidently found sanctuary with Adam.

Why didn't God just zap the devil when he started his rebellion in Heaven and personally throw him into Hell? Why did the

*Did God Know?*

Archangel Michael have to defeat him? For the same reason He did not do the same thing on the Earth when Adam sinned. God had given the government and affairs of Heaven over to angels. Consider the following excerpt from the famous Lord's Prayer that Jesus taught to His disciples.

**Our Father in Heaven,  
Hallowed be Your name.  
Your kingdom come.  
Your will be done  
On Earth as it is in Heaven.**

**Matthew 6:9-10**

Notice that Jesus does **not** say that we should pray that God does His will on Earth, as He does His will in Heaven. This is absurd. If this were the case Jesus would be teaching us to pray that God does His own will! Jesus teaches us to pray that God's will, *will be done on Earth as it is in Heaven*. Who does it in Heaven? Angels of course. Who is supposed to do it on the Earth? Mankind course!

When we pray to God that His will, will be done on the Earth, we are interceding to Him on behalf of our fellow man. God's express will for all men is that they be saved.

**The Lord is...not willing that any should perish  
but that all should come to repentance.**

**2 Peter 3:9**

The same was true in Heaven, angels were given responsibility there. That's why the devil rebelled in the first place. He understood that if he could exert control over the angels in Heaven, he could rule Heaven and be like God, without ever having to fight Him. The devil's fight was never with God, otherwise he would never have been dumb enough to start it in the first place. The devil's rebellion is recorded in Isaiah 14.

**How you are fallen from Heaven,  
O Lucifer, son of the morning!  
How you are cut down to the ground,  
You who weakened the nations!**

## Why Doesn't God Do Something?

**For you have said in your heart:  
'I will ascend into Heaven,  
I will exalt my throne above the stars of God;  
I will also sit on the mount of the congregation,  
On the farthest sides of the north;  
I will ascend above the heights of the clouds,  
I will be like the Most High.  
Yet you shall be brought down to Sheol,  
To the lowest depths of the Pit.**

**Isaiah 14:12-15**

Notice that the devil said he would be *like* God, not overthrow Him. The devil's twisted idea of being like God is to control everything, to mercilessly rule without love. This is in complete contrast to God's nature.

The generous and trusting nature of God, in giving man the rulership of the Earth, is so far outside of our consciousness that we can scarcely grasp it. If God ever made a mistake it was that He trusted those He loved too much.

When Adam sinned and committed treason in the Garden of Eden, everything changed. Adam, and consequently all of mankind to follow him, became mortal and weak; The devil proceeded to rule mankind through mental coercion and fear. Although God was still on His throne in Heaven, He was left with only one way to deal with mankind. Through people who allowed Him to by having a loyal heart and by believing and acting upon His word.

**For the eyes of the Lord run to and fro  
throughout the whole Earth, to show Himself  
strong on behalf of those whose heart is loyal  
to Him.**

**2 Chronicles 16:9**

## ***Chapter 3***

### **How Does God Do Things?**

So God didn't see it coming and when things began to unfold, He couldn't stop it because it was outside the realm of His authority - which was because He had given men authority over their own affairs. Fine, but why does the Bible, especially in the Old Testament, record God as doing truly monumental things? Things like flooding the whole Earth and wiping out all of mankind except for eight people!

**And God said to Noah, "The end of all flesh has come before Me, for the Earth is filled with violence through them; and behold, I will destroy them with the Earth. Make yourself an Ark..."**

**Genesis 6:13-14**

If God tells Noah that the wickedness of man is so great that He is going to destroy all the Earth in a flood, all except for Noah and his family; And then He does, how can anyone say even for one moment that God can't intervene in mankind?

God can intervene in mankind but He needs access through people's faith to do it. Look at Noah. He spent 120 years building an Ark. That's 120 years of being ridiculed while he exercised faith in God's word to him. That's strong faith. He even went into the Ark and lived in it for seven days before a single drop of rain began falling. By then the crowds outside were probably in fits of hysterics. Noah's great faith for 120 years enabled God to deliver mankind from the hold of wickedness that had encompassed it.

**By faith Noah, being divinely warned of things not yet seen, moved with godly fear, prepared an ark for the saving of his household, by which he condemned the world and became**

## How Does God Do Things?

**heir of the righteousness which is according to faith.**

**Hebrews 11:7**

The book of Hebrews 11:7 clearly says that *Noah's faith* condemned the wicked world to its destruction. Look at another event, the famous parting of the Red Sea.

**And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the Lord, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The Lord will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."**

**Exodus 14:13-14**

Moses has great faith in God's earlier promise to him that he would lead the Hebrews to a Promised Land. Moses fully expects God to deliver both him and the Hebrews, while they all stand at the edge of the Red Sea and do nothing. God complains to Moses that he also needs to exercise his faith.

**And the Lord said to Moses, "Why do you cry to Me? Tell the children of Israel to go forward. But lift up your rod, and stretch out your hand over the sea and divide it. And the children of Israel shall go on dry ground through the midst of the sea."**

**Exodus 14:15-16**

Moses gets the hint...

**Then Moses stretched out his hand over the sea; and the Lord caused the sea to go back by a strong east wind all that night, and made the sea into dry land, and the waters were divided. So the children of Israel went into the midst of the sea on the dry ground, and the waters were a wall to them on their right hand and on their left.**

**Exodus 14:21-22**

## *Did God Know?*

Moses believed what God said. Moses spoke to the children of Israel and told them to go through the midst of the sea on dry ground - he spoke what God had said. Moses held out his rod over the Red Sea - he acted on what God had said. Moses was exercising great faith and consequently God was able to do great things through him, even parting a sea!

All the great things God has done throughout history have been because people have believed God's word for themselves thereby giving Him a way in to act in the affairs of mankind. Abraham believed that God would make him a great nation and that through him all the Earth would be blessed.

**Now the Lord had said to Abram: "Get out of your country... To a land that I will show you... I will make you a great nation...And in you all the families of the Earth shall be blessed." So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken to him.  
Genesis 12:1-4**

Abraham was willing to give up his only son for God's plan. He even believed that God would raise his son Isaac from the dead. He thereby opened a massive door with his faith for God to be able to send His own Son Jesus one day - and raise Him from the dead.

**By faith Abraham, when he was tested, offered up Isaac, and he who had received the promises offered up his only begotten son, of whom it was said, "In Isaac your seed shall be called," concluding that God was able to raise him up, even from the dead.**

**Hebrews 11:17-19**

Throughout the ages people were praying and interceding right up to the birth of Jesus. Intercession is in itself an act of faith. In Luke 2:25 a man called Simeon has been waiting for the Messiah, fully expecting him to be born in his lifetime after God had told him he would be. There was also a Prophetess called Anna, aged around 84, who had spent years fasting and praying in the Temple. When she saw the baby Jesus she

## How Does God Do Things?

immediately knew who He was by the Spirit of God because she had spent most of her life earnestly expecting the coming of the Messiah.

When God sent the angel Gabriel to Mary and told her she would have a child without a man, and that He would be the Messiah, she believed his words and said:

**“Let it be to me according to your word.”**

**Luke 1:38**

On the other hand, when people did not believe, even Jesus - God himself in human form, could not do much for them.

**Then He [Jesus] went out from there and came to His own country...and many hearing Him were astonished, saying, “Where did this Man get these things?... Is this not the carpenter, the Son of Mary,” So they were offended at Him... Now He could do no mighty work there, except that He laid His hands on a few sick people and healed them.**

**Mark 6:1-5**

OK, but what about cases where no one believed God and He still pulled off some massive stunts?

**Now the whole Earth had one language and one speech. And...they said to one another... “Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the Heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole Earth.” But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower which the sons of men had built. And the Lord said... Come, let Us go down and there confuse their language, that they may not understand one another’s speech.” So the Lord scattered them abroad from there over the face of all the Earth...**

**Genesis 11:1-8**

## *Did God Know?*

Here we have all of mankind united and trying to build a tower or perhaps a way of reaching into the Heavens and the spiritual realm. Either way, it wasn't good - otherwise God would not have thought best to stop it. How could God stop it when no one involved was interested in stopping it? That's easy, all the people believed it would be stopped and that they would be scattered. They didn't like the idea and tried to work against it, but sure enough they believed it.

**And they said, "Come, let us build ourselves a city, and a tower whose top is in the Heavens; let us make a name for ourselves, lest we be scattered abroad over the face of the whole Earth."**

**Genesis 11:4**

Their faith for their own failure opened a door in the spiritual realm for God to work in their situation - for their own good.

Fine, but what about this scripture? Surely this wipes out everything that has been said...?

**But our God is in Heaven; He does whatever He pleases.**

**Psalm 115:3**

Well, that depends how you read it. I sit in my home and do whatever I please. What does that mean? It means exactly what it says. I do what I please in my home. God does what He pleases in Heaven. No one coerces Him into anything. All the things He decides to do on the Earth, are what He pleases, but they have to be done through people. They may take a few revisions when people drop out from the programme! Psalm 115:3 does not say: *God sits in Heaven and controls everything from which way the wind blows to which war some megalomaniac starts next.* Remember, Jesus told us to pray:

**Your will be done, on Earth as it is in Heaven.**

**Matthew 6:10**

Great, you say, so now you have given us a weak God who

## How Does God Do Things?

doesn't know what's going to happen next, and if He did He wouldn't be able to intervene to do anything about it anyway! No, not at all. We have a God who, whatever you decide and whatever comes against you, can show you how to overcome it because He has infinite understanding. Nothing phases Him and nothing outwits Him.

**Great is our Lord...His understanding is infinite.  
Psalm 147:5**

**There is no wisdom or understanding, or  
counsel against the Lord.  
Proverbs 21:30**

Moreover, God can do anything that you can believe Him for.

**“for with God all things are possible.”  
Matthew 19:26**

Possible, how? By believing!

**Jesus said to him, “If you can believe, all things  
are possible to him who believes.”  
Mark 9:23**

## ***Chapter 4***

### **Why Did God Have A Chosen People?**

If God loved all the people of the world equally and wanted to save them all, why did He spend several hundred years trying to build a nation state? Why all the weird customs ranging from animal sacrifices right through to circumcision? Why didn't God send Jesus to die and to pay for mankind's sins at the beginning of history? Surely this would have saved centuries of suffering? At the very least it would have skipped years of fighting and bloodshed on the part of the nation of Israel.

**Abraham shall surely become a great and mighty nation, and all the nations of the Earth shall be blessed in him? For I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him, that they keep the way of the Lord, to do righteousness and justice, that the Lord may bring to Abraham what He has spoken to him.**

**Genesis 18:18-19**

The nation of Israel started with Abraham. God chose Abraham for a purpose, not because Abraham had any special merit or outstanding ability. God picked Abraham to start something that would last. It would last because Abraham would pass on to His children the things that God revealed to him. That's why God said in Genesis 18:19 *"for I have known him, in order that he may command his children and his household after him."*

**And I will establish My covenant between Me and you and your descendants after you in their generations, for an everlasting covenant, to be God to you and your descendants after you.**

**Genesis 17:7**

## Why Did God Have A Chosen People?

God was making a new Covenant with Abraham, a way for Him to be able to save mankind. Remember, after Adam's treason in Eden, God had no direct way of working in mankind except through people. How does He work through people? Through His word. Whatever God said, if it was believed by a man or woman, gave Him a way to legitimately work in mankind. If it was not believed, God had to move on and find someone who did believe. By starting the Hebrew nation God was working to create a container for His word on the Earth so that when Jesus came as a man with his divinity laid aside (Philippians 2:7), he could defeat the devil fair and square as a man.

**The tempter came to Him, he said, "If You are the Son of God, command that these stones become bread." But He answered and said, "It is written, 'Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.'"**

**Matthew 4:3-4**

The devil's first temptation of Jesus was to try and get him to use his power out of line with the Word of God. The nation of Israel was needed, with all of its strange practices and laws, because when they were correctly interpreted, they revealed to Jesus when he came to Earth as a man, his divine destiny and how to fulfil it.

**...since there are priests who offer the gifts according to the law; who serve the copy and shadow of the Heavenly things, as Moses was divinely instructed when he was about to make the tabernacle. For He said, "See that you make all things according to the pattern shown you on the mountain."**

**Hebrews 8:4-5**

Without Israel having the Old Testament Law, Jesus could not have fulfilled his purpose to buy back mankind. The Law was as Hebrews 8:4 says, a *copy* of what was in Heaven. Jesus read the copy, understood its true meaning and lived it out himself. He became the sacrificial lamb of all the Old Testament

## *Did God Know?*

sacrifices. The true purpose of all of the Old Testament law was entirely fulfilled in Jesus. After Jesus came and fulfilled the law it became obsolete and God made a new Covenant with Israel and Judah, and indeed with all men everywhere who would believe.

**Behold, the days are coming, says the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah...I will put My laws in their mind and write them on their hearts; and I will be their God, and they shall be My people..." In that He says, "A new covenant," He has made the first obsolete. Now what is becoming obsolete and growing old is ready to vanish away.**

**Hebrews 8:7-13**

In order for God to bring all this to pass before Jesus came to Earth, He had two small problems. People and the devil. The main problem was people. God's chosen people had to become a viable nation and not corrupted by the pagan nations around them. Therefore God had to establish a nation, with a distinct identity, and create firm laws within it to maintain its structural integrity. It had to be a strong enough cradle into which Jesus could be born and nurtured with the word of God.

The other problem was the devil. He had to be fooled from understanding how God would buy back mankind from him. The devil knew a special man was coming. He had heard the promise given to Eve in Eden, the prophecy that one day someone would come who would crush him (Genesis 3:15). The devil must have assumed that this would be an earthly king, one from within Israel who would somehow end up ruling the whole Earth. Therefore he worked tirelessly to destroy the nation of Israel. He never quite succeeded, although at times he appeared to come quite close. For several hundred years God built a nation state that seemed in many ways to be going nowhere. The devil was clueless right up until Jesus was born. The devil never did know what was really going on. He must have thought that when Jesus came that he was going to raise up an army to defeat the Romans and rule the world by force.

## Why Did God Have A Chosen People?

**But we speak the wisdom of God in a mystery, the hidden wisdom which God ordained before the ages for our glory, which none of the rulers of this age knew; for had they known, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory.**

**1 Corinthians 2:7-8**

This is one of the most revealing verses in the whole Bible. It plainly says that the devil and his minions, the rulers in the spiritual realm of mankind, would not have crucified Jesus through the Jews and Romans, if they had known what God's plan was. God completely fooled them. He set in motion a plan as soon as Adam sinned in Eden, before the ages of the kingdoms of men on this Earth, that the devil never imagined. Jesus went to the cross and the devil thought he had won. Jesus became sin in our place that we might become the righteousness of God. The devil didn't realise this at all. When He saw Jesus spiritually die on the cross like Adam died in Eden, he could only conclude that Jesus had also sinned. What the devil did not know was that Jesus voluntarily became sin.

**For He made Him who knew no sin to be sin for us, that we might become the righteousness of God in Him**

**2 Corinthians 5:21**

When Jesus died like an unbeliever and went to Hell, the devil's glee must have been beyond measure. The mocking and tormenting of Jesus' human soul in Hell, was doubtless without any restraint. But on the third day something happened, God spoke from Heaven:

**"You are My Son, Today I have begotten You"  
And again: "I will be to Him a Father, And He shall be to Me a Son" ...He again brings the first born into the world.**

**Hebrews 1:5-6**

The scriptures are very plain. While Jesus was in Hell, God spoke and made Jesus' spirit alive again, Jesus became the firstborn from the dead. The first born again man. God the

## *Did God Know?*

Father said to Jesus: "*Today I have begotten you.*" Right there in Hell, Jesus' spirit came alive. The Bible says he then disarmed the devil and his cohorts, Colossians 2:15. The plan worked. Jesus took back all of Adam's lost authority. The only authority the devil has now is that stolen through deception.

After the resurrection everything changed. God could indwell people with His Spirit and lead and guide them through their heart and conscience. He could anoint people with His Spirit and do miracles through their hands, His words in their mouths had power behind them. There was no longer any need at all for a nation state to preserve itself by force and keep the scriptures safe for a coming Messiah. No need for harsh rules to keep people out of trouble, now they had the Holy Spirit in them to lead and guide them. There was no need for the Old Testament Law and practices because they were copies, and the original, Jesus, had now come.

**For the law, having a shadow of the good things to come...can never...make those who approach perfect. For it is not possible that the blood of bulls and goats could take away sins. Therefore, when He came into the world, He said: "Sacrifice and offering You did not desire, but a body You have prepared for Me. In burnt offerings and sacrifices for sin you had no pleasure.**

**Hebrews 10:1-8**

God was never in the slightest bit interested in sacrifices for Himself. They never took away a single sin. They were there for people, to remind them of their own need of a saviour and that they could not save themselves. When sacrifices were made properly, they were pleasing to God, not because He needed to see some blood to calm Himself down or smell burning flesh to appease His anger but because the sacrifices opened the door of His people's hearts to him. People came to God just as they were, not in fear or pride. Their faith in the sacrifice making them right took away their sense of guilt and condemnation. This made God very very happy. He had always loved people and wanted them to be real and open with Him.

## ***Chapter 5***

### **Why Does God Apparently Do Bad Things?**

Fine, you may say (again!), so God didn't see it coming and when it did start happening, He had a job stopping it. God can work through man, but only when man believes His word; God started a literal nation, for a special purpose, which has now been fulfilled. Granted! But why does the Bible record God Himself as doing and ordering, so many bad things? He wipes out humanity in a flood. His servant Joshua slaughters all the inhabitants of Jericho – including children! He tells his people to kidnap women for wives. He kills his own people in numerous plagues and even declares Himself a Jealous God. He says that men can divorce their wives if they don't fancy them any more, simply by writing them a quick note. How is any of this even fair, let alone the compassionate actions of a loving God?

And while we are at it, why does God seem to get nicer as time goes by and then flip again at the end? He starts the Old Testament off with genocide, orders the conquering of nations by force but then progresses onto focusing on the hypocrisy of His own people. As the Old Testament wears on God seems to lose interest in His people conquering the nations around them. By the New Testament God's telling us through Jesus to love our neighbour as ourselves, go the extra mile and pray for our enemies; Then at the end, He rounds it all off by reverting back to His old ways and throwing everyone into Hell who doesn't believe in His Son Jesus. What a psycho!

**For I am the Lord, I do not change.**

**Malachi 3:6**

If God does not change, who does? People? No, not really. People remain pretty much the same throughout history. All the apparent changes in God's character, reflected in His outward

## *Did God Know?*

changes of approach to mankind at different times are because of His progression towards a goal.

It is essential to remember that after the Fall in Eden, mankind went under the direct rule of the devil. People lost the ability to communicate with God directly through their spirit. God was now working from the outside in. God only had fallen, imperfect people to work with. In order to achieve His goal of freeing mankind from the devil and sin, God had to work with what He had – imperfect people, in a fallen world and deal with them in ways that they could relate to. This was through what they could hear with their ears, see with their eyes and cope with in their mindsets. God's people had to be coerced by strict rules with severe penalties, into keeping themselves from preventing God from fulfilling His plan to redeem all mankind.

Before the Flood all of humanity, except for Noah and his family, had become totally wicked in thought, word and deed (Genesis 6:6). God had to act, otherwise with the death of Noah and his family, all humanity would be completely lost and outside of His reach to save. Through Noah's great faith God flooded the Earth and cleansed it. After that people's life spans began to dramatically decrease. Wicked men could no longer rule for centuries and man was more readily reminded of his mortality. God gave the world 120 years to repent before the Flood and Noah preached His message all that time, but no one responded.

The worldwide Flood was an act of love, to save the future of humanity from itself.

After the Flood things improved but there were still problems. Mankind again began to multiply and sought to build their own way into Heaven through the tower of Babel. Humanity ended up being dispersed throughout the Earth after their language was fragmented. Throughout all this time God may have tried on numerous unrecorded occasions, to find a way to get His plan done through various people. Noah did well with the Ark, but blew it with a drunken lifestyle after the flood. God eventually found Abraham. He asked him to leave his home city called Ur and made a promise to him that he would be blessed

## Why Does God Apparently Do Bad Things?

through a new covenant. Abraham obeyed.

God was now at the very beginning of His plan. God was trying to build a people that He could deposit His word into for safe keeping until Jesus could come to the Earth. This people was constantly under attack by the devil. The more God blessed them, the more those around them fought them. Things finally took off with Moses and God was able to dictate the first five books of the Bible directly to him on Mount Sinai.

God introduced harsh punishments for breaking the law given to Moses in order to protect the identity of Israel, and preserve it from corruption by the nations around it. Those people who broke such laws demonstrated their liability to the whole nation. If they were not severely dealt with the whole thing would fall apart – and it nearly did many times. In those early days Israel was fighting for its survival all of the time. God had to focus on building up their national strength and defences so that they would not be wiped out, if they were He would have had to start His plan all over again.

Did God really order the killing of all the inhabitants of Jericho, the first city Israel fought against when entering their promised land? When Joshua was preparing for the first battle for the Promised Land, God Himself appeared to him in the form of an angel. What God said is very striking.

**And it came to pass, when Joshua was by Jericho, that he lifted his eyes and looked, and behold, a Man stood opposite him with His sword drawn in His hand. And Joshua went to Him and said to Him, "Are You for us or for our adversaries?" So He said, "No, but as Commander of the army of the Lord I have now come."**

**Joshua 5:13-14**

Joshua asks the Angel of the Lord whose side He is on in the forthcoming battle and He says **none!!** This is almost unbelievable when you think that God was surely on the side of the Israelites and trying to help them defeat their enemies. But

## *Did God Know?*

He wasn't and never was. He was on the side of saving mankind. The forthcoming battle was not really for Joshua and the Hebrews, it was for all humanity. It was to establish a nation to carry God's word until Jesus came and made a way for all men to be saved.

God did not order the killing of all the inhabitants of Jericho.

**Then the Lord said to Joshua, "See, I have delivered Jericho into your hands, along with its king and its fighting men..."**

**Joshua 6:2**

It was Joshua who told the Israelites to destroy all the inhabitants of the city, and went even further and vowed that anyone who did not join in the destruction of Jericho would be under a curse (Joshua 6:18). Joshua was far more violent than God had intended him to be, but what was God supposed to do? Sack him and start again with someone else? There was no one else. Since creation, millions had already lived and died outside of God's love. God wasn't going to put the whole plan in the bin and start again just because Joshua was too zealous. Even as reprehensible as that may seem to us today, compared to the human cost of abandoning Joshua and starting with someone else, it was a strategic necessity.

There is no record of God telling Joshua to give a command to destroy all the inhabitants of Jericho. God commanded Moses to conquer the land and *drive out the inhabitants*, not slaughter them! Joshua was Moses right hand man, he would have heard every word of this pronouncement.

**Now the Lord spoke to Moses... 'When you have crossed the Jordan into the land of Canaan, then you shall drive out all the inhabitants of the land from before you, destroy all their engraved stones...molded images...demolish all their high places; you shall dispossess the inhabitants of the land and dwell in it...'**

**Numbers 33:50-53**

## Why Does God Apparently Do Bad Things?

There are at least 21 references in the Old Testament to the Israelites driving out or failing to drive out the inhabitants of the promised land. There are none about them supposed to be slaughtering them or failing to slaughter them.

Consider the following: Joshua sent some spies to Jericho before he fought against it. They were sheltered by a prostitute called Rahab. This is what she said to them when she hid them from her own king.

**...and [she] said to the men: "I know that the Lord has given you the land, that the terror of you has fallen on us, and that all the inhabitants of the land are faint hearted because of you. For we have heard how the Lord dried up the water of the Red Sea for you when you came out of Egypt...for the Lord your God, He is God in Heaven above and on Earth beneath.**

**Joshua 2:9-11**

The people of Jericho knew exactly who the God of Israel was, they all knew very well He had even parted the Red Sea forty years earlier, but they didn't want to follow Him. They worshipped a god called Molech to whom they sacrificed their children to in fire. No wonder God wanted the city completely overthrown!

All of Rahab's family were saved in the subsequent battle because of her helping the spies, indeed she is mentioned several times later in the Bible as a woman of faith and counted in the ancestral lineage of Jesus! What are we seeing here? God is quite happy to even bring a prostitute into His kingdom because she helped hide a couple of Hebrews! Think about that.

All of the fighting in the Old Testament was a tragic necessity for God to be able to bring Jesus into the world. God had to build a nation in a violent world so He needed a fighting people for His plan to succeed. He had to work with prevailing violent attitudes. His own people were often violent and unjust in ways

## *Did God Know?*

He never commanded them to be. Moreover anyone could join the Hebrew nation and God's laws said they had to be treated the same as anyone in it.

**You shall have the same law for the stranger and for one from your own country; for I am the Lord your God.'"**

**Leviticus 24:22**

Many did join. Egyptians joined when Moses left Egypt, Moabites joined and a whole bunch of devil worshippers joined from Jericho because their relation, a famous prostitute, had helped someone. God's not trying to keep people out of His kingdom, He's trying get them in!

What about chauvinistic laws?

**When a man takes a wife and marries her, and it happens that she finds no favour in his eyes... he writes her a certificate of divorce, puts it in her hand, and sends her out of his house...**

**Deuteronomy 24:1 and on**

Actually, this law is far better than certain religion's laws today where a woman can be divorced by her husband, simply by him saying so three times in private and not giving anything in writing. The Jewish law in Deuteronomy requires something in writing to be given to the woman. The verses after it clearly state that the husband cannot change his mind and have her back under any circumstances. Moreover, the first verse does not say: *if a man no longer fancies his wife and sees a newer model*. The criteria is: *she finds no favour in his eyes*. That's pretty serious and who wants to stay married to someone who doesn't like anything at all about you anyway? This is an act of mercy so that the woman can be free to find happiness. Subsequent verses say that after she is divorced, she is also free to remarry. Nevertheless Jesus said in the New Testament that these laws were given because of the hardness of people's hearts, not as some Carte Blanche for constantly trying out new wives!

## Why Does God Apparently Do Bad Things?

What about kidnapping girls to take as wives? In the Old Testament book of Judges chapter 21, there is the bizarre story of a Hebrew civil war, which ends with the tribe of Benjamin risking extinction through a lack of women for wives. The other tribes of Israel recommend kidnapping girls at a festival held by a neighbouring people, from a place called Shiloh. This they do and the plan seems to work. All things considered, the girls are made legitimate wives and they would have had no say in who they married anyway, but is this really how God works? No, not at all, like many episodes in the Bible, just because it happened or God's people did it, it doesn't mean that God approved of it. The last verse of the chapter pretty much sums up this event!

**In those days there was no king in Israel;  
everyone did what was right in his own eyes.**

**Judges 21:25**

Why did God kill so many of His own people in plagues? Why were many of the people killed, not even responsible for the thing that started the plague?

**Now Satan stood up against Israel, and moved David to number Israel. So David said to Joab... "Go number Israel...Joab answered...Why then does my lord require this thing? Why should he be a cause of guilt in Israel?" Nevertheless the king's word prevailed against Joab...**

**...All Israel had one million one hundred thousand men who drew the sword, and Judah had four hundred and seventy thousand men who drew the sword. But he did not count Levi and Benjamin among them, for the king's word was abominable to Joab...And God was displeased with this thing; therefore He struck Israel...and seventy thousand men of Israel fell...And David said to God, "Was it not I who commanded the people to be numbered? I am the one who has sinned and done evil indeed; but these sheep, what have they done?"**

**1 Chronicles 20:1-7,14,17**

## *Did God Know?*

If there was ever an atheist's dream passage from the Bible this must be it. Regardless of everything I have written in the previous chapters, this bizarre event seems to clearly portray God as grossly unfair. Actually, it's not that difficult to answer...

First, notice the gravity of the situation. Satan himself gets David to take a census. Obviously Satan sees some great advantage in having David take a census. Satan's approach is not to fight God directly but to try and thwart His will, by having people lose their faith in God, mainly through pride and fear. The commander of the army, Joab, strongly objects asking the king why he is doing it. Joab tells David it's wrong and subsequently partially disobeys him and does not count the tribes of Levi and Benjamin. Why was it so abominable to Joab?

Take a step back and consider some things. The very existence of Israel was a continuous miracle. Almost every nation around it had fought it and wanted to destroy it at least at one time or another. Israel's military victories were often the result of miracles. These miracles happened when Israel depended on God for success. When they did not, even significantly lesser enemies easily defeated them in battle. Why? Because the battles were not just physical but also spiritual. Joab, as the commander of the army would have known this more than anyone else. That's why he objected even to his own king's face about taking the census and then partially disobeyed him anyway. God even forbade His people to have any horses (Deuteronomy 7:16). Coupled with chariots they were the battle tanks of the ancient world. God wanted Israel's confidence to be in Him to save them from their own annihilation.

I know I keep repeating this but it's so important - God had to establish a nation state, that was a secure capsule for His word, to facilitate Jesus coming to Earth and make provision for the salvation of all mankind.

A census would have undermined the nation's dependence on God. Doubtless the news of the results of the census would have been quickly known throughout the land. 'Oh wow! We have a million soldiers - aren't we great!' - and this would

## Why Does God Apparently Do Bad Things?

have been the beginning of the end for Israel as a nation and therefore of God's plan to save mankind.

Even though David committed the sin and ordered the census, God had to act quickly in the capital of the nation to stop rampant jingoism spreading. The sudden death of seventy thousand people in a terrible plague could only remind Israel of their mortality and the need for faith and dependence on God alone. It was an act of mercy. Without their faith in God, even if Israel's army numbered 10 million, they would have been defeated and wiped out as a nation, and God's plan to save humanity put back, possibly hundreds of years.

### **For I the Lord your God am a jealous God Exodus 20:5**

Eight times the Bible says God is a jealous God and always in connection with worshipping Him and not other gods. Why is God jealous? Because He wants to protect you from other gods. When you die, those other gods don't care at all that your soul is lost in Hell forever, all they want is to maintain their control and position on Earth. The real God wants you to live forever, He is jealous in a good and protective way.

All of the apparent bad things that God did in the Bible are explained when we understand that He was working to build a way for Jesus to come into mankind - to save us all. God had His dreams for mankind shattered in the Garden of Eden. Eden means *perfect pleasure*. What should have been a world of fun and excitement, with hardly a serious moment, became a world of unimaginable pain and suffering. God was forced to repeatedly make heart rending decisions to stop all of His creation being lost forever under the tyranny of the heartless fallen angel Lucifer. Perhaps we should have more sympathy for God and everything that He has had to go through. How would you like to have to kill some of your own children to save the rest?

## ***Chapter 6***

### **Hell - The Ultimate Injustice?**

Finally, if God is a God of love, why is there a Hell?! How can God on the one hand say He loves people, and yet on the other punish them in Hell forever - for not believing in Jesus - of whom some of them have never even heard!

This apparent schizophrenic and cruel behaviour is traditionally explained by deeming God to be absolutely Holy and absolutely Just. Therefore God is unable to tolerate any sin because sin itself is both unholy and unjust. Therefore if God did tolerate any sin this would compromise who He is as a Holy and Just God, and so He has to punish all sinners in Hell forever. Mmm...

This apparent intolerance for sin is strange because the Bible says that Jesus was the friend of sinners in Matthew 11:19 and Luke 7:34. Nevertheless some people say that Jesus' love for sinners is only temporary, to give them a chance to repent. But God says of Himself in the Bible.

**I am the Lord, I do not change**

**Malachi 3:6**

If this verse is true, God cannot love and then subsequently not love, anyone. It is also believed that since God cannot tolerate any injustice He has to perpetually punish people who have sinned, with conscious torment in Hell forever, in order to satisfy the Just part of His nature. This is contradictory because if God punishes people perpetually, He is never actually satisfying the Just part of His nature. In other words, God keeps on doing something forever, that never resolves anything. Even I'm not that stupid.

What about the wrath of God often mentioned in the Bible?

**For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven**

## Hell – The Ultimate Injustice?

**against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men.**

**Romans 1:18**

Notice that God's wrath is against all the ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, and not against men themselves. Why is God angry with ungodliness and unrighteousness? Because these things separate man from God and hurt man. Why else would God be angry with anything? If you really think about it, there is nothing that is wrong that does not cause hurt to someone, including the perpetrator, in one way or another.

So what is God's real nature? God is normal. What is normal? Normal is good. Everything God has ever done, is doing and ever will do, is only because of His goodness and love. Some people think this is too soft. They say God is also holy. Yes, God is absolutely Holy. The Prophet Isaiah saw God in a vision and recorded that the Seraphim that flew around the throne of God constantly cried out:

**Holy, holy, holy is the Lord of hosts.**

**Isaiah 6:3**

Holy means *consecrated* or *devoted* to. In Exodus 22:31 God asks people to be holy to Himself. If God Himself is described as holy, what then, is He holy to? Himself of course! There is no other viable alternative. And what is God Himself?

**God is love**

**1 John 4:8**

God is holy and devoted to love. Jesus is the most perfect expression of any and all the parts of God's character that you will ever see. If you have a view of God that you can't find an example of in the life of Jesus, then your view is wrong. A disciple called Philip once asked Jesus if he could actually see God and said that this would be enough – all his questions would be answered. Jesus replied to him by saying:

**He who has seen me has seen the Father.**

**John 14:9**

## *Did God Know?*

No one is going to Hell because of their sins. God can tolerate sin and has done so for the last 6000 years. It's us that can't tolerate sin because it spiritually kills us, and separates us from God. That's why God hates sin so much, because of the hurt it causes us. However God has dealt with all sin, once and for all.

**...but now, once at the end of the ages, He has appeared to put away sin by the sacrifice of Himself.**

**Hebrews 9:14**

When John the Baptist first saw Jesus he said:

**Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!**

**John 1:29**

So this is wonderful news! God has taken away the sins of the world? Yes! And if, according to Malachi 3:6, God does not change and we see in the life of Jesus that God loves the sinner, then no one goes to Hell right? Err, no.

God loves everyone in Hell. He didn't send them there, they went there themselves. Jesus said so:

**Enter by the narrow gate; for wide is the gate and broad is the way that leads to destruction, and there are many who go in by it. Because narrow is the gate and difficult is the way which leads to life, and there are few who find it.**

**Matthew 7:13-14**

Jesus does not say *God throws people in* by the wide gate, but rather that *there are many who go in by it*. This may seem very strange. How can people go to Hell, if they do not want to, and God does not really want them there either?

People go to Hell because they have sinned and therefore spiritually died. The sentence of going to Hell is on all spiritually dead beings. This was decreed by God as soon as the devil

## Hell – The Ultimate Injustice?

brought iniquity into creation. God specifically made Hell for the devil and his angels because they had become a liability to the well being of His creation. They were no longer in a living union with God. God is love and totally good. To draw away from Him in any capacity is to draw away from all things good and towards all things evil. The creation of Hell was an act of love. It was designed to imprison evil and prevent its spread.

**...the everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels:**

**Matthew 25:41**

The sentence of Hell is not really on any one person, or even on the devil. It is on sin and spiritual death. The problem is that when people choose to sin, sin spiritually kills them and takes over their nature. They become what the Bible calls spiritually dead. They become a massive spiritual liability.

**And you He made alive, who were dead in trespasses and sins, in which you once walked according to the course of this world...**

**Ephesians 2:1**

The Bible does not say: *And you He made into well behaved people who were previously not behaving...* . This is what many people think that being a Christian is all about – behaviour. The real problem with mankind is not our behaviour but our condition resulting from our behaviour – spiritual death. This is why Jesus said in John 3:3: “*you must be born again,*” not, ‘*you must start behaving properly.*’

When people sin and spiritually die they are locked into a condition which only God can get them out of - if they choose to allow Him to. As we grow up, sooner or later we all sin. This is because of what Adam did in the Garden of Eden. We are all born separated from the life of God, weak and without the strength to resist sin. This is why Jesus came:

**For when we were still without strength, in due time Christ died for the ungodly.**

**Roman 5:6**

*Did God Know?*

All people have sinned and all people who have sinned, have spiritually died. The miracle needed to be spiritually made alive again is the new birth, otherwise known as being *born again*. Without this miracle people never change, not even after they are dead.

**“There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen and fared sumptuously every day. But there was a certain beggar named Lazarus, full of sores, who was laid at his gate, desiring to be fed with the crumbs which fell from the rich man’s table...So it was that the beggar died, and was carried by the angels to Abraham’s bosom. The rich man also died and was buried. And being in torments in Hades, he lifted up his eyes and saw Abraham afar off, and Lazarus in his bosom.**

**“Then he cried and said, ‘Father Abraham, have mercy on me and send Lazarus that he may dip the tip of his finger in water and cool my tongue; for I am tormented in this flame.’ But Abraham said...‘between us and you there is a great gulf fixed, so that those who want to pass from here to you cannot, nor can those from there pass to us.’**

**“Then he said, ‘I beg you therefore, father, that you would send him to my father’s house, for I have five brothers, that he may testify to them...’”**

**Luke 16:20-27**

Jesus began this story by saying that there was: *‘a certain rich man’* who had everything going for him. There was also a poor man who was *‘desiring to be fed,’* with the crumbs from the rich man's table. Evidently he didn't get any. They both subsequently die. The beggar, called Lazarus, goes to Paradise. Jesus does not say why because the story is not really about him. The rich man goes to Hell, not because he is rich but because he was obviously a very wicked man who couldn't even spare crumbs out of his abundance for someone starving at his gate, not to mention those suffering out of his sight.

## Hell – The Ultimate Injustice?

Now, in a most revealing insight into human nature, the rich man begins a dialogue from Hell with Abraham in Paradise. The first thing the rich man does is try to get Abraham to get Lazarus, to serve him and bring him water. He naively thinks that Abraham will order Lazarus about, and hold him in the same contempt that he did when he was still alive on the Earth. Abraham explains that it's not possible to bridge the gulf between them. The rich man then tries to get Abraham to order Lazarus to go and talk to his family who are still on the Earth. Notice the rich man does not start with: *'tell Lazarus I am sorry'*, *'tell God I'm sorry'* or *'Hey Abraham, I'm sorry.'* Why? Because he's still the same. He is not sorry, he only wants to improve his situation and look after his own. He still sees Lazarus as someone who should get him what he wants. Even while burning in Hell he continues to exhibit pride.

So what would happen if we let this individual into Heaven? The same thing that was already happening with him in Hell and had been happening with him on the Earth, all his life. If the rich man was not sorry while in Hell, he is hardly going to take a more compassionate and humble attitude while basking in the sunshine of Heaven. After all, he didn't care about Lazarus while everything was going his way on the Earth.

No, if he and others like him were let in, Heaven would degenerate into a place of unbridled evil. Moreover, with eternal lifespans people would eventually become completely evil like the devil. This is exactly what happened before the great Flood of Noah when people lived for hundreds of years. Everything they did, said and thought, ended up being totally evil and controlled by the devil.

**Then the Lord saw that the wickedness of man was great in the Earth, and that every intent of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually.**

**Genesis 6:6**

If God let people who were spiritually dead into heaven, He would have to let the devil in too, since that was the basis on which he was first banished. Heaven would be in constant

## *Did God Know?*

upheaval and in perpetual civil war. The only thing to do is to imprison the evil. That's why Hell was created. It is a prison, not a punishment. God loves everyone in Hell. Everywhere you see the word *punishment* in the New Testament remember that in the original Greek it reads *penalty*. A penalty is a consequence. It is what has to happen to put things out of order, back into order. Even modern prisons are not really places of punishment – otherwise why don't we torture everyone in them?! Prisons exist to protect society by removing evil from it.

Many people would agree that the rich man in this story is unfit for heaven. But what about all the nice people who do not believe in Jesus and for many good reasons? Reasons like that they have never even heard of Him! The first and tragic point is that all people have sinned, whether or not they are nice. Anyone who has sinned, has spiritually died. This is what sin does to you. It is not what God does to you for sinning, it's quite simply what happens to you when you sin. Sin is not a mistake or an oversight, it is a violation of your conscience.

**For whatever is not from faith is sin.**

**Romans 14:22**

Anything that you have done, knowing it to be wrong, was a sin. It was a sin because you violated your conscience and not because of what you actually did. Your first sin spiritually killed you. We all spiritually died when we first sinned.

If we ask Him to, the Spirit of God will come into our heart and makes us alive again even after we have sinned and spiritually died. Thereafter we are kept perpetually spiritually alive, even though we may sin again.

**If you confess with your mouth that Jesus is Lord and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.**

**Romans 10:9-10**

## Hell – The Ultimate Injustice?

Some people are adamant that they do not need to be saved and have God make them alive again because they are not as bad as other people. Jesus told a story to clarify this.

**Also He [Jesus] spoke this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous... “Two men went up to the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. The Pharisee stood and prayed thus with himself, ‘God, I thank You that I am not like other men: extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even as this tax collector. I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I possess.’ And the tax collector, standing afar off, would not so much as raise his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me a sinner!’ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified rather than the other...”**

**Luke 18:9-14**

The Bible says that the sin of persistently resisting the Holy Spirit saving you is unforgivable. It is unforgivable because by its very nature, it is the permanent ongoing rejection of being made spiritually alive. The Bible says that after death we all face judgement. The New Testament Greek word for judgement is *diakrisis*, from where we get our English word *crisis*.

A time of judgement is a time when our previous choices are presented to us, and our fate sealed upon what we previously decided. If we decided not to be spiritually made alive when we lived on the Earth, we cannot exercise faith after we are dead to be saved - our own hearts will not let us. The story that Jesus told about the rich man and Lazarus illustrates this point. We can harden our hearts to the point that we are no longer able to change. This is a great phenomenon of human nature – have you ever known someone who was blatantly wrong but would never change and or admit it?

The more we choose a certain path, the more our hearts are conditioned and hardened onto it. No one in Hell is sorry for their sins, they are just sorry that they are there. One day your

## *Did God Know?*

life on earth will end. It is beyond absurd for you to enter eternity having spent more time and attention planning your annual holiday than you have considering the eternal destination of your soul.

God's love is being freely offered to you right now even as you read this book. No matter who you are or what you have done God's offer of eternal life and forgiveness is without any precondition except that you must choose it.

The real issue is this: There must be something significantly out of place with someone who will not accept the love of God freely offering them eternal life through Jesus. Why would you not receive it? Anyone who seeks God and His truth will find Him. That may be why you are reading this book right now. This is your chance, you may not get another so don't choose to waste it. Your choice not to open your heart to God's love, provided freely for you in Jesus, is your choice to close it to all that is good. Jesus said:

**"So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and he who seeks finds, and to him who knocks it will be opened... your heavenly Father will give the Holy Spirit to those who ask Him!"**

**Luke 11:9-13**

The gift of the Holy Spirit coming into your heart and making you alive, is the gift of eternal life that is received by making Jesus the Son of God, your Lord.

**And this is the testimony: that God has given us eternal life, and this life is in His Son. He who has the Son has life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have life.**

**1 John 5:11-12**

Do you want life? Eternal Life. Then choose the Son. Jesus is the Son of God. The light and life of God abide only in him.

## Hell – The Ultimate Injustice?

Others may be good but they cannot give you eternal life.

One day this present world will end. No one except God the Father Himself knows when that day will be. The skies will split open and Jesus will return for His own – all those whose hearts were open to him.

On the final day of this present age, God will perform His last great act of mercy to those who would not accept His gift of life. Those who hardened their hearts until they could not choose life ever again, along with even Hell itself will be destroyed forever and ever.

**Then Death and Hades [Hell] were cast into the lake of fire. This is the second death. And anyone not found written in the Book of Life was cast into the lake of fire**

**Revelation 20:14**

God is not looking forward to this last goodbye and is probably putting it off for as long as possible.

There will be many tears shed that day. Parents will see their children for the last time. Children their parents for the last time, ever. Friends, even spouses will never see each other again. Many tears will be shed that day, more than on any other day since the beginning of the world. God will wipe them all away.

**And God will wipe away every tear from their eyes; there shall be no more death, nor sorrow, nor crying. There shall be no more pain, for the former things have passed away.” Then He who sat on the throne said, “Behold, I make all things new.”**

**Revelation 21:4-5**

What about God's tears? His tears will be shed now if you choose no, so say Yes! and welcome God's Spirit into your heart by consciously saying out loud Jesus is now the Lord of your whole life.

If you want to know God, pray this prayer:

*Dear God in Heaven*

*I am sorry that I have been so wrong about you. Now I see from the Bible that you never wanted me, or anyone else, to shed even a single tear.*

*I have made many poor choices. Please forgive me.*

*Thank you that you sent Jesus your Son to pay for all my sins and that you raised him from the dead to give me new life.*

*I have decided to follow you and I now say out loud –*

*Jesus is my Lord!*

*Thank you for giving me a new heart. I will always be real with You and myself. Thank you that you have only good things in store for me.*

*Amen*

If you have prayed this prayer from your heart, you are now a Christian!

God said in the Bible: "I will never leave you nor forsake you." Jesus also said: "Whoever comes to me, I will never cast away." Whatever challenges you may face, always remember that God never rejects you, and that He is not the cause of unfair things in your life. Rise above them.

Ask God to guide you everyday. Read the Bible and ask God to help you understand it. Check out: [www.martynshenstone.com](http://www.martynshenstone.com)

Yours

*Martyn Shenstone*