



### You Asked For It:

My Goal tonight isn't to tell you what my opinion is. My Goal isn't to tell you what I think you want to hear. My goal is simple. Take the questions submitted, and to the best of my ability give a Biblical answer. One of the difficulties in tonight's objective is the temptation to read into the Bible our already held positions instead of looking objectively at what the scripture says.

The other difficulty is time. Each of these could be a full sermon, and in some cases more, but I am going to give 5 minutes to each of these 6 questions. There are a few more questions that won't fit into the time slot for tonight that I will post answers to on [www.bradraby.com](http://www.bradraby.com), so if you don't hear your question check out the answer there later this week.

**Question 1: What about paradise? It is spoken of in Luke 23:43. Some people say the Lord was there for three days after His death, and then took all the people waiting for Him to heaven when He left. What happened to paradise?**

Answer:

The idea of a place called paradise, where all the saints of the OT went before the cross, and where Jesus might have went after He died on the cross is an interesting one, and an extra-Biblical one as well.

I'm not positive to the absolute origin of how it began, but there are some very similar teachings in Roman Catholicism, they may have flowed over into Protestantism, or Evangelicalism.

In the referenced scripture passage Jesus is hanging on His cross in between the two criminals. The first mocks Jesus, but the second cries out in Luke 23:42 "Then he said, "Jesus, remember me when you come into your kingdom."

Jesus responds to the criminal in v 43 and says: "***Jesus answered him, "I tell you the truth, today you will be with me in paradise."***"

This passage is a testament to the grace of God. This dying thief knows he is totally unworthy of salvation, but cries out in repentance of his wrong doing asking Jesus to remember him in His kingdom.

Jesus responds to him, and assures him that he will be in paradise. Paradise is a synonym for heaven. It's used two other times in scripture. In 2 Corinthians 12:4 the Apostle Paul recounts his brief encounter with heaven by describing it as paradise, then in Revelation 2:7 John says that believers will have the right to eat of the tree of life, which is in paradise, or heaven.

The idea that OT saints went to another realm other than heaven to wait on Jesus isn't consistent with scripture.

Some Examples: 2 Kings 2:11 says Elijah was taken to heaven. Luke 16 we see the Rich man and Lazarus separated – Lazarus in heaven, the term Abraham's Bosom is used as another synonym for heaven. Enoch was taken to be with God, who is in Heaven.

So paradise and heaven are the same place.

**Question 2: What about the people who died during the flood, did they all go to Hell, or did some go to heaven?**

Answer: The only real answer to this question is: Those who trusted in God's grace by faith.

The state of man's heart pre-flood was pretty destitute: Genesis 6:5-7.

"wickedness was great" – "every intent of thoughts of the heart was evil" – "The Lord was grieved that He made man" – Planned to destroy man, but

"Noah found grace in the eyes of the Lord."

There is no indication that there were any other people who were just and willing to repent and find forgiveness.

The fact that God gave man an additional 120 years to repent is a testament to His mercy and compassion, but after 120 years of Noah preaching about the impending judgment of God, no one responded at all.

So, while there is no conclusive scripture evidence, it is reasonable to think that there were very few, if anyone else other than Noah's family that escaped judgment.

**Question 3: Who has the ultimate power of taking a life? God or Satan?**

Answer: The doctrine of the Sovereignty of God isn't one that can be discussed in totality in the time length of 5 minutes. So, I'm going to give some evidence from scripture that God is sovereign over life and death, and then make some comments on God's ability to allow for providential freedom.

1) The Bible makes it clear that God ordains life.

A. He is the author of Life

**Genesis 2:7** "the Lord God formed the man from the dust of the ground and breathed into his nostrils the breath of life, and the man became a living being."

**Acts 17:28** "For in Him we live and move and have our being..."

B. Life is in the hands of God

**Job 12:10** "In His hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind."

Daniel to King Belshazzar: **Daniel 5:23** "Instead, you have set yourself up against the Lord of heaven. You had the goblets from his temple brought to you, and you and your nobles, your wives and your concubines drank wine from them. You praised the gods of silver and gold, of bronze, iron, wood and stone, which cannot see or hear or understand. *But you did not honor the God who holds in his hand your life and all your ways*".

C. God often Prolonged life for various reasons: Prayer, Obedience, Wise living

2) The Bible makes it clear that God ordains death.

A. He orders it

**Deuteronomy 30:15-20** "15 See, I set before you today life and prosperity, death and destruction. 16 For I command you today to love the Lord your God, to walk in his ways, and to keep his commands, decrees and laws; then you will live and increase, and the Lord your God will bless you in the land you are entering to possess. 17 But if your heart turns away and you are not obedient, and if you are drawn away to bow down to other gods and worship them, 18 I declare to you this day that you will certainly be destroyed. You will not live long in the land you are crossing the Jordan to enter and possess. 19 This day I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you that I have set before you life and death, blessings and curses. Now choose life, so that you and your children may live 20 and that you may love the Lord your God, listen to his voice, and hold fast to him. For the Lord is your life, and he will give you many years in the land he swore to give to your fathers, Abraham, Isaac and Jacob."

**Deuteronomy 32:39** "See now that I myself am He! There is no god besides me. I put to death and I bring to life, I have wounded and I will heal, and no one can deliver out of my hand."

B. Death is the result of man's Sin

**Romans 5:12** "Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned."

3) God is Sovereign, but allows freedom for suffering for His higher purposes.

A great example is Job, who suffered significantly at the hand of Satan, but only under freedom granted by God. Job Chapter 1.

As far as the higher things of God and His sovereign reign over Heaven and Earth – there is great comfort to my faith that I cannot comprehend everything about God. I am glad He is beyond my understanding. If I could understand everything about God, then my God would be limited to my finite, limited, and puny brain. I have faith in a God, that I can't answer every question about, because He is too great for me to fully understand.

**Question 4: Matthew 5:31, 32 is explained in my study bible that the only exception given by Christ for divorce is for the cause of fornication. It is clear that adultery or fornication is a legitimate**

ground for divorce. However, the legitimacy of the divorce does not necessarily establish the legitimacy of remarriage.

**My question is that if a couple divorces due to fornication, can the faithful one ever have a relationship with another - or would that also be considered adultery?**

Answer:

- 1) Remember from our Going Deeper Study I said Study Bibles were good tools for Bible Study, but the notes are written by men, and can contain error. Here is a good case of that because the Bible explicitly provides two cases where divorce is permitted by God.
  - a. Jesus himself included the clause in **Matt 19:9**: "I tell you that anyone who divorces his wife, except for marital unfaithfulness, and marries another woman commits adultery."
    - This verse clearly indicates that a person who has been the victim of divorce because of their spouse's unfaithfulness they are permitted to remarry without committing adultery.
  - b. Then Paul added one more reason for divorce: "if an unbelieving spouse abandons a believer, the believer is under no obligation in such a case" (**1 Cor. 7:15**). This would free the abandoned spouse to remarry.

It is important to note that Jesus teaching in Matthew 19 was to correct the teaching of Rabbi's who were teaching that divorce was no big deal, as a matter of fact when it came to Paul's teaching on divorce he was speaking to a culture (Corinthians) where the men averaged over 20 spouses in a life time.

Divorce is never God's plan; His desire is always for reconciliation because marriage is a union sealed by God Himself.

So, to be clear the Bible does permit remarriage in the case of divorce for adultery.

**Question 5: What about the verse, where it says "let your women keep silent in the churches" ?**

The passage the question refers to is 1 Corinthians 14:34. "**women should remain silent in the churches. They are not allowed to speak, but must be in submission, as the Law says.**"

This verse is quoted often as it relates to the role of women in the church- sometimes as a joke, sometimes a serious command for women to never speak in church. The truth is this: 1 Corinthians 14 has a very specific context, as does the entire book of 1 Corinthians.

The Corinthian church was one group of messed up people. The first 9 verses of this letter contain the typical greeting Paul would give to most churches in his writings. However, from Ch. 1:10 to the end of the book (16:24) the book is one huge rebuke to the people in Corinth. When I say they were messed up, I mean they were messed up. I already mentioned the avg. of 20 spouses a man may have in a lifetime.

- There was rampant sexual misconduct
- They were caught up in vain human philosophy
- They were suing each other every chance they got
- They had made a spectacle out of the Lord's supper

And they were abusing the teachings and giving of Spiritual Gifts.

One in particular was the gift of speaking in tongues, or languages as it would be called today. In Chapter 12 Paul scorns them for desiring the gifts of prophecy and tongues because of pride, and urges them to focus on what matters most, and is even better: love, which is where the famous 1 Corinthians Chapter 13 comes into play.

In chapter 14 Paul begins to lay out guidelines for speaking in tongues/languages and prophecy. It should only be done by two or three people in a service. Only when there is an interpretation because the purpose of the gift was to communicate, not impress. The purpose of the gift of tongues was for unbelievers, never to edify a group of people who were already believers.

AND, women were not to speak in tongues or prophesy. The context of his writings makes it clear that there were some women who were causing disorder in the services, which was the ultimate problem anyway.

Paul's writings in 1 Timothy 2 make it clear that women speaking and teaching in church, in the appropriate contexts was acceptable, and needed.

There are other areas of the New Testament that support this notion.

**Romans 16:1-2:** "I commend to you our sister Phoebe, *who is a servant of the church in Cenchreae*.  
**2** So you should welcome her in the Lord in a manner worthy of the saints, and assist her in whatever matter she may require your help. For indeed she has been a benefactor of many--and of me also.

The word used for servant here is term Diakonos. From which the word Deacon, or Deaconess is derived. The passage indicates she likely served in the capacity of deaconess at her church.

**1 Timothy 3:11** says, "Women must likewise be dignified, not malicious gossips, but temperate, faithful in all things." NASB

The NIV and King James Version are slightly inaccurate in their translation of the original text. The pronoun 'their' isn't in the original Greek text. If Paul had been referring to the qualifications of a deacon's wife he would have used the pronoun. In the Greek language there are usually masculine and feminine uses for words. That is not the case, so the only way to distinguish between a deacon and deaconess is to use the term woman.

In **Romans 16:3-4** Paul also thanks Priscilla and Aquila. **3** Give my greetings to Prisca and Aquila, my co-workers in Christ Jesus, **4** who risked their own necks for my life. Not only do I thank them, but so do all the Gentile churches.

In ancient Jewish writings the order in which names appeared on a list was significant. Those appearing first were more prominent.

Ex: Peter always appeared first in the listing of disciples and was the obvious leader. Barnabas is listed ahead of Paul in the early missionary journeys, but then Paul begins to be listed first signifying a change of leadership prominence.

So, the famous 'let women keep silent in the church isn't a command to keep women from praying in public, or speaking at all, but was a specific command to prophetic spiritual gifts.

### Question 6: What does Bible say about taking of alcohol by a Christian?

\*\* Let me emphasize again that the purpose of this message is to provide accurate Biblical teachings on the subjects, no matter what emotions or reactions it will stir up in the listeners.

Answer:

Much has been said about this issue, and it is somewhat controversial, which is why I saved it for last. If I addressed it first, those who didn't like the answer would have tuned out the rest of the message.

I want to answer this question in 3 parts:

1. Myths about what the Bible says or doesn't say about wine.
  2. A look at the clear commands of scripture about the use of Alcohol.
  3. Biblical approach to the areas which are disputed.
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1. Myths about what the Bible says or doesn't say about wine.
    - a. When the Bible or Jesus talks about wine it is referring to grape juice.
      - No it's not. When the Bible speaks of Grape Juice, you know what word it uses? GRAPE JUICE: **Numbers 6:2** "Speak to the Israelites and say to them: 'If a man or woman wants to make a special vow, a vow of separation to the Lord as a Nazirite, **3** he must abstain from **wine** and **other fermented drink** and must not drink vinegar made from **wine** or from other **fermented drink**. He must not drink **grape juice** or eat grapes or raisins.

IF God was talking about Grape Juice, He would have used the Hebrew and Greek words for Grape Juice as He did here in Numbers 6
    - b. New wine and mixed wine in the Bible speak of non-alcoholic wine.
      - Hosea 4:11 and Joel 1:5 both says that new wine can intoxicate.
      - Mixed wine didn't refer to mixing with water, as it meant mixing with spices or other wines to alter taste or strength.
    - c. All wine was diluted with water.
      - When God compares his justice to mixed wine (Psalm 75:8) he certainly didn't mean His justice is going to be diluted.
      - When it does refer to dilution with water, it is in Isaiah 1:22 when the Lord condemns people selling wine for ripping off its customers with diluted wine.

- Water was part of the wine no doubt; the strength of the wine has been debated. Some historians estimate that a 10 glasses of wine in the ancient world would equal 1 martini today.
2. A look at clear commands of scripture about the use of alcohol.
    - a. Drunkenness is without question sinful and wicked. (Deuteronomy 21:20; Ecclesiastes 10:17; Matthew 24:29; Luke 12:45; 21:34; Romans 13:13; 1 Corinthians 5:11; Ephesians 5:18; 1 Peter 4:3).
      - It leads to other sin and heartache.
    - b. Priests were not to drink while they performed their duties in the Temple.
 

**Leviticus 10:8,9** "Then the Lord said to Aaron, "You and your sons are not to drink wine or other fermented drink whenever you go into the Tent of Meeting, or you will die. This is a lasting ordinance for the generations to come."

**Ezekiel 44:21** "21 No priest is to drink wine when he enters the inner court."
    - c. Kings and those making law are not to drink because of the good judgment they need.
 

**Proverbs 31:4** "It is not for kings, O Lemuel-- not for kings to drink wine, not for rulers to crave beer, 5 lest they drink and forget what the law decrees, and deprive all the oppressed of their rights. 6 Give beer to those who are perishing, wine to those who are in anguish;
  3. Biblical approach to the areas which are disputed.
    - a. We should love others, and think of others more than ourselves. Danny Akin, President of Southeastern Theological Seminary said:
      - "Should those who practice abstinence look down on those who do not? The answer is an unqualified no. Should those who don't knock those who practice abstinence? Certainly not. That is pride and therefore is sin. It is true that alcohol has contributed to many going to hell, but pride, no doubt, has done so in even greater numbers. A smug, prideful abstainer without Jesus is just as lost as the poor drunkard who is always in search of another drink. Those who believe in abstinence should be gracious and humble, kind and caring, loving and patient."
    - b. What is permissible and technically legal should never be the standard for a believer. But rather, "What is the wise thing for me to do?"
      - John MacArthur on the subject of drinking: "Can I say it is always a sin to take a drink? No. Can I say it is almost always ill-advised? Yes, because it violates the biblical principles of wisdom and witness."
      - You won't find me around here at Applebee's having a Budweiser. Because I think that the Bible strictly forbids the consumption of Alcohol? No. Because it is not the wise thing for me to do.