



Dear David,

February 4, 2022

First, let me say it has been a pleasure getting to know about you by reading your answers and responses to the questions in this lesson. I guess you can tell by now that I like to type what I have to say instead of scribble with pen in my poor handwriting. I am a computer geek on top of that so I like to put these computers to work for me if it makes it easier. And just because I am typing, don't think for a second that a machine is grading your work; there is a real person sitting behind these controls!

I want to congratulate you on completing your two degrees. I hope they serve you well as you step into your future. Know this for certain...

[Psalms 138:8 The Lord will accomplish what concerns me; Your lovingkindness, O Lord, is everlasting; Do not forsake the works of Your hands.](#)

And I like the fact that you know that God is going with you as you start the next chapter of your life. He is on our side.

[Romans 8:31 What then shall we say to these things? If God is for us, who is against us?](#)

[John 3:17 ...God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him.](#)

God's ways may be strange at times, but that is because He is different from us. Apart from Him what hope do we have? I could not help but notice your deep and thoughtful questions in this important lesson. David, I'm going to try to work a miracle here and address them in a short amount of space. ☺ Those that know me know that this would be a miracle!

If you are familiar with the story of Job then you know his friends, those self-appointed counselors, continually pestered him with their free advice. In chapter 15 we find Eliphaz taking his turn.

[Job 15:1-13 Then Eliphaz the Temanite responded, "Should a wise man answer with windy knowledge and fill himself with the east wind? ...12 "Why does your heart carry you away? And why do your eyes flash, that you should turn your spirit against God and allow such words to go out of your mouth?"](#)

In short, Eliphaz was eloquently telling Job to shut up and not ask difficult questions. Well, I want you to know that I am not like Eliphaz. Instead, I want to be more like our Lord. If you have tough questions then ask them. I have learned over the 40 years of my Christian life that God's Word stands up to tough questions like this.

His Word silences critics. For this reason the Word of God outlives the rise and fall of many civilizations. So, I thank God now for this opportunity to look into these questions and demonstrate this amazing quality of God's Word. I am reminded of that early promise Jesus gave to point the way.

[John 12:32 "And I, if I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to Myself."](#)

So as we spread the knowledge of God (and not cover it up or conceal it) Jesus draws all men to Himself. In light of our study in this lesson, notice this contrast.

[Exodus 5:2 But Pharaoh said, "Who is the Lord that I should obey His voice to let Israel go? I do not know the Lord, and besides, I will not let Israel go."](#)

Pharaoh did not know God and therefore would not yield to God and that led to a lot of trouble for him and his society.

☞ The principle is this: Know God and our will will bend in line with His. We know God by understanding what He revealed about Himself in His Word.

9 17. Read Leviticus 16:15-16 and 16:34 and answer the questions below.

A. What did Aaron do for the sins of the Israelites (verses 15-16)?

He slaughtered a goat as a offering for the sins of his people. Then he sprinkled the blood (gross) on a atonement cover. How does that make up for a sin?

You raised a number of important questions that I want to address but regret I won't have the space to answer as fully as I like. First, **your question in #17 about the relationship of blood and sin** will be explained in more detail when you study Hebrews 9-10. In short, the blood of goats does not make up for any evil (sin); it only covers it until the blood of the sinner can be given. Think of "blood" as a synonym for life or death. The wages of sin (doing evil) is death (see Romans 6:23). Doing evil is costly; it will cost you your soul and your life or your blood.

We really don't have to be told this because our conscience already keeps score. We knew about an eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth, a life for a life (blood for blood) long before Moses wrote anything down about it. If someone tries to shortchange us we know instantly

of the imbalance. If I struck you in the face and you lost your eyesight would you feel that justice was served if I gave you the eye of a goat in return? That sense of equality is part of the way we were made. It is not hard for me to imagine God feeling something like this when we mar not His face or His eye, but His image, His perfect image. Which is more important to you - your image or your eyesight?

[Leviticus 17:11 'For the life of the flesh is in the blood, and I have given it to you on the altar to make atonement for your souls; for it is the blood by reason of the life that makes atonement.'](#)

So, the blood of goats is just a covering and reminder until judgment day comes when He will require blood (our life). I wish I could talk more about the relationship between blood and our sin and how **sin** can be thought of as **the absence of good**, and how God being good desires no **evil** in our lives. So much so does He desire our good that He requires a very high price to be paid for encroachments upon it. He intended us to experience full joy, not some joy mixed with a little evil. Is He evil for wanting that? I must move on.

Similarly, **in #18** the answer is exclusively "No." The key word in that question was "permanently." I wish I could say more about this too.

19. God will never again require a bloody sacrifice to pay for sins, because Jesus' sacrifice is perfect and final. Do you find comfort in knowing that Jesus has been sacrificed for His people? Explain your answer.

Jesus is God's son. That is so powerful. To give himself up for all the sins of the world. That's so much bad stuff. I am not sure if comfortable is the right word, he suffered and was killed. That's not good, I try to think at chance that he wasn't killed so young or at all, I imagine all the good that he could have done in the world. Would the world be a different place today. I appreciate what he did for all of us. But what if there could have been a better way. God had the Power.

In #19 you ask, "what if there could have been a better way. God had the Power." Let's think about this. You affirm that "God had the

Power" and He does. There are few people who would deny that. While on trial Paul affirmed it this way.

[Acts 26:8 "Why is it considered incredible among you people if God does raise the dead?"](#)

But God is not simply brute force; He is personal. He is One we can have a relationship with. We have to remember that this one attribute is limited and shaped by His other attributes. Just like His omnipotence can cause us to think that there may have been other ways for Him to deal with the problem in Egypt, we have to let His other attributes provoke such thought too. How does God's wisdom govern what He does? What about His justice and love and hatred? When you start asking those questions you begin to limit and shape what His divine power can do.

Because God claims to be holy this means that each of His attributes is supreme and perfect in their quality, each work together without tarnishing the total character of God or any of His attributes. This by definition is what we normally mean when we say "God" - the totality of all divine attributes.

[Job 12:16 "With Him are strength and sound wisdom, the misled and the misleader belong to Him.](#)

[Psalms 147:5 Great is our Lord and abundant in strength; His understanding is infinite.](#)

To a wise God there is no problem He could not unravel or solve. Similarly, the way He solves the problem will depend upon the working of His other attributes not just His wisdom. And we should keep in mind, because God is also good, we can rest assured that what ultimately is is the best of all possible ways.

[Psalms 145:9 The Lord is good to all, and His mercies are over all His works.](#)

Now, because we are not perfect we will inevitably disagree with things that God does. But, as our understanding grows to be more in line with reality (the truth), then our perceptions and opinions should change to be more in line with His because God is the God of truth.

✧ If I stuck a straw in a glass of water it will look bent, but is it? We learn why and how it is not bent. We must "see" beyond perception to reality.

[Romans 3:4 ...let God be found true, though every man be found a liar, as it is written, "THAT YOU MAY BE JUSTIFIED IN YOUR WORDS, AND PREVAIL WHEN YOU ARE JUDGED."](#)

Now, let's move on to your other questions revolving around #8 (Tenth plague).

8. Write what happened in the tenth plague as you did in question 6.

Tenth plague (12:29-30): At midnight the Lord struck down all the firstborn in Egypt. From the Pharaoh's son to prisoners and live stock. (OK I have a question If the Lord can kill a baby many, many babies and children. Why not just kill the Pharaoh and the oppressors of the Israelites? Is a baby killer a loving god? I'm confused?) Finally, Pharaoh relented!

First, in order for this to be a real problem, one has to accept Exodus 12:29-30 as a real story with real people in it doing real things. If this were just a mythical tale, then there would be no problem because there would be no real people doing real things. When I see a problematic event like this I see a bent straw and wonder if I am drawing a false conclusion. I then wonder what other godly people (like Jesus or Paul) have said about such problematic events. Did they conclude the straw was bent?

Speaking of faith, I'm sort of in a pickle. So I've heard about the plagues before but in this study it really focused on the final plague. It makes me angry that such a powerful God, such a loving God would kill babies. There's no justification for hurting any child. If a baby killer lived next door, he probably wouldn't see ~~tomorrow~~ tomorrow, let alone have me as a follower. All that drama and pain could be avoided if he would have just killed the Pharaoh, like he did in the end. So this is very perplexing to me.



Do you think Jesus was ever tempted to think of God as a baby killer? The Bible says He was "tempted in all things as we."

[Luke 2:40](#) The Child continued to grow and become strong, increasing in wisdom; and the grace of God was upon Him.

He had to study as a child. When Jesus humbled Himself to become a man, He chose to walk as we are commanded to walk. When He read for the first time "the fear of the Lord is the beginning of knowledge" (Proverbs 1:7) He chose to believe it and began to learn. He had set aside His infinite storehouse of knowledge and then began to fill it back up the same way we are to fill up our storehouse of knowledge. As a man He really had no advantage over any of us.

[Hebrews 4:15-16](#) For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things as we are, yet without sin. 16 Therefore let us draw near with confidence to the throne of grace, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need.

Did Satan ever tempt Jesus to question the goodness of God? We know Jesus studied large portions of the Pentateuch if not memorized them; remember how Jesus handled the Devil? (Matthew 4) He quoted from it. He would be familiar with Ex 12:29. I believe Jesus probably did consider questions like you raised because later in His ministry He asked similar questions to others. He did not do this to create doubt, but to underscore and remind men of their horrible and miserable plight.

[Luke 13:1-5](#) Now on the same occasion there were some present who reported to Him about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. 2 And Jesus said to them, "Do you suppose that these Galileans were greater sinners than all other Galileans because they suffered this fate? 3 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish. 4 "Or do you suppose that those eighteen on whom the tower in Siloam fell and killed them were worse culprits than all the men who live in Jerusalem? 5 "I tell you, no, but unless you repent, you will all likewise perish."

In essence, wasn't Jesus asking, "Why do *innocent* people like babies suffer?" Why do *good* people on their way to worship die? Why do bad things happen to *good* people is what He was asking? People ask these questions because they have a sense of justice and they see the scales are often tilted the wrong way. Sometimes they feel they suffer unjustly like Job felt. Jesus knows this and instead of being an Eliphaz about it Jesus invites us to go *deeper* into these important subjects. Remember doubting Thomas. After 3 years of miracles and teaching at the feet of Jesus, Thomas doubted the resurrection ever took place. The Lord did not rebuke him but encouraged him to use his



God given senses to investigate further and gather evidence to help him know the truth. (See John 20:27) Jesus did not say, "believe me or else!" God does not hate the skeptic; He loves the skeptic as much as any of His disciples.

What about Paul? Like Jesus, Paul believed the story in Exodus 12 as events that happened. He also explains *why* they happened.

1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved. 7 Do not be idolaters, as some of them were; as it is written, "the people sat down to eat and drink, and stood up to play." 8 Nor let us act immorally, as some of them did, and twenty-three thousand fell in one day. 9 Nor let us try the Lord, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the serpents. 10 Nor grumble, as some of them did, and were destroyed by the destroyer. 11 Now these things happened to them as an example, and they were written for our instruction, upon whom the ends of the ages have come.

Did you notice what Paul called God? He called Him "the "destroyer!" Wow! That is mighty close to what you were wondering God to be. What is the difference between a destroyer and a baby killer? Not much.

Sometimes we read something in the Bible and at first glance it appears horrific and problematic. But as we gather evidence and piece together the entire picture we come to a completely different conclusion - like the straw in a glass of water.

Proverbs 14:12 There is a way which seems right to a man, but its end is the way of death.

For example, if I asked you to decode the following letters to know what I am thinking what would you come up with?

godisnowhere

After looking at it for a while you may conclude with certainty that you know what I'm thinking. After taking another minute you may change your mind and say you don't know. You soon realize you need more information. Likewise, if I said, "Moses walked away from the court" you might conjure up some picture of an old man in the desert walking away from Pharaoh's court. But, if I was talking about basketball, you might be thinking of something more modern like Moses Malone, a Hall of Fame basketball player, walking away from the basketball court. Two different pictures; you won't know what I'm thinking until you are given more information (context).

Context is vitally important when it comes to God's Word. In fact, Jesus chastised the Sadducees (they were literalist when it came to the law) for not paying attention to such little thing as the tense of a verb! (See Matthew 22:29-33) Context matters. Words matter.



Tenses matter. They all matter. Neglecting these things can lead to humor as well as they can lead to alarm. The following was printed in a church bulletin:

"Don't let worry kill you; let the church help."

Now, that means something different if you replace the period with an exclamation mark. Think about it.

So, let's get to your question in #8. **Why not kill the oppressors instead of all those babies?** Well, as you said later, He did. In fact in time, He kills everyone. Isn't humanity simply a very very very long line of people on death row with no way of escape? Why does it matter so much *when* people die or *how* they die? Isn't the problem *that they die* and are *gone forever and ever and ever*?

[Ezekiel 18:4 "Behold, all souls are Mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is Mine. The soul who sins will die.](#)

Job had no Scripture in his day, but he still knew this most basic principle:

[Job 1:21 He said, "...The Lord gave and the Lord has taken away."](#)

From our standpoint, we could say, "On a whim God gives life. And on a whim God takes life." But we know that there is more to it than that. God creates for a good reason never on a whim. Every birth and every death serves His purpose.

We also have to avoid making a mountain out of a mole hill. We dare not "strain out a gnat and swallow a camel." (Matthew 23:24) If we miscalculate the size and shape of a thing (like God taking back what He gave) and make everything gray and everything equal, we will be as frustrated as a small child trying to put a square peg into a round hole. Life will become very unpleasant.

Now, I think one of your points is really this: Wouldn't killing the oppressors solve the problem short and simple? Well, that depends on what you define as the problem. There are layers and layers of problems going on here. Before we look at that let me ask this: What if killing Pharaoh led to putting three more evil men in his place and instead of moving us closer to a solution it actually compounded it? Since we are speculating, why not speculate along the lines that God knows what He is doing and He didn't do anything different because anything different would have made a more bloody mess. And we have to admit, even if He did do something else, we would still wonder if something better could have been tried.



Now, there are layers of problems involved here. To see one of them take a step back from Ex 12:29. God sought to free a people (a nation) from the tight grip of another. He came to that nation and warned them not to continue in their ways but free this people. They did not listen so God did what He said He would do. He did not warn them once, but 9 times. This cycle repeated itself 9 times before we get to 12:29. That's a problem leading a multitude of people where? To Hell.

From there go back 400 years to see the beginning of this evil empire and this plot to exterminate this people. Over that many years God killed many oppressors but the problem continued. That's a problem.

Exodus 1:8-11 Now a new king arose over Egypt, who did not know Joseph. 9 He said to his people, "Behold, the people of the sons of Israel are more and mightier than we. 10 "Come, let us deal wisely with them, or else they will multiply and in the event of war, they will also join themselves to those who hate us, and fight against us and depart from the land." 11 So they appointed taskmasters over them to afflict them with hard labor.

Zip back to the time of 12:29 again and ask this: "What was the baby Moses doing in a basket floating alone down the Nile? And what became of all those other babies?"

Exodus 1:22 Then Pharaoh commanded all his people, saying, "Every son who is born you are to cast into the Nile, and every daughter you are to keep alive."

Baby killers! That's a problem - as you said.

How had Pharaoh's command tilted the scales of justice for that nation? If it is an eye for an eye and a tooth for a tooth then is it a baby for a baby? I don't know the answer to that question but I do know that looking at the multiplicity of problems surrounding your question and looking intently at it leads me to believe the straw is not as bent as it first appeared to be.

Before we can read a verse and jump to conclusions like comparing God to a neighbor next door we have to consider the context and remind ourselves of whom we are talking about. If we are talking about God, how can we compare any mortal man to such a being? God created everything out of nothing. Our neighbor can't do that. God created life with a short burst of air upon dust; our neighbor cannot do that either. God separated the lands and the languages and the people one from another to create nations; my neighbor next door cannot do that. God channels and funnels and directs all the evil in the world to serve His purposes; He confounds the wise; my neighbor and all his



friends cannot do anything like that. I don't think it is fair to compare God to a neighbor next door. Isn't that like comparing apples to oranges?

I see no problem with God granting life and then taking it back whenever and for whatever reason He wants. I know that all of His reasons are with good intentions. I know this because He proved it most clearly by sending His Son to die in my place.

Consider the following: Suppose you got on public transportation with your two kids. For the sake of argument, let's say your kids are 4 and 5 years old. They begin roaming freely and uncontrollably on the bus like kids will do. Finally, my patience is exhausted and I conclude that you are a negligent parent. So I confront you and ask you, "Why can't you control your kids?" And then you reveal the fact that you just came from the hospital where their mother just died and you have not found a way to tell them. Then I realize, I just saw a straw in a glass of water and concluded that it was bent, but it was not. I understand and back away.

Mic 6:8 He hath shewed thee, O man, what is good; and what doth the Lord require of thee, but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?

Or, what about this? You are the President of this country and you are told that someone hijacked an airline and intends on using it as a weapon to kill hundreds. You order the military to shoot down the plane which will kill all passengers onboard. Are you a murderer or a hero? Context matters doesn't it?

When God slaughtered those babies there was a context to consider. God implored Pharaoh over, and over, and over, and over, and over, and over again. God pleaded with miracles to avoid disaster. God was no neighbor plotting the diabolical death of some innocent children. He was dealing with a Pharaoh who had hijacked a nation to use it for evil purposes and careen everyone straight down into the pit. How do you stop such a cruel force? The complexity of the problem boggles the mind as you look closely at the "problem."

God implored Pharaoh to change course. He did it with miraculous illustration after illustration that dismantled that society's entire false religious system! Despite God's disdain with that people, mercifully He saved many in that horrible, horrible, setting. It was with much agony that God took the life of babies in light of all He did to avoid it. He turned the Nile into blood. He sent the frogs. He sent the gnats. He sent the flies. He killed the livestock. He



sent the sickness of boils. He sent hail. He sent locusts. He sent darkness. Now remember, in that society Pharaoh was considered divine. In the ninth plague (darkness) God was destroying Pharaoh's father, the sun god. And now in the tenth, God took action against his son. If this doesn't show how Pharaoh was not divine and was not to be worshipped as such or think of himself as such, I don't know that anything ever would. And remember, God preceded each disaster with verbal warnings through His prophet on how to avert them. Baby killers don't do that.

Pharaoh, the now dethroned *god* of Egypt, said it best.

[Exodus 12:32 "Take both your flocks and your herds, as you have said, and go, and bless me also."](#)

What a humiliating, but proper thing for Pharaoh to say to the One who created him. Note, He didn't conclude that after his baby was dead that God was a baby killer. In all reality and in light of all that was going on, one would be better to ask Pharaoh *why he waited so long to do what was right*. He let the airplane crash right into the city when it was in his power to shoot it down.

Finally, I will say this in hope that it will not be misunderstood. If a thief broke into your house and took your baby hostage and threatened to kill her unless you gave him safe passage to get away, would you compel him to take your life instead? I would because my daughter's life is so much more valuable to me. Sometimes threatening another's life can apply more leverage than threatening one's own life. Can this piece of knowledge be added to our growing storehouse of knowledge regarding that Tenth Plague? Can you see how God might apply that upon a wayward nation He would rather not see get swallowed up in waves? Can you begin to see how passionate God's desire is for each of us to avoid evil and damnation? He doesn't want to hurt anyone but He will seek to bring glory to that which is true, right, just, loving, merciful, and wise. I cannot fault Him for that.

[Psalms 39:11 "With reproofs You chasten a man for iniquity; You consume as a moth what is precious to him; Surely every man is a mere breath. Selah.](#)

I'll end with this reminder on why such horrific things had to happen:

[1 Corinthians 10:6 Now these things happened as examples for us, so that we would not crave evil things as they also craved.](#)



After spending over 20 hours this past week studying the depths of God I still do not feel I have done justice to His Holy Name. Don't think for a second that your questions put me out. This is how I grow. (I believe God has given me the gift of knowledge because I like to study so much. I never seem to get tired of it.) There are questions unanswered still I know, but I trust I have provided a pattern that might help you seek these answers out as you study further.

Romans 11:33-36 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are His judgments and unfathomable His ways! 34 For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who became His counselor? 35 or who has first given to Him that it might be paid back to Him again? 36 For from Him and through Him and to Him are all things. To Him be the glory forever. Amen!

Your mentor for this lesson

P.S Here is a list of books if you would like to study these kind of questions further.

1. The Bible by God
2. Is God a Moral Monster?: Making Sense of the Old Testament God - Paul Copan
3. The Knowledge of the Holy - A. W. Tozer
4. Sinfulness of Sin by Ralph Venning
5. Knowing God Hardcover - by J. I. Packer