

Glad You Asked - Suicide

There are 3,294 questions in the Bible.

There are 77 questions in two chapters of the book of Job alone.

Throughout the four Gospels, Jesus asked 307 questions.

On the cross Jesus asked, **“My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?”**

In the span of five verses in Romans chapter 8, Paul asks seven loaded questions.

- If God be for us who can be against us?
- Who will bring a charge against God’s elect?
- Who shall separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus?

If the Bible encourages us to “cast our cares on Him” than I don’t think He’s offended by our questions. One thing I love about God is He welcomes our searching hearts.

Questions:

I know three different young adults, all were Christians. They did not know each other. Each struggled on and off with drug addiction. In a low point in their life, each committed suicide. In today’s world this seems to be happening more and more. Will they spend eternity in heaven, some say no, but I want to know what God’s Word says...?

According to the Nation Center for Health Statistics last year in America over 47,000 people took their own life.

- That’s double the number of murders last year in the U.S.
- More people die in the U.S. every year by suicide than by an automobile accident.
- On average there are **132 suicides every day** in the U.S.

- Suicide is the #1 killer of young adults in the U.S.
 - According to a recent CNN report suicide in America was up 33% in the past five years.
 - If you've had someone in your family take their own life, you are 6 times more likely to do the same. I've had three family members commit suicide (Brenda, Robbie and Michael).
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I want to talk to two different groups today:

1. Those who have lost a loved one to suicide.
 2. Those who have or might be contemplating suicide.
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The first Question we need to ask is:

Is suicide a sin?

Yes, it is.

It is the taking of a life, and one of the ten commandments is though shall not kill.

Suicide is murder and murder is a sin.

1 Corinthians 3:17 NIV

If anyone destroys God's temple, God will destroy that person; for God's temple is sacred, and you together are that temple.

At times suicide is an act of rage either against oneself or against someone else.

It is at times the ultimate act of revenge, because now the person who hurt me will have to deal with what they did to me for the rest of their life.

Suicide is a journey away from faith and without faith it is impossible to please God.

Is suicide a sin?

Yes!

Is suicide the unpardonable sin? No it's not.

There is only one unpardonable sin listed in Scripture and suicide is not it.

The chance that you know someone who has taken their own life is highly possible. Almost everyone has thought about suicide at some point in their life. For me, my favorite family member growing up, took her own life when I was in high school.

I want to talk to those who have lost a loved one to suicide.

Some are quick to cast judgement on those take their own life. We don't know the mental state of someone who does such a thing. Nor were we there when they stood before God.

We know that for those who have received Christ, He becomes the atonement for all our sin. As hard as it is, you have to mentally and emotionally release that person into God's hands and trust Him with that loved one.

There are seven examples of suicide in the Scripture, the one story most people know of is the story of Judas.

Matthew 27:1-5

Early in the morning, all the chief priests and the elders of the people made their plans how to have Jesus executed. ² So they bound him, led him away and handed him over to Pilate the governor.

³ When Judas, who had betrayed him, saw that Jesus was condemned, he was seized with remorse and returned the thirty pieces of silver to the chief priests and the elders. ⁴ "I have sinned," he said, "***for I have betrayed innocent blood.***"

“What is that to us?” they replied. “*That’s your responsibility.*” ⁵ So Judas threw the money into the temple and left. Then he went away and hanged himself.

I want to offer a thought concerning why Judas did what he did in the taking of his own life. The obvious is that Judas felt overwhelmed with guilt. But let’s also remember that Judas was a young man and in that culture every young man knew every letter of the law of Moses. With that in mind, notice **Numbers 35**.

Numbers 35:33

So, you shall not pollute the land in which you live; the shedding of innocent blood pollutes the land. No atonement can be made for the land once the innocent blood has been shed in it, except by the execution of him who shed it.

Leviticus 24:17

If a man takes the life of someone unlawfully, he shall most certainly be put to death.

Could it be that Judas was attempting to make right his wrong?

It’s just a thought.

But listen to me...

Anytime you find yourself rationalizing with death, you’re not thinking right.

Stop and remember this...

Jesus came that we might have life and have it more abundantly.

Satan comes to steal, kill, and destroy.

Now, let me talk to those who have or might be contemplating suicide...

Suicide is a permanent reaction to a temporary problem.

Never make a long-term decision in a short-term situation.

If you're struggling today, I want to give you a few things to think about:

1. No emotion lasts forever.

Emotions come and go.

Never make a permanent decision based on a temporary emotion.

When your emotions are high your wisdom is low.

2. Most people don't want to end their life, they just want to end their pain.

There's a five-word phrase that appears 436 times throughout the Bible. The five words are, "*And it came to pass.*" Painful seasons do not come to stay, they will pass.

It might surprise you that many of the heroes of our faith founded themselves in tough times. Job wanted to die. Elijah wanted to die. Jeremiah wished that he were dead. Look at what Moses said in Numbers 11.

Numbers 11:13-15

And Moses said to the LORD, "Why are you treating me, your servant, so harshly? Have mercy on me! What did I do to deserve the burden of all these people? ¹⁴ I can't carry all these people by myself! The load is far too heavy! ¹⁵ If this is how You intend to treat me, just go ahead and kill me. Do me a favor and spare me this misery!"

All God's people go through tough times. But get this, **tough times don't last, tough people do!**

3. God never intended for you to handle all your problems on your own.

Talk to someone.

Not just anyone, but a seasoned Christ follower that you can trust.

The Bible calls this the bearing of one another's burdens.

That's why connect groups are so important.

Suicide Hotline 1-800-273-TALK

4. Begin to prophecy God's Word over your life.

I shall live and not die and declare the works of my God.

God has a plan for my life, a bright future full of hope!

I am fearfully and wonderfully made.

I am not weak, and I will not be depressed, the joy of the Lord is my strength.

I'm not alone in this battle, the Bible says that Jesus will never leave me or forsake me.

I will not live in fear, His perfect love casts out fear.

5. Remember, input determines output.

What you listen to, what you watch and what you read affects how you think and process life's challenges.

6. One of the leading causes of suicide is a lack of purpose, a lack of personal direction.

Go through GT and get on the team.

Now think with me... we are more technologically advanced now than we've ever been. Every teenager has a smart phone. We have thousands of virtual friends and followers on social media. We are wealthier than we've ever been, so what's the problem?

- People need Jesus.
- Life is found in Jesus.
- Hope is found in Jesus.
- Joy is found in Jesus.
- A new start is found in Jesus.

Glad You Asked – Why Did God Let it Happen?

There are nearly 3,300 questions in the Bible.

Throughout the four Gospels, Jesus asked 307 questions.

The Bible is a book loaded with questions.

Questions:

Seventeen years ago, my seven month old grandson was violently killed by two dogs. Why... Why... Why?

There are some questions that none of us have answers for. So, instead of trying to answer that question, I'd like to offer some encouragement.

If you've ever questioned God, you're in good company.

In his frustration Gideon asked God

- Pardon me, my Lord, but if You are with us, why has all this happened? And where are all the miracles our ancestors told us about...?

Listen to the word of the Profit Habakkuk

- LORD, how long will I call for help, and You do nothing? I cry out to You, yet You don't save.
- Why do you tolerate wrongdoing?
- Why are you silent while the wicked swallow up the righteous?
- Where is justice? The law is slack and justice never prevails.

After losing everything he had, including his children, Job asked God

- Why have you made me Your target?
- Why do good people suffer?

- When a person dies, is there life after death?

Let's not forget that on the cross Jesus cried out

- My God! My God! Why have You forsaken Me?

One of the things I appreciate about the Bible is the stories contained in the Bible aren't Instagram moments. It's not a highlight reel focusing on the best moments of everyone's life. The Bible is raw and real. There are numerous examples of good people going through difficult circumstances.

Even Jesus said, "In this life you will have trouble..." Before calling His disciples He said in **Matthew 8:20**, "Foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay His head."

My thought is, if you're trying to recruit disciples you don't lead off with that.

But I love the fact that Jesus is transparent and real with people.

Life isn't always easy, and even good people, God's people go through bad things.

It is not wrong to ask God a question.

The Bible encourages us to *cast our cares on Him for He cares for us*.

The Christian life is all about relationship – a relationship with God. In what kind of relationship can someone not ask a question and be real and honest? If you can't be real and honest in a relationship than that's not a relationship at all. If God knows you carry the question in your heart, He would rather you ask Him the question than try to hide it from Him.

I don't think difficult questions offend God. I think fake offends God.

David was a man after God's heart, yet all though Psalms David asked God difficult...

- Why do You hide in times of trouble?
 - Will You forget me forever?
 - How long will You hide Your face from me?
 - How long will my enemy be exalted over me?
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If all of us are going to go through pain, it's better to go through it with God than without God.

Pain without God leads to despair.

Pain with God leads to healing.

God has not forgotten you.

A common denominator in the lives and stories of many people throughout Scripture is a feeling of being forgotten by God.

- JEREMIAH said (JER 3:19) remember my afflictions >>> JER 29:11
- SAMSON said (JUD 16:28) remember me I pray and strengthen me I pray.
- In 1 SAM 1:11, HANNAH fell at an altar and cried out to God saying, "Remember me, and do not forget Your maidservant, but give me a child, and I will give him to the You all the days of his life."
- Eight times throughout the book of NEHIMIAH, Nehemiah cried out to the Lord saying, "Remember me, oh God."

- **JOB** said, “Remember me oh God.” We find the word “remember” nine times in Job.
- The **THIEF ON THE CROSS**, cried out to the dying Messiah and said, “Remember me...”
- The word “**Remember**” appears **230 times** in Scripture.

All these people cried out “remember me” because they felt as though God had forgotten them!

ISAIAH 49:16 NKJV

See, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands....

Repeatedly, throughout Scripture, the Bible says that God delivered His people with an **outstretched hand**.

- That means when He stretched out His hand to heal, He saw you. **Jesus performed 31 healings in NT**
- When He stretched out His hand to provide for someone’s need, He saw you.
- When He stretched out His hand to deliver His people from their enemies, He saw you.
- Any time He does anything, He sees you!!!!
- And in case you’ve doubted His love, according to **Psalms 56:8**, He has **collected every tear** you’ve ever shed / According to **Revelation 5:8**, He has **recorded every prayer** you’ve ever prayed / According to **Job 31:4**, He has **numbered your steps** / And let us not forget that **He has numbered the hair on your head**.

ISAIAH 49:16 AMP

Behold, I have tattooed a picture of you on the palm of each of My hands... **MY COUSIN JASON CREECH**

At the end of the day we have a choice. We can torment ourselves with all the why questions over and over again. We can live stuck in the bitterness of that moment, or we can make a choice to believe that God is fundamentally God even when life is not. And we can trust that someday we will see everything from His perspective.

In the meantime, and you know why it’s called the “meantime” don’t you? Because it’s mean. In the meantime, we can cast all our cares on Him knowing He cares for us.

Glad You Asked – Hearing God’s Voice

Next week... Questions about the Rapture & End Times

Later in the year... Questions about Heaven

Questions:

How do you know when God is trying to speak to you?

How do you interpret what God is trying to say?

Does God speak through dreams?

How does someone hear God’s voice?

- On August 27, 1883, the people of Alice Springs, Australia, heard what sounded like the blast of a cannon.
- The same sound was reported in fifty different geographical locations spanning 1/8th of the globe.
- What the people of Alice Springs heard was the eruption of a volcano 2,300 miles away.
- That’s the same distance by plane from Knoxville, TN to San Fransico, CA.
- It’s believed to be the loudest sound ever recorded on earth.
- The volcano is called Krakatoa.
- When it erupted, the sound measured 310 decibels.
- 210 decibels can kill someone.
- The sound wave cracked concrete, one-foot thick, 300 miles away.
- When the mountain exploded, chunks of rock were thrown 34 miles in the air.
- When those chunks of earth came down and hit the ocean, it created tsunamis with 200’ waves.
- But what’s so fascinating the me is that the soundwave actually circled the earth four times.
- On the other side of the earth, there was a measurable spike in atmospheric pressure.
- In other words, on the other side of the planet, the sound wasn’t heard, it was felt.
- It’s been my experience that when God speaks to me, I don’t hear it as much as I feel it.

Just because a sound isn’t heard, that doesn’t mean it’s not there.

1 Kings 19:11-13 KJV

And he said, "Go forth, and stand upon the mount before the LORD. And, behold, the LORD passed by," and a great and strong wind rent the mountains, and break in pieces the rocks before the LORD; but the LORD was not in the wind: and after the wind an earthquake; but the LORD was not in the earthquake.

¹² And after the earthquake a fire; but the LORD was not in the fire: and after the fire a *still small voice*.

¹³ And it was so, when Elijah heard it, that he wrapped his face in his mantle...

The Hebrew word used for "*still*" in that passage has three meaning: calm, silence, and whisper.

The reason most people seldom hear God's voice, is they never slow down to listen.

Let me remind you that when Moses went up on the mountain to meet with God, it wasn't until the seventh day that God spoke (Exodus 24:16).

If you want to hear from God, you have to make time for it.

Psalm 46:10

Be still and know that He is God.

If will slow down.

Calm down.

Quieten down.

You can get down to business with God and you can hear His voice.

He will speak to you.

And when God speaks, everything changes.

Maybe the reason most people seldom hear God's voice, is they are too distracted.

I tend to believe we started hearing from God less after 2007. That was the year Steve Jobs released the I-Phone. That was the same year Facebook was born. Did you know that the average smartphone user touches their phone 2,600 times a day.

I've been reading a book entitled, *The Ruthless Elimination of Hurry*. Let me read you a couple lines from the book... "A study found that just being in the same room with your phone decreases your cognitive ability, even if the phone is turned off. See your phone is constantly and silently shouting at your brain."

- 250 times the Bible records the words, "And the Lord spoke..."
- 1,132 times the Bible says, "And the Lord said..."
- "Jonah, go to Nineveh."
- "Moses, go tell Pharaoh to let My people go."
- "Paul, take the gospel to the Gentile world."

God will speak to you, but you have to make time to listen. All of us can and should, schedule time to hear from God.

Last year, Melissa and I took a trip to D.C. for our anniversary. We spent a Sunday Morning praying between the Supreme Court Building and the U.S. Capital. The U.S. Capital spans 1.5 million sq feet. It's a massive building. What's crazy to me is that there's a spot in that main dome room where you can stand and whisper, and people can hear your whisper on the other side of the room. It's called "The Whisper Spot." When I read the Bible, I see whisper spots everywhere.

A burning bush was Moses' whisper spot.

Mount Carmel was Elijah's spot.

Bethel was Jacob's spot.

Samuel had the tabernacle at Shiloh.

These people had a place where they met God.

A place where they could hear God more clearly.

Where is your place? Where is your spot. Where do you go to meet with God?

You see, if we do what they did in the Bible. God will do what He did in the Bible.

Questions:

How does someone hear God's voice?

Be still, be quiet, and listen.

Schedule time to regularly meet with God.

You might be thinking, "I don't have time to do all that."

The truth is you have time for, what you choose to have time for.

Fall in love with the Bible.

Does God speak through dreams?

There are 18 stories in the Bible where God spoke to someone through a dream. Yes. God can and does speak to people through dreams.

Glad You Asked – Questions About End Times

Questions:

Several people has questions about End Time Prophecy and The Rapture of the church.

The entirety of the Bible revolves around two historical events:

1. Christ's first coming
2. And Christ's second coming

Approximate 30% of the Bible is made up of prophecy.

I want to start by looking at the nation of Israel, because Israel is God's prophetic time clock. Every major prophet in the OT prophesied that the Jewish people would be persecuted, displaced and then come back to their homeland. Over and over throughout the OT God said that Israel would be reborn after ceasing to exist.

Ezekiel 37:11-12

Then He said to me, "Son of man, these bones are the whole house of Israel... Behold, O My people, I will open your graves and cause you to come up from your graves and bring you back to the land of Israel."

For nearly 2,000 years, Israel ceased to exist as a nation.

Let me walk you through the timeline. In the year 70 A.D., the Roman General Titus, surrounded Isarel, no one could go in or out of the city. Over 1 million Jews starved to death. Then Titus took 70,000 men as slaves to Rome to build the Colosseum.

The Jewish people were exiled from their homeland from 70 A.D. until 1948. Then, on May 14, 1948, the nation of Israel was reborn in just one day. The rebirth of Israel is one of the greatest fulfillments of Bible prophecy.

Isaiah 66:8

Who has heard such a thing? Who has seen such things? Shall the earth be made to give birth in one day? Or shall a nation be born at once? As soon as Zion (Israel) was in labor, she gave birth to her children.

Jeremiah 16:14-15

Therefore behold, the days are coming," says the LORD, "that people won't be saying, 'The LORD lives who brought Israel out from the land of Egypt,' ¹⁵ But they will say, 'The LORD lives who brought up the children of Israel from the land of the north and from all the lands where He had driven them.' For I will bring them back to the land I gave to their fathers."

Ezekiel 36:24

For I will take you (Israel) out of the nations; I will gather you (Israel) from all the countries and bring you (Israel) back into your own land.

The rebirth of Israel is one of the greatest miracles since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

76 years ago, the Jewish people did not have a country.

They didn't have an army.

No military.

No iron doom to defend themselves.

Then the United Nations adopted a resolution which allowed the Jewish people to return to land God promised to their father, Abraham.

This was called the Partition Resolution.

Harry Truman, was President of the U.S. and he played a major role in that resolution.

On that day, May 14, 1948, Israel was reborn.

A few hours later, 7 Arabian countries declared war on Israel.

The Jewish state consisted of what some say were less than 1,000 Jews. That's it.

A few hundred Jews against the rest of the Arab world.

Lebanon, Syria, Iraq, Jordan, Egypt, Libya, and Saudi Arabia all attacked Israel at the same time.

The Jewish people fought the three most powerful armies in the Middle East and defeated them.

The rebirth of Israel is one of the greatest fulfillments of prophecies in Scripture.

It's one of the greatest miracles since the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

It's also the fulfillment of End Time Prophecy.

Hosea 6:1-2

Come, and let us return to the LORD; for He has torn, but He will heal us; He has stricken, but He will bind us up.

²After two days He will revive us; on the third day He will raise us up, that we may live in His sight.

Now think about that timeline. (show timeline)

The Bible says that a day with the Lord is as a thousand years and a thousand years is as a day.

Hosea prophesied that on the first day, Isarel would be torn apart.

That happened in A.D. 70.

Then on November 27, 1095, the Pope called for eight different crusades.

100,000 soldiers marched on behalf of the Catholic Church.

They marched from Europe to Jerusalem slaughtering the Jewish people.

They filled synagogues with woman and children and burnt them alive.

While the flames were blazing and the children were screaming, the crusaders sang, "Christ we adore thee." That's history folks.

Then in 1478 we have the Spanish Inquisition.

That's where King Ferdinand and Queen Isabella drove the Jewish people out of Spain.

They confiscated everything they owned and gave it to the Roman Catholic Church.

32,000 Jews died because they wouldn't convert to Catholicism.

Then you have The Holocaust from 1933-1945.

A state sponsored, state endorsed persecution of the Jewish people.

Six million Jews were killed.

The reason why Hell hates the Jewish people so much is because our Savior was born into a Jewish family and Jewish people wrote our Bible. (Baptists didn't write the Bible. Pentecostals didn't write the Bible.)

The prophet said, "He has torn us, but He will heal us; He has stricken us, but He will bind us up. ²After two days He will revive us."

No one would have ever believed that Israel could be reborn.

The nation of Israel had ceased to exist for nearly 2,000 years.

Then the prophet said that on the second day God will bind them up and revive them as a nation.

That happened in 1948.

The last thing mentioned in that prophecy is the rapture and the resurrection of the church.

"On the third day He will raise us up that we may live in His sight."

Jesus is coming!

The rebirth of Israel is one sign of Jesus' second coming.

Another sign is found in Daniel 12.

Daniel 12:4

But you, Daniel, shut up the words, and seal the book until the time of the end; many shall run to and fro, and knowledge shall increase.

That was written 2,100 years ago.

Many will run to and fro.

When Daiei wrote those words everyone went to and fro on the back of a camel or a mule. Now by plane and automobile we can go all over the world.

Nahum 2:3-4

The chariots *come* like flaming torches in the day of His coming... ⁴The chariots rage in the streets, they jostle one another on broad roads; they seem like torches, they run like lightning. That's you doing 85 in a 55 mph zone.

"Knowledge shall increase."

For thousands of years, travel was the same

agriculture was the same

communication was the same

tools and weaponry were the same

But over the past 100 years knowledge has rapidly increased.

We went from swords to canons to hydrogen bombs.

We went from dying of the flu to having a heart transplant.

Jesus is coming!

Luke 21:36

Watch therefore, and pray always that you may be counted worthy to escape all these things that will come to pass... (That's the great tribulation period)

1 Corinthians 15:51-58

Behold, I tell you a mystery: We shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed — in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised incorruptible, and we shall be changed.

1 Thessalonians 4:16-18

For the Lord Himself will descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of an archangel, and with the trumpet of God. And the dead in Christ will rise first. Then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air.

