

## Thoughts

[A Single View of Marriage](#) | [Biblical Sexuality](#) | ['Christian' Books](#) | [Missionary Kids](#) | [Pet Peeves](#)  
[Pornography: Confession, Healing, and Contention](#) | [Respecting Women](#) | [Single Notes](#)  
[Snippets](#) | [Spiritual Forces](#) | [Tension Points](#) | ['Wild at Heart'?](#)

### Tension Points ([View in PDF](#))

*"So the other disciples were saying to him, "We have seen the Lord!" But he said to them, "Unless I see in His hands the imprint of the nails, and put my finger into the place of the nails, and put my hand into His side, I will not believe." After eight days His disciples were again inside, and Thomas with them. Jesus came, the doors having been shut, and stood in their midst and said, "Peace be with you." Then He said to Thomas, "Reach here with your finger, and see My hands; and reach here your hand and put it into My side; and do not be unbelieving, but believing." Thomas answered and said to Him, "My Lord and my God!" Jesus said to him, "Because you have seen Me, have you believed? Blessed are they who did not see, and yet believed." — [John 20:25-29](#) (NASB)*

*Note: Unless otherwise noted, all Scripture references below are from the NASB.*

In late 2010, a coworker of mine essentially pointed out in his devotional "The Truth About Truth" (referencing the book [I Don't Have Enough Faith to Be an Atheist](#)) that truth is either bulletproof in all circumstances, locations, and times, or it's not truth. It is the ultimate furnace that when putting statements and claims to the test either proves, or disproves, belief. In a similar way to the disciple Thomas, [W.C. Fields](#) (though perhaps with different perspective) highlights this, and in effect, puts Scripture to the test:



W.C. Fields

*"To me, these biblical stories are just so many fish stories, and I'm not specifically referring to Jonah and the whale. I need indisputable proof of anything I'm asked to believe."*

We believe God and that His Word is true, so obviously we want what we believe to make sense—after all, we're not Scientologists who literally believe we're aliens from another planet, or Muslims who are commanded to believe things [beyond the absurd](#). As Ronald Nash noted in his book, [Worldviews in Conflict: Choosing Christianity in a World of Ideas](#):

*"Even though most people who reject Christianity treat it as a refuge for enemies of reason, the truth is that there may be no worldview in the history of the human race that has a higher regard for the laws of logic."*

But as Christians, we're good at ignoring and avoiding what some refer to as "tension points" in Scripture—the mysterious and unexplained verses that just don't connect with reality this side of heaven. The fact remains that there is a stark reality and ugly facts of life that don't line up with God's apparent promises—and issues in Scripture that not even the most astute theologians and biblical scholars can answer or explain.

As a result, there are numerous "lumps under the rug" that we try to pretend just aren't there. Because we're obviously uncomfortable and disturbed by them, we try to beat them down with the broomstick of God's sovereignty or conveniently use pat answers or "Christianese" when walking over them. You might argue: *"And why not? We don't know what else to do with them!"* After all, trying to explain to a non-believer why our faith makes perfect sense...except-for-those-issues-that-we'd-rather-not-talk-about is a frustrating place to be.

If we believe that some questions are "off limits" (or asking the 'wrong' ones as I've been told by a fellow believer) in our discovery of who God is through His Word—and becoming like Him as we're commanded to—simply because we don't have any answers to them, then we have some *serious problems* in our otherwise

allegedly 'bulletproof' faith. Do we, or do we not (with all due respect), believe that God is 'big' enough to handle the honest, tough questions we have about our faith and who He is? After all, God is the One who created us with our brains and the ability to logically analyze things, including what we are asked to believe and accept at face value.

Following are examples of what I'm referring to. Due to my lack of formal Bible training, *some* of these may have answers (as always, please [contact me](#) if you have insight or comments on anything here):

1. **Creating evil:** [Isaiah 45:7](#) (KJV)

*"I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the Lord do all these things."*

If God hates evil so intently (after all, He is Holy), why did He ever create evil only to then fight against His own creation?

2. **Unified omniscience or not?** Scripture clearly states that Jesus, the Father, and the Holy Spirit are one, yet how is it that only the Father knows the time when He will return to the earth at the rapture? Jesus Himself states this in [Mark 13:32](#):

*"But of that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but the Father alone."*

Why (and how) is there a blatant contradiction in the triune Godhead that claims, yet also clearly denies, perfect unity *and* communication?

3. **Let's play "spin the verse" with...:** [Mark 11:24](#): *"Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you."*

Honestly, good luck trying to explain and match the contents of this verse with reality across the board.

4. **Strange bedfellows 1 (Communion and cannibalism):** Why does Jesus use language/wording for communion with [cannibalistic](#) references, such as in [John 6:55-56](#) (below)—a practice that's not only sinful, but horrific in its scope (e.g. various early tribes in Papua New Guinea, the [Donner party](#), etc.) and closer to Satanic (drinking blood) in its symbolism?

*"For My flesh is true food, and My blood is true drink. He who eats My flesh and drinks My blood abides in Me, and I in him."*

Surely there would have been better ways to symbolically remember His death on the cross? I seriously doubt I'm the only believer that has ever sat through communion thinking: *"This is really weird."*

5. **Strange bedfellows 2 (Sexual intercourse and spiritual intimacy):** It would be blasphemy to talk about having sex with God; yet why does God use the theme of sexual intercourse found throughout the Song of Solomon as a means of conveying or illustrating the depth of intimacy we are supposed to have with Him? It's awkward at best, but more accurately, generates unwanted connotations in our mind because of how our thoughts and sinful nature continually work.

6. **Promise vs. reality 1:** [Proverbs 22:6](#): *"Train up a child in the way he should go, even when he is old he will not depart from it."* vs. the reality of numerous children—faithfully raised by arguably godly parents—who walk away from God; some even after what seem to be genuine professions of faith. The argument that the word "depart" is better translated as "escape" still provides no plausible explanation, seeing as it would then be nothing more than a simple reiteration of [Isaiah 55:11](#): *"So will My word be*

which goes forth from My mouth; it will not return to Me empty, without accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it."

7. **Promise vs. reality 2:** Numerous verses throughout Scripture tell us that God will supply all your needs according to His riches in glory in Christ Jesus ([Philippians 4:19](#))...unless you're someone that God has pre-selected to glorify Him through being filled with disease, imprisonment, torture, starvation, and finally die for His sake. Then all those ~~guaranteed promises~~ things are, uh, conveniently cancelled because...~~reasons~~ God's sovereignty.
8. **Circumcision ([multiple references](#)):** Though not a tension point per se, I've included it for the following reasons (and incidentally, why on earth isn't anyone in the Christian community *at least honest enough to ask these questions?*). At least one of my own aunts in the summer of 2017 (during a discussion with my uncle that mentioned circumcision) wasn't afraid to ask: "What about girls?" Understandably, she wanted to know (if anything) what the legitimate relevance of male circumcision was for women in Scripture. I'm sure she isn't the only woman out there asking this question.
  - I. For starters, what relevance does genitalia have with the sign or proof of a covenant? It all starts with an out-of-the-blue command from God basically boiling down to: "You will do this, and without any explanation(s) as to the whys or reasoning behind it." It also gets tacked onto other aspects of Scripture, such as in [Colossians 2:11-13](#).
  - II. Hidden display? Why wasn't a *publicly visible* indication of being one of God's chosen people used? Surely it would have been more practical and appropriate? Especially when no-one has any idea whether or not you're a Jew or Gentile unless you *literally* drop your pants in front of them?
  - III. Granted, it looks "better" without, but what was God's rationale in creating men with a penile foreskin, only to demand that it be [cut off](#) (Leviticus 12:3) the eighth day after birth? Why didn't God just create men *without the foreskin in the first place?* (And frankly—unlike the way God blessed women—what man really wants their already obstructive and unsightly genitals to look like the [snout of an Anteater?](#))
  - IV. Why men only? Why did God require only Jewish men to undergo the physical 'designation' of circumcision to act as a sign of the covenant between God and Abraham? Why not some form of non-genital identifier (e.g. ear markings, tattoo, etc.) for both Jewish men and women? Surely identifying with the covenant applied to both men *and women* was important for the nation of Israel to bear? Unlike boys and men, girls and women can't be circumcised without significant damage to their sexuality.
  - V. Is there some kind of hidden biblical truth or significance about circumcision that we just haven't stumbled onto yet?
  - VI. And (while I'm on this subject), why did God create men with nipples? They clearly serve no purpose, and are strictly a carry over from men starting in the womb as female. And if Adam was created first, why then do all embryos begin as female, and only if they masculinize do they become male, but they still retain some of the same anatomy?
9. **Free will vs. predestination:** It seems simple enough—[Romans 8:29](#) says "*For those whom He foreknew, He also predestined to become conformed to the image of His Son, so that He would be the firstborn among many brethren...*". So for the people God knew would accept Him as Lord and Savior, He predestined them for His purposes. After all, [2 Peter 3:9](#) notes that: "*The Lord is not slow about His promise, as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing for any to perish but for all to come to repentance.*" and [Ezekiel 33:11](#): "*Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"* **But** what about Pharaoh—whose heart God hardened in [Exodus 10:1](#) (bold emphasis mine): "*Then the Lord said to Moses, "Go to Pharaoh, for I have hardened his heart and the heart of his servants, that I may perform these signs of Mine among them..."*", clearly implying that Pharaoh would have sought repentance from God, and God wouldn't have been able to "pull off" the signs without doing it...and Judas Iscariot (whom in [John 17:12](#) was slated by God for eternal damnation): "*While I was with them, I was keeping them in Your name which You have*

given Me; and I guarded them and not one of them perished but the son of perdition, so that the Scripture would be fulfilled." Back to Pharaoh: chillingly, if God knew Pharaoh would never repent of his sin, why did He ever need to harden Pharaoh's heart to accomplish His purpose(s)? Especially when God also has no problem asserting His sovereignty to do whatever He wants, whenever He wants, insinuating that there are potential 'collisions' between His trait of mercy and sovereignty as in [Romans 9:15](#): "*For He says to Moses, 'I will have mercy on whom I have mercy, and I will have compassion on whom I have compassion.'*" So the question is, at the end of the day, which of these two divine traits ultimately win, and is there consistency with God? See "How much do you wanna bet?" for the answer.

10. **Conditional holiness?** Hebrew priests are commanded to follow the law to the nth degree and are instantly struck dead for a sacrifice God doesn't like (being pulled out by a cord attached to their leg). Moses has to take his sandals off in front of the burning bush because of God's holy presence. But Satan, who was cast out from heaven because he wanted to be like God—arguably the father of sin himself—can somehow [stand in the very presence of the Lord](#) "*So Satan departed from the presence of the Lord*" (and according to Scripture this "reporting" happened on a regular basis) and God even tolerates his audacity in being challenged to a bet?
11. **Conflicting commitments:** Which is it? Care for family or disown them? [Luke 14:26-27](#) says "*If anyone comes to Me, and does not hate his own father and mother and wife and children and brothers and sisters, yes, and even his own life, he cannot be My disciple. Whoever does not carry his own cross and come after Me cannot be My disciple.*" But [Matthew 15:4](#) says: "*For God said, 'Honor your father and mother,' and, 'He who speaks evil of father or mother is to be put to death.'*" And in [1 Peter 5:8](#): "*But if anyone does not provide for his own, and especially for those of his household, he has denied the faith and is worse than an unbeliever.*"
12. **How much do you wanna bet?** Job is literally a "blameless, upright" man (so described by *God Himself* in [Job 1:1](#)) and unique in all the earth (at least at that time), "*Have you considered My servant Job? For there is no one like him on the earth, a blameless and upright man, fearing God and turning away from evil.*" But Job is literally being used in a bet between God and Satan (and why on earth would God engage in a bet with Satan, the originator and essence of evil itself, whom He kicked out of heaven—[Luke 10:18](#)—let alone let him stand in His presence as described in [Job 1:12](#), especially when God's own omniscience means He has always known exactly what would happen and who would win anyway?) So Job suffers tremendously, and upon asking God "Why?" in the midst of his pain and grief, gets a four-chapter-long reprimand for it ([Job chapters 38 through 41](#)). He did nothing to ask for it, and as far as we know, gets no explanation from God for what he went through. *But somehow it's okay for Jacob to [physically wrestle with God](#) to get what he wants, and Lot to [make deals](#) with God to withhold punishment on Sodom and Gomorrah?*
13. **Inconsistent justice:** Ananias and Sapphira [lie to God](#), and *within minutes* are struck dead by God. Yet King David commits adultery, has a man murdered, and lives to tell about it?
14. **Inconsistent marriages:** If one-man, one-woman marriage was God's design and command, please explain why Solomon was "blessed" with numerous [concubines and wives](#)? And why didn't God dispense immediate, Draconian punishment like he did to other kings who disobeyed him? God's commands are always final, right? Or His wrath and judgment are metered out on them...but God somehow relents on His command and allows divorce in the Old Testament because of people's hard hearts?
15. **Inconsistent Scripture?** Two accounts of Judas Iscariot's death differs: [Matthew 27:3–10](#) (he hanged himself) and [Acts 1:18](#) (he fell headlong, his body burst open, and all his intestines gushed out).
16. **Healing and biblical theory:** [Luke 11:5-10](#) tells us to be persistent in prayer, and we'll essentially get what we're seeking. James talks about elders laying hands on a sick person, pouring oil on their head and having faith and you will be healed. Tough reality: Numerous people with illnesses are prayed over in

faith—claiming this verse and even literally using oil as prescribed in Scripture—and still die of their illness. Our response is "Well, we must not have had enough faith or were double-minded." This conflicts with Jesus' words in [Matthew 17:20](#): "*And He said to them, "Because of the littleness of your faith; for truly I say to you, if you have faith the size of a mustard seed, you will say to this mountain, 'Move from here to there,' and it will move; and nothing will be impossible to you."*" or in [Mark 11:24](#): "*Therefore I say to you, all things for which you pray and ask, believe that you have received them, and they will be granted you.*" In addition, Jesus' words in Matthew 17:20 clearly imply that we don't even have faith enough to do that. Yet Scripture tells us that we are saved by faith. So how then are we saved?

17. **All have sinned, except for...:** [Romans 3:23](#) says "...for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God..." and [Romans 3:10](#) "...as it is written, "There is none righteous, not even one...". Yet the following verses describe at least two (possibly three) sinful men as blameless (perfect):
  1. **Noah** in [Genesis 6:9](#): "*These are the records of the generations of Noah. Noah was a righteous man, blameless in his time; Noah walked with God.*"
  2. **Job** in [Job 1:1](#): "*There was a man in the land of Uz whose name was Job; and that man was blameless, upright, fearing God and turning away from evil.*"
  3. **Hezekiah** (though more questionable) in [2 Kings 20:3](#): "*Remember now, O Lord, I beseech You, how I have walked before You in truth and with a whole heart and have done what is good in Your sight.*" *And Hezekiah wept bitterly.*"
  
18. **Jesus' questionable grace:** Why did Jesus instantly minister in loving grace to the non-Jewish Samaritan woman at the well (who was clearly living in sexual sin), yet in [Mark 7:24-29](#) when he was approached by a Greek woman simply looking for deliverance for her daughter from demon possession, not only was He reluctant to heal her, but He was clearly annoyed by her 'intrusion' and insinuates she's a dog/pet dog—either way a dog?
 

*"Jesus got up and went away from there to the region of Tyre. And when He had entered a house, He wanted no one to know of it; yet He could not escape notice. But after hearing of Him, a woman whose little daughter had an unclean spirit immediately came and fell at His feet. Now the woman was a Gentile, of the Syrophenician race. And she kept asking Him to cast the demon out of her daughter. And He was saying to her, "**Let the children be satisfied first, for it is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs.**" But she answered and said to Him, "Yes, Lord, but even the dogs under the table feed on the children's crumbs." And He said to her, "Because of this answer go; the demon has gone out of your daughter."*
  
19. **Bad translation or difference in manuscripts?** The "modern" (read: "politically correct" 2012+) NIV translates Jesus's attitude toward a man with leprosy in [Mark 1:40-42](#) as "**indignant**" (definition: feeling, characterized by, or expressing strong displeasure at something considered unjust, offensive, insulting, or base): "*A man with leprosy came to him and begged him on his knees, "If you are willing, you can make me clean." **Jesus was indignant.** He reached out his hand and touched the man. "I am willing," he said. "Be clean!" Immediately the leprosy left him and he was cleansed.*" Indignant at what? Other translations (such as the [NASB](#) for example) translate this as "moved with compassion". Those are drastic differences in translation! Even the original NIV (1984) translates this as "filled with compassion".
  
20. **Witchcraft will be punished! But if your name is Saul...:** Numerous [references in Scripture](#) strongly warn and condemn every form and iteration of witchcraft, and it is clear in [Luke 16:19-31](#) that there is a big gap between the living and the dead, but somehow Saul is allowed to [use a witch](#) to conjure up—and communicate with—the deceased (and legitimate—not a demon pretending to be Samuel) prophet Samuel after he's dead (and presumably in Hades waiting to go to heaven)?
  
21. **God never changes...but He has regrets?** How can an omniscient (foreknowing), sovereign, and unchanging God have regrets as He describes in His own words in [1 Samuel 15:10-11](#)?

*"Then the word of the Lord came to Samuel, saying, "I regret that I have made Saul king, for he has turned back from following Me and has not carried out My commands." And Samuel was distressed and cried out to the Lord all night."*

22. **If God is incapable of forgetting, He's incapable of remembering. Right?** As in [Exodus 2:23-25](#)?

*"Now it came about in the course of those many days that the king of Egypt died. And the sons of Israel sighed because of the bondage, and they cried out; and their cry for help because of their bondage rose up to God. So God heard their groaning; **and God remembered His covenant** with Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. God saw the sons of Israel, and God took notice of them."*

23. **Unbelievers using God's power?** How can people who are clearly **not** of God and practice lawlessness in [Matthew 7:22-23](#) (below) cast out demons, perform multiple miracles, and prophesy in the name of Jesus—no small invocation?

*"Many will say to Me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in Your name, and in Your name cast out demons, and in Your name perform many miracles?' And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'"*

Moreover, why—and how—could they successfully carry out each of these things in Jesus' name (see [1 Corinthians 12:3](#)), and even believe they are? Pretty frightening—especially since it says "many". This is a "class" of people (not occultists—Jesus makes that clear in [Matthew 12:26](#) *"If Satan casts out Satan, he is divided against himself; how then will his kingdom stand?"*) who were somehow(?) clearly "above" the fake believers who tried to cast out a demon in [Acts 19:11-17](#)—where they were badly beaten by the demon-possessed man who instantly recognized them as fake, having no power from God:

*"God was performing extraordinary miracles by the hands of Paul, so that handkerchiefs or aprons were even carried from his body to the sick, and the diseases left them and the evil spirits went out. But also some of the Jewish exorcists, who went from place to place, attempted to name over those who had the evil spirits the name of the Lord Jesus, saying, "I adjure you by Jesus whom Paul preaches." Seven sons of one Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. And the evil spirit answered and said to them, "I recognize Jesus, and I know about Paul, but who are you?" And the man, in whom was the evil spirit, leaped on them and subdued all of them and overpowered them, so that they fled out of that house naked and wounded. This became known to all, both Jews and Greeks, who lived in Ephesus; and fear fell upon them all and the name of the Lord Jesus was being magnified."*

24. **Doubts taken seriously or not?** In [James 1:6](#), Scripture clearly states that when asking God for something, there can be no doubt(s):

James 1:6: *"But he must ask in faith without any doubting, for the one who doubts is like the surf of the sea, driven and tossed by the wind."*

Yet in [Mark 9:20-25](#), the account of the father whose son was demon possessed, the father clearly states face-to-face to Jesus Himself that he has doubts as to whether Jesus could heal his son. Granted, there appears to be some correlation with a rapidly-approaching crowd, as to why Jesus may have suddenly chosen to heal his son, and the first account is in regards to healing, whilst the second is in regards to wisdom. But why should there be any inconsistency or difference in what's being asked for?

Mark 9:20-25: *"They brought the boy to Him. When he saw Him, immediately the spirit threw him into a convulsion, and falling to the ground, he began rolling around and foaming at the mouth. And He asked his father, "How long has this been happening to him?" And he said, "From childhood. It has often thrown him both into the fire and into the water to destroy him."*

*But if You can do anything, take pity on us and help us!" And Jesus said to him, "If You can?' All things are possible to him who believes." Immediately the boy's father cried out and said, "I do believe; help my unbelief." When Jesus saw that a crowd was rapidly gathering, He rebuked the unclean spirit, saying to it, "You deaf and mute spirit, I command you, come out of him and do not enter him again.""*

What's so frustrating about all of this is that we are commanded to become more like Christ, and to do that, we need to study His Word, etc.; yet the more we do so, the more questions and unexplained issues we will clearly encounter.

But ultimately, my faith has to rest on the handful of truths about God's Word I know—not on what I don't; i.e.: "Absence of evidence is not evidence of absence." The numerous evidences through science, history, archeology, etc. of God's existence and prophetic accuracy of both past and present events found in Scripture are what I have to keep coming back to as my faith's only anchor.

What we *do know* is that God always looks at the heart ([1 Samuel 16:7](#)), He is sovereign ([Isaiah 55:9](#)), and we simply don't always know all the intricate details and history behind these tension points. In my view, it's possible that God gives us just barely enough evidence to substantiate our faith, but not so much that we no longer need faith itself. As my 'Small Church' (a.k.a. Sunday School) teacher said:

*"Our human understanding of Scripture brings us to the edge of a large chasm; at which point, only a leap of faith can take us across to the other side."*

In the end, I find myself at the point where Job also came to in [Job 19:25](#); where all we can deduce based on logic and the reality around us:

*"As for me, I know that my Redeemer lives, and at the last He will take His stand on the earth."*

**Related material:** ["Nudity and Lust"](#), Chapter 7, pages 73-80 from Dr. James McKeever's book, ["It's in the Bible"](#) (Omega Publications: Medford, Oregon, 1988)

[Comments?](#)