

God in the Dock

Week 1 - Brian Kangas

Prophecy

Icebreaker: Do you like math? Why or why not?

Questions:

- We put God on trial **a lot** for not living up to our expectations. We have a notion of what a god is supposed to do or how it is supposed to behave. Some examples of gods we create: Genie Jesus is supposed to grant us our requests, Hammer God is supposed to take care of the people who offend or hurt us, God of the Gaps is supposed to explain the things we can't. The biggest role of our fake gods: never supposed to let anything bad happen to us - ever! None of our created "gods" are the one who created the universe, orchestrated to the smallest atom, to bring us into a redemptive relationship with him. Fake can't value anything. *Our God defies our infinite imagination to describe!*

1. Are there any "gods" you have created or leaned upon in your past?
2. When they let you down, what did your faith feel like in that moment?

- It is important not to base your faith simply on an emotion or feeling. Feelings are fleeting, and emotions change. Our faith needs to be rooted in truth, which Jesus came to be evidence of.

There are over 300 prophecies, or foretellings, in the Old Testament that point directly to Jesus and His divinity. The 8 mentioned on Sunday are:

- Micah 5:2 → Matthew 2:4-6
- Malachi 3:1 → Mark 1:2-8
- Zechariah 9:9 → Matthew 21:4-11
- Psalm 41:9 → Luke 22:21
- Zechariah 11:12 → Matthew 26:15
- Zechariah 11:13 → Matthew 27:3-10
- Isaiah 53 → Mark 14:60-61
- Psalm 22 → John 19:17-18

Read each of these and discuss with the group how you feel. It may help to read the passages before and after.

- Probability is a funny thing: humans are not very good at understanding it. One of the reasons gambling is so pervasive is because our intuition tends to be mixed up when it comes to "chance". To help get our thinking straight, let's look at some probabilities we can understand, and compare that to the "chance" of Jesus fulfilling all 8 of the above mentioned prophecies:
 - Rolling a 1 on a 6-sided dice: **1 in 6**

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- Being born female: **1 in 2**
- Being struck by lightning once in a year period: 1 in 700,000 (or **1 in 7×10^5**).
- The number of seconds that have existed in the universe: **1×10^{24}**
- One person fulfilling the 8 (out of more than 300) prophecies listed: 1 in 10,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000,000 (or **1 in 1×10^{28}**).

Things to Consider:

- The world says God doesn't exist because we **emotionally** aren't feeling or understanding His presence and role in our lives. "Arguments like bad stuff happens therefore he can't be real" rely on the notion that God said nothing bad would happen...which he never did.
- The numbers say a different story: It defies reason to say that pure happenstance is the cause for one man, Jesus, to be born to such specific predictions laid down over a period of millennia before his birth. God, over the course of history since the beginning of time, orchestrated and structured events so that Jesus would come at the exact moment needed, to redeem us and bring us back into relationship.

Going Deeper:

- This whole series is about strengthening faith, but it can't make you believe. Think back to the time you recognized Jesus as Lord. Reflect on what you knew about God before vs. what you knew after.

Prayer: Ask for prayer requests and have your group leader pray for those requests.