

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

These questions are designed to help you talk about God's word and Pastor Brian's message with friends and family. You of course can use your own questions, but we'd like to give you this tool to encourage Biblical fellowship and discipleship in your circle of relationships. *Enjoy discovering more about Him!*

"WHERE IS GOD?" | EXODUS 17 | PASTOR BRIAN

WARM-UP QUESTION:

When you are really thirsty, what do you most want to drink?

"Why do you test the Lord?" - (Exodus 17:1-3)

The Israelites questioned where was God as they were in the desert. What are reasons or circumstances that often cause people to question where is God or if He even exist? How do those circumstances affect how someone might try to answer those questions?

"What shall I do with this people?" - (Exodus 17: 4)

Moses is frustrated with how the people are testing God, which later Jesus quotes to Satan "Do not test the Lord". In what ways is testing God wrong? How is that different than expressing doubt?

"I will stand before you on the rock" - (Exodus 17: 5-7)

God tells Moses He will stand on a rock and when Moses strikes Him on the rock, water will flow. What does it say about God that He provided water in this way after the people tested Him?

REFLECTION QUESTION:

In this passage life giving water comes from a rock after being struck, foreshadowing how everlasting life comes from the Rock, Jesus, after he was struck down and killed. The Israelites still questioned and tested God after being set free from slavery, just like so many people question and test God after Jesus offers them freedom from hell. Have you been testing God lately? How have you expressed it? Have you been patiently looking for His provision, protection and presence?

Where is God?

I. Slide1 Announce:

- A. Slide2-5 Larry: MP. C@R. REAL. GC.
- B. Slide6 Fostering a Hope Community: Our next meeting is **this Wed 7pm**. Agape rm
1. For those of you who would like to know **how to come alongside and support these families**, you're welcome to pick up a **pamphlet** in the foyer from **Focus on the Family** that gives **practical ways to do that**. We all **can't** adopt, **but we can all help those who are!**
- C. Slide7 Baptism: We are very excited for our summer baptism next Sun, **July 25th**.
1. If you are interested in getting baptized, you must attend 1 of our classes: Either **TODAY** after 2nd service in the Mercy Room **or this Wed** after rt evening service.
- D. Slide8 Oh wait you want to see one pic from vaca? [God playing w/His watercolors]

II. Slide9 Intro:

- A. Wow, **Kelly & I rejoiced** this week in hearing from Larry about your **generosity** towards *Mercy Projects*. **Supporting 26 new family sponsorships**. **All 23 cows** that were needed for the *Dairy Farm* in Armenia. **Blessing them with emails & encouragement** on how you enjoyed reading their life story in their book.
1. Slide10 In 1 Sunday you fulfilled all 5 of our CM Values: **Instruction** (Experiencing God as we believe, read, share, and *live His Word*). **Participation** (encouraging all believers to discover and *use their unique ministry gifts*). **Character** (honoring God as our character is transformed, *resulting in genuine fruit*). **Stewardship** (serving God with *generous hearts* as we invest our time, talent, & *treasure in building his kingdom*). **Relationship** (encountering God as we *center our affections on Christ, sharing His grace and mercy with all people*). **Slide11**
This is our *Community of Faith* at CM.

2. **And** this is exactly what God was forming in the book of Exodus, a *Community of Faith*.

B. In Ex.13-19 is about the *relationship* between God and His *newly redeemed people*.

1. What we noticed is that there isn't such a stark contrast between **Israel** and **us**/the church today, as we may have thought.
2. We understand that God has **1 people** not 2 (we have been grafted in). God has always only had **1 people**. He has always only had **1 means of deliverance**. God saves **us by grace through faith**. God saved **Israel by grace through faith**. No one has ever been saved by **the Law**.
3. **As** God is delivering **Israel** out of Egypt, we recognize this is a picture of God's deliverance of His people from their sin. **The NT carries on this idea**
4. **So** we continue to read of these similar situations that **Israel** found themselves in, **that** we continue to face today. **It is no different**.

III. Slide12a **WHERE IS GOD? (1-7) READ** *water from the rock*

A. Slide12b Is the Lord among us or not? (7) **or** the question is: *Where is/was God?*

1. Let's start with, *This is a hard question for us to answer*. I think of just this week in **Oceanside**, a Fishermans boat catches fire heading down to **Carlsbad** (they searched for him all day Thurs, gave up the search for his body). I think of a single mom strung out on heroin with her 1 yr old lil girl w/sunburn cheeks Kelly & I met and talked to twice. [I can't care for my baby]
2. Slide12c It's known as **Theodicy** (*it means* the vindication of God).
 - a) Theodicy is the *"answer to the question of why God permits evil"*.
 - b) **Or** as the philosopher **Lex Luther** said in *Batman v Superman: Dawn of Justice*, *"If God is all powerful, he cannot be all good. And if he's all good, then he cannot be all powerful."* [aka, *It's the problem of evil*]
3. Often we don't know where to begin. Someone's child dies and they say, *Ok Christian, where was your God?* Someone's loses their **home, or livelihood, or spouse** and they say, *Ok Christian, where was your God?*

4. **And**, if we're honest, we also question God, when faced with *frowning consequences* in our own lives.

a) **Slide13a** Normally we offer 3 main *dodges*, **not answers**, but *dodges/smokescreens*.

- (1) **The 2 Wills Argument** (we become God's PR person). See God has 2 wills: His **Sovereign** will **and** His **Permissive** will (which is when God allows things *He doesn't want to happen*). **No! God decrees all things to come to pass. What He wants, He gets. He does whatever pleases Him. He's not running for God!**
- (2) **13b The Powerful Enemy Argument**. It says, when *good things happen*, that's **God**. When *bad things happen*, that's **the devil**. **Nope!** The devil is on a short leash. **Job 1, satan has to get God's permission to do anything.**
- (3) **13c The God Depends on Your Faith Argument**. It says, *if you believe enough. Or if you hadn't spoken those certain words into existence*. We see so many times in Scripture that it is based on *His grace, or His mercy, or His love*.

B. Oh my gosh, the **Israelites** were telling God *He's unrighteous in His dealings towards them?* They **demand**, **Slide14 GIVE US WATER TO DRINK!** This is the height of **arrogance**. **As if God owed it to them**. It's a lack of **humility**. **It's prayerlessness**.

1. We might not say it that way, **God give me _____**. **But** we are **equally mad** when He doesn't meet our expectations. **Do we think God owes us?**

C. **Does God owe you anything?** [we might say, *how dare they/the Israelites!*]

1. **But** *listen carefully* to what the **Israelites** are saying to **us**, *It takes one to no one!* **See**, *when something happens that we know is beyond our control*. (See how I said that ... *all things are out of our control*), **but** some things **remind us** of it is beyond our control.

2. The accusation **assumes** that **God should run the universe with ME at the center** of it. This is the key to the **Where was God? mentality**.

D. **Slide15a 2 Tracks** you can go down:

1. **The God Centered View:** If my assumption is that, **God is God**, and I exist **for His Glory**. Then I say to God, *You do with me what You will, in order to bring glory to yourself*. Then when the bad report comes, and my assumption is, this is happening because **His infinite wisdom knows** that this circumstance in my life is what will **maximize His glory**. So my prayer is, *will you give me grace to endure this circumstance so that I might maximize Your glory through my life?*
 2. **Slide15b The ME Centered View:** God, You exist to bring me glory and me comfort and me happiness, and You are not doing Your job well right now! (pause) **That's the sin at the heart of it.**
 - a) We thus only see when everything is done **rightly** by God, is when *our wants, our desires, our comforts* are the end result.
 - b) It's when we have too low a view of **God**, & too high a view of **ourselves**.
- E. **Slide16a** Remember God was *putting them to the test* not vice-versa. **Yet** that's what they're doing, *putting God to the test*. Which is what **we're** doing when we put God on the stand and ask him *why He allows war, why He allows evil, or, why He allows this or that to happen in our lives*. Instead of this being *the true Supreme Court*, this is **now** *the People's Court*, or maybe a *Kangaroo Court*.
1. Think about it, when **we** put **God** to the test, it's just as Satanic as when the devil tempted Jesus in the wilderness and tried to get Jesus to *prove Himself*. *If you were the son of God throw yourself down*. Jesus refused to submit to the devils trial, **not** because He couldn't pass, **but** because the trial itself was wrong. Listen to the loud warning **Slide16b** in Deut.6:16 **You must not test the Lord your God as you did when you complained at Massah.**
 2. **And yet** God, to our amazement, went ahead and gave them the hearing they wanted. He submitted Himself to judgment, *not their judgment*, **but His own**. [we'll see this change after He gives them the Law in ch.20]

a) Like when we were *raising our children*, no discipline when they didn't know something ... **but** once they were told :)

F. **Slide17a** What did the water from the rock **prove**?¹ It proved everything about God that the Israelites were calling into question. **Remember**, they were *demanding his provision, denying his protection*, and *doubting his presence*. **But** the water flowing from the rock *proved all these things*. *It proved that ...*

1. **17b** God had the power to **provide**: Ps.78:15,16 *He split open the rocks in the wilderness to give them water, as from a gushing spring. He made streams pour from the rock, making the waters flow down like a river!*
2. **17c** God was also their **protector**. Instead of **judging** His people for their sins, especially for their **unbelief** - *He submitted Himself to judgment so they could live*.
3. **17d** The rock was the proof of God's **presence**. The Israelites wanted to know **if God was with them or not?** Well, there He was - their Savior - standing on the rock (6a).

G. **Slide18a** The Bible often refers to God as a Rock. *He's the Rock of Israel. The Rock whose works are perfect. The Rock was a fortress & a refuge. The Rock of our salvation.*

1. So the rock that Moses struck with his rod was a symbol of **God** and **His salvation**.
2. **Slide18b** The Rock is Christ because like the rock it showed how God would submit to the blow of His own justice, **so that** out of **Him** would flow **life** for His people. Christ was struck with divine judgment/punishment.
 - a) In all of **Paul's** writings he makes it the most clear in 1st Cor.10 using **this story** of *God bringing water from a rock in the wilderness* here in Ex.17:1-7, and Paul says, *and that Rock was Christ*. [**Ohh** that's why God was so mad at Moses (**not see promise land**) when He struck the rock **a 2nd time** (Numb's). **Christ need only be smitten once!**]

¹ Adapted from Exodus - Saved For God's Glory, Ryken, Philip Graham.

3. **Slide18c** The Rock is also Christ because it flowed with the water of life. Remember as he hung on the cross and *His side was pierced*, it brought forth a sudden flow of *blood and water*. **Blood** shed for our **sins**. The **water**, not simply to prove that Jesus died on the cross, **but** to show that by His death He gives life.

H. ***Let me explain how we are going to end this morning.** I'm going to invite up the worship team. (talk to camera) Right after the last song, we are going to be cutting off our live feed so we can talk about 1 of our *Field Workers* & their family heading back out on the field.

I. **Slide19-24**

J. Keywords: water, rock, relationship, theodicy, where is God?, test, prove, provide, protector, presence, Christ.

K. **Now**, if you didn't get anything out of my message this morning let me end with **my** favorite quote on IG yesterday, *"If God can make a bugs butt light up, think of what He can do for you."* [from the book *Chasing Fireflies*, by Charles Martin]