

The Creation Story, the Divine Plan for Human History, the Authority of the Bible, and more

Question #1:

After praying every morning, I read my bible to gain more knowledge. So I have few questions and I want people that are deep into bible study to help me out.

In the book of Genesis,

Genesis chapter 1 vs 26

“then God said let’s make man in “our” own image, according to “our” likeness”

Q. Who was God referring to as “our” when He alone was and is the only God??

Q 2. If God created man in His own image, does it mean man was once like God or should I say man was God on earth?

1 vs 27 to 29, the creation of man was narrated here.

2 vs 15 to 25, the creation of Adam and Eve was narrated here.

Q. Is the creation of Adam and Eve same as the creation of man in genesis chapter 1 vs 27 to 29?

Reason why I’m asking the question is, the first creation of man narrated in Genesis 1vs27-29 seems not to go into much details until Adam and Eve’s creation.

Genesis 2vs8

Why did God plant the tree of evil in the garden that was supposed to be heaven on earth? When He knew man has a weakness and where was God when the serpent made Eve eat from the tree of evil? Also why did God put the serpent in the Garden of Eden when He knew the serpent was evil and bound to corrupt God’s creation?

Genesis chapter 3vs11, Adam was quick to shift blame to Eve. Typical of mankind. (Still happens till date)

Again in genesis chapter 3vs22, God said “behold, the man has become one of “us” to know good and evil.

God made use of the word “us” again.

In the beginning/creation, no other being, Angel, God was made mention of but only Him. Then who are the “us” He talked about?

Genesis chapter 3vs19, God cursed Adam “in the sweat of your face, you shall eat bread till you return to the ground for out of it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you shall return”

Q. If Adam and Eve had not eaten of the evil tree, does this mean mankind will not know death but live forever on earth? If yes, what happens to the world ever increasing population??

Q 2. What would have become of mankind if Adam and Eve had not eaten from the evil tree?

Reason for this last question is, if Adam and Eve was so easy to manipulate and made to eat from the evil tree by a mere serpent right inside the Garden of Eden, this means God’s creation(man) was ALREADY vulnerable(FLAW) even before eating the forbidden fruit.

PLEASE your contributions are very welcomed!! I’m learning. Pardon my moniker.

Response #1:

Hello there.

Your questions are very good, whatever the reason may be for your asking them. It is also excellent practice to pray and read the Bible daily. In addition to these things, however, you must also find a reliable Bible-teaching ministry and submit to it so that you can learn everything the Bible teaches and become able to live the way that Christians are called to live in honor of the One Who died such a terrible Death for them.

As to your questions...

Re: Q. Who was God referring to as “our” when He alone was and is the only God??

The Lord was speaking to the other Members of the Trinity, since we know from the Bible that all things were made by God, not by any creature (Genesis 2:1-3; Revelation 4:11).

Re: Q 2. *If God created man in His own image, does it mean man was once like God or should I say man was God on earth?*

First, it is important to remember that God is Spirit (John 4:24), and not even in the sense that angels are spirits (Hebrews 1:7,14). Angels are created spirits who depend on space and time to exist. God, on the other hand, invented space, time, matter, and the universe, so His Existence is utterly independent of such things. It is impossible to define God in terms of shape or dimension or material composition, so it is not right to understand His Image in those terms either.

Next, the Image of God is itself defined by the passage in question:

26 And God said, Let us make man in our image, after our likeness: and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every creeping thing that creepeth upon the earth. 27 So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. 28 And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth.

Genesis 1:26-28 KJV

That is to say, the Image of God is related to the ability to exercise authority over the things that God has created. In fact, it is the ability to respond to God's Authority. We call that ability **free will**, namely, the ability to respond to God in obedience or in rebellion against His Will. Man was made possessing this spiritual ability to make a choice about what attitude he will have toward God, whether he will rule over the earth as God's regent, or whether he will rebel against Him instead and attempt to seize the Earth from its Maker, just like some of the angels had done before Man was created.

In other words, man was and is able to determine himself with respect to God. We can choose who and what we will be in relation to God. This is a unique ability among God's creatures. It is possessed only by the angels and man. It is why the Scriptures says that we are "gods" (Psalm 82:6; John 10:34) and why angels are called "sons of God" (Job 38:7). It enables us to exercise divinely delegated authority over our lives and the world around us in God's behalf.

Re: Q. *Is the creation of Adam and Eve same as the creation of man in genesis chapter 1 vs 27 to 29?*

Yes. God finished all His Creation on the sixth day and rested on the seventh (Genesis 2:1-3). The description that follows in the rest of Chapter 2 is similar to other "zoom-in's" that Moses does in Genesis, where he develops a background in order to tell us an important story (for example, the story of Noah and the Flood). So, the creation of Adam and Eve happened on the sixth day. It is only focused on and expanded in chapter 2 in order to tell us how man fell and what that fall led to.

Re: *Why did God plant the tree of evil in the garden that was supposed to be heaven on earth? When He knew man has a weakness and where was God when the serpent made Eve eat from the tree of evil? Also why did God put the serpent*

in the Garden of Eden when He knew the serpent was evil and bound to corrupt God's creation?

First of all, Adam and Eve had no weakness when they were created (Genesis 1:31; Ecclesiastes 7:29).

31 And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day.

Genesis 1:31 KJV

Next, there was no tree of evil:

9 And out of the ground made the Lord God to grow every tree that is pleasant to the sight, and good for food; the tree of life also in the midst of the garden, and the tree of knowledge of good and evil. . .16 And the Lord God commanded the man, saying, Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: 17 But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, thou shalt not eat of it: for in the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.

(Genesis 2:9,16-17 KJV)

There was only a tree of the knowledge of good and evil that the Lord commanded Adam not to eat from. That tree was said by the Bible to be pleasant to the sight and good for food. It wasn't evil. It was part of God's good creation. It was only forbidden to man.

As to why God put this tree in the Garden, it was to be his test, to allow him to demonstrate his attitude to God of his own free will. If he chose to obey God, then eventually man would be resurrected in a new, eternal body and confirmed in God's Eternal Family as the replacement for Satan and the angels who rebelled. If he chose to disobey and join Satan in rebellion, then man would also enter Satan's condemnation and have either God's Mercy to pursue or else eternal judgment to face. Without a command of the sort that the Lord gave to Adam in the Garden, there would have been no opportunity for man to exercise his free will and make an unhindered choice whether to remain in submission to God or to rebel against Him.

As to where God was, He was in the Third Heaven. But of course He is really everywhere, so He was also with Adam in the Garden when the couple made their choice. Also, the serpent did not make Eve do anything. It only offered temptation. Eve made her own choice.

About the serpent, see Genesis 1:31 above, the serpent was not evil. It was an animal that was subtle (or careful, loosely translated) by nature, and it was Eve's pet. The only evil in the Garden was Satan who possessed the body of the serpent in order to tempt Eve into disobeying God. As I said, God allowed that to happen so that Adam and Eve could make a choice about their future with the Lord.

Re: In the beginning/creation, no other being, Angel, God was made mention of but only Him. Then who are the "us" He talked about?

Again, the Lord was addressing other Members of the Trinity here, not the angels. The angels were certainly around this time, but the Lord was not addressing them. The reason we can say so

is that man had, by his choice to rebel and take of the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, essentially constituted himself a rival God to the Lord. He would henceforth basically look to himself as the authority on all questions of life (Ecclesiastes 7:29; Romans 7; Galatians 5:16-17).

To explain, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was a tree that, just as its name went, provided anyone who ate its fruit with knowledge of good and evil. Until Adam and Eve ate of its fruit, they depended on the Lord to tell them what was good for them and what wasn't. They had no need to know anything about evil, since they were perfect and the Lord had provided for them all that they could possibly desire that was good. The tree expanded their conscience enabling them to appreciate good and evil in a far more sophisticated way than they did in the Garden where there was no evil of any kind. With such an expanded conscience, the natural tendency of man would be to decide for himself what is good and what is bad without reference to God. How? By justifying anything we prefer and condemning whatever we don't. So, we basically invent morality as it suits us. Of course, the vast majority of mankind is reluctant to do this on any great scale, but we do do it in some small ways, and there are human beings who become pure psychopaths from redefining good and evil, and during the Tribulation, the whole world will do just that when the restraint of the Holy Spirit upon evil in the world is removed and the Lord gives an empowerment of error to unbelievers to allow them to rebel to their heart's content. See Romans 1:18-2:16; Ecclesiastes 7:29; 2 Thessalonians 2:7-12; Isaiah 5:18-21.

So, this has nothing to do with the angels. Furthermore, it is clear that the Lord was speaking in order to take an executive action to forestall a situation that He did not want as the Ruler of Creation:

22 And the Lord God said, Behold, the man is become as one of us, to know good and evil: and now, lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life, and eat, and live for ever: 23 Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. 24 So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life.

Genesis 3:22-24 KJV

That is, the Lord was noting how man's new fallen state must not be allowed to become a permanent thing. This was why He drove man out of the Garden and guarded the way back to it with the Cherubim, the highest ranking angels in Heaven. If He was talking to angels, why would He need to justify any action He was about to take? Does He owe any of His Creatures any explanation for the things He decides to do? No, the Lord was merely taking a royal "decision" in the Godhead. Keep in mind that this is something of an anthropopathism though, because the Lord has always known what man would do and what He would do about it. What was written was written for our benefit, so that we can understand the Lord's Eternal Plan.

Re: Q. If Adam and Eve had not eaten of the evil tree, does this mean mankind will not know death but live forever on earth? If yes, what happens to the world ever increasing population??

Please note again that there was no evil tree.

To your question specifically, however, if neither Adam and Eve nor any of their children ever ate of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, the human race would have expanded up to the number of the angels who rebelled against God, then the entire human race would have been resurrected to have eternal bodies that are perfect and invulnerable to any more damage or decay or trouble of any sort and the whole creation would have been resurrected too into a perfect creation devoid of anything bad at all. The problem of the earth's ability to bear the ever-increasing population does not really arise because the Lord is able to do all things. He can make the earth able to sustain all those who live on it. The Lord Jesus did feed a crowd of thousands with just five loaves of bread and two fish after all. Consider also that during the Glorious Millennium, the whole resurrected Church will live on earth with a rapidly expanding population of unresurrected human beings at a time when death will not be a particularly normal occurrence (compared to the prior 6000 years of human existence). That is, a vast population of mortal human beings - possibly exceeding the number of the whole resurrected Church - will be on earth at the same time, and it won't be a problem: in fact, the Earth then will be at its most prosperous and peaceful.

However, the Lord had a different plan. That is what we see playing out in creation and documented in the Bible.

Re: Q 2. What would have become of mankind if Adam and Eve had not eaten from the evil tree?

This is answered to considerable extent immediately above. Here I will add that each human being born in such a hypothetical world would have also had to make at least a similar choice to the one that Adam and Eve had to make. If each person chose to not disobey the Lord, then the above scenario I wrote above would have occurred, but there is no guarantee at all that every single descendant of Adam and Eve would choose like they hypothetically did and if they didn't that would raise a completely new set of hypotheticals.

The Bible says that the Lord had things happen the way that they did so that all of the human race would be given to condemnation so that He would save us all (Romans 11:32; cf. Romans 5:12-19). That is, God allowed Adam and Eve to fall so that all their children would be born needing salvation. That way, the Sacrifice of the Lord Jesus that would be made later in history would answer for everybody. If only some humans sinned and not others, the situation would have been different. Adam and Eve's rebellion ruined their mortal bodies and that ruination has been passed down to every human being born of male seed ever since. That way, our sinfulness is guaranteed. Everyone of us human beings sins given even a second of life to live. That means that we are all in need of Salvation. Therefore the Death of Jesus Christ on the Cross was for all of us.

The reason for this is that Man was created as an answer to Satan's rebellion. Satan's greatest lie to seduce the angels to join him in his rebellion was that God could not forgive sin or judge the sinner. If He forgave, He would violate His Justice. If He judged the sinner, He would violate

His Mercy. The Cross of Jesus Christ proved that God can do both without violating either His Justice or His Mercy. See Ephesians 3:10-12; cf. Psalm 50:21; Isaiah 14:4-20; Ezekiel 28:12-19.

Re: ...if Adam and Eve was so easy to manipulate and made to eat from the evil tree by a mere serpent right inside the Garden of Eden, this means God's creation(man) was ALREADY vulnerable(FLAW) even before eating the forbidden fruit.

I'm afraid I don't see how this is true at all. It's just like saying that because a good car can still suffer a crash, it was flawed to begin with. That makes no sense. Man was built perfect, without sin or weakness of any sort, but with a true free will, so that he could decide either to remain perfect and without sin and weakness or else to become sinful, weak and imperfect. Consider that this was the exact same situation with the Lord Jesus. Because His Body was produced without male seed, it was perfect and without a sin nature. But He did have a free will. He was free to choose to disobey the Father. But He never chose to do so. He remained faithful and loyal to the Father in every single way. Adam and Eve could have been the same if they wanted. We too today can be the same if we want. It is only impossible to us because we have a sinful nature now that drives us to sin in our thoughts, words, and actions at all times. That is, we actually don't want to not sin. We prefer to sin, by nature. When we believe in Jesus Christ and are thus born anew, we get the Spirit of God inside us. Then, it becomes a struggle between two natures, one that loves to sin and another that loves to obey God. Even then, we are never perfect in avoiding sin, because the other nature does get the upper hand from time to time.

So, Adam's and Eve's failure had nothing to do with their design, rather it had everything to do with their choice, just as ours today do.

Question #2:

Am strong believer and I have encountered the true power of God which concreted my faith in Him. But the truth is this , the creation story in the eden something is not adding up I may not want to go deeper because people who have a little faith.does that mean God did not know the capacity of what He created by given them such test? Now am asking you when you have a very young baby that has just started to crawl and you tell the baby do not drink this snipper and keep the snipper beside the baby what will happen? That's what happened in that Eden according bible which is not making sense.

Response #2:

Hello.

I'm afraid I don't agree with your assessment of the Bible. I hold that everything that the Bible says is true. In fact, that is what I understand to be Faith in Jesus Christ, since the only Jesus Christ Who saves is the One that the Bible tells us about, so if we doubt that the Bible tells us the truth in one thing, how can we be sure that we can trust it about anything else, especially in the matter of our eternal salvation? So, I take whatever the Bible says to be true, even if it is difficult to understand.

As my post, which you quoted, explained, Adam and Eve were perfect when they were created. The only thing that they could be said to lack was a sophisticated conscience, that is, a developed appreciation of the many forms of good and evil. This, however, was completely unnecessary to them because good is only whatever pleases God, and evil is only whatever displeases Him. Or, better put, obedience to God is what is good, and disobedience to Him is what is evil. However many the ways in which we can obey or disobey God, this is always true.

Adam and Eve had only one way to disobey God: to eat the fruit of the tree that God had forbidden to them. There was no other evil of which they needed to be aware. As long as they didn't do this one thing, they were fine. If they did it, however, they were instantly in condemnation for rebellion against God.

Now, Adam and Eve were created adults, not babies. Just like the angels who were created with greater knowledge and power than man did not need to learn everything from the ground up before they could be tested, Adam and Eve were created with knowledge and power as well in order to be able to make their own choices. As an illustration, on the sixth day that God created Adam, He also gave him the responsibility to give each animal their own identity and duties. The same day, Adam completed that task and confirmed the fact that he was unique among these creatures that possessed corporeal bodies like he did. Today, we struggle to identify the animals around us, much less understand how they behave. Scientists spend their whole lives just trying to appreciate one species, to say nothing about the whole fauna of the earth. Adam did not have the intellectual limitations that we do today at all. Consider also that the Garden of Eden was a vast array of flora unlike anything in the world today. There is no tree of life or a tree of the knowledge of good and evil in the world today. Such things were unique to the Garden. How did Adam know how to tend them per his command from the Lord? He was the Lord's Gardener. How did he know how to do his job? Yet, we know that he did it well until he sinned against God.

I see no reason to believe that Adam's and Eve's test was in any way beyond their abilities. Their only trouble was that, like every creature possessing a free will, they were susceptible to temptation to see what life outside of God's Rule is like. The choice to succumb to that temptation is always a terrible one, and they found that out when they made it.

It should also be noted that Adam and Eve did not rebel against God right after they were created. They were in the Garden for a considerable length of time before Satan tempted them. So, even if we wanted to argue that they were like babies knowing nothing when they were created (and this is false, as I have just demonstrated above), they certainly were not babies 47 years later when they were thrown out of the Garden. How we can know this involves the use of the following principles:

1. God used seven days to complete the reconstruction of the universe for the creation of man, not because He needed the time (the first perfect creation He made before creating the angels was made in an instant, in which He created space, time, matter, and energy all at once in the form of the vast perfect universe of that epoch), but because He was leaving a testimony to the

length of man's history. Each day of creation represents a full millennium of human history. Human history is meant to last seven thousand years in all.

2. Those seven thousand years are divided into ages that are in pairs of millennia: the **Gentile Age** (before the creation of the divine nation-state of Israel through which the Lord would bring His Truth and Salvation and preserve a testimony of them) that lasted two thousand years from Adam's removal from the Garden until the circumcision of Abraham; the **Jewish Age** that lasted another two thousand years from Abraham's circumcision until the removal of the nation-state of Israel for its unfaithfulness to the Lord (seven years out of the two thousand years were left in abeyance to continue in the next Age); the **Church Age** that was to last two thousand years from the Cross until the Return of our Lord (these two millennia include the last seven years of the Jewish Age because the Church is also Israel). The last Millennium is not paired. It is the Day of the Lord, the Sabbath of this Creation, the Glorious Millennium of the Lord's Rule over the Earth.

So, using the above principles and counting back from the circumcision of Abraham until the creation of Adam and Eve will yield 2047 years. Since the time of the Gentile Age starts counting from the time of Adam's and Eve's expulsion, we conclude that they were in the Garden for 47 years before they were cast out.

If this is the case, they certainly had enough time to learn whatever they needed to learn in order to be able to stand up to Satan's temptation. Of course, this is not a necessary argument at all, as I have already said. Adam and Eve were created with considerable knowledge and ability. Their ability to communicate with the animals is yet another proof of that. Many of the things that they knew and understood are completely lost to us today because the human race has been declining in quality since they existed. Our bodies are weaker with each passing generation, so we can only do less and less than our forebears could, although we like to fancy that we do better than they did (not least because of what our technologies can do, but comparing what they did with what they had to what we do with what we have, it is easy to tell that we are far inferior to the generations that have gone before us). Nonetheless, if it is hard for us to accept that they were able to handle such a temptation, then we also have this teaching about the time that they had to prepare to be tempted to factor into our mental equation.

Therefore, I cannot agree with you. The story in Genesis adds up perfectly, as far as I can see, and Adam and Eve had more than a fair chance with the temptation they were faced with.

PS.: I should also point out again, although I did the same at least twice in the post you quoted, that just as Adam and Eve were no babies, the tree of the knowledge of good and evil was no "Sniper." The tree was not evil, and, in fact, it was what the Lord used to expand the human conscience once Adam and Eve sinned, so that human beings now know very much about the very many ways in which one can obey or sin against God. That is, when Adam and Eve ate of that fruit, they acquired knowledge that has led many of us to Salvation, because when our consciences condemn us for our many sins, it leads many of us to appreciate our need for God's Mercy and eventually to the Gospel and Salvation. Of course, other people simply silence their consciences and redefine good and evil to allow themselves to revel in rebellion against God. So,

the Tree was always a good thing. Eating its fruit contrary to God's express command was the evil thing.

Question #3:

I knew this was gonna be an interesting topic and would lead to much discourse but for the sake of time, I've learnt to give answers rather than raise questions, hence I limited my initial piece to a concise answer which seemed to have satisfied OP well. However, with varying perspectives presented here, and for the sake of the genuine inquirers, I would add a bit to give clarity.

There is indeed a difference in the Hebrew between LIKENESS(similarity in form, may involve distinct nature) (2Cor11:14-15 succinctly captures this) and IMAGE(which represents exact nature/character without any differences) like the image in a mirror (though that is still distorted being unreal). As a matter of fact, in the spiritual(also in Hebrew as well as Greek), the word image is related to one's name/mark/character/person/identity. You find a trace here, of the beast(Rev 20:4, 13:15-17, 14:9)

Throughout scripture(Col 1:15, Heb1:3, 2Cor 4:4) only Christ is ever given the status of the image of God. Adam has never had this image, but only God's likeness/form (Gen 5:1), was never the man in Gen1:26(hence MAN, not ADAM)and hence never lost it. As I said before, the test of the image of God is in who would act exactly like God when presented with contrary opportunities. Only Lord Jesus passed this test but Adam failed because God and only God(image of God) cannot be tempted by sin if given opportunity(Jam1:13,17)

It might help further to explain what I meant by Gen 1:1-2:3 being a different frame of existence, a 'structuring' of the 'Adamic' age we are in(I had initially tried not to expatiate, to avoid many quotes and questions.) But surprisingly, ihedinobi3, whom I do not consider a danger to the curious inquirer/brothers on scriptural subjects, unlike the OSAS crew, but a keen and balanced teacher nevertheless imperfect in knowledge as the rest of us, made a good point of this, as below:

“1. God used seven days to complete the reconstruction of the universe for the creation of man, not because He needed the time (the first perfect creation He made before creating the angels was made in an instant, in which He created space, time, matter, and energy all at once in the form of the vast perfect universe of that epoch), but because He was leaving a testimony to the length of man's history. Each day of creation represents a full millennium of human history. Human history is meant to last seven thousand years in all.”

If we take this point for granted, its easier to understand that the man in Gen1:26, refers to Christ(male) and His bride(female), who manifest at the end of God's 6th day(man's 6000 yrs, which we are fast approaching). In other words, it has been given by God to Adam(who has God's form/likeness but Adam's own creaturely image), along with his sons, to lose his own Adamic image(mark/identity/person) and bear God's divine image, after 6000 years of his existence. So the real story of Adam begins in Gen 2:4

To further corroborate this, consider my

TEASER: Why in Gen 1 does Man,v26 show up after plants and trees, v12, but in Gen 2:5,9, it clearly shows the Adam, the ground tiller, had to come before the plants in v9.

Answer: in my explanation above.

So OP, I agree with ihedinobi's answer in

“Re: Q. Who was God referring to as “our” when He alone was and is the only God??”

but differ in

“1. Re: Q 2. If God created man in His own image, does it mean man was once like God or should I say man was God on earth?

2. Re: Q. Is the creation of Adam and Eve same as the creation of man in genesis chapter 1 vs 27 to 29?

3. Re: ...if Adam and Eve was so easy to manipulate and made to eat from the evil tree by a mere serpent right inside the Garden of Eden, this means God’s creation(man) was ALREADY vulnerable(FLAW) even before eating the forbidden fruit.”

...for reasons corresponding to my explanation above. This explanation, I believe, should also help with all your other questions, stupidity.

Once again sir, I offer that while knowledge is all-important, we should never be discouraged by dissatisfying answers in the present(as there will be countless such cases, even from thorough bible study), but focus on investing in developing our relationship with God, the Holy Spirit(which is more important in producing outward righteousness and eternal rewards) and which has the added advantage of bringing us all the knowledge we seek, one after the other, in due time.

Response #3:

No response

Question #4:

I don't know how God would do it, but the old testament scriptures in Joel and Jeremiah and Malachi seem to indicate that everyone would be taught of God in the last days and they shall all know me from the smallest to the greatest.

jesus seem to agree with this perspective in John 6v44 that everyone who learns from the father and seeks to do his will, would know if his teachings are true or not.

Also jesus says elsewhere to his disciples that they that are not against us are on our side. This is remarkable, because he was referring to people who were only experimenting with his name to cast out demons, they may not have believed every single doctrine about jesus. Yet jesus said they are on his side because they were not against his ministry and were open minded enough to even try some things out

I myself I'm confused and cannot give a direct answer to your question, I'm just stating scriptures that are usually ignored by all forms of mainstream christianity, but puzzling verses nonetheless. What are your interpretation of these verses?

Response #4:

Hello.

Feel free to disregard my response. I am only making it because you raised a common difficulty in the Bible, so I wish to provide a witness for anyone who cares to know the Truth on the matter. As I told you in another conversation, I'm not much for debates these days. I am happy to defend and explain anything I say within reason, but I don't debate for the sake of debating, so if you disagree with my answer, that is fine by me, and I will not pursue the matter further with you.

This is what I believe that you refer to:

*13 All your children will be taught by the Lord,
and great will be their peace.*

Isaiah 54:13 NIV2011

"The time is coming," declares the LORD, "when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah.

It will not be like the covenant I made with their forefathers when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they broke my covenant, though I was a husband to them," declares the LORD.

"This is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after that time," declares the LORD. "I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.

No longer will a man teach his neighbor, or a man his brother, saying, 'Know the LORD,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest," declares the LORD. "For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more."

Jeremiah 31:31-34 NIV1984

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and all nations will stream to it.

Many peoples will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Isaiah 2:2-3 NIV1984

In the last days the mountain of the LORD's temple will be established as chief among the mountains; it will be raised above the hills, and peoples will stream to it.

Many nations will come and say, "Come, let us go up to the mountain of the LORD, to the house of the God of Jacob. He will teach us his ways, so that we may walk in his paths." The law will go out from Zion, the word of the LORD from Jerusalem.

Micah 4:1-2 NIV1984

In Joel, you may be referring to 2:28-29, but it doesn't quite say the same things as the above. I'm not sure what part of Malachi you meant.

It is true that the New Testament refers to the times after the Cross as the last days too, so it can be understood why many who interpret the above passages to mean that we don't need pastor-

teachers make such an interpretation. But they dispense with what else is said in the context of these passages and with what the rest of the Bible teaches in their interpretation, so they are quite wrong.

Ephesians 4:11-16 are rather unequivocal about how the Church works after the Cross. You find the same teaching in 1 Corinthians 12 too. Because of His Magnificent Victory through the Cross, our Lord gave the Church many spiritual gifts, notable among which are the apostle, the prophet, the pastor-teacher, and the evangelist, in that order (cf. 1 Corinthians 12:28), for the growth or building up of the Church. The apostles and the prophets completed the Revelation of Jesus Christ through their writings that became the New Testament. They are the complements of the prophets of old who also provided part of that Revelation through their own inspired writings. The pastor-teacher is given to the Church to interpret those writings so that those who believe can grow in their faith and become ever more confident in the Lord. The evangelist is given to teach the basic truth of the Gospel to unbelievers and thus bring those who are willing into the Lord's fold. In this way, the Church grows in number and each individual believer who obeys the Lord in this grows to spiritual maturity.

In other words, although we are truly in the last days, there is a bit of a difference between these last days and the last days that Isaiah, Jeremiah, and Micah were talking about, since obviously rather than having pastor-teachers teach anybody anything in those other last days, we see the Lord Himself doing the teaching.

To explain, there are seven millennial days of human history symbolized by and corresponding to the seven actual days of re-creation in Genesis 1. Please understand that those seven days of re-creation did, in fact, happen. That is actually how we can be sure that they were a teaching tool the Lord used to demonstrate His Plan for human history to us. So, the teaching that they are a symbol of the seven thousand years of human history does not at all mean that the Lord did not reconstruct the Universe in seven actual days. He most certainly did.

The Cross occurred at the end of the fourth millennial day and opened the Age of the Church, that is, the time of the rapid expansion of the Church among the Gentiles. Until then, the majority of believers had been Jewish, although there have always been Gentile believers including those from the first two millennia of human history, that is, the Gentile Age, before Israel was created as a nation. With the Cross, however, things sped up significantly and a flood of Gentiles filled the Church. That is why the two thousand years that followed the Cross is called **the Church Age**. These two millennia of the Church Age are part of the last three millennial days of human history, so they are called the last days too. But they are also called the last days because they will terminate with the Return of the King, the Lord God Himself, the Lord Jesus Christ, Who will return to take His Rightful Place as King over the whole Earth. In other words, the Church Age is the last two days of Satan's rule over the Earth.

But after this Church Age, there will be **the Millennium**. That is the seventh millennial day of human history. It follows the Resurrection of the Church and the Return of the Head of the Church to complete the Church. When these things happen, Satan's kingdom will be destroyed at Armageddon, and the Reign of the Kingdom of Heaven over the Earth will commence. The

Lord and the Resurrected Church will at that time rule over the whole world. It is during this time that the Lord Himself will be teaching the Truth directly to the unresurrected human beings that will live on earth. They will not have the spiritual gifts that the Church was given. They will have the Lord Himself to teach them the Truth.

It is not an error that the prophets lumped the Millennium together with the Church Age. For one thing, the division of the Lord's Advent into two: first as a suffering Servant and later as a conquering King was not clearly shown to them by the Holy Spirit (cf. Luke 10:23-24; 1 Peter 1:10-12). So, even the Church Age and the Millennium are not clearly separated in the Old Testament, at least not without the benefit of the New Testament to show us that there were going to be two Advents of the Lord. For another, the Cross is truly how both the Church (including all believers from Adam and Eve to the last person to believe in Jesus Christ during the Tribulation) and Millennial Believers (also called the Friends of the Bride - and the Bride is the Church) are saved. That is, although the Church is different from Millennial Believers in that she comprises all those who believe before the Second Advent, she is of the same family as Millennial Believers still, so the last three millennial days run together in that way. The main difference is that Millennial Believers will enjoy a world free of Satan's influence and one that is perfectly suited to mortal life, while the Church has to deal with Satan's increasing opposition right up to the moment that her Bridegroom returns to resurrect her and bring her into His Eternal Victory over all of Satan's power in an actualized way.

This difference is why although some of these prophecies are fulfilled to a limited extent with the Ascension and Session of our Lord (for example, the pouring out of the Spirit in Joel 2 and the supernatural things that resulted from that), they will be fully brought to fruition with the establishment of the Kingdom of Heaven on Earth at the Return of the Lord Jesus.

So, there is really no confusion. For now and until the Lord returns, those who believe can only learn the Truth by listening to pastor-teachers who have been properly trained in the Truth and who have also prepared themselves through studies in the original languages (ancient Greek, ancient Hebrew, and Aramaic), textual criticism, ancient history, and church history. With these tools, they can help other believers to become able to properly understand what the Bible teaches as a unified system of Truth and arm them against the lies that Satan uses to stunt the growth of believers and stultify their spiritual production for the Lord as well as even cause some to apostatize. When the Lord returns, believers of **the Millennial Age** will have Him to teach them directly what the Truth is, and without the interference of Satan's activities. This is a product of the Cross too, just as the Church herself is.

Finally, regarding the text that you put in bold, I see nothing in the Bible that suggests that the person whom the Lord told the disciples not to rebuke was only experimenting with His Name. In fact, all that we read is that the disciples reported that they saw a man exorcising evil spirits in the Lord's Name and they told him to stop. We see nothing suggestive of experimenting there. We further read that the Lord tells the disciples that they are not to oppose anyone who is doing anything in His Name. The expression "in His Name" is not often understood today in the same way that it was understood in the days of the New Testament. What it meant to them then and what it means in the Bible is "in [accordance with] His Person." That is, if something is done in

anybody's name, it is understood to be done with their approval and by their authority. In other words, the thing is associated with the Person himself or herself. So, how anyone gives a cup of cold water to a believer in the Lord's Name is by giving that believer a cup of cold water because that person belongs to the Lord, that is, the gift is given in recognition of the Lord Who owns that believer. So, it does not mean that whenever someone slaps the label "Jesus" or "Jesus Christ" on anything, it is automatically approved by the Lord, no. What it means is that if anything is done in keeping with Who the Lord is and His Sacrifice for us, then that thing has His Approval. If an evil thing is done with the Lord's Name attached to it, it will not have His Approval. It will have His Wrath instead:

"Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves.

By their fruit you will recognize them. Do people pick grapes from thornbushes, or figs from thistles?

Likewise every good tree bears good fruit, but a bad tree bears bad fruit.

A good tree cannot bear bad fruit, and a bad tree cannot bear good fruit.

Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.

Thus, by their fruit you will recognize them.

"Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven.

Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?'

Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'

Matthew 7:15-23 NIV1984

Question #5:

ok I agree with much of what you said and I am not here to argue too, just to discuss.

I am not going to speak much about your detailed descriptive theology around those verses and I must commend you on your research on the Joel and Jeremiah verses.

However concerning the verse where Jesus said whosoever is not against us is for us, it wasn't my intention to say that anybody who doesn't obey the teachings of Christ but call him Lord, has become a disciple, no far from it.

My point however was that from the context of that verse, the disciples were trying to exclude those guys simply because they were not part of the team, certainly those guys didn't believe Jesus enough to even be part of the seventy disciples at least. But Jesus was inclusive here.

Read the gospels, Jesus rarely taught people to believe in his so called sacrifice **as a sacrifice of substitution appeasing God's wrath as many Christians understand it today**, but his major message was the coming of the kingdom of God, which was both political and spiritual and is here with us, not marked by human observation nor is it a physical place but in our midst.

An understanding of the cross is of course vital for salvation but substitutionary atonement is what I have doubt about.

But I digress, perhaps that's a topic for another day.

Anyway thanks for the response and clarification.

Response #5:

You may call it "discussion" and another would call it some other name, but if it is no more than a struggle to bend other people to your own way of thinking, then it is what it is, not whatever you wish to call it.

This is not the product of mere "research," I learned from and am still guided by a pastor-teacher as I train to become a fully prepared pastor-teacher myself. This is what I learned from him and what I confirmed is true by reading the Bible.

As for what your intention is, you may not be fully aware of it, but you have just contradicted yourself. Clearly, if the man (there was only one man reported by the disciples to be carrying out exorcisms in Mark 9 and Luke 9) did not believe in Jesus enough to follow Him, then your teaching here is that no one should be excluded from being recognized as a disciple if they are "calling Jesus Lord." It's hard to see what you are saying any other way.

The Bible only actually says that this man was said by the disciples to be casting out evil spirits in the Lord's Name. We can certainly infer that he was unknown to the disciples, but there is no reason at all to infer that he did not believe fully in the Lord Jesus. Many people were secret disciples of the Lord, including Nicodemus who was part of the Sanhedrin. Mary, Martha, and Lazarus were also believers in the Lord Jesus, but of them only Mary is known to go around with Him sometimes. The Lord visited them at their home in Bethany for the most part. There was also Zacchaeus whom we only see being visited at his home by the Lord, but we do not see him going everywhere with the Lord. There were also the two men whom the Lord exorcised of evil spirits in the Gadarenes who begged Him to let them follow Him, but whom He sent back to evangelize their hometown. In other words, there is plenty reason to believe that this man whom John was speaking of was also a believer, but he wasn't one of the Twelve who went everywhere with the Lord.

We also know that only anyone who truly believed and to whom the Lord gave that special ability at that time could ever get evil spirits to leave a human body. Not even the Twelve could exorcise demons without the Lord's special provision of power (Mark 9:14-18,28-29). So, if the man was really doing what John reported, then he was most certainly a believer working under the Lord's Authority.

The lesson in that passage was that we were not to exclude others simply because we don't know them. If anyone is doing what the Lord calls us to do, they are brothers and sisters with us. The Lord calls us to believe in Him and grow in the Truth (that is, to learn everything that He teaches through the Bible and believe it) and help others to do the same (John 6:29; 15:1-8). If

anyone is doing that, the fact that they are not part of our normal physical gathering does not mean that they are not believers too like us. So, for example, the fact that some other believer that I meet on here who may be very zealous about teaching the Bible is not a student of the Ichthys Ministry as I am ought not to mean for me that he is not a believer or a true servant of Christ. It would be wrong for me to reject such a person just because I don't know them. If what they teach is in agreement with the Bible, then I should extend a hand of fellowship to them as well. That is what our Lord was teaching here. He was not saying that if someone is not a believer, but if they can do some miraculous stuff, we are in any way obliged to consider them to be brethren too.

As for your claims about what the Lord Jesus taught, I see no reason that anyone should say what you said. It's quite preposterous. No one could possibly read Matthew to John and make such a statement, unless they just don't want to believe what they read.

*20 But when he had considered this, behold, an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife; for the Child who has been conceived in her is of the Holy Spirit. 21 She will bear a Son; and you shall call His name Jesus, **for He will save His people from their sins.**"*

Matthew 1:20-21 NASB

*14 Now after John had been taken into custody, Jesus came into Galilee, preaching the gospel of God, 15 and saying, "The time is fulfilled, and the kingdom of God is at hand; **repent and believe in the gospel.**"*

Mark 1:14-15 NASB

*20 And He said to them, "But who do you say that I am?" And Peter answered and said, "The Christ of God." 21 But He warned them and instructed them not to tell this to anyone, 22 saying, "**The Son of Man must suffer many things and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed and be raised up on the third day.**" 23 And He was saying to them all, "**If anyone wishes to come after Me, he must deny himself, and take up his cross daily and follow Me.** 24 For whoever wishes to save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for My sake, he is the one who will save it. 25 For what is a man profited if he gains the whole world, and loses or forfeits himself?*

Luke 9:20-25 NASB

*14 **As Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, even so must the Son of Man be lifted up; 15 so that whoever believes will in Him have eternal life.** 16 "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish, but have eternal life. 17 For God did not send the Son into the world to judge the world, but that the world might be saved through Him. 18 He who believes in Him is not judged; he who does not believe has been judged already, because he has not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God.*

John 3:14-18 NASB

All of the Gospels run to the Cross. In fact, all of the Bible runs to the Cross and then the epistles and Revelation and all the prophecies of the Old Testament open out from it. The Cross is the foundation of all Creation. You say that an understanding of it is vital to salvation but you doubt "substitutionary atonement," but that is a contradiction. You have said elsewhere that the Cross was something that the Lord Jesus accepted to protect His disciples from the Romans, but I cannot for the life of me see how that computes from anything anyone can actually read in the Bible.

In the Old Testament, beginning from Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden, the Lord God Himself has always taught that a payment of blood, that is, life, must be made in order for the sins of the human race to be expunged. The very first mention of this is in Genesis 3:15. Following upon this was the bloody sacrifice that the Lord carried out to give Adam and Eve coats of skin to wear as they left the Garden. The couple's acceptance of those coats was their acceptance of the Sacrifice of a Substitute in their behalf for their sin. That is, the Lord had commanded death if they ever sinned against Him. When they did, in order to spare their lives, He killed something else in their behalf. That something else was not really the animal from which He obtained the coats of skin for them. The animal was only a symbol. It was the Seed of the Woman Who would come much later in history that the animal represented. Theologically, that act of the Lord's in the Garden is called the *protoevangelium* or *first gospel*.

Every animal sacrifice after that that followed the Lord's Teaching to the couple in Eden was a deliberate identification of the offerer with the Sacrifice of the Substitute Whom the Lord would send later in history. So, Abel's sacrifice, for example, was his deliberate declaration of his faith in the Coming Savior. Cain's, of course, was not, since Cain offered vegetables, not blood. This went on until the Lord gave the Law through Israel in order to further explain to anyone interested just how necessary the Sacrifice of the Messiah would be. In fact, the whole relationship of Man to God is described in the Law to be built around the Sacrifice of the Bronze Altar, which was a type of the Cross of Jesus Christ.

So, when you say that the Lord Jesus taught about the Kingdom of God and not primarily about His Sacrifice, you demonstrate a desperate ignorance of the Bible. The Kingdom of God is only accessible through Faith in Jesus Christ and acceptance of His Sacrifice in our behalf. Man lost the Kingdom that God gave to him in Genesis 1:28 by his rebellion. He has been an outcast from God's Kingdom since then, an active rebel condemned to die. The only way back into that Kingdom is through the Cross of Jesus Christ. Rejection of that Sacrifice only confirms the one who rejects it in their condemnation. That is what the whole Bible teaches.

The Kingdom of God is not political at all. In fact, it is entirely spiritual. Also, it is not yet here in full. It is only here in the form of a seed through all those who believe in the Truth. That was what the Lord Jesus meant in Luke 17:21. He said, "the Kingdom of God is among you (or in your midst)." All those who believe in Jesus Christ are subjects of that Kingdom. Their presence here on Earth is like an invading force on Earth. Satan knows that, that is why he persecutes believers and tries to kill them. In fact, if not for very important checks that the Lord has placed upon Satan's kingdom here, all believers would already be dead (and then all humans would be too to make sure that no human being would ever believe).

The Kingdom will gain ascendancy at the Second Advent when the Lord returns to destroy Satan's kingdom. Then it will physically rule over the Earth until the end of the 7000 years of human history, at which time a final rebellion against its authority will be allowed. After that rebellion has been crushed, and the universe has been destroyed, and the Last Judgment has been carried out, the Kingdom of God will finally come back in full to the New Earth that the Lord Jesus will create. The Trinity will then take back unrivaled rule over all Creation again at that time.

All of this is only possible because of the Cross that reconciles believing humanity to the King that humanity rebelled (and persists in rebellion) against. So, if the Lord Jesus proclaimed the Kingdom of God and taught it even exclusively, He was still teaching about the Cross. As you will see from the Mark reference that I offered above, His teaching was that because the Kingdom was so near to its return, sinners needed to repent and believe the Gospel (and what is the Gospel, if not that God had given a Savior to die in the place of the rebels?). Clearly, if they did not, the return of the Kingdom was going to be a most regrettable experience for them. At the Second Advent, everyone who will have taken the mark of the Antichrist to seal their allegiance to him will be burned to a crisp with fire and they will still be thrown into Torments to await the Final Judgment. After that Judgment, they will be thrown into the Lake of Fire for all eternity. This is what the Return of the Kingdom promises all rebels. Thus the "substitutionary atonement" that you "have doubt about" is everything to those who believe. It is the only escape anyone has from the Anger of the King Who is returning.

As I said before, my answers are given only because I consider them necessary for teachings in the Bible that people sometimes struggle with. You are not obliged to believe me, if you don't want to. My effort is not to dictate to you what you will believe. I will only tell the Truth, and those who have ears will hear it.

xxx

Question #6:

ok sir, let's not push it further so you wouldn't think I am trying to bend you to my will.

For the records, I believe the cross is a major part of the gospel of the kingdom of God, I was only speaking against substitutionary atonement(preached mainly by Thomas Aquinas) and common in evangelical understanding of the cross today.

Response #6:

I have never in my life been an easy person for others to teach, not unless I trust the teacher. So, I have no problems with challenges and arguments when people don't want to take my word for the things I say. I don't demand that you simply believe me yourself. My problem with you is that you couch your interactions in language that is suggestive of strife. You do say that you are willing to learn, but then you end up producing challenges that completely ignore everything that you are told. That is something I have no time for. If you actually have objections to things I say - and that means that you actually read them and understand them - I would be very happy to hear them and attempt to solve them for you. But if you wish to teach me what to believe, that would be wasting each other's time, because I spent much of my life (all but the last couple of years) looking for the Truth, breaking things, throwing things away, before I found it. Now that I

have, I will never give it up. So, if you wish to teach me something, I would encourage you not to waste your time. If you wish to query what I have learned and am still learning on the other hand, I would be happy to answer your questions.

As for what you say you believe, I'm afraid I don't believe you now any more than I did before. I don't mean that it is not true, I mean only that I cannot see how it can be. The Cross, after all, is the Gospel. If you believe even that it is a major part of the Gospel, then you would have no trouble at all with substitutionary atonement.

As for your claims about Thomas Aquinas, I know a little bit about him, but I don't quote him in any of my arguments. I have no difficulty at all discussing the whole Bible without reference to him at all and I will still demonstrate repeatedly that every part of the Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus died on the Cross for all of our sin so that we can be reconciled to God and preserved in His Kingdom eternally when He returns to His Creation to rule over it.

In other words, as long as you are persuaded that the Lord Jesus, God Who became Man to die for us, did not actually die on the Cross to save us from our sins, not only have we nothing at all to talk about, we also have absolutely no kinship at all. You see, every true Christian is defined by this belief. That is what a Christian is.

Question #7:

You said.....My problem with you is that you couch your interactions in language that is suggestive of strife. You do say that you are willing to learn, but then you end up producing challenges that completely ignore everything that you are told. That is something I have no time for. If you actually have objections to things I say - and that means that you actually read them and understand them - I would be very happy to hear them and attempt to solve them for you.

lol, it is not my intention to ignore challenges, I have queries for the things you say, but you always interpret it as me trying to bend you to my will. Also when I don't ask questions and I present my point of view, I am presenting them so they can be challenged not because I think I have found the whole truth and you must bend. But like I said if you don't want to challenge your beliefs anymore, then that is fine.

Response #7:

I didn't mean at all that you ignore challenges. I said that you ignore what you are told in answer to your challenges. I don't like to waste my time trying to make anyone believe anything. That is not only an impossible task, but it is also not our job description as pastor-teachers. My job is merely to teach the Bible. If anyone is willing to believe what they hear, then they will believe it. If they are not, then they will not.

There is a difference, although it is not often easy for some people to appreciate, between offering a reasonable challenge and being argumentative and heretical. No one knows the Truth until they are told. So, many times when people come up to a pastor-teacher, they already have

baggage. If such a person is actually willing to learn the Truth, then they are going to present their baggage with a readiness to have it measured against the Bible. I have been on Nairaland long enough to know that the vast majority of people who show up here have absolutely no interest in learning anything at all. They just enjoy arguing, so they continue to argue even well after there is nothing new to discover in the opposing position. It is also the same everywhere else. This is how many heretics and blasphemers are produced. They are people always looking for something to oppose and prove to themselves and others that they are something special.

So, if you actually just want to examine your own position and your own beliefs (and I am like that as a person too), then you will have to prove it by actually listening to the answers that are given to your arguments. If you do not demonstrate that willingness, then it only means that you have no wish to learn at all and only revel in strife.

As for challenging my beliefs, not only did I say that I have no problems with that, but that was partly why I came back to Nairaland after the Lord took me to a pastor-teacher to learn the Truth. Here I have been challenged and tested as to the integrity of what I have come to believe and I have rejoiced in proving it true against all the opposition that has been given to it. I have grown in understanding that position from engaging other people here. So, I have no problems with being challenged. I am confident in what I have learned, so I am happy to defend it. But my job is not to spend my whole life trying to satisfy others with my convictions. If anyone is unwilling to believe the Truth, then it makes no difference what I say to them. For such people, I have found myself repeating myself *ad infinitum* because they keep recycling challenges that have been answered in every conceivable way. That is a waste of time.

Question #8:

You said....But if you wish to teach me what to believe, that would be wasting each other's time, because I spent much of my life (all but the last couple of years) looking for the Truth, breaking things, throwing things away, before I found it. Now that I have, I will never give it up. So, if you wish to teach me something, I would encourage you not to waste your time. If you wish to query what I have learned and am still learning on the other hand, I would be happy to answer your questions.

Now this is interesting, so you found the truth and you are settled, then that is great. Maybe all I have to do when discussing these things with you, is just ask questions and not present my side of things. I also think I have found truth, but I am willing to challenge it everytime in order to possibly refine it and learn more truth.

Response #8:

The Bible is an incredibly intricate universe of Truth. I have continued to learn things in it through defending what I teach here and discussing with my comrades at Ichthys, and I will continue to learn things that will continue to surprise me. But what I have been learning does not violate the basic principles of biblical truth that I have been taught. Rather, they have been "fleshing out" the Truth-structure in my heart, strengthening it and making it more complex.

That is how these things work. For that reason, when someone is persuaded that they have found the Truth, just like I have, and what they have found is fundamentally different than what I have, I know that they and I are only going to quarrel. There is no point in engaging such people.

If, on the other hand, one is still examining what they believe to be sure that it is true, then there is reason to have a conversation with such a person, because perhaps I could help them build that Truth-structure that is stable and reliable, so that they can go on to learn the deeper things that the Bible has to teach. In your words immediately above, what I see is that you have a different structure in your heart than I do, and you are both willing to examine it and not. That is, when you say that you are willing to challenge it every time, what I hear is that you are still testing it to know if it is really the Truth. But when you go on to say that you are looking to refine it and learn more truth, what I hear is that you are sure that it is true and there is no further testing necessary. These two things add up to the same thing that I have consistently found in heretics and blasphemers here and elsewhere: they make such people very argumentative and unyielding in discussion. They try to find fault with every position that opposes them in order to prove to themselves that they are right, and they also try to capture other people through their unrelenting arguments, so that with the increase in the number of people who agree with them, they also feel like they are really right. There is no possibility of getting through to such people. Once an argument with them begins, it never ends, not until they are persuaded that they won.

That is why I find it hard to believe your claims about yourself.

Question #9:

You said....As for what you say you believe, I'm afraid I don't believe you now any more than I did before. I don't mean that it is not true, I mean only that I cannot see how it can be. The Cross, after all, is the Gospel. If you believe even that it is a major part of the Gospel, then you would have no trouble at all with substitutionary atonement.

Of course the cross is the gospel. Substitutionary atonement(a view that God was looking for a blood sacrifice to forgive our sins, and so he put jesus in our place and if we just believe in that we become righteous).This is an interpretation of the cross by church fathers like Thomas Aquinas. I have problems believing in this particular interpretation as the major purpose of the cross, if you want to know why I have problems with this view I am willing to tell you. Also if you want to know my views from scripture and my interpretation, I am willing to put it out to be challenged, but if you are satisfied with this belief in substitutionary atonement and would not entertain other views, then of course there is no problem, I don't think it affects your salvation in the end.

Response #9:

Of course I neither believe your claim that substitutionary atonement is an interpretation of the church fathers' nor agree with you that it is false. I already demonstrated why I don't. Of course I will not entertain other views as if they had any sort of legitimacy, because it seems too obvious

to me from the Scriptures that they are completely false. That does not mean that I am disinclined to discussing them with you if you are willing to have them properly examined. That is why I have said to you that there is no possibility of altering my position, as you require that there must be in order to discuss with you (refer to *"I am willing to put it out to be challenged, but if you are satisfied with this belief in substitutionary atonement and would not entertain other views, then of course there is no problem"* in your statement). I will never believe that the Cross was not entirely and wholly the substitution of Jesus Christ for us. Nor is it necessary for me to believe that it was not in order for me to examine any other position in a fair-minded fashion. I arrived at the belief I have by searching too, so I have seen alternate views and I have seen the Bible. That I have an unshakable conviction here does not at all mean that I will not be fair in my judgment.

To be clear, the umpire need not be my own convictions. In fact, it should not be my own convictions. Every view and every belief ought to be tested against what the Bible says. I have no problem having mine tested that way by you, if you wish to do so. And if you are willing to have yours tested that way, that would be splendid. In the end, if a point of view or a belief contradicts the whole sense of the Bible, that is, the unified testimony of the Bible in some way, something is quite wrong with it.

As for what you believe, it seems to me that you are wholly and entirely in error about all things. I can't see what you are right about in everything that you've said thus far, including this idea that it does not matter to your salvation whether you believe that the Lord Jesus died for our sins on the Cross or not.

Again, I don't have a problem answering any questions or challenges to what I believe. I will only not do it when the challenges and questions become frivolous and meaningless.

Question #10:

You said....As for your claims about Thomas Aquinas, I know a little bit about him, but I don't quote him in any of my arguments. I have no difficulty at all discussing the whole Bible without reference to him at all and I will still demonstrate repeatedly that every part of the Bible teaches that the Lord Jesus died on the Cross for all of our sin so that we can be reconciled to God and preserved in His Kingdom eternally when He returns to His Creation to rule over it.

Of course I believe that about the cross and I know you can demonstrate that, the only problem discussing with you is that when I challenge some views(like say substitutionary atonement), you interpret it as me trying to bend you to my will. The bible does not have one solidified interpretation, of course it is not a single book, it is a library of books and authors. We must be willing to listen to and learn from one another, not necessarily to agree but to be well grounded, perhaps considering things we may not have considered before. Also you misunderstand the argument, the arguement is not whether or not jesus died on the cross to reconcile us to God, the arguement is against him being a substitute as a blood sacrifice, such that believing in him as a substitute on the cross for our

punishment automatically makes us righteous or saved, that is where I have problems.

Response #10:

It is always a problem when someone says something like *"the bible does not have one solidified interpretation."* It is usually the explanation for all the problems that are evident in a theological position. Generally, the idea is that the Truth cannot be one thing, rather, it can be different things depending on the person speaking. That is precisely the spirit of antichrist (1 John 2:18-28; 4:1-6). The Truth is only One. There are no multiple Truths. If you do not believe the Truth that is what God actually says, then, of course, you are in rebellion against Him. That is precisely the reason that there is a spiritual division in the human race:

34 "Do not think that I came to bring peace on the earth; I did not come to bring peace, but a sword. 35 For I came to set a man against his father, and a daughter against her mother, and a daughter-in-law against her mother-in-law; 36 and A man's enemies will be the members of his household.

37 "He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me; and he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me. 38 And he who does not take his cross and follow after Me is not worthy of Me. 39 He who has found his life will lose it, and he who has lost his life for My sake will find it.

Matthew 10:34-39 NASB

51 Do you suppose that I came to grant peace on earth? I tell you, no, but rather division; 52 for from now on five members in one household will be divided, three against two and two against three. 53 They will be divided, father against son and son against father, mother against daughter and daughter against mother, mother-in-law against daughter-in-law and daughter-in-law against mother-in-law."

Luke 12:51-53 NASB

The unity of believers is in the Truth, and there is only One Truth, only one interpretation of the Bible that is correct. That is the amazing thing about the Book: there are 66 of them with so many authors, and yet they all agree. That is what the Inspiration of God Himself does:

20 But know this first of all, that no prophecy of Scripture is a matter of one's own interpretation, 21 for no prophecy was ever made by an act of human will, but men moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God.

2 Peter 1:20-21 NASB

So, again, I can neither believe you nor agree with you in this.

As for your argument, I don't really see how it works. If the Lord Jesus died for us, how can that not be understood as the fact that He died in our place? If your incredulity is how just believing that He died for us makes us righteous, that's another thing altogether. I can explain that, even if you may not believe my explanation. To begin, this is a very large question, since it actually is the story of the whole Bible. In short, when Satan rebelled against God, he campaigned among

the angels to get them to join him. The lie that he told them to get those who joined him to do so was that God's Mercy and Justice oppose each other, so that God cannot forgive sin or punish the sinner. So, what the Lord did through Jesus Christ is to demonstrate that He will both punish sin and forgive the sinner. If we believe that, we are essentially saying that God is true and Satan is not. That is righteousness because we have accepted the true testimony about God, rather than joining Satan in his assassination of God's Character. God's love for us is such that He gave the Only Thing of its Kind that He had in order to save us: the Lord Jesus Christ, God and Man, to die in our just place. If the Lord Jesus had not paid with His Life for our sin, then we would have certainly gone to the Second Death with no hope. That is the Cross. That is why our faith is righteousness in the eyes of God.

Question #11:

You said.....In other words, as long as you are persuaded that the Lord Jesus, God Who became Man to die for us, did not actually die on the Cross to save us from our sins, not only have we nothing at all to talk about, we also have absolutely no kinship at all. You see, every true Christian is defined by this belief. That is what a Christian is.

Can you show me where I said Jesus did not die to save us from our sins. You don't know my view on the cross and you are not interested because you think I am trying to convince you and make you reject your views, so of course you would say this.

I agree every true Christian is defined by belief on the cross and the principles of the kingdom of God on earth but not substitutionary atonement.

Response #11:

I think that my comments above have answered this. If the Lord Jesus did not die as our substitute in order to atone for us, then you are saying that He did not die to save us from our sins. That is what I see is your view on the Cross. I have no idea how you can both say this and yet say that I don't know your views on the Cross. What else could your views be if they are not this thing that you have actually said?

As for what you claim to agree with, I don't believe that we are saying the same thing at all. Christians are those who believe that the Lord Jesus died on the Cross as an atonement for their sins so that they can be reconciled to God. That is what makes anyone a Christian.

Question #12:

lhedinobi3 when I say I want to refine the truth I think I have found, it doesn't mean that if I find out that it can't be refined and it is false, I wouldn't drop it, I think you have misunderstood me. It is not different from what you said when you said you found the truth and you no longer want to add or remove from it, infact you are more convinced of your truth than I am, and as a pastor-teacher it seems you can only preach to so called heretics not try to understand what they are saying, yet this is what you are accusing me of, interesting.

The point is you are the one using the word heretic and blasphemer for people, I never used it for you or anyone. So you are the one arrogant and fixed about your views and I respect your decision to have it your way.

As for the cross, you don't understand my position on the cross and how I understand your substitutionary atonement, and you seem not to be willing to listen probably because you are a pastor-teacher, and since I am not, then I alone should be willing to learn from you and not you from me.

As for the bible, again I fear to state my view on the bible lest you call me a heretic trying to convince you, even though I do not accuse you of such when you describe your views in lengthy paragraphs.

Anyway Merry Christmas to you.

Response #12:

I think that you just made my point. In so far as you are like me, there is little chance of your changing in the things that you believe. However, this conversation has gone on because you have continued to answer me in a way that suggests some possibility of a real exchange rather than yet another shouting match on Nairaland. What I have been doing is alerting you to what my interest in a conversation like this is. As I said, I don't enter them because I have any doubts about what I believe or because I want to discover the errors in my belief system. I have the Bible and my pastor-teacher for that. So, if you want to discuss things with the Bible as an umpire, that's fine by me. If you don't, then there is no possibility of any discussion.

Next, I have not yet called you a heretic or blasphemer. I have warned you instead that you are behaving like them. Believe me, if I was convinced that you were either, that is what I would actually call you. I give everyone the benefit of the doubt before labeling them here.

Next, if you consider it arrogant that I am refusing to yield my position, that is more telling about you than about me. As I said, I offered an answer to a difficulty that you raised. I often leave things at that. I only go on to discuss my answer further if there seems to be a reasonable occasion for me to do so. That is what I do on Nairaland. If anyone knows the Truth, then they ought to hold on to it and not play fast and loose with it.

As for your position on the Cross, I think that that is already evident. But if you don't think that your comments so far are not representative of your position on it, then you should explain further. You should also note that, as I said before, I have seen other things that you have said about the Cross in other discussions than this one.

I have also seen what you think of the Bible in a comment that you made today. So, I already have a thought on you, but I am not yet making a judgment call, because I don't know yet whether you are here to sell a dangerous lie or if you are here to examine things that you believe.

Finally, have a merry Christmas too.

Question #13:

you said...<I think that you just made my point. In so far as you are like me, there is little chance of your changing in the things that you believe. However, this conversation has gone on because you have continued to answer me in a way that suggests some possibility of a real exchange rather than yet another shouting match on Nairaland. What I have been doing is alerting you to what my interest in a conversation like this is. As I said, I don't enter them because I have any doubts about what I believe or because I want to discover the errors in my belief system. I have the Bible and my pastor-teacher for that. So, if you want to discuss things with the Bible as an umpire, that's fine by me. If you don't, then there is no possibility of any discussion.>

ok then so we are not here to change each other's views only explain our side of things. However if you say something that is reasonable and also convincing to me, I would learn from you, I am not limited to just my bible and pastor-teachers. I can learn new things from anyone after weighing their argument on a scale usually for logic, consistency, and scripture in that order.

you said...<Next, I have not yet called you a heretic or blasphemer. I have warned you instead that you are behaving like them. Believe me, if I was convinced that you were either, that is what I would actually call you. I give everyone the benefit of the doubt before labeling them here.>

Fair enough, but heretic is in the eye of the beholder, your heretic is another man's saint.

you said...<Next, if you consider it arrogant that I am refusing to yield my position, that is more telling about you than about me. As I said, I offered an answer to a difficulty that you raised. I often leave things at that. I only go on to discuss my answer further if there seems to be a reasonable occasion for me to do so. That is what I do on Nairaland. If anyone knows the Truth, then they ought to hold on to it and not play fast and loose with it.>

ok then, it's great that you know the truth already, all I am doing is examining this truth, not necessarily for you but for the audience and myself.

You said < As for your position on the Cross, I think that that is already evident. But if you don't think that your comments so far are not representative of your position on it, then you should explain further. You should also note that, as I said before, I have seen other things that you have said about the Cross in other discussions than this one>.

ok my position on the cross is that jesus died for two things as explained by himself in the gospels:

1) Mark 10v45, the son of man did not come to be served but to serve and to give his life as a ransom for many.

2) And he took the cup and gave thanks and said drink, this is my blood of the new covenant for the forgiveness of sins.

1) Jesus ransom was for the new Israel, the remnant of his nation Israel that would listen to his teachings, live by it and survive. Caiphas stated in the gospel of John, that it is better for one man to die for the nation than for the entire nation to be destroyed, this high priest unknowingly was making a true prophecy here.

The fear was that the Romans would come to destroy the Jewish nation after the triumphant entry and the cleansing of the temple. The problem was that if the Romans take action, many would die in Israel for the sake of Jesus and both he and his followers would be wiped out. Part of the fear of Jesus at the garden of Gethsemane seem to be that his disciples would be taken as well, and so he told them to even buy two swords in the gospel of Luke.

To show that this fear was real, in the gospel of John (John 18v8-9), he came forward to present himself saying if you seek me let this men go.

Also notice that in Mark 10v45, Jesus says true glory is not like the world think it is, but it is that of service. So in that world, the heroes were the Caesars, so when the disciples saw Jesus naked on the cross, presenting himself to be taken and to die in their place, so as not to lose any of them (John 18v8-9), it changed their perception of what it means to be hero. So the cross is foolishness to the world, because a hero is not supposed to be on the cross, but to us, it is the power and wisdom of God says Saint Paul.

2) His blood for the forgiveness of sins is to show the fulfillment of the Passover celebration. It represents freedom from exile to all held bound in slavery due to sins of mankind towards one another. It all goes back to Abraham, when God told Abraham to sacrifice his son, that command didn't make any sense, because Isaac was the promised one through whom the world be blessed, and Abraham knew that God's promises are irrevocable, but Abraham obeyed because he reasoned that God is able to raise him from the dead. This is why Abraham became righteous in God's sight because he did works of faith still in hope of that promise, so also God was showing that even if Israel is destroyed (all her firstborn sons as in Egypt) and go on exile, God is able to bring the nation back to life again to fulfill the promises. Even if Jesus, the promised one and son of God gets killed in obedience to God, God is able to raise him from the dead. So death is not a barrier to the promise of a better world through the seed of Abraham, even death of the Messiah because God would also give us power over death because we would come back alive.

Also a Passover was sacrificed as a sign but the Passover lamb itself is just to bring this to remembrance just like Abel sacrificed an animal to the Lord, but Abel (the first blameless man) became a sacrifice himself for obeying God, he paid the price for his faith, so that his blood still cries out to God for vengeance just like all the righteous blood shed on the earth due to oppression and sins or wickedness of their killers, while Jesus cries out for forgiveness in

contrast because of his love asking God for reconciliation of the world(even the worst of the world) to God. **It is in this way that the sacrifice of jesus moves God on his throne because it is in tune with the will of God, for while it is true that God wants to punish these evil doers like cain and the Romans, he wants to punish them for correction not their total destruction because God loves the world.**

The Israelites also sacrificed a lamb to avert the angel of death, the lamb saved them from becoming extinct as a nation, so the lamb was a hero, the killing of the lamb was to remind themselves that a lamb took their place and they continued to do this for the **forgiveness of sins(meaning release from exile or slavery).The lamb was the sacrifice that saved the nation from being extinct to slavery. The lamb represents jesus who saves his people from slavery due to sin,** but the death of a lamb only averted slavery, exile and death and in practice doesn't take away sin by itself.

But with jesus, first obeying his teachings by faith through his spirit takes away sins, secondly his blood crying out to God for forgiveness of sins saves the world because he died loving even his enemies to the end. **This is not substitutionary atonement, this is a demonstration of the teaching that says love your enemies which we are called to live by even unto the death.**

So in summary, we are to take up our own cross and follow jesus not believing that jesus was a human sacrifice to appease God in our place, but rather that he not only showed us an example but that his blood still speaks unto this day. The authors in the new testament only stress on antonement to show the jews that they no longer needed the passover lamb which marked freedom from slavery, but that that passover lamb that saved the nation then from dying at the hands of pharaoh and the angel of death is actually jesus the hero that dies as a ransom to the Romans to eventually set up the era of the kingdom of God through his disciples(the new Israel) who would carry out the promises of Abraham and the hope of the world by spreading the legacy of jesus(his spirit) to the world.

Ihedinobi3 as to your last point which was about the bible, my answer to that is that the bible is not the word of God, rather it contains the word, or wasn't the bible written by men? Finally I am here to learn, not for any agenda.

Response #13:

I think that I have understood you now. I have not yet seen you taking pains to mislead other believers, although I have not made it that high a priority to investigate you, so you may have been doing it and I just haven't seen you do it, so I won't call you a false teacher yet.

However, you do not respect the Bible as God's Own Authoritative Testimony. Therefore, you do not accept what it says as final. You are your own authority. You pick and choose what you will believe with reference to nothing but a standard of your own making.

Let me explain to you what Titus 3:9-11 means:

9 But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and strife and disputes about the Law, for they are unprofitable and worthless. 10 Reject a factious man after a first and second warning, 11 knowing that such a man is perverted and is sinning, being self-condemned.

Titus 3:9-11 NASB

People who are factious or heretics, as the KJV puts it, are people who are always looking to be divisive. The word "heretic" is often used in a way that has little to do with what the Bible actually says, but what Titus 3:9-11 means is that such people do not accept Scriptural authority. They pretend to be able to determine the Truth for themselves independent of the proper channels of authority that the Lord Himself has given. In other words, they are their own authority. They have no interest in any standard that is independent of them.

Such people inevitably end up in blasphemy and cultlike behavior. That is how many of the "churches" and "religious movements" of this world, including the Jehovah's Witnesses, Roman Catholic Church, Church of Jesus Christ of the Latter Day Saints, Seventh Day Adventists, and the myriad pentecostal and Word of Faith churches today became and are becoming what they are now. The instant that some charismatic person dispenses with the Truth and sets themselves up as the standard of truth, the natural thing that follows is a twisting and corrupting of the Truth in very terrible ways to draw disciples after themselves. That is, they become blasphemers and false teachers.

Let me explain blasphemers to you too. A blasphemer is a person that essentially defames God's Character and attributes things to Him that are not true of Him. That is, they are people who lie against God, whether by claiming something about Him that is untrue or by claiming that He said or says things that He did not say at all. Basically, blasphemy is slander against God.

You should be able to see the progression here. Once a person dismisses the Bible as the authority on what is true and what isn't, then they must decide how to know the Truth independent of the Bible. Unfailingly, such a person decides that it is only their own selves that they can trust. When they make that decision, they then begin to amass information from all kinds of sources and set themselves up as the umpire or arbiter that decides what is true and what isn't. Of course, they will only believe whatever they like and reject what they don't like. In the end, these people will believe many things that are completely untrue of God. And ***they will communicate it to others!*** Once they start doing that, they have become blasphemers and false teachers.

Now, since you do not accept the Bible to be the very Word of God, that is, His Very Own Testimony, His Own Declaration of What is True, and therefore, as the True Standard by which to measure every claim and every information to tell what is true and what isn't, you are a heretic. You may not know it or accept it, but neither is necessary for you to actually be a heretic in much the same way that it is not necessary for a child to accept that they are a child for them to be a child. Things are what they are independent of what opinion they might have of themselves.

I had already warned you that you have been talking and acting like a heretic and a blasphemer. Now I am telling you that you are actually these things. If you do not accept the authority of the Bible, you are in very dire straits indeed. I urge you to rethink that decision to reject the authority of the Bible. Until you do, you and I cannot discuss. I am a believer in Jesus Christ, the God and Man Whom the Bible reveals. So, it is not possible for you and I to discuss meaningfully if you do not subscribe to the authority of the Bible. You will be providing yourself as an authority in our discussions and I will be depending entirely on the Bible. Such a situation will only lead to quarrels.

So, as you said before, we must leave things at this point. We cannot discuss. But I do urge you to repent and believe the Gospel before it is too late for you.

Question #14:

ok let me cut to the chase. I cannot for instance accept the old testament stories that Elijah was angry and asked God to kill young boys and a wild beast mauled 42 of them simply because they mocked his bald head, that is not the god of jesus in the new testament.

I cannot accept that the same God who killed 70,000 people simply for a sin committed by David is the same God of a man like jesus whom I respect so much.

So I have come to see the old testament as a collection of different ideas of Yahweh(God) unless you can prove otherwise, if you or anyone can do that, then I would begin take you guys seriously when you claim that the entire bible is your authority.

When we come to the new testament, then we begin to accept that women should not teach in church or that women should be in obedience simply because Adam was not tempted but Eve. Does your church prevent women from preaching in church today? many churches that claim to accept the authority of the entire bible, do not obey this command and they have interpretations for it too, and yet we all claim to follow the same bible. So no one can truly have a unified understanding of the bible, that's why there were various sects in Judaism from of old and there have been many sects in christianity. Do not make a book (which is a library) your authority, rather let the principles that can be compared with one another in the book, be extracted from it. If you assume from the start that a book is your authority, then you cannot question it for it must by default be perfect.

Also I cannot shut down my brain to what I know about textual variants in the new testament, and how writings like Mark 16v9-20 do not belong to the original, or 1 john 5v7 which was added to your kjv bible but was never in any earlier manuscript prior to the 10th century. How can you know all these things and claim that the bible is an authority?

You ask me what authority I base my arguments on if not the bible, and I would ask you on what authority did the disciples as well as paul and Christians of the first 100 years after jesus base their arguments on without the new testament?

In the first 3 centuries, there were many books and there was no canon of the new testament, and the books you read depended on the church you attended, are you saying those were not Christians simply because they had no canon as authority?

If anyone can explain these points to me , then I would reconsider my view of the bible.

For the records however, I respect the bible and the core of my theology and spirituality is based on the bible, but that doesn't mean I cannot question it. Martin Luther for instance, rejected the book of James, that doesn't make him a non Christian, but for you he is not a Christian because he doesn't accept all scriptures, but he kickstarted the reformation and this is most likely why you are not a catholic today.

Finally you said I make lots of claims without offering proof, can you give me examples of these claims? I have backed up most of my theological claims with the bible, if there is any I didn't back up with scripture, please bring it to my notice.

Response #14:

You make my point. You have established yourself as the authority that must be satisfied. You decide what is right and what is wrong all by yourself. You have set standards that God Himself must submit to in order for you to accept Him as God, which is a most ludicrous notion, since if God must bow to you, then He cannot be your God.

Let me see if I can show you what I mean. I think that the first Bible that I ever read was the KJV. I know that my childhood Bible-reading experience was framed by the KJV and the RSV, the latter especially because it was what was demanded in primary and secondary school, I believe. I only discovered the NIV and other versions as I grew into adolescence. So, I grew up understanding the 42 individuals that the bears mauled as little children like myself. I did not understand them as being adolescent, still I never thought "God could never do such a thing, He can't be so cruel." The reason? How on earth am I supposed to know what God can and cannot do without reference to the Bible? The only way that I can get a hint of God's Character outside the Bible is by looking at creation around me, and when I do, I see people of all ages die in all kinds of ways for all kinds of reasons. If God made the world and rules over it as it is, then the Bible must know what it is talking about in this instance. That is the attitude of faith. I don't dictate to God how He must be. He is God. I am the creature, the one who must bow and worship. The same applies to your other objections.

This is how faith is born in the hearts of men. First, we awaken to the witness of Creation around and within ourselves about the Greatness of the God Who must have made it all, to our obvious responsibility to such a Mighty God, to our utter failure in meeting that responsibility, and finally to our inescapable return to answer to Him through death (Psalm 19; Romans 1-2; Ecclesiastes 12:1-7). When we face these very obvious truths, the next question that arises in the human heart is **"how can we make peace with such a God?"** As Psalm 19, Romans 1-2, and Ecclesiastes 12 demonstrate, that question immediately leads one to the Bible where we find what this God demands of us in order for us to escape His Condemnation. We have absolutely no other way to get to God. We can certainly pretend anything we want, so all kinds of people create all kinds of religions and philosophies in answer to the witness of Creation. The vast majority of us pretend that God is something completely different than He has shown Himself to be through Creation and the Bible. They are doing just like you are here, pretending that God

cannot be what He is, assuming some ability to dictate righteousness to God. So, for example, you find fault with Him if He did indeed send bears to maul adolescents (or even pre-pubescent children, if you insist) for mouthing off to His Own Emissary. And you take issue with Him for calling faith righteousness. All of this as if you yourself had any true ability to tell the Lord God what is right and what is wrong.

The Bible does say that no one can dictate to God (Isaiah 40:13-14; Romans 11:33-36; 1 Corinthians 2:16), but if it did not say it, it is still a very natural assumption to make, since God made all things. If He did, how on earth could He ever require advice from the things that He Himself invented? Yet, here you are pretending to some ability to tell God what is righteous for Him to do and what isn't.

The point is simple: unless God Himself tells you about Himself, it is incredibly foolish to make assumptions about Him. The Bible is how He has told us about Himself through the Revelation of Jesus Christ. The Bible explains the witness of Creation to us and expands upon it to tell us of things we have absolutely no way of knowing except through its own testimony.

You complain about textual variants and interpolations in the Bible, but are you not ignoring how education and academics works? Who would reject the authority of Isaac Newton on the basis of corruptions of his actual writings and research by later hands? Not a single scientist worth his salt would do that. What every academic worth the cost of their education does in cases like that is that they apply a skill called "textual criticism" to arrive at what the authority in question actually said. That is how ancient manuscripts are reconstructed today and preserved. If science, history, and literature warrant such careful scholarship, how much more the Bible that holds our eternal fate in its pages? Who would be so foolish as to dismiss its authority on the basis of its corruptibility? What's more, if Satan is invested in our eternal condemnation, does it not stand to reason that he will instigate willing human beings to try to corrupt the original writings of the Bible? Does it not also stand to reason that God will permit it to a limited extent in order to separate those who value His Truth from those who don't? Those who value His Truth will refuse to alter it no matter what the incentive, and they will also be the ones to investigate the texts that they inherit to make sure that what they are reading is what was really written under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit, while those who don't value that Truth will seek to corrupt it to suit their own selves and they will also be the ones who insist on reading the errors without any correction and who insist on rejecting the Bible entirely because they either don't want to do the work involved in discovering what is truly written under the Inspiration of the Holy Spirit and what isn't or only want an excuse to dismiss the Truth in preference of the lies that they prefer.

You argue that different people and different groups of people do not submit to the Authority of the Bible, choosing either to ignore parts of it or to ignore all of it, but what does that have to do with me? Are they going to judge me after I die? Am I responsible to them? Why should I care what they do with the Bible if the Person that I will answer to is God Himself? My business is to learn God's Truth and make sure to align myself with it, so that when I see Him I won't be condemned by Him. Nowhere in the Bible am I required to agree with others in any fictions that they prefer. The unity that believers must have is in the Truth (Ephesians 4:3-6,13), not in some

crazy idea that anyone chooses to have. So, the Lord is not going to say to me, "why did you not have a unified understanding of the Bible with so-and-so?" He is going to ask me, "why did you not believe the Bible and those who explained it to you when they spoke in agreement with the Bible?"

As for the unproven claims that you have been making, I really hate having to make a list of such things with people like you, because you make so many and then you have a problem owning up to them. So what I will do is point out that you have made new ones here and give you examples to illustrate my point. What you do with that is likely not going to interest me enough to respond any further on them:

Claim #1: *I cannot for instance accept the old testament stories that Elijah was angry and asked God to kill young boys and a wild beast mauled 42 of them simply because they mocked his bald head, **that is not the god of Jesus in the new testament.***

Note: the prophet was Elisha, not Elijah (you make mistakes like that a lot, and that suggests to me that you are not as familiar with the Bible as one who is questioning its authority ought to be), but the claim here is that the God of Elisha in 2 Kings 2:23-25 is not the God of Jesus in the New Testament. Says who? You? Why? Because you cannot accept that God could do what He is recorded to have done there? Why could He not have? Because you cannot permit such a thing?

Claims #2 and #3: *In the first 3 centuries, there were many books and **there was no canon of the new testament, and the books you read depended on the church you attended...***

Note: Who says that there was no canon in the early church? Or that the books you read then depended on what church you attended? You? Somebody else you will quote whom we must believe because...why exactly?

As for your argument about Martin Luther, even in the Bible, Peter, later a great believer and one of the Eternal Twelve, did not believe what Isaiah taught about Jesus Christ and kept resisting the Cross. Shall I do the same because he did it too? In fact, the Lord showed Himself to Mary Magdalene first upon His Resurrection, because she was the one to believe in His Resurrection ahead of the others. In other words, she believed what He said more firmly and enthusiastically than the others. We will all be rewarded according to our individual choices, not according to how we follow other people's mistakes. You claim that without Martin Luther I would be a Roman Catholic today? Says who? Was he the first person to reject the Roman ways? There have always been those who believed the Bible independent of the wickedness of the Roman Catholic Church. How do you know that I wouldn't have been one of them? Nonetheless, where one person fails to do what they should, God is never short of options. As the Lord said to the teachers of the Law, if the crowds stop shouting, the very stones will cry out in praise. So, you have too small a God in your thoughts to compare with the One Who made the Universe and Whom I worship.

Finally, as I said, you are blaspheming, so this is not a conversation that is guaranteed to last with me in it. This is a token response, still giving you the benefit of the doubt. There is no guarantee that I will respond further. I just thought to warn you of that.

Question #15:

yeah lhedinobi3 I am not doing it for you to necessarily respond, I am doing it for those who read and others who may respond to the points without dismissing me or using words like heretics, blasphemy, etc people like _____. So yes this is not a token response to you but for others and of course myself. That is why I put these things out, let others do their research and truth would always prevail. And it may just happen to be your truth that is prevailing here, who knows? I am interested in truth not in the person speaking whether he be blasphemer, heretic, satan, etc.

So as to your first point, Can humans be more just than God? no.

If God created us and we tell atheists that all humans must base their morality on who God is and what God commands, then when we go to the bible to see who God is, shouldn't we see a compass for morality that is objective and not subjective? you don't need to answer, others can answer me, I am tired of your pride as though I am forcing you to discuss with me.

You wrote..<The only way that I can get a hint of God's Character outside the Bible is by looking at creation around me, and when I do, I see people of all ages die in all kinds of ways for all kinds of reasons. If God made the world and rules over it as it is, then the Bible must know what it is talking about in this instance>

Fair enough, but the same bible also tells you that it is a fallen world and the world is not a perfect place and there would be a new age where there would be no more death, sin, suffering, pain, sickness, etc. or am I making this up? do you reject this and are you saying God is responsible for killing all these people you see dying for no reason?

When I look at the world I see an imperfect world which we are going through as a kind of test to make our spirit man come alive, and to Learn the principles of the kingdom of God. Even the animal kingdom, innocent animals are killed everytime and we eat chicken for Christmas but the question is.. Is this the final will of God? what does Isaiah say about how animals would live and relate to us in the new age.

In Jesus teachings he says we should love our enemies, but this is almost impossible in our world today, because we need armies in many nations and we have to kill our enemies sometimes else we get killed, but it was worse in time past, does that mean it is the will of God that we continue to have armies and fight wars? no, but the world is against the Father and the Father is against the world, the world does not know the Father, only the Son knows him, and we have the gospels that teach us about the son and indirectly the Father and his ways.

You wrote...<And you take issue with Him for calling faith righteousness. All of this as if you yourself had any true ability to tell the Lord God what is right and what is wrong>

No, you don't even read what I say to understand because you are dismissive of heretics, I take issues with many Christians for how they understand faith. The faith that produces righteousness can only be seen in our works not blind belief. Did I make this up also? or doesn't the bible teach that?

Thesame bible said Wouldn't the judge of all the earth do right? Abraham asked if there are 10 righteous people in Sodom and Gommorah, would you destroy them and the lord said no. Yet thesame bible turns around to say that God flooded the entire world (which may have included babies) and even moreso it states directly that God commanded the killing of Amalekite babies. So I am not rejecting the bible, I am using one scripture to interpret another as impossible, so I have backing not only from my conscience on what is right and wrong but also from thesame bible as well, so it is 2 against 1. If your conscience tells you that there is nothing wrong with killing babies or burning promiscuous daughters of priests alive then for you it is the other way round of course.

In the bible St Paul says in Romans that even those without the law have innate conscience, so even those who were without the old testament in the time of Moses could possibly keep the ten commandments, because in addition to scripture God has given us conscience to judge what is right as well as logic. This is part of the reasons you reject the pagan gods who accept human sacrifices and do all sort of terrible things.

This is why we would reject a pope who would want to tell us to carry out crusades today, and not only kill the men but also kill babies and take only virgin women for ourselves in certain circumstances. If we do not use one scripture to override another and then measure with our conscience, how would we stand a chance to oppose these things or tell the pope that he is wrong?

You Wrote...<You complain about textual variants and interpolations in the Bible, but are you not ignoring how education and academics works? Who will reject the authority of Isaac Newton on the basis of corruptions of his actual writings and research by later hands?

Except that isaac newton 's writings are not taken as the word of God, they can be challenged and yes he was wrong about certain things, and now we know because his writings though important to us did not become everlasting dogma, but we understand the spirit and principles behind his writings and they have changed our worldview of things, and it is also by that yardstick that we challenge some of his writings as well that seem wrong.

You are actually making my point for me.

Also I take it to mean that you reject Mark 16v9-20 as possible corruptions of satan right? as well as 1 john 5v7, or maybe I am not understanding you clearly. Interestingly I don't think they are corruptions of satan, I think they are both inspired. If you think they are not inspired and should be out of our bible, I disagree with you but would not call you an heretic for what you choose or don't choose in the bible as long as you don't reject the gospel of the kingdom of God taught by jesus and his cross.

To your other points, do you agree that women should not speak in church then? Do you agree that we shouldn't keep the laws of Moses today except the law of love(which covers everything) , if you believe this then both you and paul are not different from me and jesus, you are using one part of scripture to interpret another, you are extracting principles from scripture and not necessarily the letter, it doesn't mean that you reject scripture.

Even so those who allow their women to speak in church would argue about context, and also that women were important to jesus. You may disagree with them, but a Christian who wants to keep the old testament laws may disagree with you because those laws are in the bible. You would say they are no longer important because paul taught you they aren't, but why? are they not in the same word of God? your answer would be that there is a new covenant and jesus fulfilled the law, then this would mean that you do not adhere to every letter of the bible as your authority because you can't, the bible itself does not permit you to do that.

You Wrote....Claim #1: I cannot for instance accept the old testament stories that Elijah was angry and asked God to kill young boys.

I cannot accept it because jesus said in Luke 9v55-56, ye know not what manner of spirit ye are of, the son of man did not come to destroy men's lives but to save. Jesus also said turn the other cheek in Matthew 5. This is not made up by me alone, I also get this from the bible.

You Wrote...Note: the prophet was Elisha, not Elijah (you make mistakes like that a lot, and that suggests to me that you are not as familiar with the Bible as one who is questioning its authority ought to be),

Ok, so because I was not in a condition to cross check and give you direct names and quotes, then I don't know the story or bible, lol. That's a common fallacy my man, you can do better than that. If I made a mistake in the telling of the story itself, then that make sense, not on issues like names, or are you now like strict

muslims who claim that every word of the Quran must be recited as it is? come on now.

Also Read Luke 9v55-56, jesus doesn't permit such, so I am not the one saying it, jesus whom you claim he is the word of God, he is the one saying it, even if he didn't say it, I know that it contradicts a God of love and wisdom. Except God is not love, and those parts of the bible that says he is, are contradictory.

This also is not justice, insulting a man for bald head as teenage children, and then they dying for that, how is that just to you? when in the same bible jesus healed the ear of the captain who wanted to arrest him.

You Wrote...<Note: Who says that there was no canon in the early church?

Anyone can do their research on this, so I leave this for others to judge. The Ebionites for instance, we know had only parts of Matthew. Before the gospels were written, the message of the kingdom was spread only by oral traditions. Others can investigate these things easily.

Also you are making my point for me about Peter not believing everything. So would that mean Peter wasn't a Christian then because he didn't believe that, even after that, paul had a disagreement with him on the matters of keeping the law, did they go ahead calling each other heretics. That is my point, from the very beginning, the bible has been understood differently, and this is why paul says we know in part and we prophesy in part, but let us continue to love one another. We can correct each other, but love should make us humble enough to listen to each other and not seclude each other as long as we all are willing to obey the teachings of christ, then we are brothers, because we want to do the things jesus commanded us.

Response #15:

I am glad that others are giving you responses that you are willing to respond to.

Let me reiterate: my problem with you is that you couch your questions and challenges in language that is suggestive of strife. I don't like to quarrel, nor should I quarrel, and as long as what you are doing is challenging the authority of the Bible, I cannot treat you as kindly as I would like to, so I can only offer you warnings and leave unless I see that you are heeding them, in which case I would stay and try to help you embrace and grow in the Truth. If you consider that pride, just as you considered my preference for the Bible's Testimony arrogance, then I would rather be a very proud man than a humble one.

You say that you are interested in Truth. Well, the Bible is Truth. It is THE Truth that the Lord has given to us to save us from the condemnation of Satan and his angels who slandered Him and who believed that slander respectively. So, you should see my difficulty with you. If you don't consider the Bible to be Truth, then what are you calling truth? What exactly are you interested in and thus how can I, a Bible teacher, help you?

Granted that this is a public forum and our conversation cannot be limited to each other - and that is partly why I don't assume that my responses are everything for anyone here - it is an act of courtesy on my part to notify the person that I am responding to that I may not continue to respond and offer my reasons for disengaging. That way, my position cannot be misconstrued by anyone who reads our conversation.

As for dismissing you and calling you a heretic and a blasphemer, not only are you those things, but those who love the Truth and are truly seeking it can never be discouraged or turned away by the way that they are treated in their search for it. Of course, if your ego is more important to you than the Truth that you say is what you seek, then you will only be offended and reject admonition as a result (Proverbs 12:1; 15:5):

21 Jesus went away from there, and withdrew into the district of Tyre and Sidon. 22 And a Canaanite woman from that region came out and began to cry out, saying, "Have mercy on me, Lord, Son of David; my daughter is cruelly demon-possessed." 23 But He did not answer her a word. And His disciples came and implored Him, saying, "Send her away, because she keeps shouting at us." 24 But He answered and said, "I was sent only to the lost sheep of the house of Israel." 25 But she came and began to bow down before Him, saying, "Lord, help me!" 26 And He answered and said, "It is not good to take the children's bread and throw it to the dogs." 27 But she said, "Yes, Lord; but even the dogs feed on the crumbs which fall from their masters' table." 28 Then Jesus said to her, "O woman, your faith is great; it shall be done for you as you wish." And her daughter was healed at once.

Matthew 15:21-28 NASB

5 Then He said to them, "Suppose one of you has a friend, and goes to him at midnight and says to him, 'Friend, lend me three loaves; 6 for a friend of mine has come to me from a journey, and I have nothing to set before him'; 7 and from inside he answers and says, 'Do not bother me; the door has already been shut and my children and I are in bed; I cannot get up and give you anything.' 8 I tell you, even though he will not get up and give him anything because he is his friend, yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him as much as he needs. 9 "So I say to you, ask, and it will be given to you; seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. 10 For everyone who asks, receives; and he who seeks, finds; and to him who knocks, it will be opened.

Luke 11:5-10 NASB

But, of course, you are quite wrong that I have been dismissing you. As I said, I have only been warning you about your behavior. If I had not been, I would be disobeying the Scriptures and certainly not walking in love toward you. But, as I said, you have set yourself up as the authority to be deferred to, so warning you is a sin in your eyes. It is pride on my part to do so, in your

eyes, not an act of love that is done to fetch you out of the fire. Nonetheless, what I do for you is going to be rewarded to me by the Lord, not by you, so how you receive it or judge it is of no consequence to me.

As for your question, it is the Lord Who defines what justice is and what it isn't, not humans. Anyone can pretend to define justice and demand that God act in accordance with their definition. Whether that is reasonable or not, I'm sure that you can judge. As for the question of subjectivity and objectivity, God sets objective standards for us but those standards are subject to Him. He is the King. There is no authority above Him that may dictate to Him. So, if He answers Elisha's request and sends bears to maul 42 "children" for disrespecting Him, that is justice and righteousness because God did it. So, just as you said, the standard is objective and it is God Himself, not us.

Regarding your second challenge here, there is where the difficulty lies. You ask me if God is the One responsible for all the dying we see. If I answer you one way or the other, how can I prove to you that my answer is true? Will you accept Scriptural evidence for my answer or will you tell me that the Bible contradicts itself and therefore cannot be trusted for an answer here?

For what it is worth, this is what the Bible teaches:

5 "I am the Lord, and there is no other; Besides Me there is no God. I will gird you, though you have not known Me; 6 That men may know from the rising to the setting of the sun That there is no one besides Me. I am the Lord, and there is no other, 7 The One forming light and creating darkness, Causing well-being and creating calamity; I am the Lord who does all these.

Isaiah 45:5-7 NASB

Yes, it is a fallen world that lies in the wicked one (1 John 5:19), but that is precisely why there is suffering in it. That suffering is God's judgment on the moral evil in the world. It will remain until God destroys this universe and makes a new one where there will be no unrighteousness. That is the only time in human experience when there will be no death or any kind of suffering, since no one will be sinning against God anymore. But, of course, all sinners will be in the Lake of Fire then suffering eternally for their rebellions against God. That too is what God does.

As for the wars in the world and the Lord's command that we should love our enemies, this is why the Bible is written the way it is. It is written like a puzzle with its pieces scattered across all the books of the Bible. If you insist on simplistic answers to complex questions in the Bible, you will err. As individuals, we must love even those who hate us and not seek revenge for wrongs done to us, but the Lord also gave law and governments to protect good people from evil ones (Genesis 9:1-7; Romans 13:1-7; 1 Peter 2:13-14; Daniel 4:24-32). Therefore governments have a divine exception to kill criminals in order to protect law-abiding people from them. With respect to war specifically, God created the nations in order to prevent the coercion of human beings to abandon the Truth or cease from seeking it (Genesis 11:1-9; Acts 17:26-27). This was (and still is) necessary because when people band together to do anything, those who oppose it are usually killed by the majority. So, the separation of the nations preserves the lives of those who may

wish to continue to seek after God. Armies are then godly tools used to preserve the integrity of each unique nation to allow those in it to continue to seek after God. This is what wars are about.

In other words, for as long as the human race is still making its choice whether to submit to God or persist in rebellion against Him, these things will remain part of human experience. During the Glorious Millennium of which I spoke before, it is true that there will be no armies, no weapons of war, and no war, but this is because the Perfect Government of the Lord Jesus will be resolving every international and intranational dispute in the perfect way, still preserving national integrity and punishing corporate wickedness (Isaiah 2:4; Micah 4:3-4; Psalm 2:8-9; Revelation 2:26-27; 19:15). Only after our seven thousand years are up, and this Creation has been destroyed and replaced with a perfect new one will these things end.

As for the righteousness of faith, I do read what you say, and I shudder for you. The Bible teaches that faith, that is, confidence that the Lord is true and right in all that He does (cf. Daniel 4:37; Hebrews 11:1) is considered righteousness by the Lord (Romans 4:3-8). It is true that faith demonstrates itself in obedience to God, for, after all, how can one claim to believe what God says if they never do what He says? That is a clear contradiction. But there are works that come from unbelief, including legalism:

23 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you tithe mint and dill and cummin, and have neglected the weightier provisions of the law: justice and mercy and faithfulness; but these are the things you should have done without neglecting the others. 24 You blind guides, who strain out a gnat and swallow a camel! 25 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you clean the outside of the cup and of the dish, but inside they are full of robbery and self-indulgence. 26 You blind Pharisee, first clean the inside of the cup and of the dish, so that the outside of it may become clean also. 27 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you are like whitewashed tombs which on the outside appear beautiful, but inside they are full of dead men’s bones and all uncleanness. 28 So you, too, outwardly appear righteous to men, but inwardly you are full of hypocrisy and lawlessness. 29 “Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you build the tombs of the prophets and adorn the monuments of the righteous, 30 and say, ‘If we had been living in the days of our fathers, we would not have been partners with them in shedding the blood of the prophets.’ 31 So you testify against yourselves, that you are sons of those who murdered the prophets. 32 Fill up, then, the measure of the guilt of your fathers. 33 You serpents, you brood of vipers, how will you escape the sentence of hell?”
Matthew 23:23-33 NASB

*13 Then the Lord said,
“Because this people draw near with their words
And honor Me with their lip service,
But they remove their hearts far from Me,
And their reverence for Me consists of tradition learned by rote...”*
Isaiah 29:13 NASB

10 Hear the word of the Lord, You rulers of Sodom; Give ear to the instruction of our God, You people of Gomorrah. 11 “What are your multiplied sacrifices to Me?” Says the Lord. “I have had

enough of burnt offerings of rams And the fat of fed cattle; And I take no pleasure in the blood of bulls, lambs or goats. 12 "When you come to appear before Me, Who requires of you this trampling of My courts? 13 "Bring your worthless offerings no longer, Incense is an abomination to Me. New moon and sabbath, the calling of assemblies— I cannot endure iniquity and the solemn assembly. 14 "I hate your new moon festivals and your appointed feasts, They have become a burden to Me; I am weary of bearing them. 15 "So when you spread out your hands in prayer, I will hide My eyes from you; Yes, even though you multiply prayers, I will not listen. Your hands are covered with blood.

Isaiah 1:10-15 NASB

What God wants is Faith in His Son Jesus Christ (John 6:29). That is the thing that produces the kind of works that God is pleased with. But when you say that it can only be seen in our works, given everything else you say, I cannot agree with you. There are many who believe but are living terrible lives. If they die believing, the Bible teaches that they will still be saved although they will lose eternal rewards (1 Corinthians 3:11-15; 5:5). On the other hand, there are plenty enough people who think that they are doing righteous things that will merit salvation for them when they stand before the Lord. About those, this is something else that the Lord said:

21 "Not everyone who says to Me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father who is in heaven will enter. 22 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?' 23 And then I will declare to them, 'I never knew you; depart from Me, you who practice lawlessness.'

Matthew 7:21-23 NASB

As for Abraham's prayer and the Flood, how did Abraham know what "right" was? He was a prophet, I hope you know. So, although he had no Bible, he did receive revelations of the Truth by which to walk. Also, there was the oral tradition that would have been passed down from Adam and Eve through believing descendants like Seth, Enoch, and Noah, that Abraham could also use to tell what God is like and therefore what He would do or would not do. In other words, Abraham was not dictating to the Judge of all the earth what was right for Him to do and what wasn't, as you seem to want to do. Rather, he was beseeching Him to do as He would normally do. That is how we treat Kings. No one talks presumptuously before a King (Ecclesiastes 5:1-2; Proverbs 16:14-15; 19:12; 20:2). You don't presume to dictate to a King, but you may humbly ask a King to do as a King would ordinarily do: that is, be just (Proverbs 16:10-13). The Lord is just and cannot be otherwise. He had never and has never destroyed the righteous with the evil ones. Abraham was begging the Lord to spare the righteous as He always does. Prayer is not made because the Lord will not do right, if we don't pray. It is made in obedience to Him because He commands us to pray. As you yourself noted, God still destroyed all of Sodom and Gomorrah, sparing only Lot and those of his family as obeyed His Command to flee and escaped. When you say that this proves that the Flood was not true, I can't imagine what you are thinking. The Lord destroyed Sodom and Gomorrah while saving the only righteous man there with his family. How is this different from what happened in the Flood?

In Genesis, we are told that Noah was the only man who pleased the Lord in his generation, therefore God spared him and his family while destroying the rest of the world. Sodom and Gomorrah was only the Flood in miniature (that is, not counting that the Flood was a watery destruction while Sodom and Gomorrah was a fiery one).

As for your conscience dictating to God what must be right and what must be wrong, what is your conscience and where did it come from? Everyone has a conscience, yet everyone does evil, and many people call their evil good. Even the Bible tells us that:

20 Woe to those who call evil good, and good evil; Who substitute darkness for light and light for darkness; Who substitute bitter for sweet and sweet for bitter! 21 Woe to those who are wise in their own eyes And clever in their own sight!

Isaiah 5:20-21 NASB

*5 Trust in the Lord with all your heart And **do not lean on your own understanding.** 6 In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He will make your paths straight. 7 **Do not be wise in your own eyes; Fear the Lord and turn away from evil.***

Proverbs 3:5-7 NASB

Incidentally, this is what I have kept warning you that you are doing. We may have consciences, but we also have a sin nature (Romans 7; 1 John 1:8), so we are often making up our own moral code, pretending that what is good is really evil and what is evil is really good. The world today is overflowing with such madness. So, you have no leg to stand on to claim that you can use your conscience to dictate to the Bible what it is right about and what it is wrong about.

As for using Scriptures to override one another, as I said, the Lord Himself said that that is impossible. Perhaps your conscience is also telling you that He could not have said that. Peter also said through the Holy Spirit that the Scriptures are often twisted by ignorant and unstable people who have no idea how they work to their own destruction. These things ought to give you pause, at least, even if they do not terrify you:

*35 If he called them gods, to whom the word of God came (and **the Scripture cannot be broken**)...*

John 10:35 NASB

*16 as also in all his letters, speaking in them of these things, in which are some things hard to understand, **which the untaught and unstable distort, as they do also the rest of the Scriptures, to their own destruction.***

2 Peter 3:16 (NASB)

That is, the Scriptures cannot be broken, although they certainly can be distorted or twisted by people too arrogant to be taught and who are therefore unstable in all their ways because they do not know the Truth. Still that distortion leads to the destruction of such people. So, at the very least, the Bible denies that what you claim that you can do is actually possible. You cannot override any part of the Bible with any other. You may distort Scriptures and twist them, but

even that will be obvious to those who have been taught the Scriptures. That is why I have been warning you.

As for knowing how to oppose lies, I told you before: learn the Bible from a gifted and prepared pastor-teacher and you will not be vulnerable to all the lies out there anymore:

11 And He gave some as apostles, and some as prophets, and some as evangelists, and some as pastors and teachers, 12 for the equipping of the saints for the work of service, to the building up of the body of Christ; 13 until we all attain to the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to a mature man, to the measure of the stature which belongs to the fullness of Christ. 14 As a result, we are no longer to be children, tossed here and there by waves and carried about by every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, by craftiness in deceitful scheming; 15 but speaking the truth in love, we are to grow up in all aspects into Him who is the head, even Christ, 16 from whom the whole body, being fitted and held together by what every joint supplies, according to the proper working of each individual part, causes the growth of the body for the building up of itself in love.

Ephesians 4:11-16 NASB

11 Now these were more noble-minded than those in Thessalonica, for they received the word with great eagerness, examining the Scriptures daily to see whether these things were so.

Acts 17:11 NASB

It is true that there are many false teachers about. When we are looking for teachers, we ought to do so with our Bibles open, comparing what they say to what we read in them. That is the only way to be safe from false teaching. In other words, by throwing out the authority of the Scriptures in favor of your fickle conscience, which can be silenced by you (cf. 1 Timothy 4:2), you pretty much hand yourself over to false teachers.

15 "Beware of the false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly are ravenous wolves. 16 You will know them by their fruits. Grapes are not gathered from thorn bushes nor figs from thistles, are they? 17 So every good tree bears good fruit, but the bad tree bears bad fruit. 18 A good tree cannot produce bad fruit, nor can a bad tree produce good fruit. 19 Every tree that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire. 20 So then, you will know them by their fruits.

Matthew 7:15-20 NASB

What you see above is what the Bereans in Acts 17, quoted above, did. By comparing what they heard from Paul to what they read in the Scriptures, they were able to tell whether he was lying to them or not. That is what you too must learn to do, or else you will persist in darkness and eventually put yourself in the condemnation of evildoers.

Per Isaac Newton, you did not understand the analogy that I made. Isaac Newton is an authority on physics, not on God and His Eternal Plan. I was demonstrating to you that scientists who built on his work did not dismiss it because any of the manuscripts that they inherited were corrupted. If they were, they would have worked to figure out what he actually wrote, rather

than just take it corruption and all or throw it out. If scientists would do this, how much more should we with the Bible? The Bible is a far more important document than all the science literature that has ever been written put together. If scientists, historians, and literary historians would go to so much trouble to figure out what was actually written by whoever in the distant past, why on earth should we believers not do the same with the Bible, which is far more important than all that other stuff?

As for the longer endings of Mark 16, whether vv. 9-20 or the unversed ending, and 1 John 5:7, you are free to believe whatever you want. The reward for that will be for you alone and it will come from the Lord, not from me. As for not calling me a heretic, please, don't think that I care. Anyone is free to call me anything that takes their fancy or treat me however they please. I only get troubled if I find that their opinions or actions toward me are sanctioned by the Scriptures. That is when I try to correct whatever it is that they see in me. So, call me whatever you please, or don't, if you prefer, but don't imagine that I see it as any favor of any kind. I will still warn you that you are being a heretic and a blasphemer if, in fact, you actually are being those things. If you listen to me, the warning will do you good. If you don't, that is really your own problem with the Lord. I can assure you though that neither Mark 16:9-20 nor 1 John 5:7 are part of the Bible at all. And there are quite a number of other interpolations and corruptions too that we have inherited besides them. If you wish to believe them all as Truth, by all means, do. It's not my problem.

As for women speaking in church etc, first, of course, Scriptures interpret each other. That is how they work. One part of the Bible explains and contextualizes or delimits another in order for a perfect system of Truth to emerge. But they don't negate or break each other. As to your specific questions, I preferred not to address them because the conversation is stretching with objections from you to the authority of the Bible. I can give you short answers to these things, but I cannot start developing comprehensive discussions of the in's and out's of each issue in addition to demonstrating to you the folly of challenging the authority of the Scriptures. Just look how long this response already is from answering each challenge you've thrown out so far. So, short answers:

1. The Bible does teach not only that women are not to speak in church (and neither should anyone else who is not the pastor-teacher or who is not asking a question in an orderly fashion or not offering some kind of useful help that the pastor-teacher allows), but also that women ought not to have teaching authority over men. Although this is spelled out in the epistles, it is part of the fabric of the Bible from beginning to end.

2. We are no longer under the Law, but the Law is still part of Scripture and a pastor-teacher worth his weight will teach from both the Law and the New Testament:

*52 And Jesus said to them, "Therefore every scribe who has become a disciple of the kingdom of heaven is like a head of a household, who brings out of his treasure **things new and old.**"*
Matthew 13:52 (NASB)

The Law is a shadow of the Cross, so in many ways it helps us understand the New Testament. But that does not mean that we are responsible to keep the Sabbath or make sacrifices or observe feasts and holidays and pay tithes of all kinds. Doing those things is pretending that the Cross never happened. That is the blasphemy that can never be forgiven, it is the sin of unbelief.

As for your response to your claims, regarding the first, the words attributed to the Lord in Luke 9:55-56 are not part of the Bible. They too are a corruption. As for "turn the other cheek," the Lord was teaching us how to behave as individuals suffering humiliation, not when our lives are threatened or when our legitimate civil authority is challenged. Elisha was a prophet of God in the land where God was supposed to be King (1 Samuel 8:7; 12:12). That made him a civil authority. When he was challenged in the manner that he was, it was right for the Lord to stamp His Authority on those children and teach others to respect His Emissary (cf. Psalm 105:15; Revelation 11:5). People who have authority must exercise it for the sake of others, not necessarily for theirs. That was what happened there. Beseeching the Lord and having His Answer in that manner would teach others to take Elisha seriously and listen to whatever he said for their own good. So, no, that claim cannot be backed by any Scriptural appeal.

As for the mistake, I said you make a lot of mistakes like that. I was not making a demand for perfection. There are slips and then there is carelessness.

Per your second claim, you just made more claims. I don't see any proof. But you need not provide any, since, in the Scriptures themselves, we learn that every church made copies of every writing that they received from the Apostles and prophets like James and Jude and passed them on to other churches (cf. Colossians 4:16). As for what they had before the New Testament, the Old Testament was fully available and kept in places where believers assembled (cf. Luke 4:17). When the New Testament was being written, each assembly made copies and kept in their meeting places where they were read to the assembly whenever they gathered. Each individual believer could, would, and did, in fact, make copies of Scriptures according to their ability to afford the services. So some individuals had the Scriptures in varying degrees of completeness, with some having only a passage from this part of the Bible or other, and others (especially the wealthy) having the whole Bible copied on the most durable material that they could get. Additionally, sometimes, fragments that are found today are only fragments not because they were not complete documents nearly two thousand years ago, but because they were degraded until now.

As for Peter, the Lord Jesus actually called him Satan for trying to turn Him away from the Cross in the example that I gave you. If I were to follow that example, my language would be much harsher than you have endured so far. So, I don't see how you can see your point being made here. It is clear that Peter later repented his earlier foolishness and embraced the Truth and taught it enthusiastically too. So, being called Satan worked out for him. If you have only been called a heretic and blasphemer, that should work out even better for you.

Question #16:

Ihedino3, your posts sometimes are verbose, you often sometimes, write continually at tedious lengths. Tbh, if you arent aware, you would lose someone like _____ in the

thick of your write-up because it all becomes and/or turns into information overload. Besides, lengthy post sets off the antispam bot and the result is like your post getting hidden, just as in above. Talking of _____, he too is guilty of this too. you look at his posts, you wonder where should I jump in, which part should I respond or not respond, which one should I let pass, which one should I leave as hmm, lol

Response #16:

****No response****