

Life's Most Important Question Part II

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[0 : 00] I guess you could call this part two for the subject of life after death, and we've listed this as life's most important question.

And the reason I have concluded that it is life's most important question is simply because if there is no life after death, then there really isn't very much in this life that matters at all anyway.

Anyway, the law of logic, called the law of the excluded middle, don't know how familiar you are with it, but philosophers worldwide are very familiar with the law of the excluded middle, and we would invoke that on behalf of the issue called life after death.

The law of the excluded middle requires an either-or answer with no possibility of a third option. The answer must be yes or no. There is no maybe. Now, it's possible there may be a maybe in your mind as to whether there is life after death, simply because you haven't decided, and you would say, maybe there is and maybe there isn't.

[1 : 25] But that's just your own personal opinion. That is not a position. A position is yes, there is, or no, there isn't. And the law of the excluded middle says there are no options, only two.

And of the two, one must necessarily be right, making the other necessarily wrong. And the law of the excluded middle is applied by all of us every day without even thinking about it.

It's a very simple and necessary idea to life itself. It either is or it is not. And for a very simple illustration, there is a pulpit behind which I am standing right here.

Yes or no. That's how simple it is. And for anybody who says, I'm not quite sure whether there's a pulpit there or not, you are not in touch with reality.

Because it either is or it isn't. And with the law of the excluded middle applied to life after death, there either is such a thing or there is not such a thing.

[2 : 48] I say this and invoke the law of the excluded middle only to reinforce the idea that only one of the two represent reality.

If there is life after death, then there is no possibility of there being no life after death. And if there is no life after death, there is no possibility of there being life after death.

Choose either option, you please, but only one is right. Now, this is so simple and so basic that somebody is probably tempted to say, well, why is he doing this?

Why is he spending the time? You would be amazed at the sloppy thinking that goes on out there.

There are people who say, well, there is life after death for those who really believe it.

And for those who don't, there isn't. That is patent nonsense. The existence of an entity is not determined by whether or not somebody believes it.

[4 : 04] The existence of any entity is determined by whether or not it is factual, whether it is actual, whether or not it actually does exist.

And if it does, it does. And there isn't any believe what you want and that will make it so. That's in keeping with a lot of the modernistic new age type thinking whereby people believe they can create their own reality.

It is complete nonsense. You cannot, you cannot create your own reality. What is, is.

And what isn't, isn't. And it doesn't make any difference how much you believe it. Well, doesn't that negate faith? No. It undergirds faith.

Faith is not built on fluff. Faith is not built on what you want something to be. Faith is built on that which is real.

[5 : 10] We have good and sufficient reason for believing what we do. Some people think that faith is just mustering up some kind of oomph from within you to believe something.

Like the little boy in Sunday school when asked what faith was, he says, Faith is believing something you know isn't so. That's nonsense. That's a study in futility and insanity.

It isn't believing in something that you know isn't so. That is incredulity. It's right next door to stupidity. The Christian faith is not built on nothing.

It is built on good and sufficient evidence. So, with life after death, consider some of the more practical reasons for life after death. The understanding, acceptance, and anticipation of life after death is placed in the hearts of men.

So, it will impact behavior and values that accommodate humanity in this present life. And we have talked about humans worldwide having an internal concept of there being something after this life.

[6 : 35] Now, that doesn't prove there is. But it does give credence to the idea that the preponderance of people are thinking this way the world over.

Let me repeat that. The understanding, acceptance, and anticipation of life after death that is placed in the hearts of men, so it will impact behavior and values that accommodate humanity in this present life.

Then why doesn't it? Because it certainly doesn't in a lot of areas. And a lot of times.

We see worldwide behavior and treatment of our fellow humans taking place in such a way that those who engage in it must surely be persuaded that there is no life after death.

So, all that matters is what you get and what you do in this life. Because when it's over, it's over.

And they behave and act accordingly. Well, let me just put this as bluntly as I can.

[7 : 48] If God etched in the human heart the concept of life after death so that people would be impacted by it and act and treat one another in a manner that is in keeping with that so that knowing there will be a confrontation later on and accountability, if that is why God put that in the human heart, why isn't it having that desired effect?

Because worldwide, we can be pretty brutal. Do you realize, do you realize that more human beings have been violently slain in the last 100 years than in all of the preceding life of humanity?

We have managed to kill each other in a greater number during the last 100 years than all of our ancestors from time immemorial, going back thousands of years.

Does this sound like an improvement up the evolutionary scale? What accounts for this abject brutality, this viciousness and violence that we see?

Genocide, holocausts, wiping out thousands of people, Africa, the tutus and the bantus at it. Not because they're from a different ethnic background or different color skin.

[9 : 54] All got the same color skin. They're just from the wrong tribe. So you kill them. There's only one answer given that can answer man's behavior toward his fellow man.

And that is, God not only etched eternity in the hearts of humanity, he also endowed humanity with that ever-present trouble-causing bugaboo called human volition.

That's the real culprit. Mankind is endowed with the power to choose to do good or to do evil.

And most of us know the difference, most of the time, between moral good and moral evil. So why did God make us this way?

You know, it is incredible how much blame God gets for everything. Now, usually it's George Bush that's blamed for most things, but even before George came along, God gets the blame for a lot.

[11 : 22] Why doesn't he fix this world? Why does he allow the injustice to go on? Why does he allow the hurricanes and the earthquakes? Why does he allow men to be so vicious? And why does he allow children to be abused and tortured and ill-treated?

And what kind of a God is that anyway? And he takes a lot of blame for what goes on in this world. And every time you've got to remember what is behind it is volition.

The power to make choices. And then the next question is, well, why did God make us that way?

He had no choice. Not even the deity has an option.

He has no choice but to give us a volition unless he is going to create us automatons. Where you are programmed to always do the right thing.

But if you have no power of choice, then there is no such thing as obedience or disobedience because everything is just compliance. Sometimes parents wish their kids were more like that.

[12 : 36] But if you know anything as a parent, you know your kid has a volition. And they exercise it. They choose sometimes to just blatantly, rebelliously, disobey you.

And do you know why they do that? Because they're just like you. That's why. And only a love that is optional is a love worth having.

Only an obedience that is optional is an obedience worth having. So God either had to create us volitional or non-volitional.

And if he created us volitional, which is what he did, he endowed our first parents with the capacity to obey or disobey, we know what the choice was. And that set in motion a whole series of things precipitated by what we call the fall.

The fall of humanity. And when humanity fell, it didn't fall upward. It fell down. We are not in an evolutionary mode, either morally, biologically, or any other way.

[14:01] We are in a devolution mode. We started out at the top. And we have been descending ever since. Man rebels in that he suppresses God's truth even to his own harm and detriment.

And I would ask you to turn to Romans chapter 1, if you would please. This is a very key passage. Romans chapter 1. It is a perfect picture that explains why the world is the way it is.

This is a chapter that as we read Romans 1, don't be surprised if within a very short period of time, maybe less than five years from now, it may be against the law to read this chapter.

It is already being tested in court cases in Canada. Because it is purported that some use the Bible to conduct hate speech.

Imagine that. Romans 1 and beginning with verse 16, Paul said, I am not ashamed of the gospel, for it, this gospel, this good news, is the power of God for salvation to everyone who believes, to the Jew first and also to the Greek.

[15:47] For in it, that is, in this gospel, the righteousness of God is revealed from faith to faith, as it is written, that the righteous man shall live by faith.

You see, when the gospel is proclaimed, it is called good news that is designed to offset the bad news. The bad news is we are in terrible shape as individuals and as a human race and that our righteousness fails to be acceptable to God.

So, the good news is Christ died to make his righteousness available to us and we can have it on the basis of accepting him and receiving him as our Savior.

And therein lies the power of God and therein also lies the righteousness of God. If God were not righteous, there wouldn't be any gospel. But because God is righteous and just, this provides a seedbed for the gospel to grow.

And verse 18, for the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness.

[17:10] Now, that is a really, really serious claim. The suppression of truth. that goes on a lot today in the media.

It's called media spin. They can take something that looks bad and report it and spin it in such a way that it looks pretty good.

They can take that which is right and true and honorable and color it in such a way that they make it ugly.

That's the manipulation of truth. And when you suppress the truth, you do so because you don't want to go where the truth will take you.

And you recognize that from afar and you short circuit it back here because you don't want to end up here. So you've got to stop it early.

[18:16] Suppressing the truth is one of the most dangerous things anybody can do in any venue. Picture, if you will, a large Saratoga trunk.

Big box-like trunk. And let's personify truth and make believe that truth is a person and the person is in that trunk, that Saratoga trunk, and the lid is closed and latched.

And from the inside, truth starts knocking, wants to get out of the trunk. trunk, and instead of a man walking up, unlocking the trunk, and opening it so truth can get out and do its work, he sits on it.

So it can't get out. That's the suppression of truth. You recognize that the truth is going to lead to implications and consequences that you don't want to face.

So you kill it right at the beginning. You suppress it. You hold it down. You keep it back so it can't be free and do what it was intended to do. The truth really liberates, sets people free.

[19:51] Just as our Lord said, if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed. Man actually engages in locking up himself and binding himself by hindering and suppressing the truth.

Don't ever be afraid of the truth. It's your greatest ally. That which is true is true because it is true, not because of who believes it or who doesn't believe it.

truth is set forth in Scripture as that which is priceless and precious. We are to be seekers after truth. We are to follow after the truth, search out the truth, protect the truth, proclaim the truth in love because truth is nothing more than a dose of reality.

Truth is what is truth. And the lie is what is not. And the lie proliferates so much because there are so many more lies than there are truths.

There's only one truthful answer. Two plus two equals four. Just one truthful answer. What are all the other answers? They're all lies. How many of them are there? Well, you can't count them.

[21 : 22] But there's only one truth. to that equation. And that which is true is that which corresponds to reality. So, the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men who suppress the truth in unrighteousness because that which is known about God is evident within them.

For God made it evident to them. How did he do that? For since the creation of the world, his invisible attributes, his innate powers and abilities, his eternal power and divine nature have been clearly seen, not vaguely seen, obscurely seen, clearly seen.

Can't miss it. Being understood through what has been made, so that they are without excuse.

Nobody's going to be able to say, but I didn't know. I was clueless. How was I supposed to?

Nobody's going to be able to say that. Even though they knew God, they did not honor him as God, nor give thanks, but they became futile, empty, in their speculations, and their foolish heart was darkened.

Don't be thrown by this word heart. Our word studies in the past have revealed that the Bible uses the word heart synonymously with the mind.

[22 : 58] This is the thinking process. As a man thinketh in his heart, so is he. But it has nothing to do with the blood pump in the chest. It has to do with the core of your being, that heart.

Professing to be wise, they became fools and exchanged the glory of the incorruptible God for an image in the form of corruptible man and of birds and four-footed animals and crawling creatures. Have you ever looked at the deities of ancient Egypt? At the time, the children of Israel were prisoners there and slaves in Egypt, and Egypt's multiplicity of gods, many of them, had the body of a human and the head of a bird with a big beak, or the head of a crocodile, or the head of something else.

These were all pagan deities under the Egyptian worship system. And of course, Egypt was just one of many examples. All of the other countries had theirs as well.

Because, listen, when man rejects truth, a lie is all that's left.

[24 : 16] And you will not operate out of a vacuum. You will go with something. And if you don't go with the truth, you will go with a lie, because that's the only thing remaining.

Therefore, verse 24, God gave them over in the lust of their hearts to impurity that their bodies might be dishonored among them.

In other words, God let them have their own way. God did not impose his superior will and power upon them to contain them, or to disallow their activities, or to short circuit them.

He turned them over and left them to their own devices. And it was not pretty. And it isn't getting any prettier.

He gave them over. They exchanged the truth of God for a lie. What a transaction.

[25 : 34] and worshiped and served the creature rather than the creator who is blessed forever.

Amen. For this reason, God gave them over to degrading passions. This is man moving from normal, quote unquote, to abnormal.

Their women degrading passions for their women exchanged the natural function for that which is unnatural. This is nothing more than woman to woman.

This is lesbianism, which in some circles today is almost a badge of honor. in the same way also, the men abandoned the natural function of the woman and burned in their desire toward one another.

Men with men committing indecent acts and receiving in their own persons the due penalty of their error.

[26 : 54] And all that is saying is that behavior comes with built-in consequences. And they are several. And sometimes fatal.

We bring consequences upon us, good and bad, by our actions. And there's no reason why this should be exempt. It is not.

Just as they did not like to see fit to acknowledge God any longer, God gave them over. You see, if God isn't God, man is.

What else do you have? He's the only other intelligent being on the block. It's man. If God isn't God, man is God.

God and man establishes his own rules, man determines his own reality, man sets his own agenda, man establishes his own morals, right, wrong, etc.

[28 : 03] Man creates his own environment, etc. God is simply removed from the picture. And what you get when man does that is what you see right here in Romans 1.

A depraved mind, a warped mind, a warped intellect, skewed thinking, unable to think clearly or properly or in accordance with reality and the facts.

These are the human imagination that surface and they are amazing. God gave them over to a depraved mind to do those things which are not proper.

Being filled with all unrighteousness, wickedness, greed, evil, full of envy, murder, strife, deceit, malice, they are gossips, slanderers, haters of God, insolent, arrogant, boastful, inventors of evil. These are people who sit around and think up new ways to do evil things. Not content with the status quo, they are the adventurers in evil.

[29 : 42] Amazing list, isn't it? Disobedient to parents, without understanding, untrustworthy, unloving, unmerciful. You realize this is an indictment against the human race?

It's kind of hard to hold your head very high when you read this list, isn't it? And if you're thinking, boy, I'm sure glad that's not true of me, well, if it isn't true of you, you have only one thing to thank for it, and that is the grace of God.

But for the grace of God, here we all are. And it is only this gospel that was introduced in verse 16 that makes the difference between us and them.

Otherwise, we're all cut from the same bolt of cloth. It's pretty ugly. And although they know the ordinance of God that those who practice such things are worthy of death, they not only do the same but also give hearty approval to those who practice them.

And they do that by making movies about it and publicizing it and writing books about it and publishing them and having the TV talk shows where those who engage in these things are on and are held up as paragons of wonderful modernity.

[31 : 07] And they sit there and smile while the audience applauds. That's where we are. Am I being over dramatic?

Am I exaggerating anything? Not in the least. If anything, maybe a short sell. Life after death gives importance, value, and permanence to this present life.

Conversely, no life after death does exactly the opposite. No life after death minimizes the value and the significance of this present life and makes all that occurs in it but a fleeting moment with no enduring consequences.

And what that means, of course, and this ties right in with the evolutionist model, particularly the atheistic evolutionists, and most evolutionists are atheists, but not all.

and their view regarding origins, of course, requires that if there is no God, and if, as Stephen Hawking suggested, and who is Stephen Hawking?

[32 : 32] Stephen Hawking just happens to be the world's most acclaimed physicist. He is a man who is eminently brilliant.

As I've said of some of these people, Stephen Hawking could buy my IQ six times and have change left over.

He is brilliant. World acclaimed, probably the most intelligent man in the world, so say the most intelligent people in the world. He is suffering from the debilitating disease of Lou Gehrig's disease completely paralyzes much of his body physically, and he's lived in a wheelchair for several years. He has already far outlived his life expectancy because most medical authorities considered that he would die a long time ago, but he's still alive and kicking, and he is able to communicate after a fashion, and his brilliance still comes through because apparently the mind isn't all that affected by Lou Gehrig's disease.

It's just the body, how it atrophies, etc. Stephen Hawking said in one of the recent findings that he published, that he really sees no need for the existence of a God, since the universe is capable of creating itself.

[34 : 27] Professing themselves to be wise, they became as fools. Isn't that incredible? a mind like that, the universe is capable of creating itself.

How? For Pete's sake, Stephen, how? Well, given enough time, oh my, you realize, of course, that if this is true, if the universe has created itself by whatever method, it was able to do so, then consequence of that is inescapable.

You and I are biological flukes. We are all a mistake that just happened to happen. We are an aberration. The fact that we even exist as a result of nothing but pure random chance.

There was no intelligence behind it, no design behind it, no intent behind it, no anything behind it. life. And that reduces the meaning of life to an absolute zero.

There is no meaning to life. There is no purpose for living. It's just an accident. That's all. Because origins are extremely important.

[36 : 05] And this huge battle goes on day after day between the evolutionists and the creationists in state courts and even in the Supreme Court. And every now and then somebody has a victory only to be appealed by the other side and referred to another court.

And then in another state there will be another issue crop up, whether it's Bible reading in the schools or whatever. And it just goes on and on. Both sides realize what is at stake.

And what is at stake is the minds of our young people. And make no mistake about this. Whatever is inculcated in the minds of our young people today will come out in the minds of our legislators, lawmakers, judges, etc.

10, 20, 30 years down the road. That's why it's important. There is a definite connection between our present life and life after death.

even though there are great dissimilarities between this life and the next. There remain certain commonalities and definitely a continuity between the two.

[37 : 24] Rejecting life after death does more to cheapen this life than any other concept of existence. life after death does more to cheapen this life than any other concept of existence.

Untold millions living under atheism, as in communist lands where God is officially denied, are those for whom the lives of others mean little, and often even their own.

religion. It's remarkable how that for the past couple of centuries, religion has been pointed to as that which has resulted in carnage and the taking of human life as men have gone to war over religious issues and religious ideas, fighting and combating one another because of it.

And that's true. There have been lots of needless loss of lives through the Inquisition, through other purges that have taken place going all the way back a couple of thousand years even to early Christianity.

And there have been religious underpinnings that were at the core of it and fueled that, no doubt about it.

[38 : 47] But the numbers taken in death as a result of religious convictions do not begin to compare with the untold hundreds of millions of lives wantonly taken under brutal communistic rule and authority.

Joseph Stalin alone was credited with doing away with 50 million of his own countrymen. And the Pol Pot killing fields of the Khmer Rouge defy description.

And they are not in the name of religion. They are all in the name of irreligion. They are all atheistic in their base. Belief in life after death not only makes this life more important and more worth living because it is lived in such a way as those who will give an account.

This not only is more beneficial for the one living it but is more beneficial for all who come in contact with those living it. Belief in life after death also provides a perspective on death in this life.

Not by denial but by the comfort it affords. And while the atheist would charge the Christian the life after death advocate as being unwilling to face the reality of his own mortality so he makes up this story about there being life after death so it will enable him to not only comfort himself with his own mortality but it will enable him to comfort himself over the loss of others and he tells himself I'll see them again.

[40 : 41] But we look at it as just the opposite. We don't see it as denial at all. we see it as facing the reality of death in this life and the absolute confidence of life hereafter and that affords us enormous comfort in staying in power.

as Christians and theistic in our thinking rather than atheistic we believe the aforementioned observations are psychologically philosophically logically and more important biblically built into the human psyche by our creator.

It is only by a rebellious and deliberate effort of humans aided by our fallen volition and by an equally fallen adversary Satan that these truths are denied and even suppressed as we have seen here in Romans 1.

and I want to conclude with this passage in 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 because it powerfully ties in with everything we've been talking about. 2nd Corinthians chapter 4 and verse 3 even if our gospel even if our good news is veiled or obscured it is veiled to those who are perishing they are right now as I speak in the process of perishing and they don't even know it and if you were to tell them that they are perishing they would say you're crazy I feel fine nothing wrong with me and they do not know that they are perishing as they are speaking that in whose case the God of this world and that's none other than the adversary

Satan himself has blinded the minds of the unbelieving you see how many times have I told you that Christianity is a thinking faith what do you think with you think with your mind you receive data through the eyes and ears and you process the information with your mind and your mental capabilities and you reach a conclusion and on that conclusion you act or you build your case or you exercise your faith God of this world has blinded the minds of the unbelieving to the end that they might not see the light of the gospel the good news of the glory of God who is the image of God

[43 : 57] Satan knows where man is because it's where he is and he wants to keep them there and prevent the light of this gospel from shining through you realize what we're saying is that man in his fallenness is in such a mess that nothing short of the very power of God can correct it and that's what Paul said the gospel is the power of God through faith unto salvation to everyone who believes believes this is the faith thing this is why as I've said in the past people ask questions like can the existence of God be proved no not conclusively we can give good and sufficient evidence that there is a

God but you can't prove it conclusively because when you prove something conclusively you eliminate all the opposition you will not find you will not find one person who would deny it if it's proved conclusively but it isn't so the existence of God can be proved but only to the satisfaction of certain people not to the satisfaction of others and this does not mean that evidence is insufficient because the scriptures say that evidence is sufficient God has made it known to them so that he is clearly clearly seen and the reason that evidence is not given in an overwhelming and compelling way is because if that were done we wouldn't be able to operate on the basis of faith because where you have certain knowledge faith is not required this is why faith is going to be done away with and so is hope faith hope and love the first two are going to be scrapped they won't be needed anymore because faith and hope will both have been ushered in to reality and fulfillment and nobody will be hoping for anything and nobody will have faith about anything because everything will be a wrapped up certainty but it isn't now so there is room for faith and that's why

God is operating on the basis of faith he has not given us all the evidence that he could give us but he has given us sufficient evidence to believe for those who want to believe the evidence is adequate for those who do not want to believe no amount of evidence is adequate they've always got a yes but this is why salvation is by grace through faith there is a certain element of unknowing but what God is saying is look I have given you all that you need to know that I am a trustworthy reliable dependable God and I am the one in whom you should put my faith your faith you should put your faith in me because I've given you sufficient reason for doing so remember

Bertrand Russell when interviewed brilliant brilliant man another example of brilliance gone astray interviewer asked him what would you tell God if you stand before him someday and he says Bertrand Russell why didn't you believe he said I would tell him you didn't give me enough evidence you know what I don't think he's going to tell him that at all because I think he's going to know when he stands before the almighty that's an excuse that's not going to fly because the evidence was sufficient when you put your faith and trust in Jesus Christ you are simply saying you believe what God has revealed and you see Christ as your only hope that's the bottom line and this is as real as reality gets not only for the afterlife but for this life have you question or comment we've got a roving mic we'll take a moment or two anybody okay I see no hands so we'll stand and be dismissed please remember to pick up your

CD on the way out if you didn't get one last week you will you will really be blessed by it father we are truly grateful for the evidence that you have provided because we know that it coming from you it is not only true it is adequate even more than adequate and we are so grateful that there was a

day when we heard that Christ died for our sins and we were able to make a connection we understood and we appreciated the consequences and as a simple act of our will we exercised our faith and our trust and put it in the only one who can save and deliver thank you for being that savior thank you for all that you provided for us help us to be responsible in how we handle this truth we bless you for it in

[50 : 20] Christ name amen