

THE 10 CONUNDRUMS

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- 1) **SUFFERING AND EVIL:** Christianity teaches that God is omniscient, omnipotent, and all-loving, demonstrating boundless compassion. However, the undeniable presence of suffering in the world calls into question at least one of these divine attributes. This posed an insurmountable challenge to my Christian beliefs. In the Bible, a supposedly benevolent God suffocates (drowns) 99.99%+ of humanity during the supposed worldwide flood because Genesis 6:6-10 says He regretted creating man. Noah found favor in God's sight and God was hoping that Man V2.0 would be better, but that did not come to pass. This version of God does not seem to be perfect or know the future or even how to learn from HIS mistakes in making Man V1.0!
- 2) **PRAYERS NOT ANSWERED:** Bubonic plague killed more than 25 million people in fourteenth-century Europe. These Christians prayed. Yet there was silence. During the Holocaust 6,000,000 Jews were killed and prayed to God for deliverance. Yet there was silence. Each day 25,000 humans on planet Earth die from lack of water and food (9,125,000 people per year!) Many of these are Muslim or animistic. They die a slow death as they watch their children die before them while they pray. Yet there is silence again.
- 3) **ILLNESS:** A benevolent God does not interact with humanity or solve the problems of humanity such as illness, pandemics, miscarriages, birth defects, cancer, etc. Instead, science has provided cures for smallpox, polio, and rinderpest. Vaccination protects against others such as measles, mumps, and rubella.
- 4) **GOD CONFUSION:** God does not appear to be concerned with informing humanity which specific deity or deities they should worship. So far mankind has worshiped over 3,000 gods. People of different faiths around the world have visions, dreams, ecstatic experiences, 'a burning in the bosom', and extraordinary happenings that prove their faith is the truest and most pleasing to God.
- 5) **LACK OF PROOF:** There is a lack of empirical, verifiable evidence for the existence of God or even for major events in sacred scripture. For example, there is no scientific proof of a worldwide flood and no archeological proof of the Exodus from Egypt. Extraordinary claims require extraordinary evidence.
- 6) **CONTRADICTIONS IN SACRED SCRIPTURE:** Contradictions and inconsistencies abound. For instance, Matthew 27:3-10 and Acts 1:16-19 have different stories of the death of Judas Iscariot and the purchase of the field of blood. Which is correct? Matthew 2:13-14 says that after the birth of Jesus, the Holy Family fled to Egypt while Luke 2:39 says they returned to Galilee. Which is correct? These two examples show us that not all of the Bible can, or should be, taken literally.

- 7) MORALLY PROBLEMATIC ISSUES IN SCRIPTURE:** In the OT, God supposedly orders the annihilation of the Amalekites, including not only their fighting men but also their pregnant wives, their children, their livestock, and their pets. In other instances when battles were won, God (?) let the wives of the fallen enemy be taken to become sex slaves of the Hebrews. Another example is that the Bible never condemns slavery. A prohibition against human slavery as the 11th Commandment surely would have saved humans worldwide from much suffering over the centuries. Human attributes such as anger, regret, revenge, hate, jealousy, etc. are routinely applied to a supposedly perfect God. We see in scripture that man has truly created God in his image.
- 8) SCIENCE HAS BETTER EXPLANATIONS FOR NATURAL PHENOMENA:** The advancement of human knowledge from science has provided naturalistic explanations for such things as the causes of violent weather, volcanoes, earthquakes, and mental illness. These are more coherent and consistent explanations than religious beliefs attributing these to divine punishment or demonic activity.
- 9) RELIGIOUS DOCTRINE CHANGES:** Religious beliefs are often shaped by the historical and cultural context in which they emerge and often evolve and change over time. In the synoptic gospels, Jesus is an apocalyptic preacher warning people to repent for the kingdom of God is near. He never declares himself to be God. But in the Gospel of John, Jesus often proclaims he is equal with God. The Gospel of John was written decades after the synoptic gospels. Theology changes.
- 10) SCRIPTURE WRITTEN BY MEN:** There is no science or technology revealed in the scriptures newer than Iron Age technology. There are no 'Only God could have known that at that time!' proof verses. Ancient men wrote hundreds of years after events supposedly occurred in the OT and people not even living in Palestine wrote down the oral traditions passed down from NT times decades earlier. Fallible man both creates, translates, and interprets fallible scriptures.

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