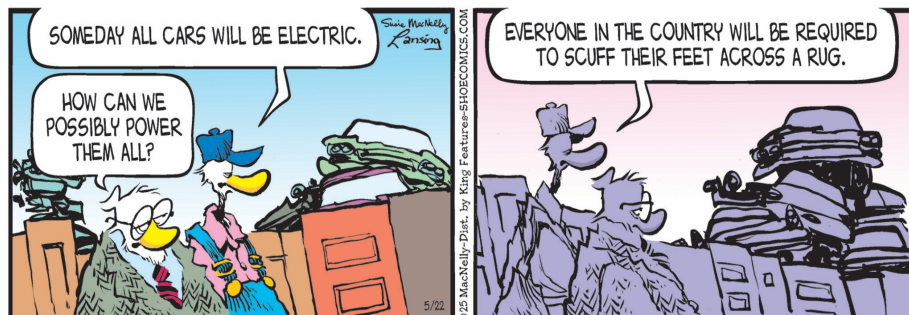




Questions & Replies by John T. Polk II, www.johntpolkll.com
QUESTION: "Where is God when storms cause death and destruction?"

ANSWER: A study of God's History shows He has answered this question many times.

1. In Times Of Trouble. Israel's government and religious leaders said "to a tree, 'You are my father,' And to a stone, 'You gave birth to me.' For they have turned *their* back to Me, and not *their* face. But in the time of their trouble They will say, 'Arise and save us.' But where are your gods that you have made for yourselves? Let them arise, If they can save you in the time of your trouble; For according to the number of your cities Are your gods, O Judah" (**Jeremiah 2:27-28**). Today, the notion that we came from animals is called "Evolution." Children are taught that Earth & Time, but not God, are responsible for their existences. But when trouble comes, no one cries out to Dinosaurs or "Evolution" for help! *The furious storm fronts in June/July caused death and destruction, and thousands called out for God, not "Evolution!"*
2. Where Is God When Trouble Arises? "My tears have been my food day and night, While they continually say to me, 'Where is your God?'" (**Psalms 42:3**). *Unbelievers taunt believers, whose faith is being tested, by asking: "Where was God?" It is an ignorant question asked by cruel and heartless people that assumes:*

1) God is limited. Unbelieving Syrians challenged Israelites with: "The LORD is God of the hills, but He is not God of the valleys" (**1 Kings 20:28**). God met that challenge by defeating the Syrians.

2) That this test is "un-get-over-able." Believers simply say: "We are hard pressed on every side, yet not crushed; we are perplexed, but not in despair" (**2 Corinthians 4:8**).

3) God is too removed to know our problem: "Am I a God near at hand," says the LORD, 'And not a God afar off?'" (**Jeremiah 23:23**). Prayers to God are answered by mountains of help!

3. How Does God Help? When the time came to build the tabernacle at Mount Sinai, "Bezalel and Aholiab, and every gifted artisan in whom the LORD has put wisdom and understanding, to know how to do all manner of work for the service of the sanctuary, shall do according to all that the LORD has commanded" (**Exodus 36:1**). *When needs arise, it seems there are always plenty of people who have the talent, and know God's Will, who are ready to step up and do what needs to be done. Ask "how will God help," then look at those who do. "But as for you, brethren, do not grow weary in doing good" (2 Thessalonians 3:13). Since Jesus said our giving should not only be done: "before men, to be seen by them" (Matthew 6:1), it's easy to overlook the generous response from churches of Christ who help in time of need.* -----John T. Polk II

~“A gem is not polished without rubbing, nor a man perfected without trials.” — Chinese Proverb

~ Sign in a school: “In time of national disaster the ban on prayer in this building is temporarily suspended.”

~“Doubt your doubts before you doubt your faith.”

— Dieter F. Uchtdorf

~“I sink in deep mire, Where there is no standing; I have come into deep waters, Where the floods overflow me. I am weary with my crying; My throat is dry; My eyes fail while I wait for my God.”
(Psalm 69:2-3 NKJV)



By David Sproule

Has Man Seen God or Not?

There are some Scriptures that clearly state, “No one has seen God at any time” (John 1:18; 1 John 4:12; cf. 1 Tim. 6:16 1 John 4:20). But there are other verses that indicate Moses and company “saw the God of Israel” (Ex. 24:10), Jacob saw “God face to face” (Gen. 32:30), and Moses spoke with God “face to face” (Num. 12:8). How can some Scriptures say that no one saw God and other Scriptures say that people saw God? Isn’t that a contradiction?

Add to that these verses. God said, “You cannot see My face; for no man shall see Me, and live” (Ex. 33:20), and yet Jacob said, “I have seen God face to face, and my life is preserved” (Gen. 32:30). Those seem to contradict each other. Don’t they?

Let’s start with the nature of God. This is the key. Jesus tells us that “God is spirit” (John 4:24). He is “invisible” (Col. 1:15; 1 Tim. 1:17). Paul further explains that the Lord dwells “in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see” (1 Tim. 6:16). It’s not just that “no man has seen” God—no one, by the very nature of God’s essence, “can see” that which is “invisible.”

So then what did those persons “see” when they “saw” the invisible God who cannot be seen? Jesus said that He was the only one to see God in His true essence, as He

alone shares that essence (John 6:46). So, while “No one has ever seen God,” Jesus, “who is at the Father’s side, he has made him known” (John 1:18, ESV). By seeing Jesus in the flesh, man was able to see the Father (John 14:9).

When man saw God in the flesh, he was seeing God, but in a human form (not in “His [spirit] form,” John 5:37; cf. Phil. 2:7). Could this, then, be the same thing that Jacob (Gen. 32:30) and Moses (Ex. 33:11) saw? That’s the conclusion that follows the evidence, as the Bible does not contradict itself, especially within the same paragraph—“the Lord spoke to Moses face to face...But He said, ‘You cannot see My face...and live’” (Ex. 33:11, 20).

Let’s allow the Bible to explain speaking to the Lord face to face. In Numbers 12, the Lord spoke to Aaron and Miriam in “vision” and “dream” (12:1-6), but He spoke with Moses “face to face” (12:8). “Face to face” meant that God was speaking “plainly, and not in dark sayings; And [Moses] sees the form of the Lord.” God spoke in an intimate way with certain Bible characters, revealing Himself (even His “glory,” Ex. 33:18, 22) through visible forms and manifestations, as if they were seeing His face. It is a figurative way of emphasizing how close God was with certain ones, but as humans, they were limited to only see God in limited capacities through which God revealed Himself to them. They saw what God wanted His humans to see.

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The Benefits of Knowing God Through His Word

When Peter wrote his second epistle, he wrote to “those who have obtained like precious faith” (1:1). That includes you and me, if we are Christians! Then in the following three verses, he mentioned something interesting about “the knowledge of God” (1:2). I believe within this section are four incredible benefits of knowing God through His word.

Here’s the full text: “To those who have obtained like precious faith with us by the righteousness of our God and Savior Jesus Christ: Grace and **peace** be multiplied to you in the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord, as His divine **power** has given to us all things that pertain to life and godliness, through the knowledge of Him who called us by glory and virtue, by which have been given to us exceedingly great and precious **promises**, that through these you may be **partakers** of the divine nature...” (1:2-4)

In this particular translation (NKJV), there are four words that begin with “P” that reveal these incredible benefits.

- * **Peace** - The more we know God through His word, the more at peace we will be. Understanding just who God is and having a relationship with Him brings great peace of mind, life, and soul.
- * **Power** - When we gain a greater understanding of God through His word, we will truly stand in awe of His power. And we will also realize that He will use His power to help and guide us in many ways.
- * **Promises** - When we read God’s word, we will see many of His precious promises. We will also see how He has always kept them with His people, and this will assure us that He will keep them all!
- * **Partakers** - When we consume and obey God’s word, we deepen our relationship with Him. He then shares many wonderful blessings with us.

Of course, there are many other benefits to knowing God through His word, but these four ought to be enough to encourage us to spend more and more time reading the Bible – God’s precious word.

- Edd Sterchi