

3ABN SABBATH SCHOOL PANEL
007 - Tuesday - February 11, 2025

THE SKEPTICAL THEIST

Religious Theism: is the view that all limited or finite things are dependent in some way on one supreme or ultimate reality of which one may also speak in personal terms. In Judaism, Christianity, and Islam, this ultimate reality is often called **GOD**.

There are various types of theism, including, but not limited to,

- **Monotheism**, the belief in exactly **One God**.
- **Polytheism**, the belief in **many gods**.
- **Pantheism**, the belief that **God and the universe are one and the same**.
- **Panentheism**, the belief that **God is present throughout the universe, but as a separate entity**.

In each of these points of view, God is prosecuted for the following reason, many don't understand **why God allows what He does** and **why God does what he does**.

God proclaims in **Isaiah 55:8-9** “**For My thoughts are not your thoughts, nor are your ways My ways,’ says the Lord. ‘For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts’**”

- God's thoughts are far more incomparable than ours.
- We cannot even imagine the complexities of God's plan for history.

- Given this, why should we expect to be in a position to know just what God's reasons are for what He does or does not do in various situations?

The skeptical theist is one who believes God has good reasons for acting as He does, but given our limited knowledge, we should not expect to be in a position to know just what those reasons are.

How does the psalmist approach the evil and injustice around him? What does he see that puts his understanding in a different perspective?

Asaph Struggle—**The Tragedy of the Wicked, and the Blessedness of Trust in God: Psalm 73:1-16 (NKJV)** “(1) Truly God *is* good to Israel, To such as are pure in heart. (2) But as for me, my feet had almost stumbled; My steps had nearly slipped. (3) For I *was* envious of the boastful, When I saw the prosperity of the wicked. (4) For *there are* no pangs in their death, But their strength *is* firm. (5) They *are* not in trouble *as other* men, Nor are they plagued like *other* men. (6) Therefore pride serves as their necklace; Violence covers them *like* a garment. (7) Their eyes bulge with abundance; They have more than heart could wish. (8) They scoff and speak wickedly *concerning* oppression; They speak loftily. (9) They set their mouth against the heavens, And their tongue walks through the earth. (10) Therefore his people return here, And waters of a full *cup* are drained by them. (11) And they say, “How does God know? And is there knowledge in the Most High?” (12) Behold, these *are* the ungodly, Who are always at ease; They increase *in* riches. (13) Surely I have cleansed my heart *in* vain, And washed my hands in innocence. (14) For all day long I have been plagued, And chastened every morning. (15) If I had said, “I will speak thus,” Behold, I would

have been untrue to the generation of Your children. (16) When I thought how to understand this, It was too painful for me—

Asaph's mind was opened to understand God more clearly:

Wicked: Evil boasting, no regrets in death, no daily problems, no difficulties, pride, limitless abundance, unrestrained violence, covetous, no real need, scoff at God, speak against righteousness, worldly influence, never struggles with thirsts, mocks God, increase in wealth,

Psalm 73:17-28 (NKJV) “(17) Until I went into the sanctuary of God; *Then* I understood their end. (18) Surely You set them in slippery places; You cast them down to destruction. (19) Oh, how they are *brought* to desolation, as in a moment! They are utterly consumed with terrors. (20) As a dream when *one* awakes, So, Lord, when You awake, You shall despise their image. (21) Thus my heart was grieved, And I was vexed in my mind. (22) I *was* so foolish and ignorant; I *was like* a beast before You. (23) Nevertheless I *am* continually with You; You hold *me* by my right hand. (24) You will guide me with Your counsel, And afterward receive me to glory. (25) Whom have I in heaven *but You*? And *there is* none upon earth *that* I desire besides You. (26) My flesh and my heart fail; *But God is* the strength of my heart and my portion forever. (27) For indeed, those who are far from You shall perish; You have destroyed all those who desert You for harlotry. (28) But *it is* good for me to draw near to God; I have put my trust in the Lord GOD, That I may declare all Your works.”

Asaph was troubled by the evil in the world. He looked around him and saw the wicked prospering. Everything seemed unjust and unfair. He had no answers to give. He wondered whether it is even

worth believing in and serving God. Until, that is, he looked into the sanctuary.

When we don't understand God's plan, know that God has a "secret place."

1. God cannot be intellectually contained: **Job 11:7 (NKJV)** "**Can you search out the deep things of God? Can you find out the limits of the Almighty?**"
2. God cannot be comprehended—but He can be trusted: **Proverbs 3:5-6 (NKJV)** "**Trust in the LORD with all your heart, And lean not on your own understanding; (6) In all your ways acknowledge Him, And He shall direct your paths.**"

If we allow **doubt to occupy even the corners of our heart**, God will **become our victim**. It is **not whether we can trust God**, but **whether God can trust us**.

3. If God does not reveal it, don't search for it: **Deuteronomy 29:29 (NKJV)** "**“The secret *things* belong to the LORD our God, but those *things which* are revealed *belong* to us and to our children forever, that we may do all the words of this law.”**
4. Don't rush God's timing: **1 Corinthians 4:5 (NKJV)** "**Therefore judge nothing before the time, until the Lord comes, who will both bring to light the hidden things of darkness and reveal the counsels of the hearts. Then each one's praise will come from God.**"
5. God's revelations are based on our readiness to receive what He reveals: **John 16:12 (NKJV)** "**I still have many things to say to you, but you cannot bear *them* now.**"

6. All that is unknown and misunderstood will be revealed: **Matthew 10:26 (NKJV)** “Therefore do not fear them. For there is nothing covered that will not be revealed, and hidden that will not be known.”
7. The gospel is revelatory: **Colossians 1:26 (NKJV)** “The mystery which has been hidden from ages and from generations, but now has been revealed to His saints.”
8. Our confidence come from knowing: **Isaiah 46:9-10 (NKJV)** “Remember the former things of old, For I am God, and there is no other; I am God, and there is none like Me, (10) Declaring the end from the beginning, And from ancient times things that are not yet done, Saying, “My counsel shall stand, And I will do all My pleasure.”