

# *819 Is God at Work Today?*

## *Phil Sanders*

### *God's Answers to Life's Questions*

Some folks think God is absent in our world today; others think that God is only an influence for conflict and evil. Is God at work in the world today for good? How can we find God's goodness and love? There are people who never seem to know God is at work, because they shut their eyes and heart against him. I read recently of a professor in Iowa who believed Bible study should end. He believed we should completely eliminate any influence of the Bible in the modern world. He could see no reason to have an ancient book that endorses everything from genocide to slavery. All he could see in God or the Bible was evil. Such a man is very narrow in his thinking and blind to all the good God does. How sad that this man sees only what he wants to see and ignores all the good in what the Bible has done for mankind.

I am amazed more and more as I grow older at how easily people can slip into a very narrow view of life and of God. Some folks close their eyes and their minds to the beauty of God and see only the evil and the ugly. Several years ago in graduate school, I spent a couple of semesters studying skeptics and atheists. One of the things I found was that skepticism and atheism grew more out of attitude than it did out of evidence. Atheists and skeptics tended to look only on the disorder and ugly in life and this world. They missed the order, the beauty, the grandeur, and the wisdom so evident in our universe.

I have always loved the inspired apostle Paul's prayer in Ephesians chapter 1. Paul prayed in verses 18-19, "I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe." God's power towards us who believe is great! Have you ever had an "aha!" experience—awakening to some great truth that had eluded you up until that time? That's what Paul wanted for the Ephesians. He wanted them to understand what God causes to happen—God is at work! God has great power—and His power works in the lives of His people.

You might ask how God is at work. He is working in many different ways. First, God is at work in the world. The prophet of God, King David, said in Psalm 19:1, "The heavens are telling of the glory of God; and their expanse is declaring the work of His hands." One can hardly look at the beauty, the order, and the wisdom of this world and the universe and not see how wise and powerful God is. The God who makes the sun to shine and flowers to bloom, the God who regulates times and seasons has such great power and wisdom that it is truly beyond our understanding. Paul made this statement in Acts 14:16-17: "And in the generations gone by He permitted all the nations to go their own ways; and yet He did not leave Himself without witness, in that He did good and gave you rains from heaven and fruitful seasons, satisfying your hearts with food and gladness" All we have, all our blessings come from God!

Jesus is not only our Creator, He is also the one who keeps this world together. The Bible says in Colossians 1:15-17, "And He [Jesus] is the image of the invisible God, the first-born of all creation. For by Him all things were created, both in the heavens and on earth, visible and invisible, whether thrones or dominions or rulers or authorities-- all things have been created by Him and for Him. And He is before all things, and in Him all things hold together." God's power and wisdom cause our seasons, cause the earth to rotate every 24 hours making night and day, cause the moon to revolve around the earth every 28 days and controlling the tides of the ocean, and cause the earth to go around the sun every 365 and one fourth days determining our year and our seasons. This could not just happen on its own; God has been in control.

The Lord Jesus taught us to pray in Matthew 6:11: 'Give us this day our daily bread.' We are so blessed to have food to eat each day, food that God provides. Have you ever thought about the power of a seed planted in the ground? One kernel of corn planted in the ground, watered and fertilized can produce an ear of corn with sixteen rows and 800 kernels. Many cornstalks will have more than one ear! God created that kernel of corn with the information and the ability to reproduce itself that way. God is indeed powerful! The Lord Jesus said in Mark 4:27-29, "The kingdom of God is as if a man should scatter seed on the ground. He sleeps and rises night and day, and the seed sprouts and grows; he knows not how. The earth produces by itself, first the blade, then the ear, then the full grain in the ear. But when the grain is ripe, at once he puts in the sickle, because the harvest has come." God has been taking care of us in marvelous ways for a very long time.

Second, God is at work in your salvation. God sent His Son to die on the cross; God through the Holy Spirit inspired men to write the Bible (gospel), which has the power to save; and Christ built His church, the body of the saved. From the very beginning of time, God has been working toward your salvation. The apostle Paul by inspiration said in Ephesians 2:4-9, "But God, being rich in mercy, because of His great love with which He loved us, even when we were dead in our transgressions, made us alive together with Christ (by grace you have been saved), and raised us up with Him, and seated us with Him in the heavenly places, in Christ Jesus, in order that in the ages to come He might show the surpassing riches of His grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus. For by grace you have been saved through faith; and that not of yourselves, it is the gift of God; not as a result of works, that no one should boast."

The salvation we enjoy in Christ was not simple or easy. It is the gift of God, and for that we are so thankful. But gifts are not always cheap. The cost of your salvation was not cheap. God sacrificed his Son Jesus, and Jesus sacrificed His body on the cross for you and me. I don't believe any of us can say that salvation is so cheap and easy that we should take it for granted or treat it lightly as if it were not important. When I hear people put down the Lord, the Bible, or the church, I think of how ungrateful and unkind they are. They don't appreciate what God did for them to save them, what lengths He was willing to go to give them eternal life. The Bible is the message of that life. Without the message of the Bible we would all be in great peril—without hope and without God in this present world.

The Bible teaches us how to be united with Christ, how the blood of Christ cleanses us, and how we can have new life with Christ. The Bible says in Colossians 2:12-13, "having been buried with Him in baptism, in which you were also raised up with Him through faith in the working of God, who raised Him from the dead. And when you were dead in your transgressions and the uncircumcision of your flesh, He made you alive together with Him, having forgiven us all our transgressions." You may not realize it, but it is God is "at work" in baptism. In baptism God unites us with Christ, washes away our sins, takes away that old man of sin, buries us with Christ, and raises us from spiritual death to life. In baptism God adds us to the church and makes us His children. Oh God is very busy working on us in baptism. For this reason, I cannot quite understand why anyone would say baptism is unnecessary for our salvation. Baptism is when God works on us.

And God hasn't forgotten us once we become saved as Christians. Now every Christian sins. He wishes he wouldn't, hates it when he does, and wants to stop it afterward. God knows we are weak and has provided for our weaknesses. The Bible says in Hebrews 7:25, "Hence, also, He is able to save forever those who draw near to God through Him, since He always lives to make

intercession for them.” You see, that’s what Jesus is doing right now for us. He is interceding with the Father on our behalf, asking the Father to forgive us and to continue blessing us, even when we have sinned. Oh, I am so thankful for the Lord who loves me enough to pray for me.

Third, God is at work answering your prayers. The Bible says in Isaiah 65:24, "It will also come to pass that before they call, I will answer; and while they are still speaking, I will hear." God wants to hear your prayers. He invites you to pray to Him. The Bible says in James 1:17, "Every good thing bestowed and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights, with whom there is no variation, or shifting shadow." God loves us enough to hear our prayers and to help us when we need Him. The apostle Paul reminds us in Ephesians 3:20-21, "Now to Him who is able to do exceeding abundantly beyond all that we ask or think, according to the power that works within us, to Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations forever and ever. Amen."

Fourth, God is busy shaping our lives. He is at work in us. The Bible says in Philippians 1:6, "For I am confident of this very thing, that He who began a good work in you will perfect it until the day of Christ Jesus." God is making us into His people, doing His work, and preparing us for an eternity in heaven with Him. What God is doing in and for us in this life is preparing us for the life to come. The Bible continues in Philippians 2:12-13, "So then, my beloved, just as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your salvation with fear and trembling; for it is God who is at work in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure." God is shaping our hearts, our attitudes, our will, and our lives to conform to His will, so that we may please Him and live with always.

God did not save us to for us to sit on the pew and do nothing. He saved us so that we might be His servants, doing good works and impacting the world for love and righteousness. The apostle Paul said in Ephesians 2:10, "For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them." So much good is being done in the world because of God and the Bible. Because of the love of God and the teaching of the Bible, Christians feed the hungry, take care of widows and orphans, help unwed mothers, provide help to the lonely and homeless, and point sinners to righteousness. That foolish Iowa professor has failed to take into consideration all the good that God and the Bible have done to lift up an otherwise dismal and bleak world. Thank God we have a Bible!

I saw a book the other day written by a skeptic, called *The God Problem*. His subtitle suggested that God never addresses the problem of evil. I wondered which Bible he was reading, because it is not the

God and the Bible I have spent my life studying. God knows about our suffering and the cross is a marvelous demonstration of God’s willingness to suffer for us. The Bible certainly does address suffering, and I’ll speak more about that on another program. The Bible does say this in Romans 8:28, "And we know that God causes all things to work together for good to those who love God, to those who are called according to His purpose." God doesn’t stop every event of suffering, but He does take that suffering and causes it to work for good. We don’t always understand what God is doing or why; but we do know that God loves us and will use every circumstance in our lives, pleasing or painful, to work for good in some way. We can trust God!

The sweet psalmist of Israel, David, who was inspired of God, said in Psalm 103:1-5, "Bless the LORD, O my soul; And all that is within me, bless His holy name. Bless the LORD, O my soul, And forget none of His benefits; Who pardons all your iniquities; Who heals all your diseases; Who redeems your life from the pit; Who crowns you with lovingkindness and compassion; Who satisfies your years with good things, So that your youth is renewed like the eagle." God has been working in our lives a long, long time. It’s not that He is hidden; it is that we are sometimes distracted by life and unable to see what He is doing in our lives. The Bible is such a treasure and reminds us of all the good God is doing for us and in us. Paul said in Acts 20:32, "And now I commend you to God and to the word of His grace, which is able to build you up and to give you the inheritance among all those who are sanctified." God’s word is far from being harmful. It is the source of love and life and good and righteousness. We need the Bible every day to help us grow and to live the life God intended for us. I join Paul in that prayer in Ephesians 1:18-19: I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened, so that you may know what is the hope of His calling, what are the riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints, and what is the surpassing greatness of His power toward us who believe."

God can work in your life, IF you let Him. He won’t twist your arm; He won’t make you do anything. But if you out of love put your life into His hands, God can do amazing things. You’ve got to trust Him and let Him work in you. That starts by trusting Him enough to repent of your sins and confess the name of Christ before others. Christ doesn’t want a secret disciple. He wants you to confess with your mouth that He is your Lord and that you believe He is the Christ, the Son of the living God. After you’ve repented and made that confession, God wants you to be baptized into Christ, where God cleanses you with the blood of Jesus and makes you into one of His own children. Won’t you do that today? Won’t you obey the gospel and put the Lord first? Will you let God work in your life?

*Copyright 2007, Phil Sanders  
Concord Road Church of Christ  
8221 Concord Rd., Brentwood, TN 37027  
1-877-226-5747*

[phil@God-answers.org](mailto:phil@God-answers.org)

[www.tv.God-answers.org](http://www.tv.God-answers.org)