

## QUESTIONS ATHEISTS' ASK: WHO MADE GOD?

David Halbrook

People who choose not to believe in God often have many questions for those who do. We who believe God exists remind atheists and agnostics that since physical things cannot create themselves, then they must have been created by a Being more powerful and intelligent than any human being. All things have a builder—except God (Hebrews 3:4).

A common response by an unbeliever is, “If humans and all things must have a creator in order to exist, then, if God exists, who created him?” Acknowledging that no human can create himself, he claims that the same must be true of God.

The difference is that God is not human. He is a different type of being. It is not reasonable to claim that the laws of physical things apply to a Being who is neither human nor physical.

God identified Himself as “I AM” (Exodus 3:14). Unless God told us, we could not know He always has and will exist. Of course, then the atheist will ask why he should trust the Bible—another answerable question for another time.

(Visit [WWW.QVCOC.COM](http://WWW.QVCOC.COM) for more discussion of this topic)

-- *Editor's Note:* This bulletin has something for almost everyone—the undevoted Christian, the Christian concerned for the undevoted Christian, and for the unbeliever who has been conformed to the thinking of this age, which even influences Christians at times. I hope at least one of these articles will build up your faith. Remember to help us maximize the money we are spending on the articles in *Arkansas Weekly* by helping others know about these weekly articles.

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# The Exhorter

Acts 11:23 *Exhorted them all... cleave unto the Lord*

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## ***IS WITHDRAWING FELLOWSHIP MEAN?***

Greg King

It is unfortunate that there are times when fellowship must be broken. It is unfortunate that there are those who are half-hearted and negligent when it comes to spiritual things. In the cases that I have been involved with it is due to a lack of attendance which is a sign or symptom of a greater problem. The last place a person living in sin wants to be is around those who are desperately trying to avoid sin and serve God with their whole heart. Repeated efforts are made to plead and encourage those in error, but to no avail. A letter is written explaining once again the danger that they are in and the action that the Bible teaches the church to take. Often times the response of the one in sin is a defensive one. They lash out saying all sorts of things that are not true and trying to make themselves out to be the victim of some heinous crime committed by supposed Christian people.

Withdrawing fellowship is one of the most difficult things a local congregation is ever called upon to do. If it is not difficult, then something is seriously wrong. Withdrawing fellowship is difficult on two levels. First, recognition that someone you love has placed their soul in danger of eternal punishment; is upsetting. Second, the relationship must change; association broken. I can no longer freely associate with a withdrawn person; no longer treat as a fellow-heir of heaven. The public action of withdrawing or marking is to take place when efforts to bring about repentance have failed. This is what is required by God. (2 Thess. 3:6)

Withdrawal is something we do FOR the brother/sister who continues unrepentant in sin. It is not something we do TO them, but something we do FOR them. Long ago, Cain asked, “Am I my brother’s keeper?” The answer is clearly YES! Matthew 18:17 says, “If he refuses to listen to them, tell it to the church; and if he refuses to listen even to the church, let him be to you as a Gentile and a tax collector.” The King James Version says to treat them as a “heathen” and a “publican”. The meaning is to

treat them as those with whom the Jew had neither social nor religious fellowship. We should no longer have normal social/recreational associations with a brother/sister who continues in sin. We must demonstrate to the world and the congregation that the church does not tolerate sin. Paul in addressing the Corinthians said, “I wrote you in my letter not to associate with immoral people; 10 I did not at all mean with the immoral people of this world, or with the covetous and swindlers, or with idolaters, for then you would have to go out of the world. 11 But actually, I wrote to you not to associate with any so-called brother if he is an immoral person, or covetous, or an idolater, or a reviler, or a drunkard, or a swindler--not even to eat with such a one.” 1 Corinthians 5:9-11

We should remember the primary purpose of withdrawal. Paul also tells them concerning the brother in sin, “I have decided to deliver such a one to Satan for the destruction of his flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus” 1 Corinthians 5:5. Every action and word needs to keep the salvation of the erring brother/sister in mind.

Withdrawal is intended to help keep the local body pure. Paul says, “Your boasting is not good. Do you not know that a little leaven leavens the whole lump of dough? Clean out the old leaven so that you may be a new lump, just as you are in fact unleavened. For Christ our Passover also has been sacrificed. Therefore let us celebrate the feast, not with old leaven, nor with the leaven of malice and wickedness, but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth” 1 Corinthians 5:6-8. Withdrawal is intended to safeguard the local body from the corrupting influence of the factious brother/sister and the false teacher.

Discipline is not pleasant (Heb. 12:11). Not pleasant to give; not pleasant to receive, but necessary because of love (Heb. 12:5-6). When a member refuses to honor discipline (continue as if nothing is wrong or changed) they do not show love for the offending brother or sister, but a sorry disregard for the danger faced by their soul. To refuse to honor discipline places one in rebellion to God. Is withdrawing from someone mean? No, it is the loving thing to do and must be done to be obedient to God.

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### ***THEY DEVOTED THEMSELVES***

*Jeff S. Smith (www.trainup.org/ Oct. 27, 2009)*

It is difficult enough to start congregations these days – in regions or nations where the New Testament or its church are little known – but imagine the task before the apostles in starting the church itself from scratch.

As the Acts of the Apostles opens, 120 believers are gathered in an upper room in Jerusalem to plot their shared spiritual fate. After ordaining a new twelfth apostle, the Holy Spirit falls upon that select dozen on the day of Pentecost, enabling them to preach the good news in a way that the assembled throng of thousands could all understand in their native tongues. Peter’s speech is preserved by the historian – it is a sermon that convicts the visitors who when last in Jerusalem had witnessed the execution of one Jesus of Nazareth, the King of the Jews and very son of God. They were cut to the heart and wondered what to do about their mistake. Peter told them to repent – to confess their sin and abandon it – and to be baptized for the forgiveness of sins – to be immersed in water to wash away their guilt (Acts 2:38). “So those who received his word were baptized, and there were added that day about three thousand souls” (Acts 2:41).

Later in the chapter, Luke refers to this new association as the church – the ekklesia in Greek, the assembly of called-out believers. Luke also gives the modern reader a little insight into the early church’s function.

“And they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and fellowship, to the breaking of bread and the prayers” (Acts 2:42).

The work of the infant church, which must be imitated by the modern one, involves evangelism, edification, enthusiasm and education.

The early Christians – not just the apostles – shared the gospel with their neighbors so that the Lord continued to add “to their number day by day those who were being saved” (Acts 2:47; see also Acts 8:4).

They edified one another and whipped up the believers’ enthusiasm for the work by regularly assembling, sharing in praise and prayers and in the weekly observance of the Lord’s Supper (see Acts 20:7, First Corinthians 11:17-34). They spent time together beyond the worship assembly as well, “breaking bread in their homes” and seeing to each one’s peculiar needs.

The early church was concerned with education, for they devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching as part of the Great Commission to instruct believers to observe all things Christ had commanded them (see Matthew 28:20). There was so much to learn.

The early church was equipped for this kind of work because her members were devoted to it. The work was not characterized by entertainment, recreation, dramatics or philosophy, but by the simple and pure plan of salvation and sustaining the redeemed. One wonders how much the church could grow today if such devotion could be reproduced!