

# Unanswered Questions

Romans 1:18-32

On September 11<sup>th</sup>, 2001 four large planes were hijacked at about the same time. Two flew straight into the World Trade Center in New York City. A third plane crashed into the Pentagon and a fourth crashed into the ground. Apparently the passengers were wrestling with the hijackers over control of the plane and it missed its target. Now the questions:

How is it possible?

How could it happen?

What kind of persons could do this?

What will happen next?

Another question which we all need to answer. "If it had been me on that plane where would I be today?" I am sure that none of the people who boarded those 4 flights had any idea that this would be their final flight in life. The same is true with those almost 4000 people who got into the elevators in the World Trade Center. No one was even slightly suspicious that this would be the last day in his or her life.

As a Christian I have been taught that all these tough questions can find answers in the Bible, the Word of God. So we want to examine God's Word for the answers to these unanswered questions. We have certainly been reminded that life is unpredictable and that we must be prepared to die at any moment.

## **1. What kind of person is capable of planning and doing these atrocities? Are they inhuman or subhuman?**

Romans chapter one has some answers to this question about human nature and human capabilities. Verse 18 mentions that "wrath of God". Usually people think about the wrath of God as being related to the end-time judgment of the wicked. But in verses 18-34 the wrath of God is explained to be 'the abandonment of the wicked to their sins'. "God gave them over" is mentioned 3 times in verses 24, 26 and 28. Those who did not glorify God neither gave thanks to Him and substituted the living God with dead images. These are called people who exchanged the truth of God for a lie.

The description of such people is found in verses 27-34

Inflamed (burning) with lust for one another.

Did not retain the knowledge of God.

Depraved minds, to do what should not be done.

Filled with every kind of wickedness, evil, greed and depravity.

Full of envy, murder, strife, deceit and malice.

Gossipers, slanderers, God haters, insolent, arrogant and boastful.

Invent ways of doing evil.

Disobey their parents, senseless, faithless, heartless and ruthless.

Approve those who practice all these evils.

The next comments in God's Word are even more amazing!

Romans 3:9 "What shall we conclude? Are we any better?" The answer is given in the next verse, Romans 3:10, "There is none righteous, not even one".

Romans 3:23, “For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God”.

My mother in Nederland used to tell me that I was a thief and liar before I could even walk or talk. How is this possible? My mother managed a clothing shop and while she was tending to customers I was watching money being exchanged for clothing and this money went into a little box on the table. I was crawling on the floor. One day when my mother had gone to the kitchen I was alone in the shop. I noticed the moneybox on the table! I could not reach the box so I pushed a chair near the table and climbed on the chair and then on the table. My little hand took some coins and put them in my pocket. Suddenly my mother came in and saw my little hand again going into the money box. She called out: “Willem, are you stealing my money?” I could not yet speak but I looked at her and shook my head.

I had a perfect environment. My mother was a holy lady praying with me each day. Yet before I could walk or talk I was both a thief and a liar! As the Bible says, “I was born a sinner”, and did not become a sinner because of bad environment.

This leads us to the next question?

## **2. What if it had been me?**

Life is a risk. Every time we go on a plane it may be our last flight! Every time we go for a car ride, it could be our last trip. Every time we say goodbye to our family it could be the last goodbye. On TV we heard people saying goodbye to wives and husbands, as they were about to crash into the building or into the ground. Something to think about!

The Bible teaches to be prepared to meet our God. None of us knows when the appointed time to die will come. I know we don't like to think about death. It is not fashionable.

For 3 years I lived close to a cemetery in Jakarta and so I was reminded of death nearly every day. It may not be fashionable to think about death but it is very realistic because our time to die will surely come. There is no escape to our appointment with death!

This leads us to the final question:

## **3. How can I be sure that I am going to heaven when I die?**

No intelligent person believes that death is the end of life. Even the primitive Asmat tribal people in Irian Jaya (with whom I lived for 10 years) believed in life after death. These men were so brave in battle, killing their enemies without mercy. The bodies would be cut up into small pieces and roasted in the open fire. Human brains were mixed with sago and also eaten. These men were fearless. Yet they feared death and would openly weep for days when their loved one had died. They were so worried and concerned about life after death. It was considered the great unknown. It took me 3 years to learn their very complicated language before I was able to share the Good News of the Gospel. I was able to answer their questions about life after death from the Word of God. The Holy Spirit worked in the hearts of these Asmat tribal people and I witnessed several thousand Asmat cannibals become believers in the Lord Jesus Christ and be established into five local churches in the villages of Suru, Yapem, Ewer, Wus and Beritin. This was the beginning of the Bible Church movement throughout Indonesia. The Gospel brought total change in their lives and Asmat culture. They could not imagine that some one would die for them and offer forgiveness.

The Bible is written so that we may know. 1 John 5:13, "I write these things to you who believe in the name of the Son of God so that you may know that you have eternal life." "What must I do to be saved?" is the question three thousand people asked the apostles at the Day of Pentecost, after Peter had shared a twenty minutes message. The answer is the same today as it was two thousand years ago! "Repent and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins and you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit". All three thousand people believed on the Lord, repented from their sins and were baptized. It was a public decision in front of thousands of people in the center of the city.

You may make the same decision today! This decision will change your life and destiny for all eternity. You will never regret this decision and be forever thankful. It is the most important decision you can ever make. After making this decision you now may help others come to the same decision. You may know this little chorus:

"I have decided to follow Jesus,  
No turning back, no turning back.  
Though none go with me, still I will follow,  
No turning back, no turning back.  
The cross before me, the world behind me,  
No turning back, no turning back".

Willem Hekman