

### Six Recommendations for dealing with difficult questions

1. Have faith that an adequate explanation exists.
2. Have patience if the answer does not come right away.
3. Examine the context and background of the passage.
4. Study the specific words and phrases as best as you can.
5. Check several conservative commentaries if necessary.
6. Remember that a claim is not proof.

### Illustrations

1. Was Peter mistaken about the timing of the last days (Acts 2:14-21)?

Peter paraphrased Joel 2:28-32, which compresses a long span of time into a single passage  
The phrase ‘in the last days’ is not referring to a limited, 3 ½ year period  
Many other prophecies are also highly compressed (Isa 9:6-7, Rev 22:12, Mark 1:15)  
The Church Age ushered in the final phase or ‘latter days’ of God’s plan  
Peter was speaking from God’s point of view

2. Was Paul mistaken when he said that “the time is short” (1 Cor 7:29)?

Paul was giving advice that was specific to of his day  
The Greek essentially means “the favorable season is ending”  
NT Prophets warned the church of troubles to come (e.g., Acts 11:28, 21:10-11)  
Paul was not saying that the return of Jesus Christ was imminent  
He was saying that tough times lay ahead and that physical life is temporary

3. Was Paul wrong when he said that “the love of money is the root of all evil” (1 Tim 6:10)?

This wording is only found in the King James Version  
The Greek term should be understood as “a root” of all evil  
Most modern translations render this passage accordingly

4. Did Satan influence Pilate to try to release Jesus?

Both God and Satan wanted the crucifixion to proceed but for very different reasons  
Satan possessed Judas for the express purpose of betraying Jesus to death (John 13:27)  
Pilate knew that the chief priests had handed Jesus over because of envy (Matt 27:18)  
He realized that they would blame Rome for executing a popular religious teacher  
By releasing Jesus, Pilate could escape their trap and not release a dangerous criminal  
His wife warned him to avoid the case because of a dream that she had (Matt 27:19)  
There is no indication that Satan influenced Pilate to try to release Jesus

5. How do we avoid “doing our own pleasure on the Sabbath” (Isa 58:13-14)?

The passage is emphasizing the distinction between the holy and the profane  
God is not forbidding all pleasurable activities on the Sabbath, only secular ones

6. Does the creation teach us that the Creator is unfair, cruel, or perverse (Rom 1:18-21)?

Creation is not always teaching us something about God’s nature  
Sin and demonic activity can pervert nature (Mark 5:1ff)  
God cursed the ground after Adam and Eve sinned (Gen 3:17-19)  
Creation was subjected to futility until the kingdom comes (Rom 8:20-22)  
We can learn valuable spiritual lessons from nature (Prv 6:6, Matt 13, 1 Pet 5:8)

7. Does God know the future or can He be surprised by the unexpected (Isa 5:1-4)?

Isaiah 5:1-4 records God’s indictment against Judah in poetic, figurative language  
The Hebrew verb *qavah* means that God was watching or waiting  
God gave Judah the time and the resources to produce good fruit, but they failed

Scripture indicates that God knows all things including the future:  
God is omnipresent (Jer 23:24) and omniscient (Isa 40:28)  
He foretold the fate of Jacob and Esau before their birth (Gen 25:23)  
He predicted Josiah (1 Kgs 13:2, 2 Kgs 23:16) and Cyrus (Isa 44:28, 45:1, Ezra 6:14)  
Jesus foretold Peter’s denial in precise detail at the Last Supper (Mt 26:34, 75)  
God predicted Israel’s failure and exile centuries beforehand (Deut 31:19, 21)

Israel’s history teaches us that we can’t succeed on our own power  
God’s “expectation” was not a belief that Israel would succeed  
Rather, He had waited long enough for them to bring forth good fruit

8. Since Jesus was tempted, could He have sinned and lost eternal life (Heb 4:15)?

Jesus is both fully human and fully divine through the miracle of the Incarnation  
There was no risk that He would sin or fail to become our Savior at His first coming  
The success of His mission was foreordained (e.g., Gen 3:15, Isa 53)  
Since God’s Word cannot be broken, there was no chance of failure (John 10:35)

The term “tempted” means that Jesus was tested or tried to reveal His inner character  
It is referring to His external circumstances, not to His internal inclinations