

Trusting a weird God

Coming to grips with a God who defies logic

The God of the Bible comes across as pretty strange at times. Why would he order Abraham to kill his son, for instance? How weird is that?

Weird? To many people a God like that is repulsive. So is the God who killed every firstborn child in Egypt and commanded the slaughter of every woman and child in Jericho. But what do you make of a Being who drowned a Pharaoh and his entire army just to prove how powerful he was? No wonder people question God.

In Pharaoh's case, however, God fires right back with a question of his own. "Since when," he asks in **Romans 9**, "did clay argue with the potter as to what it's used for? Exquisite vase or humble flowerpot, I have the right to make you into whatever I want. If I designed you to display my anger or my goodness, what's that to you?"

But what kind of answer is that? I'm just a pawn, am I, an object to be used without rights or any say in what happens to me, eh? "But you were already a nobody without rights or say," God replies, same chapter (paraphrased), "because admit it, you were coasting through life totally absorbed in your own petty projects, all of which amounted to a big fat zero and a six foot hole in the ground. Worse still, you couldn't have cared less. Fortunately for you, I've always had better things in mind for my beloved humans, including plucking some of you pathetic losers off your little trip to oblivion to go explain that to people."

Well, that's nice, but how can I convince people God loves them and has amazing plans for them when story after story in the Bible makes God seem monstrous and uncaring? It's like trying to convince your teenage daughter you have her best interests in mind when she still thinks you haven't evolved from pond-scum yet. It's disheartening; you try to tell the girl something for her own good and she snarls like a cornered cat and stomps off to phone her friends about the rejects she has for parents.

But some teenagers don't do that, do they? They trust their parents even when their parents seem impossibly old-fashioned. Why? Because they accept their parents know more about life than they do - just as billions of galaxies humming away quite nicely above our heads prove God knows a whole lot more about life than we do, right? He may seem odd at times to us, yes, but from where he sits he doesn't see a problem because what's a measly chunk of clay like us in the hands of a Master Potter like him, who can make a universe out of nothing and eternally happy beings out of nobodies?

And some, like Abraham, could see that. So, when told by God to kill his son, Abraham didn't argue or accuse God of being out of his mind; he simply trusted him. Some, it seems, can trust God when justice, logic and decency scream otherwise, whereas others simply cannot.

But why can't they? Well, it's human ego, isn't it? Just like teenagers who think they know everything and their parents know nothing, we think we know everything and God is an ignorant slob. A brief look at our own history, however, soon tells us who the ignorant slob is. Look at us: after 6,000 years of human civilization we still have no idea where we're going, no clue what we're here for, and no control over what happens to us.

Isn't it jolly nice knowing that "Someone up there" does, then? And especially Someone who shows us in the Bible he has a supreme purpose in everything he does - and he has the power to pull it off too, including the power to bring everyone he killed back to life again.

By comparison, we're like bottles bouncing along a conveyor belt, completely oblivious to the helpless condition we're in. We have no control over death or the endless destruction we inflict on each other, and no ability to bring back to life the people we kill.

Compared to God we are clueless. So, who's the weird one here - God or the person who doesn't trust him?