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*Digging Deeper*

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## BIBLICAL HORIZONS ☞ TO WHERE DO WE SAIL NEXT?

*D. Thomas Porter*

Biblical Texts, Conundra & Other Esoteria

SELECTING A DESTINATION ☞ *If you don't know where you're going, you'll probably get there.* –Yogi, Yankees Catcher, 1956

### Scripture I've Always Wanted to Study More Deeply, But Haven't—

1. The so-called “minor” prophets—what do they have to offer besides kvetching about believers?
2. Acts—the early church struggles, from the Christ's 2<sup>nd</sup> ascension to approximately 40 years later.
3. Isaiah—the most often quoted Scripture in the New Testament.
4. Romans—claimed by many to be the pinnacle of the Bible.
5. Daniel—how the rich and good looking became dominant in the world.
6. \_\_\_\_\_

### Conundra I've Always Wanted to Consider Formally, But Haven't—

1. Just what does it take to be saved—faith or works? In other words, what must I do to be saved?
2. If the Lord God is omniscient, why has He communicated, “Now I know...”?
3. The Lord God is presumably unchanged, yet He often allowed human beings to change His mind. Why? What does it say about the Lord God that not everything is “written in stone?”<sup>1</sup>
4. Why does the Lord God accept and bless one human being who has killed believers, and yet rejects another who has never killed anyone and has even acknowledged Jesus as Lord?
5. \_\_\_\_\_

### Esoteria<sup>2</sup> I've Wanted to Explore, But Haven't—

1. What was the church like after the apostles died? Just when did believers begin to look like the “Roman Catholic” church? What was the “post-Acts” church like? What should we use as our model for today's church orthodoxy, and orthopraxy? Restore, reform or reconfigure?
2. How can I use New Testament Greek to understand the New Testament better?
3. Which translations are to be compared and contrasted; which translations are to be avoided?
4. \_\_\_\_\_

<sup>1</sup>Now this may seem heretical to you—that humans change God—but the Scriptures are replete with God changing His mind and behavior about people. Eve & Adam's behavior changed how the Lord God viewed Eden. Abraham teaching God about his faithfulness (Genesis 22, Moriah). Moses changing God's mind about whether to destroy all the Israelites and start over. David's murderous and adulterous indiscretions allowed the Christ to come to earth as Joshua of Nazareth. Thomas was allowed to doubt—without being cast away as an infidel. And Peter, oh Peter: the Lord God showed mercy when justice was poised to strike.

<sup>2</sup>Knowledge important only to those who choose to dig deeper into the subjects at hand. –Porter; or “Designed for or understood by the specially initiated alone; of special, rare, or unusual interest.” –Merriam-Webster

Of all the questions you have been challenged by others, or have asked yourself, which one would you especially like to explore these next few months in our studies?

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Here are some of the questions which have challenged me, perhaps they might intrigue you. Please indicate your degree of preference for each of the questions so we can collectively ascertain some degree of consensus on what to emphasize.

Check one...

QUESTIONS ABOUT SOMETHING YOU HAVE ALWAYS WANTED TO KNOW ABOUT GOD:	Not Really Interested	Maybe Interested	Definitely Interested
Is it best to understand the Lord God Almighty as the Father, the Son, or Holy Spirit?			
Assuming He <u>does</u> love me, <u>why</u> does God love me?			
Who made God? <sup>3</sup>			
How can I know God has protected me from all the evil I did before I die?			
Why does God exist?			
What do I believe about God that is wrong?			
Your Question: _____			
Your Question: _____			

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<sup>3</sup>This is my favorite, and most difficult question. When teaching VBS in the late nineties, I was assigned as a helper in a class for five year olds. They ask the best questions, and this was one of my biggest challenges to explain. It is easy to explain difficult constructs to normally intelligent people; you've got a treasure trove of language and ideas from which to draw.

But the intelligent 5 year old? Now, that's another story. Later when teaching doctoral level students the ins and outs of existentially-driven communication analyses, I tested their understanding by requiring them to explain the constructs in question to an intelligent, sentient 5 year old. I challenge you to use that standard—not only for your intellectual and spiritual development, but for any who would encounter your sharing of what we know and experience about the LORD God Almighty.