

As Christians, our foundation of faith is based on the revelation of God, which is manifested in the testimony and history of the Hebrew people, in Jewish religiosity, and later in the movement of the promised Messiah, who inaugurated a new covenant founded on love and grace. This story, which spans more than 4,000 years, has been compiled in the Bible, both in the Hebrew Scriptures and in the New Testament.

Personally, I believe that to truly understand the Scriptures and their message, we must move between the historical and cultural context in which they were written and our own contemporary reality.

1. Have you ever found it difficult to understand certain biblical texts because they were written in a context very different from ours? Have you ever visited another country and seen customs or practices that seemed strange or surprising because they don't exist in your own culture?

In Old Testament times, it was commonly interpreted that a person born with a disability—such as blindness, lameness, or other limitations—was being punished by God, either for their own sin or the sins of their parents. However, Jesus offers a new perspective: in cases like the man born blind (John 9), He teaches that it is not a matter of punishment, but rather an opportunity for the glory of God to be revealed.

2. Do you believe that God punishes? How do you interpret the discipline God gives to His children?
3. Have you ever experienced situations that you interpreted as God's discipline? How did you live through them?

Proverbs 23:13–14 says: “Do not withhold discipline from your children; if you beat them with a rod, they will not die. If you beat them with the rod, you will save their lives from Sheol.”

4. Given the changes in our understanding of child development and human rights, do you think this type of advice should be applied literally today, or should it be interpreted in light of current context and culture?

Hebrews 12:6, according to the NRSVue version, says: “For the Lord disciplines those whom He loves and chastises every child whom He accepts.” And the King James Version says: “For whom the Lord loveth He chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom He receiveth.”

5. Since language and ideas about discipline have changed over time, do you think it is appropriate to interpret these texts with consideration of the cultural and historical context in which they were written?
6. When we go through times of suffering—such as illness, unemployment, broken relationships, or financial struggles, how should we interpret them? Are they punishments from God, natural consequences of our actions, tests of faith, or times meant to grow in dependence and trust in Him?

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| <b>Financial Update</b> as of Aug 3, 2025 | <b>Births and Deaths</b>   |
| 2025 Annual Budget                        | \$ 14,203,292  |
| Actual Income to Date                     | 6,975,894  |
| Needed to Meet 2025 Budget                | 7,227,398  |
|   | George Wilson passed away July 30.   |
|   | Doris Sheils passed away August 1.   |
|   | More information at <a href="http://memorials.mdpc.org">memorials.mdpc.org</a> . |