



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

Many years ago there was an earthquake that shook the foundations of a prison resulting in all of its doors being opened and its prisoners unshackled. When the jail keeper saw what had happened he thought all the prisoners had fled and was going to kill himself. This was because the rigid government that he served would hold him accountable for the prisoners that escaped while under his care. He would have to serve their sentences and could, perhaps, face torture and death as a punishment. But, happily for him, none of the prisoners had left and before he could fall on his sword, one of the prisoners cried out to him assuring him that everyone was still there. Getting a lantern he went into the prison with fear and asked the prisoner who had called out to him the most important question that anyone can ask, *“what must I do to be saved.”* Of course, you have probably already figured out that I am speaking of the Philippian Jailer and the Apostle Paul and the events recorded in Acts chapter 16 (see Acts 16:19-34).

I say that the question asked by the jail keeper is the most important a man or woman can ask because it has to do with the eternal destiny of a person’s soul. In other words, where they will spend eternity. While the jailer had been out of jail and Paul was in jail it was the jailer who was actually a prisoner and Paul who was actually free. The jailer was a slave to sin and faced everlasting death while Paul was free from the bondage of sin and had eternal life *“in Christ.”*

The answer the jailer received to, *“what must I do to be saved,”* was not complicated and it was not cryptic. It was simple and clear, *“Believe on*

the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.” The Gospel, or “Good News” is that *“Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (I Cor. 15:3-4).

I hope that you have come to the place in your life where you realize that, because of your sin, you are separated from God and are facing everlasting condemnation. If so, you can be saved from God’s wrath by simply trusting (believing) in Jesus Christ and you will receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23).

If you are a believer then the most important question you can ask is the one the Apostle Paul asked the risen Lord Jesus Christ as he lay on the road outside of Damascus. *“Lord, what will thou have me to do?”* (Acts 9:6; see Vvs. 1-6ff.). The Lord is not going to answer in an audible voice like He did Paul, but He will guide you through His Word and the burden He will lay on your heart for ministry if you will make yourself available and be willing to step out by faith to serve Him as an *“ambassador for Christ”* in *“the ministry of reconciliation”* (II Cor. 5:18-21).

“For by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: It is the gift of God: Not of works, lest any man should boast, For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus unto good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them” (Eph. 2:8-10).

Because Christ is Alive!

W. Edward Bedore

Dr. W. Edward Bedore, Editor
BBI Bulletin, BABQ

“All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness: That the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished unto all good works.” II Tim. 3:16



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QUESTION: Is the saying "Cleanliness is next to Godliness" in the Bible?

ANSWER: It is not found in the Scriptures, but was made popular by John Wesley in 1778. He used it in a message he gave on the subject of proper dress for Christians. What he said was "let it be observed, that slovenliness is no part of religion; that neither this, nor any text of Scripture, condemns neatness of apparel. Certainly, this is a duty, not a sin. 'Cleanliness is, indeed, next to godliness.'" (Sermons, No. xciii. On Dress; as quoted in *The Oxford Dictionary of Questions*, third edition, Oxford University Press, 1980).

The saying is not entirely original with Wesley as it can be traced back to a rabbi named Phinehas ben-Yair who lived about A.D. 150-200. He used it in a spiritual sense as steps to acceptance by God, saying that religion is "resolved into carefulness; carefulness into vigorousness; vigorousness into guiltlessness; guiltlessness into asceticism; asceticism into cleanliness; cleanliness (from evil) into godliness (purity of thought and action); etc. In this order, "cleanliness is actually found next to "godliness." Wesley put the words in quotation marks, probably to indicate that he had borrowed, and perhaps slightly changed them, from another source. Regardless, it seems he took them out of context and applied them to the wearing of neat and clean apparel as a matter of proper conduct and being a good witness for the Lord by believers.

Today this saying is often mistakenly thought to be from the Bible. While it is not, it is true that personal cleanliness and proper hygiene are beneficial to those that practice them.

QUESTION: In Romans 1:2 Paul writes, "Which he had promised afore by his prophets in the Holy Scriptures," which seems to be qualifying the previous phrase "separated unto the gospel of God". What is the explanation of this passage without contradicting Romans 16:25:

"Now to him that is of power to stablish you according to my gospel, and the preaching of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began"? **This makes it sound like Paul was saved under the Kingdom gospel, yet we also believe that he was the beginning of the Body of Christ.**

ANSWER: This is an important question because these two passages make it seem like Paul is contradicting himself, saying that the gospel he preached was the same message as the prophets of the Old Testament preached on one hand and yet on the other insisting that the message he preached was not made known to anyone until the Lord revealed it to him. While this makes it sound like Paul was confused, the confusion evaporates when we look at what Paul wrote between his general introduction (Rom. 1:1-7) and his benediction (Rom. 16:25-27).

Important to the subject of God's Good News is how Paul introduced the Lord Jesus Christ in this epistle. He is said to be God's "Son....which was made of the seed of David according to the flesh....and declared to be the Son of God with power according to the Spirit of holiness by the resurrection from the dead" (see Rom. 1:1-4). That He was of the seed of David would draw the Jews' attention as Israel's prophetic hope was based on a coming Messiah from David's family line. That He was the Son of God with power over life, as proven by His resurrection, would draw the attention of the Gentiles whose emperors and kings often claimed to be sons of one of their pagan gods. But, all of these rulers were powerless over death and all died. Paul was preparing to present evidence to substantiate his claims in regard to the Good News of Jesus Christ as the Lord Himself had revealed it to him and he wanted both the Jews and the Gentiles to pay attention to his presentation. Christ Jesus' identity as David's heir and the One with power over death is the bedrock of Paul's message.

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The phrase *"the gospel of God"* does not refer particularly to any specific message of hope, nor is it unique to any one dispensation. It is simply a general reference to God's "Good News" for man that is found throughout the Bible. Different aspects of God's overall plan of redemption were revealed at different times throughout history. While the whole world has always been in view in God's redemptive plan, most of the Bible is specifically about the nation of Israel and God's coming Kingdom of Righteousness on earth. In all that it encompasses, past, present, and future, the Lord Jesus Christ stands at its center. In other words, there is no Good News from God for anyone in the human race apart from *"the Man Christ Jesus"* (see I Tim. 2:5). The first mention of Good News for mankind is found in Genesis 3:15 which, in a rudimentary way, speaks of the Lord Jesus' final and complete victory over sin, death, and Satan. The Scripture's also tell us that the Son of God became Man, a Jew who was virgin born into the family line of David, giving Him the right to David's throne. He died a substitutionary death for the sins of the world and was raised in victory from the dead. These truths are what validate both the Gospel of the Kingdom (Prophecy) and the Gospel of the Grace of God (Mystery) and so both gospels can be said to fall under the general heading of *"the Gospel of God"* or we could say, "God's Good News to man."

I believe that Paul (under inspiration of the Holy Spirit) introduced himself as being *"separated to the Gospel of God"* in Romans to set the stage for what he had to say to its readers. According to what had been revealed to him by Christ Himself. He goes on to explain the spiritual ins-and-outs of how the salvation, (which includes, among other things, forgiveness of sins, redemption, reconciliation, imputed righteousness, and oneness in and with Christ), of a believer has been provided for.

In his explanation of the significance of the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, Paul also shows that there is no spiritual difference between Jew and Gentile as all are sinners (Rom. 1:18-3:23). In the present dispensation, the Jews have no advantage of any kind over the Gentiles. With Israel, as a nation, set aside in unbelief, under the Grace Gospel the Jews covenant relationship with the Creator God gives them no standing or place of national favor before the Lord as it does under the Kingdom Gospel. For salvation they can only come to the Cross with the Gentiles as vile sinners and trust in Christ alone for forgiveness of sins (Rom.3:21-26). And once saved, they become equal members of the Body of Christ with the Gentile believers (Rom. 5:1-2; 6:3-5; 8:1; 10:11-13). In fact, spiritually, their Jewishness is obliterated in Christ. The Scriptures say that all who *"have been baptized (spiritually) into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew or Greek (Gentile), there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus"* (Gal. 3:27-28; cf. Rom. 10:11-13).

Paul also explains why Israel was set aside (Rom. 9); how Jews are saved today (Rom. 10); and that sometime in the future God will restore Israel to her covenant position and fulfill all of His covenant promises to her (Rom. 11).

Finally, after surveying how a life of faith is to be lived (Rom. 12:1-15:7), and giving some concluding thoughts and personal greetings, Paul gives a benediction that includes the statement that his preaching of Jesus Christ was *"according to the revelation of the mystery kept secret since the world began"* (Rom. 16:25). This is a bold statement by the Apostle to the Gentiles that the doctrines of grace he has systematically laid out in this epistle are distinct to God's secret program in which salvation and all of its attached spiritual blessings are offered to all sinners, with absolutely no distinction between Jews and Gentiles, by grace through the channel of faith alone. "Hallelujah and Amen!"



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INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"The Dead Sea Scrolls"

In 1947 a Bedouin shepherd discovered a clay pot containing an ancient scroll in a cave northwest of the Dead Sea. Soon many other manuscripts were found in a total of 11 caves in the area. Altogether 28 nearly complete scrolls and 100,000 fragments of an additional 875 manuscripts were discovered. Except for Esther, multiple portions of all of the Old Testament books were among them. These Hebrew, Aramaic, and Greek manuscripts are the oldest representative texts of the Old Testament available today. Some of them pre-date the earliest known Old Testament texts that were available before they were discovered by 1,000 years. They verified their complete accuracy, demonstrating that God has indeed preserved His Word in the many manuscripts that have been found.

"Translations"

In Exodus it says that Moses' face "shone" when he came down from Mt. Sinai after talking with God (see Ex. 34:29,30,35). The Hebrew word for shone can also be translated "horned" and some early translations did so. This is why medieval and Renaissance era art often portray Moses with small horns protruding from his head.

"Study Bibles"

While we might think of them as a thoroughly modern innovation, study Bibles have been used for hundreds of years. One example is the Luther Bible. Published in 1534 it included chapter summaries and cross-references. Others are the Geneva Bible, the Bishop's Bible and the original

King James Version, which all contained marginal notes to assist the reader.

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"The Spirit is Willing but the Flesh is Weak"

This common saying is taken from the Lord Jesus' words to His disciples, "Watch and pray, that ye enter not into temptation: the spirit is indeed willing, but the flesh is weak" (Matt. 26:41). The occasion was when the Lord had taken Peter, James, and John with Him when he went to a quiet place to pray in the garden the night before He was crucified. While He was praying to the Father, the three fell asleep three times as He prayed in great sorrow and agony about His approaching death for the sins of the world (see Matt. 26:37-46ff). All of the disciples only a short time before had said that they would remain faithful to death, yet these three leaders couldn't even stand watch for Him for an hour while He prayed. His words in verses 40 & 41 were a reminder to them that they needed to pray for themselves. While they meant well and were sincere, they were unable to carry through with what they had committed themselves to because of the weakness of their flesh. This episode serves as a reminder to believers today that we also are powerless to faithfully serve God in our own power but must depend on His Spirit to strengthen us to walk worthy of His calling on our lives (see Gal. 5:16-26 for the contrast between living in the power of the flesh and living in the power of the Holy Spirit). The saying is popularly used today of the universal human problem of having good intentions but not the will or ability to follow through.

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