



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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What If You Died Today?

An often used and generally effective lead-in to sharing the Gospel with an unbeliever is to ask, "If you died today, do you know that you would go to heaven?" Such a question is meant to spur the unbeliever to give some serious thought about their future and where they will spend eternity. Hopefully, this will initiate discussion and provide an opportunity to open the Bible with them and to show them what the Scriptures say about their lost condition and God's provision of a Savior that they might receive forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. But, what about those who have already trusted in Jesus Christ as their personal Savior and know for sure that Heaven is their eternal home where they will reside forever in God's presence? Is becoming saved all there is to being a Christian, or are there some "what if..?" questions for the members of the Body of Christ as well?

Everyone who has truly trusted in Jesus Christ alone as their Savior can have complete assurance of their salvation. However the question remains, "What if you died today dear brother or sister in Christ?" You certainly would go to heaven (II Cor. 5:8), but what legacy would you leave behind? Would you be remembered as one whose life reflected Christ or just another person who lived their life according to the world's standards? Would there be those who would say that you had a positive impact on them because of your attitude toward life and your conduct in life?

Would they say your mindset was Bible-based and Christ-centered, or would they say that your mindset and lifestyle were worldly and self-centered? In other words, would you be remembered as a Bible believing Christian who was not ashamed of the Gospel of Christ, or would those you interacted with in your daily life have no idea that you were a believer in Jesus Christ? Is your worldview essentially the same as that of your unsaved neighbors, co-workers, family members, acquaintances, etc., or do you stand out as being different from the world because your worldview is heavenly instead of worldly? If we are going to leave anything of lasting value to show for our lives on this earth, it must be spiritually based, dispensationally accurate, Biblically founded, and accomplished through faith. The Church is not called to blend in with the world, but to stand out as different from the world.

As members of the Body of Christ, we "should no longer walk as the rest of the Gentiles walk, in the futility of their mind, having their understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God, because of the ignorance that is in them, because of the hardening of their heart; who, being past feeling, have given themselves over to licentiousness, to work all uncleanness with greediness" (Eph. 4:17-19). Walking according to the world is something we certainly have not learned from our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ, who only teaches us truth (see Eph. 4:20-21). What we do learn from Him through His Word

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"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 Timothy 3:16



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is that we are to “put off, concerning your (our) former conduct, the old man which grows corrupt according to the deceitful lusts, and be renewed in the spirit of your (our) mind, and that you (we) put on the new man which was created according to God, in righteousness and true holiness” (Eph. 4:22-24).

Yes, the believer has forgiveness of sins and has the righteousness of Christ imputed to him or her and will never be subject to God’s wrath. But, at the same time, each member of the Body of Christ will be required to give an account to the Lord for how they conducted themselves in this life (see Rom. 14:12; II Cor. 5:10). Our motivation to serve Him should not be out of fear of retribution since there will not be any because Christ’s blood cleanses us from sin. And, although rewards will be given at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:14), our motivation to strive for them should not be to simply earn them. Our motivation to walk pleasing to the Lord should be born out of a deep desire to honor and glorify Him because of the great love He has loved us with and demonstrated to us by giving Himself on the Cross for our sins (see John 3:16; Rom. 5:8; II Cor. 5:14-15).

After all, He purchased us out of the slave market of sin with His own precious blood to make us His own special people (see I Cor. 6:19-20; Titus 2:14). Should we not then do all that we do to His glory? (see I Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:17). Beloved believer, what if ...?

Because Christ is Alive!

W. Edward Bedore

Dr. W. Edward Bedore, Editor

BBI Bulletin, BABQ

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: What is an ephod and what is a teraphim?

ANSWER: An ephod is a piece of clothing that seems to have covered the body from the shoulders to somewhere around the knees. An ephod could be made of plain white linen or, as in the case of the High Priest, be highly ornate (Ex. 28:6-14). When dressed in his full priestly attire, the High Priest wore an ephod along with a robe, a tunic, linen undergarments, a breastplate, and special headwear (see Ex. 28:1-43). Samuel, who was a priest, wore an ephod (I Sam. 2:18) as did the eighty-five priests of Nob (I Sam. 22:18). David was wearing only a linen ephod when he danced before the Ark of the Covenant when he had it brought to Jerusalem (II Sam. 6:12-14).

Teraphim’s are images in human form that were used as household gods, or idols, in pagan worship. The word teraphim is found fifteen times in the Hebrew text of the Old Testament. In the KJV Bible, six of those times it is not translated but is simply transliterated. That is to say, it is spelled out with corresponding letters of the English alphabet in place of the Hebrew letters. These verses are; Judges 17:5; 18:14, 17, 18, 20; and Hosea 3:4. Other places where it is found are; Genesis 31:19, 34, 35; I Samuel 15:23; 19:13, 16; II Kings 23:24; Ezekiel 21:21; and Zechariah 10:2. In these passages it is rendered image, images, idols, and idolatry.

An ephod is in some places linked to teraphim (see Judges 17:5; 18:14, 17-20). This indicates that during the Judges period there were apostate and/or illegitimate priests leading the people into the idolatrous worship of the heathen nations. The Northern Kingdom of Israel and the Southern Kingdom of Judah would both finally end up being carried out of the Promised Land because of their involvement in idolatry.



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QUESTION: When in Israel's history was it revealed that the nation would go through a Tribulation period in the Last Days? Was it revealed to them after their multitude of sins? Who was the first to reveal it to them and why?

ANSWER: This is a good question dealing with the prophesied future of the nation of Israel. The term "the Last Days" first appears in Scripture in Genesis 49, where Jacob called his sons together to tell them what would befall them in the "last days" (Gen. 49:1-28). It was not his twelve sons personally that were the subject of this prophecy, but rather the twelve tribes that would come from them to make up the nation of Israel.

The "the last days" is a general term used in reference to a future period in history when God will bring His plan for Israel and the nations to pass. Other terms with the same meaning are "the latter days" and "the last time(s)." They can refer to the Tribulation that will precede Christ's Second Coming or to the Second Coming itself and the reestablishment of David's throne by Jesus Christ. Jacob's prophecy in Genesis 49 seems to blend these different aspects together. It is later in the history of Israel that we find the events of the Tribulation specifically mentioned as a chastisement of Israel for her unfaithfulness. Through Moses, the Lord forewarned Israel about what would happen if she rebelled against Him (Deut. 28:15-68; 29:14-29; 31:16-21; 32:15-33).

Some of these prophesied judgments against Israel have already come to pass, but many are still future. The judgments that are yet to come will take place after the Rapture of the Church brings the Dispensation of Grace to a close. Most will occur during the Tribulation, which is also known as "the time of Jacob's Trouble" (Jer. 30:7). Others will be realized during the Millennial Kingdom and some at the end of the thousand years.

Along with the judgments for disobedience foretold in Deuteronomy are promised blessings; blessings conditioned on Israel's national repentance and turning back to the Creator God who delivered her from Egypt, made a covenant with her, and called her to be His own special people (Deut. 29:1-13; 30:1-10). Like the curses, some of the blessings have already been fulfilled and some are still future. Here, our interest is in the future, so let us consider Deuteronomy 30:1-10.

When Israel remembers God's promises of blessings while she is dispersed among the nations and turns back to the Lord, He will bring them back from among the Gentiles where He has scattered them to enjoy a time of unprecedented prosperity (Deut. 30:1-5, 9-10). In conjunction with this return, the Lord says that He will circumcise Israel's heart (Deut. 30:6) and bring the curses down on those persecuting her. This is a picture of what will happen at the end of the Tribulation when Jesus Christ will regather all of Israel into the Promised Land and put a new heart in her (see Ezek. 11:17-20; 36:22-27; Jer. 32:37-40). These passages from Ezekiel and Jeremiah have a definite connection to the Tribulation and Israel's full return to the Promised Land. So, it seems that it was from Moses that the first direct prophecies of the Tribulation were made, although it wasn't named as such and it was intermingled with other prophecies about Israel. All of the Major Prophets and most of the Minor Prophets have something to say about the coming Tribulation, but it is in Daniel and Revelation that we find the timeline that reveals to us the seven year window that it will take place in.

Believers today are "to serve the Living and True God, and to wait for His Son from Heaven, whom He raised from the dead, even Jesus who delivered us from the wrath to come" (I Thes. 1:9-10).



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QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

I deceived a twin, who deceived his twin,
and I'm his father in law twice. Who am I?

*Answer to the December Question for the Reader: Who Am I? **ONESIMUS** (See Phile. 8-12).*

(I was a slave who lived in Colosse but stole from my master and ran away to Rome where I met Paul and became a believer in Jesus Christ. Paul sent me back to Colosse with a letter to my master appealing to him to forgive me. Who am I?)

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"A Man After My Own Heart"

Because he had been disobedient to the Lord by intruding into the priest's office, God announced to Saul that He would not allow his kingdom to continue. This proclamation was made through the prophet Samuel, who was a priest, a prophet, and a judge of Israel. Samuel told Saul that the Lord was seeking "a man after His own heart" to replace him as king of Israel (I Sam. 13:13-15). The idea behind this saying was that instead of a man with a rebellious heart like Saul, the Lord would seek out a man with a heart attitude that was disposed toward God; a man with a will to obey the Lord and serve Him as a shepherd of His people; in other words, a godly man.

The phrase is used today in the same way it was used in the Bible. When a person speaks of another as "a man (or woman) after my own heart," they are referring to them as someone who thinks the same way that they do about a particular issue or of things in general.

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

Thou, Thee, Thy, Thine, Ye, and You

Many people today think of words like thou, thee, and ye as Bible language because they are found in the older English translations. It's not just Bible language though, but words that were commonly used when the early translations of the Bible were being made. In Shakespeare's plays, which were written between 1589 and 1613, thou, thee, thy, thine and ye are used in abundance. In modern English, we have dropped the use of these words and simply use you or your in their place. This simplification of the English language is mostly advantageous, but it does have its drawbacks.

The different forms of "you" that were used then had different meanings. "Thou" and "thee" are **singular**, "ye" and "you" are **plural**. "Thou" and "ye" are **subjects**, "thee" and "you" are **objects**. "Thine" is the possessive of "thee," it becomes "thy" when used before a vowel. So, these words don't simply mean the same thing as "you." They help keep the distinctions found in the original Hebrew and Greek. For example, most of the Ten Commandments given in Exodus 20 begin with "Thou shalt." "Thou" is singular, so each commandment was addressed to each Israelite, not just to Israel as a nation. The "you shall" found in modern versions could be plural or singular. In cases like this, giving careful attention to the context and the comparing of related Scripture passages are essential in accurately determining the intended meaning.

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