



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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"O Foolish Galatians, Who Hath Bewitched You...?"

In the third chapter of his epistle to the churches of Galatia, the Apostle Paul asks a pointed question. He wants to know who it was that they had foolishly allowed to draw them away from the truth of the Gospel of Grace and back to the bondage of the Law. The implication is that they had mindlessly allowed themselves to be taken in by those proclaiming a false gospel of works. And this, in spite of the fact that the crucified and risen Savior, Jesus Christ, had clearly been presented to them by Paul (Gal. 3:1). They were without excuse for their departure from the truth of the Gospel of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ.

Pressing his point, Paul asks another question; *"received ye the Spirit by the works of the Law, or by the hearing of faith"* (Gal. 3:2). In other words, he was asking them, "did you receive the Holy Spirit who indwells you when you were saved after hearing the Gospel preached and believing it? Or did you do the works of the Law in order to earn His presence in your heart? Of course, this is a rhetorical question to which the Galatians could only give one answer; it was *"by the hearing of faith"* (cf. Gal. 4:6; Rom. 10:17; Eph. 1:13-14). Paul then presses even harder, asking; *"Are you so foolish? Having begun in the Spirit, are ye now made perfect in the flesh?"* (Gal. 3:3). "Are you so foolish as to think that you were saved by faith and the regenerating work of the Holy Spirit, but now you can go on to spiritual maturity by your own power?" is what

he is asking. Of course they couldn't and we cannot either in spite of the fact that many believers have allowed themselves to be "bewitched" by this same counterfeit gospel. It is through Christ's blood that we have redemption and forgiveness (Eph. 1:7). It is by grace that we are saved (Eph. 2:8-9). It is by a work of the Holy Spirit that we are regenerated and renewed (Titus 3:5). It is God who has begun a good work in us, and it is He who will bring us to perfection in *"the day of Jesus Christ"* (Phil. 1:6; 2:13; cf. Gal. 2:20). Let us not forget these things, lest we find ourselves in the same spiritual bewitchment the Galatians were under. If you are a believer, you are *"complete in Christ"* (see Col. 2:8-10).

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

Complete in Thee! no work of mine
May take, dear Lord, the place of Thine;
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And I am now complete in Thee.

Complete in Thee! no more shall sin,
Thy grace hath conquered, reign within;
Thy voice shall bid the tempter flee,
And I shall stand complete in Thee.

Yea, justified! O blessed thought!
And sanctified! Salvation wrought!
Thy blood hath pardon bought for me,
And glorified, I too, shall be!

Source: Worship and Service Hymnal: For Church, School, and Home
#191; author Aaron R. Wolfe

"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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QUESTION: Will the Antichrist be a Jew or a Gentile? I have heard different views on this.

ANSWER: The very fact that he is the Antichrist means that he will have to be a Jew. Or at least he will have to convince the majority of the Jewish people that he is. The hope of Israel is for the promised Messiah, or the Christ, to come as a great spiritual, political and military leader who will finally deliver Israel from her enemies and bring peace to all the earth. The Old Testament clearly states that the Messiah will come from the family line of David (see Isa. 19:5; Jer. 23:5-6; Ezek. 37:24; Hos. 3:4-5). Most of the Jews who are living when the Antichrist comes to power will be deceived into believing he is actually the promised Messiah. To pull this deception off, this "man of sin" will have to convince the Jewish people that he is of Jewish descent. There is debate over whether he will actually be a Jew or not, but I believe that he will be a Jew of the Kabbalistic tradition, probably from the tribe of Dan even though he will claim to be David's heir. Kabbala is an ancient esoteric Jewish mystical belief system that contains strong features of Pantheism as well as elements of Neoplatonism. In other words it is an occultic form of Gnosticism. The tribe of Dan has, or will in the Last Days, lose its inheritance. Notice that Dan is not mentioned among the tribes of Israel in Revelation chapter seven. Perhaps the Antichrist arising out of this apostate tribe has something to do with Dan's name being replaced by Manassas, Joseph's oldest son's name, in the list of tribes found in Revelation 7:5-8.

QUESTION: I agree that when Christ "ascended up on high" and "led captivity captive" (see Eph. 4:8-10) that the Old Testament saints are in view. (BBI Bulletin, summer edition 2014, Bible Answers to Bible Questions, page 4). Does this not mean that since Jesus rose into heaven and sat down at the right hand of God in Acts chapter 1 as "Head over all" the family

of God in heaven and earth (Eph. 1:20-23; 3:15) that the Body of Christ could not have begun with Paul in Acts 9 or 13 nor in Acts 2 at Pentecost. The saints in heaven before Acts 2 were already under the reigning headship of Christ. Pentecost, then, was the continuation of the growing Body of Christ on earth, not its start. Also, Paul said there were saints "in Christ" before He was (Rom. 16:7,11). I consider myself as an Acts 1 Dispensationalist who sees all of the saints (OT and NT) as being made "one in Christ" through the Cross (Eph. 2:12-16) with the Body of Christ beginning when Christ sat down as "Head over all" in Heaven in Acts 1.

ANSWER: Even though tradition says otherwise, I believe that you are correct in your understanding that the Church didn't begin at Pentecost but was a continuation of a Church that already existed. However, I also believe that you are wrong in your assertion that it was the Body of Christ that already existed at Pentecost.

The problem that has caused confusion in the Church for centuries is that most have never realized that God has two programs with two distinct Churches. One is the Body of Christ, of the present Dispensation of Grace, which is made up of both Jews and Gentiles without any distinction at all between the two. This Church had its beginning with the conversion of the Apostle Paul (Acts 9:1-16), to whom the Lord revealed the "mystery of the Dispensation of Grace" (Eph. 3:1-9) that we are now living in. This came about after Israel's blatant rejection of the Lord Jesus as her promised Messiah at the stoning of Stephen (Acts 7:51-60).

Those Jews who did believe that the Lord Jesus was indeed the promised Messiah also constitute a Church. The doctrine, position, walk,

(continued on page 3)



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(BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS cont. from page 2)

and destiny of this Church is interlaced throughout the books of the Old Testament, the Gospel Records of Christ's earthly ministry, the so-called General Epistles, and Revelation. It is the subject of prophecy.

While Paul wrote to a Church with a heavenly hope, the Body of Christ, the rest of the Bible is concerned with a Church whose hope is in God's Kingdom on earth which the Lord Jesus Christ Himself will one day establish when He returns in great power and glory. This hope is the main subject of Old Testament Prophecy. This is the hope that Peter offered to Israel on Pentecost (Acts 2:15-36; cf. Acts 3:12-26). This Church eventually died out after Israel was set aside in unbelief. But, it will be reestablished after the current Dispensation of Grace comes to a close with the Rapture of the Body of Christ into the heavenlies where its members will reign forever. The eternal destiny of those who are redeemed does not depend on their location between physical death and resurrection. It depends on the terms of the Dispensation they lived under. There are two peoples of God, Israel and the Body of Christ. To make all of the saints of all time one Church is effectively a denial that God will fulfill all of His promised blessings to the nation of Israel. In the Millennial Kingdom, Israel will rule over the Gentiles as *"the Priests of the Lord"* (Isa. 61:6; Ex. 19:5-6). In the Body of Christ *"there is neither Jew or Greek"* (Gal. 3:28; Col. 3:11).

QUESTION: Isn't the practice of tongues and other sign gifts important to evangelism? Don't miraculous signs help draw unbelievers to Christ?

ANSWER: We now have the written Word of God in its entirety. It is what God has given us and it is all we need to understand the truth of the Gospel of the Grace of God and to grow spiritually mature. The Scriptures say that the power to save souls is manifested in the

preaching of the Cross, not in the signs and wonders of tongues, healings, and other miracles. It is those who are perishing, the lost, who discount the complete sufficiency of Jesus Christ's redemptive work on the Cross to save sinners, denying that those who simply believe the Gospel are saved (see I Cor. 1:18, 21; 15:3-4). The believer's assurance of salvation comes from believing in Jesus Christ according to what God's Word says. Biblical faith must not only reject salvation by works, but also the necessity of any evidential miracles to accompany salvation. The proof of salvation today is through what the Bible says and how God works in the hearts of believers, not through signs and wonders.

Many of the claims of those who promote signs and wonders for today are confusing because they are not Biblical. Much of what the so-called "Word of Faith" movement, which is heavy into Pentecostal signs for today, teaches is actually based on "New Age" concepts. It is simply age old Paganism dressed up to look Christian and heralded to be a superior spirituality that finds its power in personal faith. The more faith a person is able to exercise, the more power they have available to empower God to act on their behalf in answering prayer, performing miracles, etc. This is a lie of the Devil. The Bible's teaching is not that the strength or quality of one's faith makes it operational, but that it is the object of faith that makes it effectual. It doesn't matter how much faith a person has that they can earn their own way into heaven, they will not make it. Believing in self will not make self able to overcome the barrier of sin that separates a person from God. However, faith, even a weak and wavering faith, when placed in Jesus Christ alone as Savior will result in the forgiveness of sins, redemption, and fellowship with God; not because of the strength of that faith, but because of the power of the Savior to save those who trust in Him.



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COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"Cast the First Stone" (John 8:7)

The Apostle John records the account of how the Scribes and Pharisees tried to trap the Lord Jesus by His words when they brought to Him a woman who was caught in the act of committing adultery (see John 8:1-11). They set her before Him as He taught the people in the Temple and said; *"Now Moses in the Law commanded us, that such should be stoned: but what sayest thou?"* They thought that they had placed Him in a lose/lose predicament. If He said to let her go, they could accuse Him of not upholding the Law of Moses. If He said to stone her, He would have lost His reputation with the people for being compassionate and forgiving towards sinners. Rather than answer them, He bent down and wrote in the dirt with His finger. As they continued to badger Him for an answer, He stood and said, *"He that is without sin among you, let him first cast a stone at her"* and then continued writing in the dirt. We do not know what He wrote, but whatever it was, along with His statement about *"casting the first stone,"* it brought conviction *"by their own conscience"* to the hearts of the woman's accusers and they quietly slipped away *"one by one, beginning with the eldest, even unto the last."* When they had all left, he stood and asked the woman *"where are thine accusers? Hath no man condemned thee?"* She answered *"no man Lord."* In response He said, *"Neither do I condemn thee: go, and sin no more."*

To "cast the first stone" is a commonly used saying today in regards to taking care not to

accuse others of something that you yourself might be found guilty of, or maybe of something even worse. The Lord used it to turn the tables on the hypocritical Scribes and Pharisees who brought the woman to Him, not to uphold the Law, but as a political ploy to destroy Jesus and safeguard their religious control over the people.

Note: Space does not permit a full explanation, but Jesus Christ was not condoning or excusing sin here. The woman's accusers were acting outside the Law by trying to initiate her stoning without a proper trial, which would require two or more witnesses for a guilty verdict. Also, they did not bring the man that she was caught in the act of committing adultery with, whose punishment would have been stoning as well. With no one to accuse her, the Lord Jesus bid her to leave her life of sin.

QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

I was asked to curse the children of Israel but I couldn't do it. My donkey was given the power of speech for a short while. Who am I?

Answer to the June "Who Am I" Question for the Reader:
Absalom (I was my father's third son. When my half-brother hurt my sister, I killed him and then ran away. I hanged myself, accidentally, of course. Who am I?) Absalom was born to David and Maacha. Two years after his brother Amnon assaulted their sister, Absalom had him killed during a sheep shearing festivity. He fled the country and started his own army. When he went up against his father, Absalom's men were either killed or ran out of the country. While trying to run away, Absalom got his hair wrapped around a tree limb and was hung. While hanging in the tree one of David's men killed Absalom with a spear. Absalom's story is in II Samuel 14-18.

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