



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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ISSUE 8

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"Did God Send His Son to Save Israel or the World?"

This is a question that most would answer, "the world, of course," and then quote the following from the Gospel record of John, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in Him should not perish, but have everlasting life" (John 3:16). This a true statement from God's Word, but it does not stand alone. For a proper understanding of this verse, it must be considered in its immediate context and the greater context of the whole Bible.

When we read through the Old Testament, we find that God's chosen people, the Nation of Israel, are particularly in view. Throughout the Old Testament we find prophecies concerning the Nation of Israel and its people. The prophets pronounced both declarations of judgment on Israel and promises of the eventual redemption of God's chosen people, both nationally and personally. Jesus Christ came as Israel's promised Redeemer, and through Israel He also came as the Redeemer of the world.

In the unprophesied Dispensation of Grace that we are living in today, salvation through faith in Jesus Christ is offered to both Israel (the Jews) and the Gentiles (all the people of all other nations) without distinction. Those who trust in Jesus Christ for salvation become members of the Body of Christ "where there is neither Greek nor Jew, circumcision nor uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, bond nor free: but Christ is all and in all" (Col. 3:11; cf. Gal. 3:28). But, according to the

prophetic Scriptures, there is a time coming when this will not be the case. The Word of God reveals to us that in Christ's Millennial Kingdom on earth, Gentiles will have to come through Israel to come to the Lord (Zech. 8:20-23; Isa. 49:6). The nations will be blessed through Israel, so yes, Christ was given to the world. This truth is what is in view in the Gospel record of John. But, we must note that the Gentiles will also be in servitude to Israel in the Kingdom (see Isa. 49:22-23; 60:1-3, 11-14; etc.), while Israel will serve as the "priests of the Lord" (Isa. 61:6). So why does Paul say there is no difference between Jew and Gentile in the Body of Christ?

Israel rejected her Messiah when He came and had Him crucified by the Romans. But, death could not hold Him and He rose from the dead. After His ascension into Heaven, His apostles preached that, according to the prophets, if Israel would believe on Him as the Promised One, He would return to earth to establish His Kingdom (see Acts 2:29-36; 3:12-26). But they would not, and they persecuted those who believed on Him (Acts 4:1-6; 5:17-18, 33-40; 6:9-15; 7:54-8:1). After they had stoned God's servant, Stephen, to death, the Lord set Israel aside for a time and temporarily suspended the fulfillment of prophecy. In its place, He inserted the Dispensation of Grace that is now in effect and that will continue until, at His own pleasure, the Lord brings it to an end. At that time, those living on the earth will be subjected to a time of political upheaval, social chaos, military terror, and spiritual darkness that the world has

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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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ever seen. Only when Christ returns to earth will this horrible time of great Tribulation be brought to an end. But, until then, the forgiveness of sins and salvation is available through God's grace to all who believe that Jesus Christ died for their sins, that He was buried, and that He rose again on the third day just as the Bible says He did (I Cor. 15:3-4).

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: What is the significance of the rending of the veil of the Temple from top to bottom at the time of Jesus Christ's death on the Cross (Matt. 27:51)?

ANSWER: The rending of the veil is one of the most powerful illustrations of what Jesus Christ accomplished on the Cross to be found in Scripture. The Tabernacle/Temple has everything to do with Jesus Christ's redemptive work in regards to Israel, prophecy, and the Kingdom. Its effects carry over into every dispensation as His death, burial, and resurrection provide the basis of salvation for all mankind throughout history.

In Hebrews we read concerning Israel, "This is the covenant that I will make with them after those days, saith the Lord, I will put my laws into their hearts, and in their minds will I write them; and their sins and iniquities will I remember no more. Now where remission of sins is, there is no more offering for sin. Having therefore, brethren, boldness to enter into the holiest by the blood of Jesus by a new and living way, which He hath consecrated for us, through the veil, that is to say, His flesh" (Heb. 10:16-20).

The word "flesh" as used here is a reference to Jesus Christ's physical body that was broken on the Cross on behalf of sinners. John tells us that, "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us..." (John 1:14). A body was prepared for Him because, "In burnt offerings and sacrifices Thou (God) has no pleasure" (see Heb. 10:5-6). We are told that sanctification comes "through the offering of the body of Jesus Christ once for all" (Heb. 10:10). This all points to the "new and living way" that He opened to Israel to approach God "through the veil, that is to say through His flesh" (Heb. 10:20). In other words, the veil that closed off the most holy place was taken away by what Jesus Christ did on the Cross where He suffered in body, soul, and spirit, and died for our sins.

With "a new and living way" of approaching God opened for Israel, their commission to be a light to the Gentiles that they too might come to God "through Israel" takes on "a new and living" aspect prophetically. Christ's sacrifice of Himself was never meant to be exclusively for Israel but, through their redemption, Israel was to be a channel of blessing that included salvation for the Gentiles. In Isaiah, speaking of the Redeemer of Israel, we read, "And He (God) said, It is a light (small) thing that thou shouldest be My Servant (Christ) to raise up the tribes of Jacob, and to restore the preserved of Israel: I will also give Thee for a light to the Gentiles that Thou mayest be My salvation unto the end of the earth" (Isa. 49:6). There are a multitude of Scripture passages that confirm this truth.

With Israel temporarily set aside, the blood of God's New Covenant with Israel (Matt. 26:26-28; Mk. 14:22-24; Lk. 22:19-20) is revealed to also be the blood that has made redemption possible in the present Dispensation of Grace (see I Cor. 11:23-26). The fullness of what Jesus Christ

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accomplished on the Cross as He suffered and died there was not fully revealed until the Lord revealed the mystery of “the Dispensation of the Grace of God” to the Apostle Paul (see Eph. 3:1-9). We who are living in “this present evil world” (Gal. 1:4) can rest in the assurance that Jesus Christ has “made peace through the blood of His Cross” and reconciled every believer “in the body of His flesh through death” (see Col 1:20-22).

QUESTION: Scripture says that God has given all a measure of faith (Rom. 12:3). Our question is: Why do some people seem to have more faith than others? Does it have to do with a person’s will, or has God given us different measures of faith?

ANSWER: To answer this question, I think that it is important that we define Biblical faith. The basic idea of faith is to trust based on what one believes. To trust in something or someone means to rely or depend on that thing or person in some way. We might say that faith is to believe, to place confidence or trust in something or someone for a specific purpose. We all exercise faith in some way every day. We go to work trusting that our employer will give us a paycheck at the end of the week. We make appointments believing the other party will be at the place and time that we agreed on. And the list could go on and on.

Biblical faith refers to faith or trust in God based on what He has revealed in Scripture. Simply put, it is to rely on God, trusting Him to be faithful and true to His Word, the Bible. The question of Biblical faith is not about the strength or amount of one’s faith or their level of intelligence, it is about the object of one’s faith. If Jesus Christ is not the focal point of faith, it is not Biblical faith.

I believe that in Romans 12:3 Paul was saying that no member of the Body of Christ

should ever be puffed up over their level of faith because God has given each member the same measure of faith. In other words, it is speaking of every member of the Body of Christ being given the capacity to believe, but not all choose to exercise their faith by actually trusting the Lord in all areas of their lives. The personal decisions that believers make are heavily influenced to the extent that their thinking has been “transformed by the renewing of (their) mind” (see Rom. 12:1-2), which takes place through the study of the Scriptures with an open heart towards God’s will (see Col. 1:9-11). However, because each member is at a different stage of spiritual maturity, how faith in God is being demonstrated is difficult, and at times even impossible for others to discern. Only God knows the true condition of the heart (II Cor. 5:12; 10:7; I Sam. 16:7).

While it is important for believers to live their lives by faith, a person must first personally receive Jesus Christ as their Savior by faith. Only those who come to Him acknowledging their sinful, condemned, and lost condition, trusting in Him alone to save them, are redeemed through His shed blood and become members of the Body of Christ. They must believe the gospel, “...how 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).

QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

I was a Nazarite from the womb. I set fire to a grain harvest using foxes with torches tied to their tails. I carried the city gates of Gaza up to the top of a hill. My girlfriend betrayed me. Who am I?

Answer to the November “Who Am I” Question for the Reader: **Sapphira** (My husband and I lied to the apostles about the proceeds on a piece of land we sold. Unfortunately I did not live to tell the tale. Who am I?) **Ananias & Sapphira** deceived the apostles and lost their lives for it (Acts 5).



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COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

The Prodigal Son & Riotous Living

These terms found their way into the English language as common sayings by way of "The Parable of the Prodigal Son" found in Luke 15:11-32. The Lord Jesus used the story of a man with two sons to illustrate the continued love of God towards His chosen people, Israel, even when they were in open rebellion against Him. The younger brother, who demanded his inheritance only to waste it, represents the "publicans and sinners" that the Lord focused much of His ministry towards. The elder brother pictures the Scribes, the Pharisees, and other religious leaders of Israel and their self-righteous attitude that caused them to resent those who turned to the Lord in repentance rather than rejoice over the salvation of those who were lost. One of the lessons we can learn from this parable is that while the obvious outward sins of the flesh are a reproach to God, He is quite willing to forgive those who turn to Him. On the other hand, we see that it is a prideful heart of self-righteousness that causes many to fail to recognize their personal need of a Savior. Though this parable is particularly to Israel and concerns the Messianic Kingdom on earth, it teaches an interdispensational truth that is found throughout the Word of God in regards to the sinful hearts of the sons and daughters of Adam.

The term "The Prodigal Son" is not actually found in the Bible, but sometime in the past it was used as a title for the parable and it took hold because it aptly described the wayward son. It is often used today in the same general way to refer to anyone whose lifestyle is marked by reckless extravagance and wastefulness of whatever resources they might have.

The term "*riotous living*" on the other hand is found in the Bible, the younger son being said to have taken a "...*journey into a far country, and there wasted his substance with riotous living*" (Lk. 15:13). One who is said to be involved in "*riotous living*" is a person who is living a wild and loose life of foolish endangerment of resources, body, and soul.

THE GREATEST GIFT OF ALL

During the Christmas season no doubt you will probably be giving a gift to someone special. When I give gifts to someone special I think of three things that need to be true of my gift. First I want to give a gift that is personal. I take my time and think of something that is "perfect for the person in mind." The second thing I think of in giving a gift is that the person will find it of value. It does not have to be expensive, but useful and something the person can enjoy. Finally, I look for a gift that is enduring. I want to give a gift that will last.

Now you are probably thinking, since when did the BABQ become a guide to gift giving? Well, my purpose in sharing this with you is to remind you of the wonderful gift that God the Father has given to the world. God sent the Lord Jesus Christ to be born in a manger, live a sinless life and die on a Roman cross as a gift to humanity. God's gift was personal in that it is offered to all who have sinned (Rom. 6:23). It is valuable in that it is the greatest gift one can ever receive in trusting the Lord Jesus Christ as our Savior (II Cor. 5:21). Finally, God's gift to us in the person of the Lord Jesus is an enduring and eternal gift that gives us the assurance of spending eternity with Him.

So while you are choosing that special gift, stop and think that God had you in mind when He gave His special gift to you.

On behalf of the Faculty and Staff of Berean Bible Institute we want to wish you a blessed and joyous Christmas.

Dr. Robert E. Nix

President, Berean Bible Institute

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