



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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Is God Through With Israel?

This is a question that many would answer “yes” to, but that is not the correct response, not according to the Holy Scriptures anyway. For centuries theologians have been teaching a doctrine called “replacement theology” (it is formally known as “supercessionism”). At the core of this doctrine is the idea that the Church has now and for all time superseded and replaced Israel as God’s chosen community of people. This view is generally held by those who embrace Covenant Theology. To support their view they resort to spiritualizing the covenantal promises found in the Old Testament concerning Israel’s future in order to make Scripture fit their doctrine, which denies a future literal fulfillment of the covenants God has made with Israel and the promises associated with them. In other words, they reject any idea that God will one day reestablish national Israel in their ancient homeland as His favored people. God, they say, has forever set Israel aside in unbelief and transferred all of the national promises He has made to her to the Church.

This approach to Scripture has in turn given birth to the view that all Bible prophecies have already come to pass, finding their fulfillment in the destruction of Jerusalem in A.D. 70 by the Romans. This is a logical position to take because if God has actually abandoned Israel in favor of the Church, there cannot be any prophecies left lying around awaiting future fulfillment. So, the numerous Bible prophecies that pertain to Israel’s future redemption and restoration are simply declared to be allegorical

references to the spiritual blessings of the Church. This allows for claiming that the clear words of Scripture do not actually mean what they say, but a deeper spiritual meaning is hidden in them. Using this manner of interpreting the Bible, a passage of Scripture can be perceived to have more than one meaning while at the same time not really meaning what it actually says at all. We are not talking about simply recognizing and properly interpreting allegory when it is used in the Bible. What we are referring to is the error of allegorizing that which is not allegory in order to spiritualize its meaning rather than taking Scripture at face value and letting it say what it says and believe it.

Try as they might, those who would allegorize away Israel’s future by transferring her promised blessings to the Church will fail in their efforts. God has spoken in His Word, and He has spoken clearly. He will fulfill His promises, all of His promises to Israel. If He did not, He would not be the “*God of Truth*” that the Psalmist has recognized Him to be (Ps. 31:5).

God has given us His Word in written form that we might read it, understand it, believe it, proclaim it, and live our lives by it. It only makes sense to read it to see what it says and to interpret it accordingly. The Lord has given His word that as long as the sun and the moon regularly appear in the sky that we can know without a doubt that He has not permanently cast Israel aside (see Jer. 31:31-37). This truth brings comfort to the heart of the believer today. If God would abandon Israel and go back on His Word to her, how could we have any assurance of our salvation? Might He not abandon

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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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us sometime in the future as well? We have no need to fear, "for the gifts and calling of God are without repentance" (Rom. 11:29). God does not revoke His unconditional promises nor recall the gifts He has given. He will bring to pass His plans for His earthly people, Israel, just as He will for His heavenly people, the Body of Christ. Those who have placed their faith in Jesus Christ have the absolutely sure "hope of eternal life, which God, that cannot lie, promised before the world began" (Titus 1:3).

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: When is the gift of speaking in tongues to cease?

ANSWER: The Biblical gift of speaking in tongues has already ceased. Since the gifts of tongues, healing, special knowledge, and the working of miracles are all connected to Israel's mission to the Gentiles and the 1,000 year reign of Christ after His Second Coming, they are not needed in this present Dispensation of Grace in which the Jews have no advantage over the Gentiles. These gifts were given to the apostles and other Kingdom believers as evidence that their message was from God and that Jesus Christ was the promised Messiah. With Israel set aside in unbelief for rejecting their Messiah, these sign gifts eventually became inactive. During his early ministry, the Apostle Paul exercised these gifts to confirm to the Kingdom apostles that his message and ministry of Grace was revealed to him by the Lord Jesus Christ Himself. But, this was only temporary until the Scriptures were

completed. That is what Paul was referring to when he wrote to the Corinthians saying: "...whether there be prophecies, they shall fail, whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away. For we know in part, and we prophecy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (I Cor. 13:8-10). As Paul received further revelation of Grace Truth for the present Dispensation from the Lord, the need for the sign, or evidence, gifts was diminished. Finally, when the Scriptures pertaining to the Grace Message were revealed to Paul in their entirety, there was no more need of the revelatory gifts of prophecy, tongues, and special knowledge or the sign gifts and they all passed away. Rightly dividing the Word of God dispensationally is the key to understanding this. Confusion prevails when we fail to do so.

The Biblical use of tongues was primarily to reach unbelievers (I Cor. 14:22a), and prophesying, or proclaiming God's Word was for edifying believers (I Cor. 14:22b). But, now that we have the complete Bible, God is not giving any new revelation through the use of tongues, prophecy, and special knowledge. Today we have the complete inspired Word of God that we are to look to as our first and final authority for faith and practice. "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. 3:16-17). In evidence of this, shortly before his execution, Paul's final instructions to Timothy were not for him to speak in tongues, to conduct healing services, or to work miracles of any kind. He said; "I charge thee before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom; **preach the Word**; be instant in season, out of season: reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine" (II Tim. 4:1-2). The



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maintaining of sound doctrine is a major theme throughout Paul's pastoral letters to Timothy and Titus. There is no mention of revelatory or sign gifts at all in these letters of instructions for pastors.

All of the Bible was not revealed at once, but was given over periods of time. For example, Isaiah received revelations from God over at least a fifty year period. In a similar manner, the letters of Paul that have been preserved for us in the Bible were written over a time span of almost twenty years (he wrote his first letter, Galatians, about A.D. 48 and his last, II Timothy, about A.D. 66). With the prophetic Kingdom program on hold and Paul's apostleship and message recognized and confirmed by the Kingdom Apostles and the Grace Church (the Church which is Christ's body) firmly established towards the end of Paul's life, there was no further need for the working of miracles, such as healing and raising the dead, to authenticate Paul's apostleship and message. With the complete body of Grace Truth for the present dispensation having been revealed through Paul, and recognized as Scripture, there was no further need for the speaking in tongues, prophecy, and special knowledge to reveal truth. Neither is there any more need for miraculous works to confirm them as Grace Truth is to be received by faith.

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 and those who simply believe the gospel who 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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QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

My son was the oldest man who ever lived. My great, great grand son built an ark so many would live. Who am I?

Answer to the December Who Am I Question for the Reader: ZACCHAEUS. (I was a tax collector who lived in Jericho the first time I saw Jesus. Who am I? Zacchaeus was a tax collector who lived in Jericho. He was in the crowd on a particular day when Jesus was coming through town. With his small stature, Zacchaeus couldn't see Jesus so he climbed into a sycamore tree where he could look down into the crowd and see Jesus. While in the tree, Zacchaeus was noticed by Jesus and both men went to Zacchaeus' house to eat and talk. The story of Zacchaeus' tree climbing can be found in Luke 19.)

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"Bible Paper"

The increased use of acid-free paper in present times means that most books of today will hold together pretty well. But most earlier papers aged badly, turning yellow and crumbling, as a look at most old books will give evidence to.



The major exceptions are old Bibles which were printed on a thin, strong, durable, opaque, and fairly expensive paper known as "India paper," which ages very well. Because of its prevalent use in Bibles it is also referred to as "Bible paper." Quality Bibles are still printed on Bible paper today.

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"Let's Kill the Fatted Calf"

This phrase is derived from the Gospel Record of Luke where we find the well-known parable of the Prodigal Son (see Lk. 15:11-32). When his wayward son returned home after wasting his inheritance, the father was overjoyed. He instructed his servants "to bring forth the best robe, and put it on him; and put a ring on his hand, and shoes on his feet: and bring hither the fatted calf, and kill it; and let us eat and be merry (Lk. 15:22-23). The father had considered his son to be dead, but now that he had returned home, he considered him to be alive again and he would spend lavishly in celebrating his return (Lk. 15:24). The "fatted calf" would have been an especially well fed and cared for yearling from the herd that was being prepared for eventual slaughter. It would produce the most choice and expensive cuts of meat. It was probably being kept for a special occasion such as a special feast or sacrifice, but the father saw fit to use it to celebrate his son's return and reconciliation. It was for a different reason, but Abraham did something similar with "a calf tender and good" when he was visited by three men one of which was the preincarnate Jesus Christ (see Gen. 18:1-8).

Today people say, "let's kill the fatted calf" in reference to celebrating around a great meal whether high grade steak is on the menu or not.

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