



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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Will Heaven Be On Earth?

Recently I heard a radio preacher teach a lesson on Heaven on his program. While he had some good things to say on the subject, one of his main points was problematic. It was a problem because it was not Biblical; even though I am sure that he is absolutely convinced it is true. He was teaching that the Heaven the Body of Christ will inhabit in eternity will be right here on planet earth.

The problem with this unbiblical teaching is twofold. First of all, it is simply not what the Bible teaches. The hope of the Body of Christ, the Church of the present Dispensation of Grace, is a heavenly hope. Our position "in Christ" as members of His Body is in Heaven, not on earth as Israel's is.

"But God, who is rich in mercy, for His great love wherewith He loved us, even when we were dead in sins, hath quickened us together with Christ, (by grace ye are saved); and hath raised us up together and made us sit together in heavenly places in Christ Jesus:" (Eph. 2:4-6). The positional truth that this passage of Scripture teaches is that we have been seated with Christ at the right hand of the Father (see Rom. 8:33-34; Eph. 1:20-23; Col. 3:1). What we mean by "positional truth" is that what God has imputed to us by virtue of our relationship with Him through His Son, Jesus Christ, is ours for eternity. That Christ is seated at the right hand of the Father in the heavens (Eph. 1:20), and we have been seated there with Him (Eph. 2:6) is stated in Scripture as a fact and thus assures us that we will experience it when we enter into the eternal state following the Judgment Seat of Christ. Heaven is our home,

our place of citizenship (see Phil. 3:20-21). Heaven and earth are two specifically different places and to try to make them one and the same can only result in confusion for those who are looking forward to what God has prepared for them.

The second thing is that it affects the believers' understanding, and thus their actions, of what the Body of Christ's responsibilities are. When the focus of the Church is shifted from seeking "those things which are above, where Christ sitteth on the right hand of God" (see Col. 3:1-4) to seeking those things that are on the earth, it results in a misunderstanding of the Church's mission. Instead of acting as Christ's ambassadors and proclaiming the message of Reconciliation to God's enemies (II Cor. 5:18-21; Rom. 5:6-11; Col. 1:21), the focus is placed on "social, political, and religious reform" as the mission of the Church. Instead of sharing Christ with the lost that they might be saved and join them in heaven, they begin to try to fix the "world system" in an effort to Christianize the world and establish a heaven on earth for Christ to return to. This effort is condemned to fail because this is not God's program for today. When the Church embraces political and social activism in the name of religion as its mission, it is trying to defeat the world on its home court and it is a futile cause. It is only when Jesus Christ returns in power and glory that the anti-Christ world system will be defeated and a Kingdom of Righteousness established on earth. The Church is not called to Christianize the world so Christ can return, it is to evangelize the world until Christ calls it home to heaven before He judges the earth (II Cor. 5:20-21; I Thess. 4:16-17; cf. I Thess. 1:7-10).

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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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At the root of this problem is the failure of the Body of Christ at large to recognize the distinctions between the Church of today and Israel. In the Millennial Kingdom and on into eternity on the New Earth, Israel will rule the earth in righteousness as a kingdom of priests just as the Bible promises they will (Ex. 19:5-6; Isa. 61:6; 66:20-22; I Pet. 2:9). In contrast, the Body of Christ will sit at the right hand of God in the Heavens (Eph. 1:19-23; 2:6-7). Understanding the Word of God "rightly divided" is important to properly understanding Bible truth concerning our destiny.

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: Can a person be a Christian and belong to the Masonic Lodge at the same time?

ANSWER: First we must establish what we mean by the term "Christian." As used in the sense that is generally understood in our culture today, it refers to anybody and everybody who belongs to a church, group, organization etc. that claims the name Christian, or has been christened, baptized, gone through catechism, was born to Christian parents, lives in a Christian country, attends church and so on, why yes they can. These are what we might call "cultural Christians." But, if we narrow our definition down to what it means to be a Bible believing, or "Biblical Christian," that is one who actually believes the Bible to be God's Word and has personally trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior, and are forgiven of their sins and redeemed through the blood of Christ, then we have a serious problem.

There are many today that consider themselves to be Christians who have no idea of what the Gospel of the Grace of God is. Many others have a skewed perception of the Gospel, thinking that doing good things, or at least doing more good than bad, will get them into Heaven. Still others are trying to earn their salvation through ritual practices, keeping the Ten Commandments, and so-forth. And we could go on and on concerning the multitude of different concepts of what a Christian is that are embedded in the post-modern culture we are living in, but we believe that it would be more beneficial to look at what qualifies a person to be recognized as a Biblical Christian.

They must know that there is One True and Righteous God to whom they are responsible. According to the Scriptures, all people know this deep in their being, whether they will admit it to themselves or not (Rom. 1:18-20).

They must know that every human being has sinned against God and is condemned in their present state. This fact is also seated deep in the heart of every man and woman (see Rom. 1:32-2:16).

They must understand that Jesus Christ's death on the Cross was on their behalf and that they can have their sins forgiven only if they will put their trust in Him alone for salvation, believing "...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).

Having heard the message of the Cross, the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ on behalf of sinners, they must receive it as true and put their trust in Jesus Christ alone apart from any good works, rituals, or anything else at all that they have done, are doing, will do, or might try to do in the future (see Rom. 5:6-8; I Cor. 1:18-21; Eph. 1:12-14; I Tim. 2:5-6).

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About those who have trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior from the power and penalty of sin, the Bible says that God the Father *"hath delivered us from the power of darkness, and hath translated us into the kingdom of His Dear Son: in whom we have redemption through His blood, even the forgiveness of sins"* (Col. 1:13-14). Having been delivered from *"the power of darkness"* Biblical Christians are in *"the Light"* and are to live accordingly. *"For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord: Walk as children of Light"* (Eph. 5:8).

For a person to have the assurance of salvation that brings spiritual rest and peace of heart through simple faith in Jesus Christ as we have outlined it here from the Scriptures, they would necessarily have to perceive the Bible as being God's Word and absolutely true. With that understanding of the Bible, it is only logical that they accept it as the only authority for faith (what to believe doctrinally) and practice (how to live godly) that it claims to be (see Rom. 10:11; Col. 3:16; II Tim. 3:16-17).

In answering the original question, we want to say here that there is no way that a person can fully embrace the truths of Biblical Christianity we have presented without rejecting as false the basic tenants of the Masonic Lodge. The opposite is also true. If a person is convinced that the Masonic Lodge has the truth and is the channel through which they can find spiritual light, they must reject every tenant of Biblical Christianity. Masonry is also at odds with Biblical Christianity on many other points of doctrine we have not touched on, such as the nature of God and the Deity of Christ.

Biblical Christianity is exclusive. Only those who trust in Christ alone are redeemed and given the gift of eternal life (Rom. 6:23). Masonry is inclusive, claiming to be based on the fundamentals of all religions.

Biblical Christianity, while it encourages good works by believers as service to God, it rejects the idea of good works of any kind as

having any merit at all that would contribute in any way toward an individual's salvation (Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9). Masonry avows that one's good works helps them earn their salvation.

The God of the Bible forbids the giving of honor or worship to any so-called god of any religion of any kind anywhere because He Himself is the One True Living Creator God who alone is worthy (Ex. 20:1-5; Isa. 45:4-6; I Cor. 8:4-6; Eph. 4:6; I Tim. 1:17; 2:5; 6:15-16). Masonry endorses the worship of the gods of all religions as being acceptable, believing that all religions are basically the same.

A Bible believing Christian trusts in the Bible as God's infallible Word and the only authority for their understanding of God's will and how to live it (II Tim. 3:16-17). Freemasonry says that the Bible is only a symbol of God's will and that the religious writings of other religions are equal to it.

We could go on, but there are already numerous books, articles, and videos available that reveal the incompatibility of Biblical Christianity and Freemasonry. The point we want to make here is that nobody can embrace these two diametrically opposed belief systems and be loyal to both. Anyone who claims that they can would fall into one of three categories. 1) They are completely ignorant of what the basic tenants of one or the other, or both, teaches. 2) They know the difference, but are willing to compromise, which makes them a hypocrite. The very nature of what the Biblical Christian believes precludes them from claiming to be both a good Mason and a faithful Christian. To make such a claim invites scrutiny of what they really believe about Jesus Christ, the Bible, and what it means to be saved, because they are denying the validity of the Gospel. 3) They know the difference and are trying to pervert the Biblical Gospel of God's Grace through Jesus Christ by deceiving others as to what it means to be a Biblical Christian. This would make them a religious charlatan.

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On the other hand, a Mason can, with good conscience, claim to be a "Christian" in the cultural sense and still hold to the basic principles of Freemasonry, which allows for believing in any religion they want to. While they may give lip service to being a Biblical Christian, there is no way they can hold to the teachings of both. It is illogical in the first place and, second, for a true Bible believing Christian, it would constitute a sinful and shameful departure from the faith. As far as cultural Christians go, they are simply lost souls who are dead in their sins and need to be saved, just like those who are trusting in the Masonic Lodge to provide the spiritual light they need. It is Jesus Christ alone who can save a lost soul and give them eternal life. Christ is "the Light of the world" (Joh. 8:12), and it is Satan who blinds the lost to the Light (see II Cor. 4:3-5) "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved" (Acts 16:31).

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"Three Score and Ten"

This is a reference to the allotted years of human life as found in Psalm 90:10; a score being twenty, "three score years and ten" add up to seventy years. The whole verse reads; *The days of our years are threescore and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore (80) years, yet is their strength labor and sorrow; for it is soon cut off, and we fly away.*" This Psalm was written by Moses who, by the way, lived to be 120, and this verse is meant to remind rebellious Israel (and us) how short life really is. The average life span

of man had started out being over 900 years, pre-flood, but the curse of sin had shortened it to between seventy and eighty years by Moses' day. He points out that physical problems multiply for individuals as they grow older and eventually everybody dies. In view of the futility of living life apart from God, Moses prayed on behalf of Israel that the Lord would "teach us to number our days, that we may apply our hearts to wisdom" (Ps. 90:12). The idea expressed is that the people of God should seek God's will and live each day for the Lord in order to have a meaningful life. The Apostle Paul admonishes believers today to live by this same principle in His epistle to the Ephesians. "See then that ye walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time because the days are evil. Wherefore be ye not unwise, but understanding what the will of the Lord is" (Eph. 5:15-17). The emphasis is on serving the Lord while we have the opportunity.

In our current culture, people sometimes say, "threescore years plus ten" when they hear of someone passing away. The idea behind using this saying is basically the same as when Moses first wrote it, a reminder that life is fleeting and death eventually comes to all.

QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

I was the fattest king of Moab. I was tricked into believing my enemy was coming to give me a tribute, but instead he stabbed me. Worse yet, while I was bleeding none of my people helped me. Who am I? (*Judges*)

Answer to the February Who Am I Question for the Reader: ENOCH (Genesis 5:21-29; 6:13-22). (My son was the oldest man who ever lived. My great, great grand son built an ark so many would live. Who am I?)

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