



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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"Be Thankful In All Things: REALLY?"

Many believers have trouble with the idea of giving thanks to God in every situation and circumstance of life that they find themselves in. They simply find it impossible to be thankful for the serious trials of life they have to face and the bad things that happen to them and/or those that they love and care for. Rather than be thankful, they often become resentful and bitter towards God when things go awry. Others become more or less indifferent towards God as far as His personal involvement in their life is concerned. They have the attitude that after God saves us He pretty much leaves us to muddle through life on our own the best we can until we go to Heaven. They are thankful for the things of God that they have in Christ, such as forgiveness of sins, redemption, imputed righteousness, being seated in the heavens, etc., etc., but they find no reason to thank God for all that they experience, both good and bad, in this life. After all, they reason, how can God use the evil doings of the ungodly, things that He condemns, for His own purposes of good and glory? Regardless of whatever it was that set them on a path of resentment and anger, or indifference and ingratitude towards God, the underlying cause is a failure to take God at His Word, which is unbelief.

Throughout Scripture the principle is taught that God uses even the wicked works of men to accomplish His purposes concerning His people. The selling into slavery of Joseph by his brothers

is one example. The evil that they did to Joseph, "...God meant it unto good..." (Gen. 50:20) in order to preserve the Children of Israel alive in Egypt where they grew into the twelve tribes that became the nation of Israel. The book of Job vividly reveals to us that in the spiritual warfare unseen by us, God at times even allows the Devil to bring unbelievable discord and pain into the lives of His saints. It is interesting that in the book of Job, God does not reveal why He allowed Satan to inflict such hardship and misery on this godly man. What we do see is that in the end Job was doubly blessed and that he grew in his faith and understanding of God and thus in his reverence toward God and his trust in God (Job 42:1-6).

So, are believers today to be thankful in all things? Yes we are, and the Word of God tells us why. One reason is that whatever suffering we endure on Christ's behalf will produce an incomparable amount of glory that will be "*revealed in us*" in Heaven (see Rom. 8:16-18). The suffering of this life is a "*light affliction*" which "*worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory*:" (see II Cor. 4:16-18). God uses every circumstance and situation we find ourselves in, yes, even when afflicted by the evil works of the wicked, for our eternal good. It is through the trials of life that we grow spiritually mature and more Christ-like, which glorifies Him. God's predetermined purpose for every member of the Body of Christ is that we "*be conformed to the image of His Son*" (see Rom. 8:28-29; cf. Rom. 5:1-5; II Cor. 12:7-10). The "natural

(continued on page 2)

"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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(BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS cont. from page 1)

man” rebels against this truth. The “new man” thanks God for it. We really can, and should, be thankful to God in every situation and circumstance of life. *“In everything give thanks: for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus concerning you”* (I Thess. 5:18).

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: In “Bible Answers to Bible Questions,” Aug. 2014, Vol. 5, Issue 5, you state that the Antichrist will either be a Jew or pretend to be one. But, won’t the Antichrist come out of the old Roman Empire? I believe that the False Prophet will be a Jew and convince other Jews to worship the Antichrist. Possibly the False Prophet will be from the tribe of Dan.

ANSWER: I agree, the Antichrist will emerge from the Roman Empire, but I do not think that fact precludes him from being an ethnic Jew, or more accurately, of Israelite descent. As an example, Saul of Tarsus was an ethnic Israelite and at the same time a Roman citizen by birth. In other words, he came out of the Roman Empire and held a prominent place in Judaism. No doubt Saul (who became Paul the Apostle) was not the only Jew with Roman citizenship in his day and we know that today there are many Jews who are citizens of the countries that were part of the old Roman Empire. So, I think that Antichrist could very well be a Jew and still come out of the Roman Empire. We might note that over the centuries many Jews have been influential in the areas of finance, politics, and entertainment among the nations, and this is still true today.

As I explained in the BABQ, I do not think that the Jews will be convinced to accept anyone as their Messiah unless they at least think that he is from the royal line of David as the Scriptures say he will be, regardless of where he comes from. Of course, the Antichrist will be an impostor and that means that he probably won’t be anything he claims to be. Like his ‘father,’ the Devil, he will be an accomplished deceiver. In which case, you would be right, he will not be a Jew. Of course, the False Prophet, who will also be a liar and deceiver, could be from the tribe of Dan, or he could be a world renowned Gentile religious leader who is working to form a one world religion.

This is an interesting subject that I do not think we can be dogmatic about, but it certainly makes for good discussion.

QUESTION: If the Apostle John was a pastor at some point in the Ephesus Church, does that indicate that the twelve all became members of the Body of Christ and preached the same message as Paul and operated under the Grace Commission? Secondly, it seems that Paul had some Kingdom Church members working in the Mystery Church (Barnabas, Silas, Apollo, and Aquilla). How do you explain this if the two churches were separate? Personally, I am of the impression that the Kingdom Church and her members never became part of the Body of Christ; perhaps I am wrong in my position. What sayest the Scriptures?

ANSWER: The short answer to your question is that I do not believe that the members of the existing Kingdom Church became members of the Body of Christ. Comparing Paul’s teaching against any form of law-keeping in Galatians and the fact that the Jerusalem church, under James’ leadership, was openly “zealous of the Law” (see Acts 21:17-20ff.) is telling. In Galatians, Paul put a curse on those who would come to churches

(continued on page 3)



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

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

that he established and preach any gospel other than the Gospel of Grace of God that he preached (Gal. 1:6-12). But, in Jerusalem, he didn't protest at all when James claimed that there were still thousands of believing Jews there who were "zealous" in their adherence to the Law. Since Galatians was written about AD 49 and Paul's visit to Jerusalem in Acts 21 was about AD 58, almost ten years later, we cannot explain this "apparent" contradiction away by appealing to "progressive revelation." Besides, the Jerusalem church had endorsed Paul's ministry at least eight years before (Acts 15:1-29).

I personally believe that the Kingdom Church continued to function until its members simply died out or were finally dispersed when Jerusalem was destroyed in AD 70. The kingdom brethren that joined Paul in his ministry of proclaiming the Grace Gospel did so because they believed that God was doing a new thing through Paul and they wanted to serve the Lord in whatever capacity they could during that time. A strong desire to see souls saved probably motivated them; but regardless, I do not think that either they or Paul had any idea that God would extend the new dispensation of Grace for two-thousand years as He has done. Anyway, even though the kingdom believers were looking for Christ to come to Earth, while grace believers expected to live with Him in Heaven, their faith was focused on the same Savior, who is the only Savior.

The matter of John having been a pastor in Ephesus is another subject. The "when" and "if" John the apostle was pastor in Ephesus would take more time than I can give to this right now, but I would like to say that I believe that all of the kingdom writings (Hebrews-Revelation) were actually completed by AD 47. It was Paul, not John, who completed the canon of Scripture (Col. 1:25).

QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

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?

Answer to the September "Who Am I" Question for the Reader:
Elisha (I was a prophet of Israel. I have the cloak which belonged to my predecessor, who left me quite suddenly. At Bethel some boys came and made fun of me. Who am I?) Elijah was taken up by the whirlwind. He passed his mantle on to Elisha (2 Kings 2).

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"Jumping Jehoshaphat"

While this is a common phrase, there is no evidence that it comes from the Scriptures, except that Jehoshaphat is a Bible name. There are five men named Jehoshaphat in Scripture, but the one usually associated with this saying was one of the few godly kings of Judah (see I Kin. 15:24; 22:2-50; II Chron. 17:1-21:1 for the interesting life and times of King Jehoshaphat). Its background is uncertain, but the term seems to have originated sometime in the mid-1800's. The first place it is found written is in "The Headless Horseman" that was written by T. Mayne Reid around 1866. Some think it is older, but most think that it probably originated in Reid's fertile imagination as he penned his story. Wherever it started, it caught on and is still used today as a kind of mild oath.

"The Patience of Job"

This phrase is found in James 5:11, a passage in which the leader of the Jerusalem church wrote to "the twelve tribes that were scattered abroad" (James 1:1), that is, the people of Israel who were dispersed throughout the nations where the Lord had driven them long ago because of their rebellion and unbelief (Deut. 4:24-28; 28:64-66; Jer. 9:13-16; etc.; etc.). And dispersed they will remain until their Messiah, Jesus Christ, whom the nation rejected at His first coming, returns to establish His Kingdom on earth (Jer. 23:1-6; 31:31-34; etc.; etc.). When

(continued on page 4)



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

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(BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS cont. from page 3)

James wrote his epistle, the believing remnant of Israel was expecting to soon enter into the Tribulation where they would experience severe persecution and great suffering (Jer. 30:3-7). He was using the example of Job, who suffered terribly as a victim of a conflict between the Lord and Satan. He was reminding them that in the end of Job's time of trial the Lord God proved to be compassionate and merciful as He blessed Job with multiplied blessings. Just as Job found the Lord to truly be the Faithful One (Deut. 23:19; Lam. 3:22-23; II Tim. 2:13), James is saying that believing Israel will find the Lord to be faithful to see them through their time of trial, if they will but trust Him. Of course, the Tribulation was forestalled by the Lord's temporary cessation of prophecy and the introduction of the dispensation of Grace that we are currently living in. After the Rapture of the Church and the restarting of prophecy, the epistle of James will again be directly applicable to the situation believing Israel will find itself in. And, of course, the principle presented in this passage is an interdispensational truth: the God of the Bible will never fail us when we put our trust in Him.

Most often today people say that someone has "*the patience of Job*" when they willingly endure severe and prolonged hardship of some kind. Less often it is used in the Biblical sense, to endure through whatever difficult circumstance or situation that might overtake us, trusting in the faithfulness of a loving God, who is merciful and gracious, for the end results. And this whether we understand why things are going the way they are or not. "*And we know that all things work together for good to them that love God...*" (Rom. 8:28).

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"Thomas Jefferson's Bible"

Politician, scholar, author of the "Declaration of Independence," and third President of the United States, Thomas Jefferson was no friend of Biblical Christianity. As were many of the educated men of his time, Jefferson was influenced by Deism. As a Deist he believed in a God that created man but left him to get along on his own. Rejecting the miracles recorded in the Bible, he put together his own version of the Gospel Records of Jesus Christ's life and ministry on earth. Deleting all of the miracles from the Gospels, he portrayed Jesus Christ as a wise teacher of proper morals and an ethical role model for men to follow, just as many "Christian" moralists do today. They deny that He is the Lord of the universe and the Savior of sinners. The title he gave to this perverse version of Scripture was "The Life and Morals of Jesus of Nazareth." While Jefferson was criticized for his religious views, he remained a popular president.

Jefferson's Humanist worldview is revealed in his statement that "The studious perusal of the Sacred Volume will make better citizens, better fathers, and better husbands," when it is laid down beside his denial of the miraculous. People may benefit in the short term from the study and practice of the moral standards and ethical behavior taught in the Bible. However, not one soul will be eternally saved apart from believing in the miracle of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who came into this world as God Incarnate through the miracle of a virgin conceiving and giving birth to the Son of God, who is Lord of all and Savior of those who trust in Him.

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