



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

AND INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT THE HOLY WORD OF GOD

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE, INC.

PO BOX 587, SLINGER, WI 53086

VOLUME 5

SEPTEMBER 2014

ISSUE 6

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"Is Jesus Christ Enough?"

It seems today that many who profess to be "Christians" are not satisfied with the Lord Jesus Christ and the spiritual blessings that are theirs through faith in Him. Instead of being thrilled and satisfied by the wonder of the love, mercy, and grace that God has extended to all believers through the redemptive work accomplished by His Son on the Cross on behalf of sinners, they are continually seeking new and varied mystical experiences to satisfy their spiritual hunger. Instead of focusing on the Savior, they claim to be recipients of a special anointing of the Holy Spirit who empowers them with spiritual gifts and that God regularly speaks directly to them, revealing things that are not found in the Bible. In other words, they view the Scriptures as an open ended resource that God is continually amending through new revelations given to them. By implication, not only is Jesus Christ insufficient to meet their spiritual needs, but the Bible is also insufficient for us as God's revealed Word to mankind. They go so far as to claim that when they speak by faith, their words have divine authority. Of course, we are speaking of the Charismatic-Pentecostal renewal movement that began in 1901 and has become increasingly bizarre in its teachings and practices over the last eleven decades. Today, some even insist that they have the authority to anoint each other as apostles and prophets with the same authority as Peter and Paul and the other apostles and prophets of the Bible. The hallmark of this large and rapidly growing movement is the health, wealth, and prosperity gospel that they preach. While there is

undoubtedly a spirit at work in this movement, with all of their unbiblical doctrines and practices that are found within it, we can be sure that it is not the Holy Spirit. Is there an answer to this phenomenon that is overrunning the "world of Christendom?" Yes, we believe that there is and it is not found in any special revelations given to self-styled modern day apostles and prophets. It is found in the Holy Scriptures that were God-breathed (II Tim. 3:16) and written down by men of God who *"spoke as they were moved by the Holy Spirit"* (II Pet. 1:20-21).

For those who accept the Bible as complete and authoritative for all matters of faith (what we believe, doctrine) and practice (how we are to think and live), it is a simple matter of searching the Scriptures to see what they say and then believe it. A major problem within the Body of Christ, the Church of today, is its failure, or it might be better said, its refusal to acknowledge that the Body of Christ did not begin on the Day of Pentecost (Acts 2), but started later with the ministry of the Apostle Paul. In the early chapters of Acts a new Church was not being formed, instead Peter and the eleven other apostles were offering the prophesied Kingdom of God on earth with Jesus Christ as King to the nation of Israel. While many of the Jews believed, most did not and the religious/political leaders as a whole rejected the Lord Jesus as Israel's promised Messiah. If they had believed on Him as the Son of God and the promised King of Israel from the family line of David, the Tribulation would have soon begun and after seven years it would have been brought to an end by Jesus Christ at His glorious Second Coming in victory over Satan and the armies of anti-Christ (see Rev. 19:11-21).

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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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Because of their rejection of His Son, God has set Israel aside in unbelief for a time of unknown duration to us. At the beginning of this unprophesied interval, the Lord saved His foremost enemy of the day, Saul of Tarsus (who became the Apostle Paul) and revealed to him a secret program that was not professed beforehand, called the Dispensation of Grace that we are now living in. When we understand this marvelous grace truth, it becomes clear that we are not to look back to Pentecost as a pattern for the Church today. Rather, we are to look to the Epistles of the Apostle Paul and his example for instruction for the Church. Yes, the apostolic sign gifts of early Acts will resume someday, but not until the Body of Christ is caught up to heaven. In the meantime, believers can find an overabundance of spiritual satisfaction in the Person of Jesus Christ, *"For in Him dwelleth all the fullness of the Godhead bodily. And ye are complete in Him, which is the Head of all principality and power"* (Col. 2:9-10).

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: Does being wealthy preclude a person from heaven if he/she has accepted Christ as their personal Savior? I say it does not, but a friend of mine says it does, being convinced the following is true: "Choosing to follow Christ always means choosing not to pursue wealth." We both read the book this is from and feel strongly that it is a false statement. What do you think?

ANSWER: It is a false statement. A person cannot earn their way into Heaven by renouncing all earthly possessions and living an indigent lifestyle any more than they can buy their way

in. Salvation is *"by grace are ye saved through faith; and that not of yourselves: it is the gift of God: not of works, lest any man should boast"* (Eph. 2:8-9). When a person, rich, poor, or in between, hears the Good News of salvation in Jesus Christ through His death, burial, and resurrection (I Cor. 15:3-4) and believes that it is true and they trust in Christ to forgive and redeem them through the blood of His Cross (Col. 1:14, 20-21), He saves them from God's wrath and they are *"sealed with the Holy Spirit"* who promises to keep them until the day of their resurrection and glorification (Eph. 1:13-14; Phil. 3:20-21). Being sealed by the Holy Spirit (I Cor. 1:21-22; Eph. 4:30), nothing can ever separate them from God's loving protection (Rom. 5:5; 8:34-39). That being said, we must point out that the Apostle Paul warns believers of the pitfalls of having a wrong attitude about wealth and the pursuit thereof, saying: *"But they that will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition"* (see I Tim. 6:5-10). Also, he points out that those believers who are rich can be both greatly blessed and a blessing to others when they put their wealth to work glorifying God with the right motives (see I Tim. 6:17-19). On the other hand, unsaved people often let their obsession with a particular sin harden their heart to the Gospel. It could be the sin of greed or covetousness, which is a form of idolatry, or lust, or pride, or any other of a host of sinful desires, attitudes and practices. In this sense, riches might keep someone out of heaven. But, in the same way, it could keep the man out who pridefully thinks he has earned God's favor by giving all his possessions away.

This brings us to a most important issue raised in the statement in view, *"Choosing to follow Christ always means choosing not to pursue wealth."* I do not know the context this statement is found in, but the statement by itself implies that one is saved by *"Choosing to follow Christ."* Nothing could be further from the truth. A person is saved only after realizing that

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their sin has separated them from God and has condemned them and that they are facing the judgment and wrath of God if they die in their sins. Knowing that these things are true, upon hearing that Jesus Christ died for their sins, was buried and raised from the dead, and that He is both willing and able to save them from the wrath of God, they must, by faith, trust in Him. Only then, after being indwelt by the Holy Spirit, are they made spiritually alive (Eph. 2:1-5) and enabled to be *"followers of God, as dear children; and walk in love, as Christ also hath loved, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour"* (Eph. 5:1-2).

QUESTION: I believe in the Trinity, that there is One Eternal God existing in three Persons, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Recently, I have been talking to someone who insists that if I believe this that logically I must believe in three Gods. He says that the Son is a lesser being than the Father and that the Holy Spirit is not a Person but only the spirit of God. Can you comment on this?

ANSWER: This is a form of "Arianism," so named after the false teaching of a man named Arius (c. A.D. 256-336) who taught that Jesus Christ was not of the same essence or substance as the Father. In other words, he denied the Deity of Christ, saying that He was a created being and therefore inferior to the Father, who alone is the fullness of God. Of course, this denies the Trinity as well as the Deity of Christ. A great theological debate erupted over Arius' teachings and two theological terms emerged as a result; "homoiousis" and "homoousios." Arius used the word "homoiousis," which means "of similar substance" or "of similar essence" to defend his idea that the Son is not God in the same sense that the Father is, but is only similar to Him.

Those who stood against Arius' heretical views used the word "homoouios," which means "of the same substance" or "of the same essence" to describe the Son as being of the same or identical nature of the Father and thus fully

God. This position, which is based on Scripture, substantiates the Biblical teachings of the full Deity of the Son and His equality with the Father. It also substantiates the truth that God is Triune in nature as the same truth of equality also applies to the Holy Spirit, something that Arius strongly rejected.

The Doctrine of the Trinity is unique to Biblical Christianity. Those who refuse to believe it do so on the grounds of human logic, not on what the Bible teaches. They reason that if the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit are of the same substance, essence, and nature, they must be one and the same person. Those who believe this either embrace Modalism, that God is one Person who only manifested Himself in three modes at different times, or they reduce Jesus Christ to a lesser god and the Holy Spirit to a non-personal force. While we cannot understand how God can be a Triunity of Persons and yet be one God with our limited powers of deduction and comprehension, it is what the Bible teaches. Actually, sound reasoning should lead us to the conclusion that such limited and finite creatures as we are should not expect to understand anymore about the eternal, infinite, all powerful, all knowing, and righteous God who created us than what He has chosen to reveal to us in His Holy Word (II Tim. 3:16-17), and it is only reasonable to believe it. When we look at the overall teachings of Scripture, it is clear that there exists a co-equal unity in the Godhood of the Father, Son, and the Holy Spirit who are an eternally co-existing Triunity of Persons. *"The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you"* (II Cor. 13:14).

QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

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?

Answer to the August "Who Am I" Question for the Reader: Balaam (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?) Numbers 22 - Balaam could not see the angel of the Lord, but the donkey could and protected Balaam.



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COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"Jezebel"

Jezebel was the evil wife of the wicked Ahab, the eighth king of Israel. She was the daughter of the pagan king Ethbaal of Sidon (I Kin. 16:31). Prompting Ahab into even greater idolatry than he was already involved in, she pushed to completely eradicate all worship of the God of Israel in the northern kingdom and replace it with the worship of Baal and Astarte (I Kin. 16:32). She surrounded herself with 450 prophets of Baal and 400 prophets of the "groves," where Astarte was worshipped (I Kin. 18:19) while having the prophets of Jehovah killed (I Kin. 18:13; II Kin. 9:7). Her tenure as queen, and later as the queen mother, was marked by intrigue, bloodshed, and the immoral practices of the pagan religion she practiced and enticed others to follow. Because of her wicked ways, Jezebel's name has come to be a by-word that people now use to refer to an unscrupulous and conniving woman. There is debate over whether John used it figuratively or if it was the actual name of a self-styled prophetess of Thyatira, but there is no doubt that she is of the same character; "...that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed to idols (Rev. 2:20).

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"Study Bibles"

Virtually all Bibles in use today incorporate some kind of aids to help readers in their study and understanding of the Scriptures. At the very minimum, they contain chapter breaks and the numbering of verses. While we take the

chapters and verse numbers for granted today, they did not exist in the original Hebrew and Greek texts. The chapter divisions were added around A.D. 1200 by Stephen Langton, the Archbishop of Canterbury, England. It was not until over three hundred years later that the text was divided into verses by Robert Estienne, a French printer who had converted during the Reformation. We should be extremely grateful for these helps. It is certainly more helpful to hear "open your Bible to Romans 8:37" than to have someone say, "turn to the place in Romans where it says, 'we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us.'" And just think what it would be like trying to find a passage in Leviticus, Isaiah, or II Chronicles.

Of course today, most Bibles contain more than chapter divisions and verse numbers. At the very least, they have Scripture cross references and footnotes to explain difficult passages. Bibles with introductions and background information for the different books of the Bible are very popular today, but they are not new. They became popular after the printing press made Bibles available to the common people. The Reformation of the 1500's fueled the desire to have a Bible for the general public and most readers were desirous to have some kind of helps to aid in their understanding, just like they do today. There are literally dozens of study Bibles available today, and readers must beware when using them. The study notes are not part of the inspired Word of God, but are the opinions of those who supplied them based on their theological bias and personal understanding of the Scriptures. We must be careful not to confuse them with God's Word.

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