

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

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ISSUE 6

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"Be Ye Reconciled to God"

Adam's sin brought enmity between him and God, an enmity that has been passed down to all his descendants from generation to generation until this very day. Man's hostility towards God is revealed in his prideful insistence that he can somehow earn his own salvation through his own good works. In arrogance, he rejects the idea that he must trust in Jesus Christ alone, depending completely on Him and in His death, burial, and resurrection as having accomplished all that is needed to provide for his salvation. In doing so the barrier of sin remains between him and a holy God.

Because God is perfectly righteous by nature, He cannot simply ignore sin but must demand that the penalty incurred by sin be paid before the relationship between Him and man can be restored. The penalty owed because of sin is "death" (Rom. 5:12; 6:23a). Knowing that if man was left to pay the penalty of sin on his own, he would die in his sins and would be forever separated from God in the everlasting torments of the "Lake of Fire" (Rev. 20:11-15). However, God, the Creator of all things, is not one dimensional in His being. While He is absolutely holy, righteous and just, He is also a God of mercy, grace, and love. And, because of His great love for ungrateful, wicked, and hostile sinners, He sent His Son to die for our sins (see Rom. 5:6-11) and mercifully offered salvation to man as a gift of grace (Eph. 2:4-5, 8-9; Titus 3:3-5). Through the death of His

cross, Jesus Christ has made it possible for that which alienates man from God, man's sin, to be removed. With his sin debt paid in full by the blood of Jesus Christ, man can be reconciled to God. However, while God has reconciled the world to Himself in the sense that in His Son He has provided for the remission of sins of the entire fallen human family, each individual man and woman must by faith accept God's terms of reconciliation in order to be personally reconciled to God. When a sinner recognizes his or her lost and hopeless condition and believes the message of the cross, that Jesus Christ died for their sins, was buried, and rose again as the Scriptures say, their sins are forgiven and they are redeemed (Eph. 1:7; Col. 1:13-14), and thus reconciled to God (Col. 1:21). Those who shun God's offer of reconciliation and remain in their sins, will one day be judged for their works of unrighteousness. *"For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto us which are saved it is the power of God....For after that in the wisdom of God the world by wisdom knew not God, it pleased God by the foolishness of preaching to save them that believe"* (I Cor. 15:18, 21).

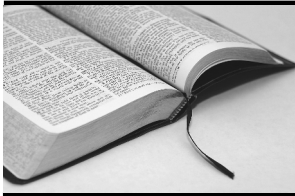
Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

"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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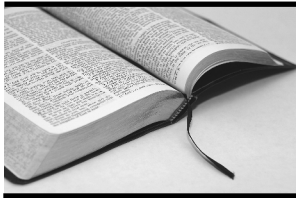
QUESTION: You say that spiritual baptism alone results in the regeneration of a believer, but I believe that there is no spiritual baptism in Scripture apart from the rite of water baptism. Are not the two always linked together in the Bible?

ANSWER: Something to think about in addressing this subject is whether it is water baptism or the Baptism of the Spirit that results in a person being regenerated. I suppose that you would say "it takes both." But that leaves us with a problem because Ephesians 4:5 says that for those who are in the Body of Christ there is but "one baptism." Is this "one baptism" a water ritual done by man that only washes the outside of a person or is it a spiritual baptism done by God who washes and regenerates the believer from the heart out, a work accomplished entirely by the renewing power of the Holy Spirit who indwells each believer when they trust in Christ for salvation. Note carefully that the "one baptism" is listed as one of the aspects of "the unity of the Spirit: that Christians are to endeavor to keep "in the bond of peace" (see Eph. 4:1-6). It is "the unity of faith," that which we must believe to grow in "the knowledge of the Son of God" (Eph. 4:13). In the present Dispensation of Grace there is only one Church, the Body of Christ; only one Spirit at work in the Church, the Holy Spirit; only one hope for the Church, a heavenly hope in Christ; only One Lord and Savior and Head of the Church, Jesus Christ; only one faith, the Gospel of the Grace of God; and only one God and Father over all. These are all spiritual realities that are associated with the works of God and not what man does. This being so, we must conclude that the "one baptism" is the spiritual baptism that identifies the believer with and seals him in Christ. We are to simply believe that this is true and that God has accomplished it without our help.

Yes, water baptism is in the Bible and it is associated with salvation in some places, such as Acts 2:38. But, those instructions are in the context of God's prophetic dealings with Israel as His called out Covenant People (Acts 2:22, 36). Today, in the Dispensation of Grace, God is working among the nations **apart from Israel** to call out a special people through grace alone. "For by grace you have been

saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, let any man should boast" (Eph. 2:8-9). A gift given with requirements attached to it is not a gift. It can't have any works that someone can boast about doing associated with it. This would include church membership, tithing, giving to the poor, or anything else that men or women can do, including being baptized in water. Salvation is all of Jesus Christ and what He did on our behalf. Through faith, the believer is complete in Christ and needs nothing more (Col. 2:9-10). According to Scripture, the exercise of faith is not a work (see Rom. 4:4-5). There is no merit in believing the truth. It has been rightly said that "faith is the only thing we can do without doing anything at all." I Corinthians 12:13 tells us that it is "by One Spirit are we all baptized into one body..." with no mention of water baptism in or near the passage it is found in. Also, in Titus we read that it is "not by works of righteousness that we have done, but according to His mercy He saved us, by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Spirit; which He shed on us abundantly through Jesus Christ our Savior" (Titus 3:5-6). There is no mention here of the ritual of water baptism only, "the washing of regeneration," which is carried out by the Holy Spirit. Members of the Body of Christ undergo a spiritual "circumcision made without hands" and they are "buried with (Christ) in baptism, wherein also ye are raised with Him through the faith of the operation of God..." (Col. 2:11-12). "The operation of God" here speaks of that which is done by God, being done in His energy, efficiency, and power apart from any contribution made by the one being circumcised and baptized. To trust in works of any kind or degree to secure salvation is to deny God's Grace and to make of no effect the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus.

In the prophetic Kingdom program, water baptism was in the past, and will be in the future, a requirement for believers as an expression of their faith. But in this present Dispensation of Grace we are living in, faith alone in Jesus Christ and what He has done for us is what God requires. To add works of any kind or degree is to deny God's Grace and to make of no effect the Gospel of the Grace of God in Christ Jesus.



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

QUESTION: Did Jesus Christ go to the place of torment in Sheol/Hades and fight with the devil for the “keys”?

ANSWER: No, Jesus Christ did not go to the torment side of Sheol/Hades after His death on the cross. When He said “*it is finished*” and died (John 19:30), His sacrificial, substitutionary, and propitiatory work of redemption was complete. In love, He gave Himself as a sacrifice for our sins (Eph. 5:2). In giving Himself for our sins, He became our substitute (Rom. 5:8; I Cor. 15:3-4). In the giving of Himself on our behalf as a perfect sacrifice and therefore acceptable substitute, He propitiated, or satisfied, God’s righteousness, allowing Him to release us from our sin debt and declare us to be righteous without violating His holiness (Rom. 3:21-26). All this took place on the cross where He suffered and died in our place for our sins. He was raised from the dead in victory over sin and death that He might be our Mediator and give us assurance of our salvation, the promise of eternal life, and guarantee our future resurrection (Rom. 5:8-11; 6:1-5; 8:31-34; I Tim. 2:5-6).

Jesus Christ did indeed go to Sheol/Hades for the three days His body was entombed, but He was not suffering there at the hand of Satan as some teach. The Devil has never in the past, is not now, and will never be in the future the ruler of Sheol/Hades or the Lake of Fire. The fact is that Satan wants to avoid those places. The torment of judgment experienced in those places is not by the hand of Satan, but is the just punishment of the unsaved according to the wrath of a Holy God toward the unrighteous works of the sinful members of Adam’s fallen race.

Satan could no more have overpowered Jesus Christ in Sheol/Hades than he could during Christ’s earthly ministry. Both Satan and his demons are subject to Jesus’ authority. While Satan thought he had defeated Jesus Christ by instigating His death on the cross, it was actually the Devil’s undoing. Jesus Christ came not only to save sinners through

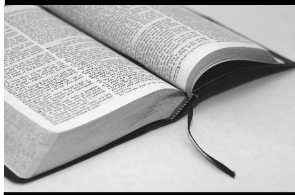
His death on the cross, but also “*that through death He might destroy him that had the power of death, that is the Devil*” (Heb. 2:14). When Jesus Christ died on the cross and rose again three days later, Satan’s final defeat was assured. He will end up in the Lake of Fire (Rev. 20:10).

We do not have much information about the activities of the Lord Jesus Christ during His three days in Sheol/Hades, but we do know that He went there in a “spiritually quickened” state of being (see I Pet. 3:18). This means that He was spiritually alive. We also know that He preached, or proclaimed God’s Word to the spiritual beings imprisoned there because of their disobedience (see I Pet. 3:19-20). No doubt His message was one of joy to the believers there and one of condemnation towards those who had been disobedient. Regardless, this tells us that He was in charge while He was there and was not in any way in subjection to the Devil.

The idea that the Lord Jesus Christ suffered at Satan’s hands while He was in Sheol/Hades is a lie of the Devil. It demeans the Person of Christ and is meant to pervert people’s perception of who Jesus Christ is and show Satan to have more power and authority than he actually has. It is an evil doctrine that should be rejected outright and exposed for the lie that it is.

The claim that the Lord Jesus was tormented by Satan in Sheol/Hades for three days is common among the so-called “word of faith” teachers. They say that Christ ended up on the cross because of a lack of faith. Then, after three days of being bound by the Devil, He was “born again” and then, by faith, He defeated Satan and was raised from the dead. They also teach that Jesus Christ took on the nature of Satan during His three days in Sheol/Hades and was transformed into a mortal and satanic man, making Him a demoniac. None of this is true. The Lord won a total victory through His death on the cross and the “keys” are His. The resurrection proves it. He became sin for us on the

(continued on page 4)



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(Answer continued from page 3)

cross in that He bore our sin debt and paid it in full that we might be declared righteous through faith in Him (II Cor. 5:14-15,21; Rom. 3:21-26). He did not take on the sin nature of fallen man nor was He identified with Satan. What He did was to identify with the human race in His incarnation that He might become our sin bearer making it possible for sinners to be set free from the bondage of sin and death through faith in Him (Rev. 6:6-7,17-18,23) and to defeat Satan (Heb. 2:14).

Another teaching that usually accompanies this diabolical doctrine is that the ransom to free us from the bondage of sin and death that Jesus Christ paid on the cross was paid to Satan. While Satan is called "the god of this world" (II Cor. 4:4), he has no legal right to it. He stole it and only maintains control by deception and manipulation. Satan has no authority to sit in judgment of sinners, only God can do that. It is God's holiness that is violated by sin. Satan will one day have to give an accounting of his evil deeds and will suffer everlasting condemnation (Rev. 20:10). Scripture is clear, Christ's sacrifice of Himself for our sins was a sacrifice to God. "Christ also hath loved us, and hath given Himself for us an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smelling savour" (Eph. 5:2). We also read in God's word that "there is One God, and One Mediator between God and men, the Man Christ Jesus; who gave Himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time" (I Tim. 2:5-6). As the one to mediate the terms of peace between God and mankind, the ransom price Christ paid had to be to God not to Satan. It is God that is the offended party and Jesus Christ's blood satisfies the sin debt that God's justice demands. To teach otherwise is heretical.

QUESTION FOR THE READER: WHO AM I?

Who said this? "Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water"

Answer to the August "Who Am I" Question for the Reader: Samuel (I was born because God promised my mother she would have a child. I was raised in the House of the Lord by a priest named Eli. Who am I?) Samuel means "heard of God." He was the son of Hannah and Elkanah. He was a priest who was also a prophet and a judge. Samuel's story is found in I Samuel.

COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

"Many Are Called But Few Are Chosen"

This phrase is generally used as an euphemism for the idea that "success is rare," meaning that they are few in number that make it to the top. It is taken from Matthew 22:1-14, which is a parable of the Kingdom of Heaven in which the Lord Jesus tells of a king that randomly brought in a large number of people off the streets to attend the wedding feast of his son to replace those who were invited but refused to come. One man did not wear the proper wedding garment to the feast, special clothing provided by the king. When the king saw him he was displeased and ordered his servants to "cast him into outer darkness," saying "there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth. For many are called but few are chosen." Regardless of its popular use, this saying is not about anyone working their way up to the highest level in whatever their endeavors might be. It pertains particularly to Israel and is about God's provision of redemption and entrance into His Kingdom on earth at Christ's Second Coming. All are invited or "called", but only those who respond in faith will be allowed to enter in and become part of the company of the "chosen" (also see Matt. 20:1-16).

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