

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

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ISSUE 7

“ARE WE TO TRUST IN TRADITION, REASON, OR TRUTH?”

Sometime ago I picked up an informational brochure from a Church. I was interested in finding out more about this group and their core beliefs. The first statement I read in the brochure was encouraging. It read; “We believe that the Holy Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments contain all things necessary for salvation.” I took this to mean that they believed that the whole Bible is to be considered to be the very Word of God, and that in it alone we find the message of salvation. So far so good, but the next statement caused my heart to sink. It read; “We view Scripture through the lenses of tradition and reason.”

To approach God’s Word through the lenses of tradition and reason, one has to move away from the view that the Bible is authoritative in all matters of faith and practice. This statement, in effect, nullifies the first. If the Bible itself contains all that we need to know to obtain salvation, why would we need to add the traditions and philosophies of man to it? The Bible says we don’t and, in fact, warns us against doing so because it is harmful to our souls. God’s Holy Word tells us to *“beware lest anyone cheat you through philosophy and empty deceit, according to the tradition of men, according to the basic principles of the world, and not according to Christ”* (Col. 2:8). The trouble is when we start trying to fit our traditions and our reasoned ideas (philosophy) into the Scriptures something has to give way when they do not agree with each other. Sadly, both history and current events reveal that when given a choice, most

people will choose familiar traditions and the ideas they are comfortable with over what God has to say in His inspired Word. This is a major problem because the salvation that every man and woman of the human race is in need of is uprooted by the rebellion of mankind against God that manifests itself in a stubborn insistence of doing things their own way instead of God’s way by following their own traditions and philosophies. It all started back in the Garden of Eden when the first man and woman chose to disobey God and eat of the fruit of the *“Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil”* (see Gen. 2:15-17, 3:1-24) that He had forbidden them to partake of.

The curse of sin and death has been in place since Adam’s fall into sin and every one of his descendants, the entire human race, has been subjected to it. Every son and daughter of Adam’s fallen race is born with a sin nature that is revealed in their thoughts, attitudes, and actions. They try to hide it with their traditions and deny it through their reasoning. They even convince themselves that they are “all right” and God will surely accept them because that is what they want to believe. After all, they do have their traditions and their rationalizations to support and comfort them. But alas, they are deceived, self-deceived by their own heart. Man insists that the heart of man is basically good at its core, but God’s Word reveals to us that every man’s heart is *“deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked”* (Jer. 17:9).

How about you dear reader? Are you living with a false hope based on the traditions and philosophies of men rather than in Jesus Christ and

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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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His finished work of redemption? If your soul were required of you today, what would you tell God if He asked you: "Why should I let you into my Heaven?" Though you may deny it and appeal to your cherished traditions and philosophies, it is through the message of the cross, which is "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) that you can have forgiveness of sins and the gift of eternal life. The power of God to the salvation of souls is found in the message of the Cross "For the message of the cross is foolishness to those who are perishing, but to us who are being saved it is the power of God...For since in the wisdom of God, the world through wisdom did not know God, it pleased God through the foolishness of the message preached to save those who believe" (I Cor. 1:18, 21).

Because Christ Lives!

W. Edward Bedore

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

(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)

QUESTION: I believe that from the beginning of time until the end of time the unsaved dead go to a place called Hell (in English), which is a temporary place of torment, until they are finally resurrected, judged at the Great White Throne as mentioned in Revelation 20, and then thrown into the Lake of Fire. However, on the basis of the rich man's word in Luke 16:24, "For I am in agony in this flame," some claim that all references to Hell throughout the Bible must be talking about the Lake of Fire. How would you explain the meaning of the Rich Man's words?

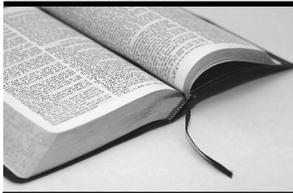
ANSWER: You are correct, there are those who assume that this verse, and all references to Hell in

the Bible are references to the "Lake of Fire." However, the context of the events of Luke 16:19-31 tell us otherwise. The Great White Throne Judgment is the final judgment of the unsaved dead, which takes place at the end of the Millennial Kingdom (see Rev. 20:7-15). In this prophetic account, we find that "hell" (*hades* in Greek) will deliver up the dead which are in it to be judged at that time (Rev. 20:13), and Hell (Hades) will itself be cast into the "Lake of Fire" along with death (Rev. 20:14). This is an impossibility if Hades/Hell and the Lake of Fire are one and the same thing.

Besides Hades, the Greek word "Gehenna" is also translated Hell in the New Testament. While Hades/Hell refers to a place of temporary residence for the unsaved dead, Gehenna/Hell refers to the Lake of Fire, the final and permanent home of the unsaved who will suffer everlasting torment there (Rev. 20:10, 15). Originally created for Satan and his demons (Matt. 25:41), this place of "everlasting fire" is also called a place of "outer darkness" (Matt. 8:12; 25:30), a "furnace of fire" (Matt. 13:42), a place of "everlasting punishment" (Matt. 25:46); "the mist (gloom) of darkness" (II Pet. 2:17), "the hurt of the second death" (Rev. 2:11; cf. 20:6,14; 21:8), and a "lake of fire burning with brimstone" (Rev. 19:20; 20:10; 21:8).

Since they were spoken to Abraham before the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, the words of the Rich Man and Abraham's response indicate that at that time Hades/Hell was divided into two parts, one side being referred to as Abraham's Bosom and the other a place of "torments" by fire (Lk. 16:23-24). Between these two places there was "a great gulf fixed:" so that those on either side could not pass to the other side (Lk. 16:26). At the time of His death on the Cross, Jesus Christ descended into Hades/Hell and His lifeless body was placed in a tomb about 3 hours later. Three days and nights after His death, He was reunited with His body and rose

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from the dead just as David had prophesied (see Ps. 16:8-11), and Peter testified to Jesus Christ having fulfilled this prophecy proving Him to be Israel's promised Messiah (see Acts 2:22-32ff). We will take note here of the fact that the Hebrew word "*Sheol*" translated "*Hell*" in Psalm 16:10 is the equivalent of the Greek word "*Hades*" found in the New Testament.

It seems imperative that something should be said here about the place called Paradise in the Bible. While Paradise is not now a part of Sheol/Hades, it will be mentioned here because it was located in Sheol/Hades at one time. Before the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, everybody who died went to Sheol/Hades which, as mentioned earlier, was at that time divided into at least two compartments; one being a place of torment while the other a place of blessing referred to as Abraham's Bosom (Lk 16:22-25).

We know that Jesus Christ went "*into the lower parts of the earth*" (Eph. 4:9), that is to Sheol/Hades "*in the heart of the earth,*" for three days and nights while His body was in the grave (Matt. 12:39-40). The Lord Jesus told the repentant thief that he would join Him in Paradise that same day (Lk. 23:42-43). This tells us that Paradise was located in Sheol/Hades at that time. We believe that this was the same place referred to as Abraham's Bosom in Luke 16. However, after Jesus Christ rose from the dead, He ascended to the Father, taking the saints who were in Abraham's Bosom to Heaven with Him. Thus, He took "*captivity captive*" (Eph. 4:8-10).

That Paradise was moved to Heaven is confirmed to us by the Apostle Paul who speaks of a man who was "*caught up into Paradise*" where he "*heard unspeakable words*" (II Cor. 12:3-4). With Jesus Christ's work complete, the believers who had been confined to Sheol/Hades were now taken to Heaven

to wait in God's presence until the time of their resurrection to enter His Kingdom on Earth. Since that time, at death all believers go to Paradise in Heaven to await the time of their resurrection. This is true whether they belong to the Kingdom Church of the future or the Body of Christ Church of the present Dispensation of Grace whose members will be resurrected in the Rapture. Meanwhile, all of the unsaved dead are confined to Hades/Hell where they suffer in the flames of the torment of unbelief as they await the Great White Throne Judgment where their unrighteous works will be evaluated and their final judgment of the everlasting torment of "*the second death*" pronounced and carried out (Rev. 10:13-15).

For more information on this and related subjects, please see the editors book *The State and Place of the Dead: What Happens After We Die*. It can be ordered from Berean Bible Institute, PO Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086 or on our website at: bereanbibleinstitute.org.

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"The Genealogical Tables in the Bible"

It is a strange fact, but it seems most professing Bible believing Christians, including many pastors and Bible scholars, consider the genealogical tables in the Bible, including the record of Jesus Christ's human ancestry, to be of little importance, or even irrelevant to our understanding of the Bible today. This is especially true in the materialistic post-modern western culture of the twenty-first century. However, nothing could be further from the truth.

It is true that much about the Bible and its message of redemption to lost sinners, and living a sanctified life to believers can be understood with little or no knowledge of the genealogical tables found in Scripture. Nevertheless, even a rudimentary grasp of their place and purpose in the Bible will greatly enhance a person's understanding of the Word of God.

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There are several genealogical records found in Scripture in passages that many of us only give superficial attention to or entirely skip over. Admittedly, these sections can be monotonous to us and cumbersome to read through, but they are God-breathed and part of Scripture. That being so, they are important and we can and should learn from them as *“all Scripture is given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness”* (I Tim. 3:16-17; II Pet. 1:20-21; John 17:17). Genealogies are a list of ancestors or descendants in the study of family lines. They are compiled to trace biological descent, rights of inheritance, succession to an office, and/or ethnological and geographical relationships. These are all true of the genealogies found in Scripture. In the KJV Bible, the term *“generations”* is sometimes used to denote a genealogical list (Gen. 5:1-32; 6:9-10; 10:1-32; 11:10-32; Matt. 1:1-17, etc.). The first nine chapters of I Chronicles is made up of genealogical tables, a fact that emphasizes their importance.

The genealogies given in Scripture serve several purposes. A few of those are that; they confirm the historical accuracy of God’s Word; they substantiate prophecy; they attest to both Jesus Christ’s Humanity and His Deity; and they demonstrate God’s love and concern for Adam’s fallen race. Space prevents us from going into great detail here about the various genealogical lists in the Bible and their relationship to the overall historical and spiritual content of God’s Word, but I do hope that this brief article will spur those who read it to take these lists seriously and spend some time reviewing

them. Those who familiarize themselves with them will find many of the names found in them showing up in other portions of Scripture as well. One example is Zadok, the son of Ahitub¹ (I Chron. 6:8). His faithfulness to David, the Lord’s choice to be the king of Israel and through whose family line the Messiah would come, earned him the privilege of having his descendants serve God by overseeing the Lord’s special oblation (district) among the tribes of Israel in the Millennial Kingdom (I Kin. 2:26-27, 35; Ezek. 48:8-11).

ENDNOTE

1. Admittedly this genealogical example is a difficult one to trace out. To understand its full impact, we must start with Eli, the high priest who raised Samuel. Because of the wickedness of Eli’s sons, his descendants would be cut off from serving as priests (I Sam. 2:27-36; I Kin. 2:26-27). Something to keep in mind is that Zadok had a great grandson four times removed who was also named Ahitub and he named his son Zadok. This can lead to confusion if the two father-son combinations are not recognized and put in their proper chronological order.

QUESTION FOR THE READER

When Aaron put his rod inside the tabernacle, what grew on it?

ANSWER TO THE SEPTEMBER QUESTION: 15 YEARS

(How many more years did God add to King Hezekiah’s life in response to the dying king’s prayer?)

“...I have seen thy tears: behold, I will add unto thy days fifteen years.”

—Isaiah 38:5

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BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE
116 Kettle Moraine Drive S.
PO Box 587
Slinger, Wisconsin 53086

Phone: (262) 644-5504
Fax: (262) 644-5507
E-mail: bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org
Web: bereanbibleinstitute.org

President & Executive Editor: Robert E. Nix, Ph.D.
Managing Editor: W. Edward Bedore, Th.D.
Associate Editor: Matthew Ritchey, M. BS.
Layout: Jessica Sadler