

# BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

*And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God*

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ISSUE 6

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*“Are You Prepared?”*

The current national and world trends in religious, political, and economic affairs have many concerned about the future, which is understandable. Not knowing exactly how things are going to work out, and being apprehensive about the possibility of terrorist attacks, social upheaval, and violence leading to anarchy and possibly even all-out war has caused a lot of Americans to begin preparing for future survival in case they find themselves in an emergency situation. There is wisdom in this as any number of catastrophic events could take place that would leave whole areas with limited, or no, access to electricity, fuel, food, water, and adequate shelter. This can happen with natural phenomena such as tornados, hurricanes, floods, earthquakes, and volcanoes as well as the things mentioned earlier. People try to protect the things that they most highly value. You would think that for most people staying alive would be their top priority, but it isn't. It seems that the majority do far more to protect their material wealth than they do to protect their physical well-being in the face of a calamity. I understand that expense and practicality are important considerations in this regard. Health insurance can be purchased to protect against going bankrupt from enormous medical bills due to illness or injury. But, nobody can guarantee that you will not become seriously ill or critically injured in an accident. Of course, we can buy life insurance as a financial hedge against an untimely death, but someone else will benefit from it. There are quite a few people that

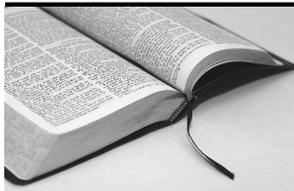
store specially prepared food and water in long-term storage containers with an eye towards survival in case of an emergency. Most do not.

So, what is the point I am trying to make? Well, I am not attempting to persuade anybody to stock up on supplies in order to survive any future crisis situation they might face. What I hope to do is encourage believers, and non-believers, to be spiritually prepared for the future and whatever it might bring. Of course, a person's salvation is first and foremost when it comes to being prepared for the future. Anyone who dies in their sins, and *“all have sinned”* (Rom. 3:23), is destined to spend eternity in Hell, a place the Bible calls *“the Lake of Fire”* (Rev. 20:10-15). On the other hand, everyone who has trusted in Jesus Christ as their Savior is forgiven of their sins and receives the gift of *“eternal life”* (Rom. 6:23; Acts 16:31) and will live forever in Heaven. The greatest thing in preparing for the future that an unbelieving sinner can do is to put their trust in Jesus Christ, believing *“that He died for [their] sins according to the Scriptures; and that He was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures”* (see I Cor. 15:1-4; also I Cor. 1:18-21; Eph. 1:6-7, 13-14). That the Gospel is said to be *“according to the Scriptures”* tells us that it is important to know what the Scriptures, the Bible, say. First is to know how to be saved from the everlasting condemnation we deserve and given the gift of Eternal Life we do not deserve (Rom. 6:23; Eph. 2:1-9). No matter what a person has done to prepare for the future, if they have not placed their trust in Jesus Christ alone, through faith alone, they are totally unprepared for the

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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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future. If they die in unbelief, they will be forever lost to the fires of Hell.

And believers, how should they prepare for the future? Since we are not given instructions in the Bible, every believer will have to decide for themselves what kind of preparations to make for future survival during emergency situations. But, how to prepare spiritually for whatever temporary life situations we might face here on earth and for our eternal future in Heaven, we are given instructions. We start by letting God direct our lives and transform our thinking (Rom. 12:1-2). We are to focus on Christ and learn to trust in the power of God rather than the wisdom of man (I Cor. 1:18-21; 2:1-5). We are to learn to rely on God alone as our true source of comfort and strength in the trials and sufferings of life (II Cor. 1:3-4; 4:7-11). Our focus is to be on the things of Heaven and not on earthly things (Phil. 3:20-21; Col. 3:1-4). Because we cannot accomplish these things on our own, we must do them by faith. That is, we must believe God's Word and allow the Holy Spirit to work in our hearts and minds to conform us to the image of Christ. Spiritual growth comes through reading God's Word, studying God's Word, and applying God's Word. God's Word and God's Word alone is sufficient, without error, and our authority for faith (what we believe) and practice (how to live). To read, study, learn, believe, and live God's Word is God's will for the believer. *"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 Tim. 3:16-17).

Because Christ Lives!

*W. Edward Bedore*

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

*(All questions answered by the Editor unless otherwise noted)*

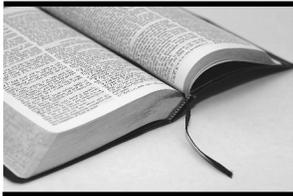
**QUESTION: What is purgatory? Is it found in the Bible?**

**ANSWER:** Purgatory is a teaching of the Roman Catholic and Eastern Orthodox churches. It is the idea that there is an intermediate realm where those who die in good graces with the church, having received the required sacraments, are still in need of purification from sin before going to heaven. Only those who have reached a state of perfection in their Christian life are said to go immediately to heaven. Almost all others, if not all, must go to Purgatory where, for whatever time is necessary, they must suffer personally until all their remaining sins are purged, after which they will be translated to heaven.

The seriousness of the error of Purgatory is readily recognized in that it requires man to pay for his own sins, at least in part. The Bible teaches that through faith in Jesus Christ the believer is redeemed and forgiven of all of his sins by Jesus' blood (Eph. 1:7; Rom. 3:24-25; 5:9-10; Col. 1:13-14, 20-22; 2:10-13).

It is also taught that the church on earth can help those suffering in Purgatory to be released sooner though special prayers and masses said on their behalf. The Bible tells us that man's sin debt can only be settled in full through the penalty of death. God cannot be bought or enticed through prayers and ceremonies to release a sinner from the penalty he deserves. A man's sins can only be forgiven through faith in Christ, who shed His blood for us (Rom. 5:8-9). Those who trust in anything other than Jesus Christ and His death, burial, and resurrection (Rom. 5:8-9; I Cor. 1:18, 21; 15:3-4) for their salvation are, in effect, refusing God's gift of eternal life. If they die in their sins, they will be required to pay in full the penalty of eternal death that their sins have earned them (Rom. 6:23). They will be sentenced to a place of everlasting torment that is called the Lake of Fire, where they will consciously reside forever (Rev. 20:10-15).

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The Bible tells us that for the believer, *“to be absent from the body”* (physical death) *is to be present with the Lord”* (II Cor. 5:8). There is no such place as Purgatory. A person is either in a state of unrighteousness and responsible for each and every one of their sins or, though faith in Jesus Christ, he or she has been forgiven of all their sins and are righteous in Christ (Rom. 5:1; II Cor. 5:21). *“For 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. 2:8-10).

**QUESTION: How can invisible things be clearly seen and leave mankind without excuse as it says in Romans 1:20? Things that are invisible, by definition cannot be seen, but this verse says that they are clearly, or plainly, seen. Isn't this clearly a contradiction of terms that shows the Bible to be an unreliable source of truth? How can a person see what cannot be seen and be held responsible for not seeing it?**

**ANSWER:** Actually the verse this statement is found in is self-explanatory as it answers your very question. In full, the verse says *“for the invisible things of Him from the creation of the world are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead; so that they (ungodly mankind) are without excuse”* (Rom. 1:20). In other words, the very existence of the Creation, the earth, the whole universe, and all that is in them (see Gen. 1:1-2:3; Ex. 2:11) provides all the evidence needed to prove the existence of a Creator, the One who designed, planned, and made it all. This Creator is a Being who is so vastly superior to the creation in His intellect, power, and abilities that He must be recognized as God. Those who deny the Creator God, who is revealed by what He has created, and glorify the Creation in His place are bringing condemnation on themselves.

Because of the evidence of God's existence that is contained in the Creation itself, they have no defense against the charges of unrighteousness and the suppression of the truth that they will face in the judgment if they die in sinful unbelief (Rev. 20:11-15). They will be found guilty, *“Because that, when they knew God, they glorified Him not as God, neither were thankful; but became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptable God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts and creeping things”* (Rom. 1:21-23).

Anything man puts before, or in the place of, God is an idol. This is especially true when man elevates his own wisdom above that of the God who created Him. To declare God's Word to be an unreliable source of truth is paramount to claiming man is wiser than God. Read Romans 1:16-32 and carefully consider what it has to say about the *“ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who hold [suppress] the truth in unrighteousness.”* Romans 3:21-26 tells us how unrighteous men and women can have their sins remitted, be redeemed, and justified (declared righteous) in God's sight through faith in His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ. *“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved”* (Acts 16:31; cf. I Cor. 1:18, 21; 15:3-4; Eph. 1:13-14; 2:8-9).

## QUESTION FOR THE READER

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

**ANSWER TO THE AUGUST QUESTION:** (*“What tribe was the Apostle Paul from?”*) **Benjamin. “I say then, Has God cast away his people? God forbid. For I also am an Israelite, of the seed of Abraham, of the tribe of Benjamin” (Romans 11:1).**



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## INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

*Jerome of Prague 1371 – 1416*

Not to be confused with the Jerome who produced the Latin Vulgate translation of the Bible that he completed around AD 405, Jerome of Prague was a contemporary of John Huss. Jerome, who like Huss was an early reformer, visited Oxford University where he copied some of the works of John Wycliffe. He was excommunicated in 1409 and imprisoned in Vienna in 1410 for his support of Wycliffe's teachings. He escaped and went to Monrovia. In 1414 Jerome followed John Huss to the Council of Constance to support him and provide aid if possible. He was rearrested and tortured for 18 months before being burned at the stake as a heretic. As he died in the flames he sang, "This soul in flames I offer, Christ, to Thee. Bring thy torch, had I feared death, I'd have avoided it."

*"Did Moses Have Horns?"*

Michelangelo's statue of Moses has a strange feature about it. Moses has two horns sprouting out of his head. This is not the only medieval work of art that depicts horns on Biblical characters. The idea of Moses having horns grew out of a combination of ignorance and a mistranslation from the Hebrew. In Exodus 34 we read that when Moses came down from Mount Sinai with the two tablets of stone "that the skin of his face shone" (see Ex. 34:29-35). The idea is that his face was "glowing" or "radiant." It seems that in translating the Bible from Hebrew into Latin, some early scholars mistook the Hebrew word "qaran" (shone) for "qeren" (horns) and thus translated it into Latin

as "cornuta," which means "horned." This error was carried over into the Latin Vulgate, which became the "official Bible" of the Roman Catholic Church for centuries. During this time, translating the Bible into any other language was strictly forbidden, so to those who only had access to the Vulgate, which was most priests, Moses had horns.

## COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

*"A Labor of Love"*

We often hear the phrase, "that was a labor of love" in reference to somebody having put a lot of effort and care into some project or cause. Generally it means that what was done was out of concern and the benefit of others rather than for self. We find it used in the book of Hebrews where it says, "For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love, which ye have shewed toward His name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister" (Heb. 6:10). In this verse, the writer of Hebrews, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, is assuring those he is writing to that God is fully aware of their ministry to other Kingdom saints that they were engaged in and that He would not forget about it. With this "labor of love" that they were carrying out in "His Name" through their ministry to others, they were laying up "treasures in Heaven" where they could not be lost, ruined, or stolen (see Matt. 6:19-21). When Christ establishes His Kingdom of Heaven on earth, they will be rewarded for their faithful service, just as Grace believers will be at the Judgment Seat of Christ (I Cor. 3:11-15).

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**BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE**  
116 Kettle Moraine Drive S.  
PO Box 587

**Phone:** (262) 644-5504  
**Fax:** (262) 644-5507  
**E-mail:** [bbi@bereanbibleinstitute.org](mailto:bbi@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