

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

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ISSUE 2

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QUESTION: In regard to your article in the December 2017, *Bible Answers to Bible Questions* (page 2), you discussed salvation but did not mention the actual gospel we must believe to be saved as stated in I Corinthians 15:1-4. Instead you mention "The Gospel of Salvation," and "The Gospel of Grace." You have omitted Christ's burial and resurrection, both of which must be believed for salvation. Has your ministry changed its doctrine on salvation?

ANSWER: First of all, while it is closely related, the subject of the article in question was not how to be saved per se. Rather it was addressing the question of whether or not everyone's sins, believers and unbelievers alike, are automatically forgiven because Jesus Christ died for the sins of the world, or must each individual personally trust in Christ for their sins to be forgiven. In short, the answer is that the Bible teaches that each sinner must personally believe in Jesus Christ *"that they may receive forgiveness of sin* (Acts 26:18; cf. Eph. 1:6-7, 12-14; 2:1-6).

You point out that I did not mention "the actual gospel that we must believe to be saved", which you rightly identify as being found in I Corinthians 15:1-4. This passage reads, *"Moreover, brethren, I declare unto you the Gospel which I preached unto you, which also ye have received, and wherein you stand, by which also ye are saved, if you keep in memory what I preached unto you, unless you have believed in vain. For I delivered unto you first of all that which I also received, how that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, and that He*

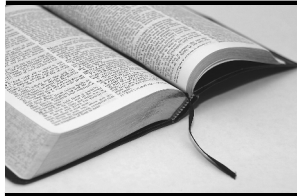
was buried, and that He rose again the third day according to the Scriptures."

I appreciate your taking the time to read this article in the BABQ and also your willingness to speak up in defense of the Gospel of the Grace of God in Jesus Christ. However, I do not understand your concern that BBI may have changed its doctrine on salvation on the basis of this article alone. No, I did not quote I Corinthians 15:3-4 in this article, but in an article on Interfaith Dialogue, in the same newsletter, I defined true Biblical Christians as being, "Those who have been redeemed through faith in Jesus Christ, believing that He died for their sins, was buried, and rose again the third day" and cited I Corinthians 15:3-4 as a proof text (*Bible Answers to Bible Questions*, December 2017 issue, page 1, right hand column). So, in answer to your question, "Has your ministry changed its Doctrine on Salvation?" the answer is no, it definitely has not.

As for my use of the terms, "The Gospel of Salvation" and "The Gospel of Grace," there are two points I would like to make. First, with limited space and the need to stay on subject, it is necessary to condense as much as possible and still get the major point across. These, and similar terms, are commonly used in this way. Second, the Apostle Paul, by inspiration of the Holy Spirit, used these kind of terms in places where he did not specifically mention the death, burial, and resurrection of the Lord Jesus Christ in his letters. Some examples are as follows: *"The Gospel of the Grace of God"* (Acts 20:24); *"The Gospel of Peace"* (Rom. 10:15); *"The Gospel of Christ"* (I Cor. 9:12, 18);

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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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“Christ’s Gospel” (II Cor. 2:12); “The Glorious Gospel of Christ” (II Cor. 4:4); “The Gospel of the Uncircumcision” (Gal. 2:7); “The Gospel of your salvation” (Eph. 1:13); “The Gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ” (II Thess. 1:8); “The Glorious Gospel of the Blessed God” (I Tim. 1:11). In addition the simple term “the Gospel” is found numerous times in the Apostle Paul’s letters.

The Apostle Paul’s example shows us that it does not demonstrate a departure from sound doctrine to use such terms as “the Gospel of Salvation” and “the Gospel of Grace” as I did in my answer about the forgiveness of sins. However, it is important that we remain vigilant because we are in an ongoing battle for the truth. So let me say here that to be saved an individual must personally believe that Christ did die for their sins, was buried, and three days later was raised from the dead, just as the Bible says He did. If any of these things are not actual historical facts then Christ has not been raised from the dead and He is no Savior at all, and those that trust in Him are the “most miserable” of all mankind (see I Cor. 15:12-19). But every believer can rejoice in heart and soul because Jesus Christ did die for our sins, was buried, and was raised from the dead on the third day, and is alive forevermore and all of those who are “in Christ shall all be made alive” (see I Cor. 15:20-22, 51-58; Phil. 3:20-21; I Thess. 4:13-18).

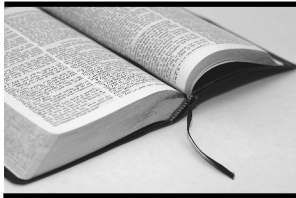
QUESTION: When people die are they in a conscious or unconscious state until the Resurrection?

ANSWER: This is a topic many have expressed an interest in in recent years and we have answered it before in the BABQ. Because it is frequently asked, we will answer it again here. The story of the Rich Man and Lazarus (Lk. 16:19-31) clearly shows that, after physical death, they were very much aware of their circumstances and what was going on around them. The Apostle Paul stated that for the believer “to live is Christ, and to die is gain” (see Phil. 1:21-23), indicating that this is in fact the case. That he had “a

desire to depart (this life)” to be with the Lord tells us that he expected to consciously experience something “far better” than can be found in this life. This means that at the time of physical death believers will “gain” something. As precious as the believer’s life is “in Christ” in the here and now, it will be greatly enhanced when he leaves it to enter into the presence of the Lord. Paul’s statement that “to live is Christ” speaks of a purposeful life lived in service to and for the glory of the Lord Jesus Christ. The only way to add to this, to “gain” that which is better, is to enter into the very presence of Christ in heaven, to consciously enjoy perfect fellowship with Him in a way that we cannot in this life. It is only by faith that the believer can find the confidence to face death, “willing rather to be absent from the body, and to be present with the Lord” (II Cor. 5:7-8).

That the death of a believer brings him, or her, into a situation considered to be “gain,” or the increased experience of spiritual blessing, refutes all erroneous ideas such as soul sleep or that the soul ceases to exist at death to be awakened or recreated at the time of the resurrection. To enjoy the life of Christ in this life, only to be experientially separated from Him by becoming unconscious or ceasing to exist would be loss, not gain. This would be true even if it was only for a short time. But the fact that we have been given eternal life guarantees that we have everlasting fellowship with God. Our life in Christ will never be diminished, only enlarged. That “the love of God is shed abroad in our hearts by the Holy Spirit who is given unto us” (Rom. 5:5) mandates the continued conscious existence of the believer after physical death because nothing, not even death, “shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord” (Rom. 8:29).

The above is an excerpt from “The State and Place of the Dead: What Happens After We Die,” by W. Edward Bedore. Available from Berean Bible Institute, PO Box 587, Slinger, WI 53086. Tel.# 262-644-5504. This book deals with the conscious state of the dead as well as several other related subjects.



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COMMON SAYINGS FROM THE BIBLE

“Naked I Came Into This World and Naked I Will Leave”

We often hear the above saying, or some similar phrase, said to express the truth that when we are born we don't bring anything of material value with us and when we die, we cannot take any of the material wealth we might accumulate in our lifetime with us.

The saying is taken from the words of Job as recorded in the Bible. Job had just heard the news that all of his livestock had been stolen or killed and almost all of his servants were dead as well. This very, very, wealthy man was now, in a day's time, a poor man. He had lost it all and to top it off, later that same day he received the horrible news that his seven sons and three daughters had died in a windstorm when the house where they were feasting fell on them (see Job 1:1-5, 13-19). Unknown to Job was the fact that the multi-faceted catastrophe that had come upon him that day wasn't simply a matter of chance, but was the result of a vicious attack by Satan who was trying to discredit this man of God. An attack that the Lord allowed for reasons that He did not reveal to Job. After hearing such terrible news, Job *“...arose and rent his mantle, and shaved his head, and fell down upon the ground, and worshipped. And he said, ‘Naked came I out of my mother's womb, and naked shall I return thither: The Lord gave and the Lord hath taken away; blessed be the name of the Lord’”* (Job 1:21). We should take note here that later things actually did get worse for Job as even his health was taken from him (Job 2:1-8).

There is much that could be said about this passage of Scripture and the overall theme of the book of Job, but space limits us. So here it will suffice to say that it teaches us not to lose sight of the big picture and to always remember that God is the Creator and all men and women are mere creatures, created beings that are dependent on the

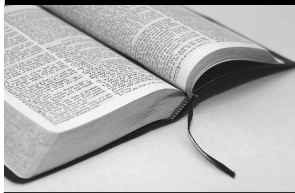
Lord for every breath they take. This being so, the material wealth, fame, and notoriety we might gain in this life is not a gauge of real success because it will all disappear someday.

Something not revealed to Job in the days of his affliction is a truth that God has now revealed to us in His Word. While all believers and unbelievers alike at some time experience the hardships, afflictions, trials, and sufferings of life, it is only believers who can find real comfort and hope during times of trouble. We can rest in the truth that no matter how bad things get in this life, not even death can separate the believer *“from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord”* (Rom. 8:35-39; cf. Rom. 5:1-5). We need not despair because, according to God's Word, we *“know that all things work together for good to them that love God, to them who are the called according to His purpose”* (Rom. 8:28; cf. Rom. 8:17-18; II Cor. 4:16-17). For believers then, those who have trusted in the death, burial, and resurrection of Jesus Christ for forgiveness of sins, success will be gauged by faithful service to the Lord in this life that results in eternal rewards in Heaven. The believer may gain or lose rewards depending on their service to the Lord, but once having believed, their salvation is eternally secure *“in Christ”* (see Eph. 1:13-14; I Cor. 3:11-15). On the other hand, those who die in unbelief remain in their sins and will be rewarded with the everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire that their sins have earned for them (Rom. 1:18-32; 6:23a; Rev. 20:11-15). Jesus Christ alone can deliver a lost sinner from this fate. *‘Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ and thou shalt be saved’* (Acts 16:31).

“Arise and Shine”

It is common for us to tell someone to *“rise and shine”* to prompt them to get out of bed and get about their business for the day, whatever that may be. In the Bible, it is used to instruct national Israel

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of her mission in the "Last Days." The Prophet Isaiah wrote; "Arise, shine; for thy light is come, and the glory of the Lord is risen upon thee" (Isa. 60:1). Chapter 60 is a prophetic passage of Scripture that is yet unfulfilled. It speaks of Israel and the nations during and following the Tribulation. It is true that the Tribulation will be a time of rebellion against God by the nations of the world (Ps. 2:1-5), which will be judged by the Lord (Ps. 2:6-9). It is also true that it will be a time when the Gentiles will be invited to trust in the Lord (Ps. 2:10-12) and a great multitude from all the nations will be saved (Rev. 7:9-10, 13-14). The Light of Israel is the Gospel of the Kingdom that proclaims the Second Coming of Jesus Christ, who is "the Light." When He comes, He will vanquish His enemies and subdue the whole earth and establish a worldwide Kingdom under His absolute rule of righteousness. He will reign over this one world empire from "the Throne of His Glory" in Jerusalem (Matt. 25:31).

After the Dispensation of Grace comes to an end and "the Church which is His Body" (Eph. 1:22-23) is "caught up" in the Rapture (I Thess. 4:16-17), the Tribulation will begin. Many Jews, realizing their mistake in rejecting Jesus of Nazareth as their Messiah, will repent and believe on Him as the Son of God who is their Messiah, Lord, and Savior. In turn, believing Israel will be responsible to go "into all the world, and preach the Gospel" to everyone, and to "teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Spirit" (see Matt. 28:18-20; Mk. 16:15-18; Lk. 24: 46-47). Just as the only light in Egypt during the plague of darkness

was in the houses of Israel (Ex. 10:21-23), the only spiritual light to be found in all the world during the Tribulation will be in the Gospel of the Kingdom proclaimed by believing Israel in anticipation of the coming of her King.

While he doesn't say it in the same words, the Apostle Paul gives us similar instruction for today. It is time for the Body of Christ to "awake out of sleep: for our salvation is nearer than when we believed" (see Rom. 13:11-14), and to "shine as lights in the world" (see Phil. 2:14-15). So, beloved believer, let's "rise and shine" by making "the light of the glorious gospel of Christ" (see II Cor. 4:1-6) known to a world of lost sinners in desperate need of the One and Only Savior, who is Christ Jesus the Lord.

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"Puritan Bible Names"

While Bible names such as David, John, Jacob, etc., have always been popular, during the late 1500's and early 1600's many of the English Puritans, who were zealous for the Holy Scriptures, chose words and phrases from the Bible as names for their children. The following are examples taken from official court documents from the time.

Weep-not Billing; Meek Brewer; Redeemed Compton; Make-peace Heaton; Faint-not Hewitt; Be-faithful Juniper; Peace-of-God Knight; Search-the-Scriptures Moreton; Kill-sin Pimple; God-reward Smart; Stand-fast-on-high Stringer; Fight-the-good-fight-of-faith White; and Seek-wisdom Wood.

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