

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE, INC.

SEPTEMBER 2018

PO BOX 587, SLINGER, WI 53086

VOLUME 9

(Published eight times yearly: Feb., Mar., May, June, Aug., Sep., Nov., Dec.)

ISSUE 6

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

QUESTION: How important is the study of the numbers found in the Bible?

ANSWER: Numerology, the study of the symbolic use and meaning of numbers in Scripture is certainly a subject that many are interested in and so deserves some attention. However, caution is advised when looking at this aspect of Bible study. Bible Numerology is the assigning of meaning to numbers used in Scripture. The numbers 7 and 40 are probably the most prominent in this respect. The number 7 is said to be the number of completion and/or perfection. It is often referred to as the "number of God" as He alone is perfect and complete. The number 3 is also considered to be a number of divine perfection as it signifies the Triunity of the One True God who eternally exists in three Persons; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

The number 40 is variously seen as the number of chastisement, judgment, or testing. Examples are the 40 years of wandering by the Children of Israel (Deut. 8:2-5); Moses on Mt. Sinai (Ex. 24:18); the 40 days of warning during which Jonah preached to Nineveh of its impending doom (Jonah 3:4); the 40 days the Lord Jesus was tempted in the wilderness (Matt. 4:2; the 40 days between Christ's resurrection and ascension to Heaven (Acts 1:3; etc.).

While there is a special significance to some numbers that are used in Scripture, there are quite a few people who put too much importance on their use and try to find a special meaning for every number in the Scriptures. The fact is that often a number used in the Bible, even if it is one

of the more significant ones, is just a number. An over-emphasis on Biblical Numerology over the years has resulted in many embracing false doctrines and cult like followings. Bible believing Christians are not called to search out secret meanings, concealed messages and hidden codes in the Bible. We are to read, study and meditate on the very words of the Bible that we might learn them, understand them, live them, and proclaim them. The words and their meanings as found in the Scriptures and the eternal truths that they convey are more than sufficient to keep any mere mortal occupied with studying them for more than a lifetime. And when you think that you have learned it all, read the Bible again because you haven't. *"Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the Word of Truth"* (II Tim. 2:15). *"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).

QUESTION: What is the significance of the three days from Jesus Christ's crucifixion to resurrection? Why three days? I believe that the number 3 is the divine number representing the Trinity; Father, Son, and Holy Spirit.

ANSWER: Yours is a good question that I will try to answer. I agree with you that the number 3 is often used in Scripture in reference to the Triunity of the One True God who eternally exists in Three

(continued on page 2)

"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



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

(BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS continued from page 1)

Persons; the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. But I do not believe that Jesus Christ's body being in the grave for three days between His crucifixion and resurrection is primarily symbolic of the Trinity. I believe that it has a very practical and important function in the fulfillment of prophecy. Peter's Pentecostal address (Acts 2:14-36) was directed to the Israelites gathered at Jerusalem (Acts 2:5-13) for the Feast of Weeks, (also known as the Feast of Harvest and as Pentecost). Foundational to his message was that Jesus of Nazareth, whom the leaders of Israel had had crucified, was now raised from the dead and very much alive. And not only that, God the Father, who had raised Him from the dead, had seated Him at His own right hand and declared Him to be "*both Lord (ruler of all) and Christ (Messiah)*" (Acts 2:32-36).

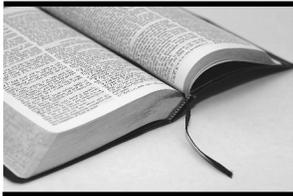
Although the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit are found in this passage (Acts 2:32-33), it is the three days and nights Christ's body was in the grave that we are concerned with here. As part of his message, Peter quoted part of Psalm 16, which says; "*because thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thine Holy One to see corruption. Thou hast made known to me the ways of life; thou shalt make me full of joy with thy countenance*" (Acts 2:27-28) and pointedly applied it, not to David who wrote it as the Jews did, but directly to the Lord Jesus as a prophecy about the Messiah that He fulfilled when He rose from the dead (see Acts 2:29-36a). So, why three days in the grave? Why not only one or two days or why not four or more?

This prophetic promise about the resurrection of the Messiah, whose suffering and death for our sins were also prophesied, was two-fold. First, in death His soul would go to Hell (Sheol/Hades), but He would not be left there. Second, His body would not be allowed to decompose (*see corruption*) in the grave. The first part of this prophetic promise was fulfilled by Christ being bodily resurrected the third day, after which He ascended into Heaven

and was seated at the right hand of His Father. The second part was also fulfilled at the same time in that, as He was raised physically, His body was not left to rot in the grave but was reunited with His soul and spirit at the time of His resurrection. While early stages of the process of decomposition had most certainly set in during the three days His lifeless bruised and broken body laid in the tomb, those processes were brought to an end before His body reached a stage of putrefaction that another day in the grave would have produced. After Lazarus died, the Lord went to Bethany and raised him from the dead (see John 11:1-46). Upon His arrival at Lazarus' burial place, the Lord Jesus told them to "*Take away the stone*" that covered the entrance of the cave Lazarus was buried in (vss. 38-39a). Lazarus' sister, Martha, objected to the opening of the grave, saying; "*By this time he stinketh: for he has been dead four days*" (vvs. 17, 39b). In other words, four days after death a rotting corpse becomes putrid, an advanced stage of decay that Christ's body was not allowed to go through because, as the Bible says; "*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). Thus, by being resurrected the third day in fulfillment of prophecy, Jesus Christ's fleshly body did not "*see corruption*" and decay to the state of putrefaction as Lazarus's body did.

QUESTION: Is it true that only unbelievers can, or will, commit suicide, or can true believers actually kill themselves as well? Some in our church hold that all who commit suicide are unsaved as no true believer can commit suicide because they are guided by the Holy Spirit and God wouldn't allow His children to do this. Others think that believers can commit suicide due to the fact that they are not immune to sin, but are susceptible to temptations, weaknesses, the difficulties of life, the deceptions of the world and

(continued on page 3)



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

(BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS continued from page 2)

the attacks of Satan that can ruin one's life. This group also says that if a believer does commit suicide he/she is still saved. They say that the Holy Spirit's leading is only on those who hear and willingly obey God's Word and those who don't can fall into all kinds of sin, but they will not lose their salvation, not even if they commit suicide.

ANSWER: This is a subject that has generated many heated debates over the centuries. As outlined in your question, there are basically two views. One is that a true believer either cannot commit the sin of suicide or, if they do, they will lose their salvation. The other view is that true believers can and do commit all kinds of sin, including the taking of their own life, but will not have their salvation revoked as a result.

First of all, in answering this question, we must keep in mind that this is not a philosophical or emotional issue, it is a question of Bible doctrine. Philosophy and emotions are based on what a person thinks and feels about what is right or wrong. Sound Bible doctrine is based on what the Bible actually says, not on what we feel or think it should say. That is to say, what God has told us in His Holy Word we are to believe. There is no doubt that suicide is a sin, but I do not know of any place in the Bible that tells us that the sin of suicide is in a category all its own that would cause a believer to forfeit his or her salvation. And we certainly cannot find such a proclamation in the Epistles of the Apostle Paul. In regard to believers and their absolute security "in Christ" Paul did say:

"What shall we say to these things? If God be for us, who can be against us? He that spared not His own Son, but delivered Him up for us all, how shall He not with Him also freely give us all things? Who shall lay anything to the charge of God's elect? It is God that justifieth. Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that

died, yea rather, that is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us. Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall tribulation, or distress, or persecution, or famine, or nakedness, or peril, or sword? As it is written: 'For thy sake we are killed all day long; we are accounted as sheep for the slaughter.' Nay, in all these things we are more than conquerors through Him that loved us. For I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord" (Rom. 8:31-39).

Taken at face value, this passage of Scripture explains and strongly defends the absolute security of the salvation of all those who have believed in the Lord Jesus Christ, trusting in His death, burial, and resurrection for the forgiveness of sins (also see I Cor. 15:1-4; Rom. 4:24-25; 5:8-10; cf. Rom. 8:34). To put it simply, Christ paid a penalty sufficient to cancel the sin debt of every man and woman who has "come short of the glory of God," which are all human beings, "for all have sinned" (Rom. 3:23). It is only a Living Savior that can intercede on behalf of any member of Adam's sinful and fallen race. And it is only through the intercession of the Risen Son of God on behalf of sinners who have come to Him through faith, that they can be proclaimed righteous and therefore justified and at peace with God (Rom. 5:1; II Cor. 5:21). With their sins thus forgiven through the blood of Christ and having been justified by the Father, it is Paul's point in the passage of Scripture we quoted earlier that there is nothing in all of Creation that can separate anyone who has been forgiven and redeemed by Christ's blood (Eph. 1:7) from the overabounding love of God. We are not saved by anything we do and we cannot keep ourselves saved by anything we do. We are saved by faith, which is not a work (Rom. 4:5; Eph. 2:8-9),

(continued on page 4)



BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

(BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS continued from page 3)

in a crucified and risen Savior, the Son of God, who gives all who believe “eternal life” (Rom. 6:23). And eternal life is life without end. A common saying is “once saved, always saved.” While this is true, I think it falls short, and believe it is more appropriate to say: All who are saved by Jesus Christ are saved once and for all time and are eternally secure “in Him.”

No one can bring any charge against any believer that God can find them guilty of because it is His own Son, who “*He delivered up for us all*” and “*is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us*” (see Rom. 8:32-34). With Jesus Christ as their Mediator, no believer can be found guilty of any sin whatsoever because He “*gave Himself a ransom for all*” (see I Tim. 2:5-6).

Paul sums up his declaration of the believers’ absolute security in Christ by saying that there is no creature, that is, there is no created thing or person that is “*able to separate us (believers) from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord*” (Rom. 8:39). Every believer, in fact, is a created being, a creature, and therefore totally unable to separate any other believer, or themselves, from God’s love and cause them to be lost once they have been saved by grace through faith and “*sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise, which is the earnest of our inheritance until the redemption of the purchased possession, unto the praise of His glory* (Eph. 1:13-14; cf. Rom. 5:5; I Cor. 5:5; Eph. 4:30).

The issue is not really whether or not suicide can cause a person to lose their salvation or not, but

do we believe what the Bible says about the sufficiency of Christ’s blood of redemption to forgive all sins and to eternally save all those who believe.

When we become saved through faith in Christ, we are saved into a future hope of everlasting blessings in the presence of our glorious Savior, who is Christ Jesus the Lord. However, believers are not automatically delivered from the trials and troubles of the circumstances of day-to-day life. These things can, and sometimes do, bring a person to a point of overwhelming despair that can lead them to taking their own life. We cannot truly know another’s heart or understand how troubling their circumstances might seem to them. Therefore, it is not for us to judge the motives of others. That must be left to Him that does know the heart and “*who is the Father of mercies and the God of all comfort*” (II Cor. 1:3).

INTERESTING BIBLE FACT

Biblia Pauperum

The Biblia Pauperum, Latin for the Bible of the poor, were picture books used to teach the Bible to those who could not read, who were often poor. The pictures illustrated the major themes and important events of the Bible. The Bible in this picture book format was first printed sometime in the early 1400’s, years before the first printing of the Bible with movable type in 1456 and the Reformation that followed.

Bible Answers to Bible Questions is published by **Berean Bible Institute** of Slinger, Wisconsin. All rights reserved. *Bible Answers to Bible Questions* is sent free of charge to all who request it. **Berean Bible Institute, Inc.** admits students of any race, color, and national or ethnic origin.

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