

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

And Interesting Facts About the Holy Word of God

BEREAN BIBLE INSTITUTE, INC.

SEPTEMBER 2019

PO BOX 587, SLINGER, WI 53086

VOLUME 10

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

ISSUE 6

SPECIAL ANNOUNCEMENT

Dear BBI Partners,

First and foremost, we praise the Lord for the investment you make each month in supporting *Berean Bible Institute*. Your support is an investment in the training of leaders who are taking up the mantle of Grace to churches and ministries both in the United States and around the globe.

As I have shared with you in the past, the *Berean Bible Institute* main building was in need of some major repairs and up-keep. Over the past months, I have worked with a building committee to determine the cost of making the necessary repairs to our campus. After working with an architect, soliciting bids from contractors, and meeting with the committee, we were amazed by the cost of the project. Many of the bids we received would have amounted to nearly half of the appraised value of our whole building.

Based on the size of these bids, and our desire to be good stewards of the resources God has given us, we have decided to move from our current location and sell our campus. Honestly, the decision was simple; as the board of directors, we understand that we are not called to raise money for an aging building (a portion of the building dates back to 1864) that will continue to need repairs well beyond the project at hand. Our mission is to train Pastors, Missionaries and Christian workers for the ministry of the Lord Jesus Christ and the proclamation of the message of Grace given to and through the Apostle Paul.

We praise the Lord that He has provided such a wonderful campus over the past sixteen years, and as we look to the future, we believe the Lord will continue to provide for our ministry needs.

In conclusion, I am asking you to pray for us as we seek a buyer for our current property. I am also asking that you pray for us as we look for a location suitable to carry on our mission and better meet our needs. Financially speaking we continue to need your support more than ever. If you receive our publications and believe in the mission of *Berean Bible Institute*, please consider supporting us on a monthly basis. Your support is an investment used to train leaders who will boldly proclaim the message of grace to a lost and confused world.

Thank you for your prayers and support.

Because He Lives,

Dr. Robert E. Nix

President, *Berean Bible Institute*

BIBLE ANSWERS TO BIBLE QUESTIONS

QUESTION: What was Pascal's Wager?

ANSWER: Blaise Pascal (1623-1662) of France was a boy genius who became a noted inventor, scientist, philosopher, mathematician, and Christian apologist. His conversion to Christianity in 1654 had a dramatic effect on him and he spent the rest of his life making notes for a book he planned to

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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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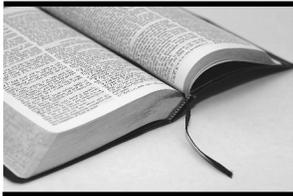
write entitled "Apology for the Christian Religion." Pascal died at the relatively young age of 39 before completing this work, but his notes were published posthumously under the title of "Penses," which in English means "Thoughts."

Pascal is probably best known today for what has come to be called "Pascal's Wager." This so-called wager is based on the idea that all human beings bet with their lives that God either exists or does not exist. The God that is assumed in this wager is the Christian God as revealed in the Bible. In the end, Pascal claimed, those who choose to believe that God does exist and seek to obey Him will only suffer the finite loss of enjoying the passing pleasures of worldliness for a season, but will receive the infinite blessings of spending eternity in Heaven with God. On the other hand, those that bet that God does not exist will in the end suffer the infinite loss of all that is good. The validity of Pascal's theses has been argued back and forth ever since Pascal's day by philosophers, theologians, and humanists. Is there any truth to it? Is it reasonable to believe in a God you cannot see or touch? Do such places as Heaven and Hell really exist? The idea is that everyone has to bet one way or the other because each of us is a personal entity, a free moral agent, with the ability to choose to believe the truth or to reject it in favor of believing a lie in its place. Considering the long term consequences of winning or losing such a wager, it certainly seems prudent that we give some serious attention to the validity of such a theory. I think the first thing we should look at is the question, is there any evidence that God does exist? I believe that there is and that it is all around us. The very existence of the physical properties and laws of physics the universe is comprised of gives testimony of the existence of a Creator. The Bible tells us that *"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth His handiwork..."* (see Ps. 19:1-6). This testimony of God's existence is

universal as it is found worldwide and beyond and is understandable to every member of the human race. Thus, the evidence all around us speaks to us of the existence of a Creator. Accordingly, every member of Adam's fallen race, who are sinners one and all, are responsible to worship and obey the Creator God who is Supreme over all things. The sad thing about this is that, when left to their own choices, not one of Adam's descendants had actually wagered that God exists. At least they did not bet on the Creator God who is revealed in the Bible. I have no doubt at all that statement will be rejected by many professing Christians as having no validity, but it is true none the less. I base my conclusion on God's Holy and infallible Word, which condemns mankind as a whole as being a company of ungodly idolaters worthy only of God's wrath (see Rom. 1:18-20). Romans 1:21-31, has much to say about mankind's "vain imaginations" and his choosing to worship the creation rather than the Creator and the depths of unrighteousness that choice leads them to, but note well the last verse of the passage: *"Who knowing the judgment of God, that they who commit such things are worthy of death, not only do the same, but have pleasure (approve of) in them that do them"* (Rom. 1:32). You see, people are not saved because they love God and seek fellowship with Him. We know that this is true because the Scriptures tell us that all people, *"both Jews and Gentiles,"* are under the condemnation of sin (Rom. 3:9). And, *"As it is written, there is none righteous, no, not one. There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God. They are all gone out of the way, they are together become unprofitable; there is none that doeth good, no, not one"* (Rom. 3:10-12).

Everyone knows deep in their soul that God does exist and that they are alienated from Him by their sin, yet they persist in either denying that He exists (evolutionary humanism) or insist that He must accept them as righteous and worthy of His acceptance because of their devotion to Him and

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their good works (piety and religion). But the truth is that for a person to be forgiven of their sins, and “*all have sinned*” (Rom. 1:23), they must agree with God that they are a sinner worthy only of His wrath (Rom. 1:18) and believe the gospel: “*...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*” (see I Cor. 15:1-4).

While the philosophers and theologians have called into question some of the details of Pascal’s wager, the principal it is based on is indeed valid. When we get down to the core issue, we find that what is at stake is a person’s soul. All humans, men and women alike, because they are sinners by nature, have a propensity to be self-serving, that is to say they are selfish and want to do things their own way. In other words, they choose to believe the lie that they can displace the Creator God and worship the creation in His place. Note carefully what God has to say about this: “*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*” (Rom. 1:21-22ff). And being given over to a darkened heart of foolishness, they foolishly “*changed the truth of God into a lie, and worshipped and served the creature more than the Creator, who is blessed forever Amen*” (Rom. 1:25). In other words, in their sin darkened mind they flip the truth on its head by claiming that their foolish way of thinking is actually wisdom and God’s wisdom is foolishness. But the Lord will call such ridiculousness into account someday (I Cor. 1:19-20). So it is not exactly a wager as to whether or not God exists that everybody must make, but rather it is a proclamation by God that He will only save those who simply believe the Gospel of Jesus Christ. “*For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but to us which are saved it is the power of God*” (I Cor. 1:18). “*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. 1:21). How about you, dear reader; have you recognized your sinfulness and, consequently, your desperate need of a Savior? If so, put your trust in Jesus Christ alone, believing that through His shed blood your sins will be forgiven “*according to the riches of His grace*” (Eph. 1:7; 2:8-9). Believe it or not, Jesus Christ is the only hope of salvation there is for anyone. “*Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved*” (Acts 16:31).

QUESTION: What is a Conditionalist?

ANSWER: The theological term Conditionalism refers to the belief that immortality is only conferred on believers and those who die in their sins will be annihilated. This view, which is a form of Annihilationism, is based partly on the idea that God would be unjust to condemn sinners to everlasting punishment in the Lake of Fire while they only sinned during their comparatively short lifetime on earth. They also fail to recognize the distinctive differences between immortality (the everlasting conscious existence of each person’s soul and spirit), and the gift of eternal life, the life of God and His righteousness that is conferred by the indwelling Holy Spirit that is freely given to every believer. They also claim that the Greek words translated *eternal*, *forever*, and *everlasting* in the Bible do not actually mean eternal, forever, or everlasting, but only speak of a temporal time of judgment when used in reference to the judgment of the unsaved, such as Matthew 25:41, Revelation 14:10; 20:10; etc. But this is problematic for them as I explain in my book, “*The State and Place of the Dead: What Happens After We Die.*”

In the book of Matthew, we find the Lord Jesus pronouncing everlasting punishment on the wicked and ascribing eternal life to the righteous in the same verse. “*And these (the unrighteous) shall go away into everlasting*

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(aionios) punishment, but the righteous into life eternal (aionios)" (Matt. 25:46). The same Greek word, *aionios*, is used of both the punishment and the life given by the Lord here. Since the punishment of the lost is set in direct contrast to the blessing of the saved, the same duration of time must be assigned to both. In other words, if the life given by God to the believer is everlasting, so also will the punishment of God on the unbeliever be everlasting, as both are described by the same word in what is undeniably the same context and are set against each other as absolute opposites. The Bible teaches that everyone is immortal in the sense that they will never cease to exist as a person. Believers will forever enjoy the blessings of Eternal Life. Those who die in their sins will be eternally alienated from God and will suffer the everlasting condemnation they have earned. (from *"The State and Place of the Dead,"* page 89, available from *Berean Bible Institute*).

It must be pointed out here that the Bible expressly states that it is God alone who *"hath immortality"* (I Tim. 6:16). Those who argue for conditionalism use this verse as a proof text for their position, but it does not support it at all. Because God has no beginning or end, the inherent nature of His immortality is necessarily eternal. The immortality of man is of everlasting duration but, since man is a created being, as every human being is, he does have a distinct beginning. For an in-depth study of this and other related subjects,

see my book, *"The State and Place of the Dead."* It is available from *Berean Bible Institute*.

INTERESTING BIBLE FACTS

"McGuffey's Readers"

Alexander and William McGuffey began publishing their *"Eclectic Series"* of textbooks in 1836. This series of books became popularly known as *"McGuffey's Readers"* and millions of copies have been sold around the world. They remain popular to this day, especially with Christian home schoolers because of the Biblically based moral lessons found in them.

"Jonathan Edwards"

Jonathan Edwards (1703-1758) is considered by many to have been the greatest theologian of colonial America. He was well known as an evangelist in the revival movement known as the Great Awakening (1734-1744). Even though he wrote extensively on theology, Edwards is best known for his hellfire and brimstone sermon entitled; *"Sinners in the Hands of an Angry God."* Ironically, he did not base his sermon on any of the references to Hell found in the Bible, but on a short passage found in Deuteronomy, *"...their foot shall slide in due time: for the day of their calamity is at hand..."* (Deut. 32:35).

Under the tutorship of his father and four older sisters, Edwards had a good knowledge of Latin, Greek, and Hebrew by the time he was thirteen, at which time he enrolled at Yale College. He graduated with high honors before he was seventeen.

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