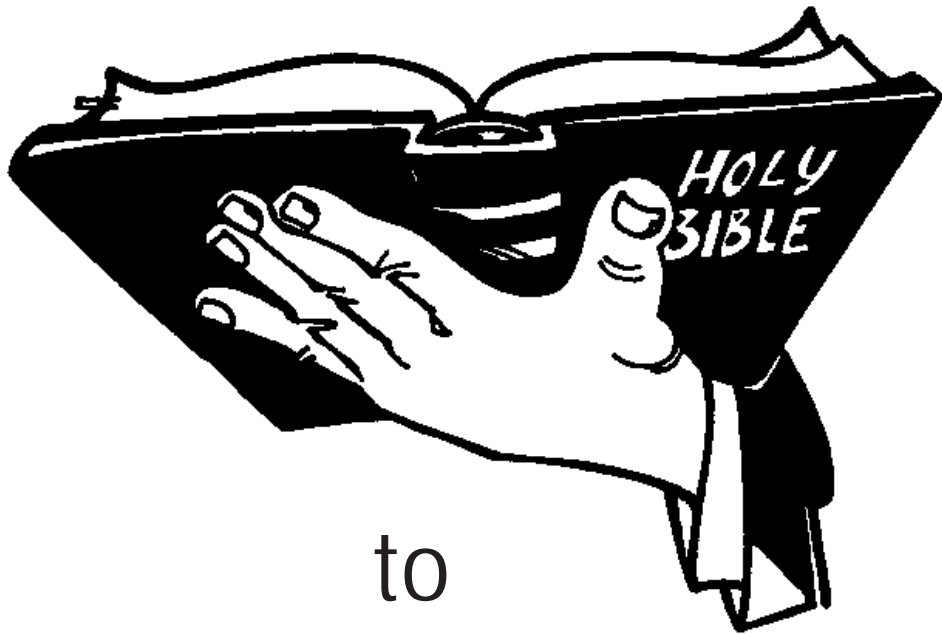


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to
Bible Questions

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Bible Answers to Bible Questions

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Published in the United States of America in 1998

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Second ed., 2000

Scripture quotations are from the King James Version of the Bible.

Library of Congress Cataloging in Publication Data
Briney, Patrick R.
Bible Answers to Bible Questions
1. Bible 2. Apologetics 3. Christianity I. Title
Printed in the United States of America.

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PREFACE

By the time I began college, I was full of questions about God, about Biblical teachings, and about life. I was searching for answers but found few until I joined a Bible study group that specialized in Biblical apologetics. Our mission was First Peter 3:15 which says, "But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and be ready always to give an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you with meekness and fear." I had fun hearing and learning answers to my questions. The enjoyment of study increased when I was saved and met Bro. Brian Disney. Every week we met to discuss more questions I had thought of. His answers and studies gave me a framework to continue my Biblical studies and pursuit of answers.

Like many people today, unanswered questions prevented me from listening to the Gospel, from respecting Christian people, and from giving my life to Christ for salvation. No wonder the Bible commands us to be ready to give an answer. The salvation of souls depends on it. Granted, most people do not ask all the questions in this book. But every question has been asked at some time by someone and many have been asked many times. Having answers does help to bring people to Christ. Having good answers that make sense gains respect for Biblical teaching. Having answers from the Bible gives authority.

In addition, unanswered questions cause Christians to shy away from witnessing and teaching Bible studies. A frequent excuse I hear for not witnessing is fear of not knowing what to say when asked questions. Fortunately, there are only a few questions that are frequently asked. Once you learn to answer about ten questions, you can easily witness to most people.

Unanswered questions also produce weak and intimidated Christians. Christians need answers to increase in boldness. Proverbs 24:5 says, "A wise man is strong; yea, a man of knowledge increaseth strength." Many Christians live in doubt and lack conviction about what the Bible teaches. Many are ashamed of Biblical positions that oppose secular claims and challenges. This is a despicable and unnecessary attitude to have toward the Bible and God. The Bible is always right and defensible. It is up to Christians to overcome laziness and to work hard to study and pray for the good answers.

Perhaps the answers in this book will help a teacher, boost the confidence of a Christian, satisfy a confused mind, and convince a skeptic. Many people I have taught have said how helpful it was to them to have their questions answered. I would have liked to have a book like this when I was searching for answers. Most importantly, I pray that you will be convinced that the Bible does have answers to all questions and be stimulated to be a student of the Bible!

FUNDAMENTAL QUESTIONS

Is there really a God?

Yes. In addition to millions of testimonies of people who know God, there is undeniable, scientific evidence for his existence as well. The first law of thermodynamics states that energy cannot be created by natural means. This is a law because it has been demonstrated to be true 100% of the time. But everything that exists is made of energy in different forms. The only conclusion about the origin of energy in the universe, in light of a scientific law, is that it must have been created supernaturally. To say there is no God is to contradict a scientific law. Honest people are forced by scientific observations and objectivity to conclude that there is a God.

The second law of thermodynamics states that usable energy cannot be increased in a closed system. Observation of our universe shows that usable energy is decreasing like a clock winding down. However, the universe, like a clock, cannot wind down unless it had original usable energy. The only conclusion about the origin of this usable energy is that it began supernaturally. There is a God.

Who is the real God?

Of the many religions in the world, there are only a few personal claims to being God. Jesus Christ is the only one who claimed to be God and proved it. His empty tomb stands as a testimony to the fact. In addition, eyewitnesses of Jesus being alive after his crucifixion willingly died for their claims. People will lie to save themselves from torture and death. However, no one is willing to die for a lie. The only rational explanation for their willing martyrdom is that Jesus is truly alive thereby proving His claim that He is indeed God.

Where in the Bible is Jesus said to be God?

John 1:14 refers to Jesus as the Word saying, “the Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father). John 1:1 says of this Word whom we know as Jesus, that “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God.” In John 10:33, the Jews say they want to stone Him “for blasphemy; and because that [He], being a man, makest [Himself] God.” In John 20:28, the apostle Thomas called Jesus “My Lord and my God.”

What is the meaning of “the inspired word of God?”

This phrase describes the way in which God wrote the Bible. Second Timothy 3:16 says that, “All scripture is given by inspiration of God.” And Second Peter 1:21 explains, “For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake as they were moved by the Holy Ghost.” In other words, God recorded His message to us through prophets who were under the control of the Spirit of God. God inspired prophetic writer with the very words He selected.

Why is the Bible considered inspired?

First of all, it contains the message and life history of Jesus Christ. Jesus came to teach, and it is not surprising that He recorded His message in writing. Further, He proved Himself to be God, and therefore, He is able to inspire and preserve His message. In spite of thousands of attempts to discredit it, the Bible continues to stand as the final authority on truth, without error, and without contradiction within its pages. Its message of morality has been shown to produce the best people, families, societies, and governments. Science continues to make discoveries supporting Biblical claims such as the discovery of the “paths in the sea,” the innumerable stars, the creation of the universe, and life requiring blood. Each of these discoveries showed the popular opinion of the day to be wrong and the Bible to be right. Moreover, the Bible contains sixty-six books written by over forty different men of greatly different experiences, social status, economic status, geographical locations, and time periods. Yet, they all agree. That is a miracle in itself!

How can the Bible be inspired by one God but show the differences in writing styles of the prophets?

God used the vocabulary of each prophet to write His message through them. Like a writer with pens of differing ink colors and writing points, God wrote his book to man.

What makes the King James Bible better than other English translations?

The KJV was translated from the Received Text or Majority Text in Greek and the Massorete Text in Hebrew for the Old Testament. Other English translations are from eclectic texts which were produced to be inclusive and representative of all manuscripts rather than accurately representative of the original, inspired writings.

What is wrong with English translations other than the King James Bible?

The Bible is the inspired word of God and “profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness” (Second Timothy 3:16). If the Bible is to be trustworthy, then it must not be wrong. Contemporary English translations have introduced error into their Bibles. For example, in Mark 1:2, the KJV Bible quotes the “prophets” Isaiah and Malachi. Other English translations attribute the same quote to Isaiah only. If a reader searches through Isaiah for the full quote, he will not find it. He concludes that the Bible is wrong. In Luke 2:33, the KJV Bible refers to Joseph and Jesus’ mother. In other English translations, Joseph is referred to as Jesus’ father. But Jesus is the only begotten Son of God because God is His Father. Again the reader is led to conclude that the Bible is misleading or wrong. Caution must be taken when reading it. In Isaiah 14:12, the KJV Bible says, “How art thou fallen from heaven, O Lucifer, son of the morning!” Other English translations say that the “morning star” is fallen from heaven rather than Lucifer. The only other mention of the term “morning star” is in Revelation 22:16 when Jesus calls Himself “the bright and morning star.” Such blatant wrongness in a translation makes it completely untrustworthy. No wonder many people are returning to and prefer the KJV over other translations.

Why insist on using an Old English Bible translation rather than a contemporary English Bible translation?

Besides being the best English translation, Old English words in the KJV like “thee” and “thou” are more accurate and distinct English word translations of Greek and Hebrew. For example, Second Samuel 7:23 says, “And what one nation in the earth is like thy people, even like Israel, whom God went to redeem for a people to himself, and to make him a name, and to do for you great things and terrible, for thy land, before thy people, which thou redeemedst to thee from Egypt.” Thee, thou, and thy are second person singular, whereas, you, ye, and your are second person plural. This helps the reader keep track of who is being spoken of or to. In Luke 22:31-32, it is easy to follow who Jesus is addressing when He says, “Simon, Simon, behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat: but I have prayed for thee, that thy faith fail not: and when thou art converted, strengthen thy brethren.” Though Jesus was speaking to Simon and praying for him personally, He indicated that Satan was wanting to sift all of the apostles. As for other archaic words, there are very few words and, therefore, easily learned.

Why did God create us?

Revelation 4:11 gives the answer saying, “Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.” We are created for the pleasure of God. To appreciate this statement, we need to realize that because God is love, He is pleased by giving to and caring for us. Romans 8:17 tells us that He expresses this love by making it possible for us to be heir to all that He has created by making us joint heirs with Christ. He has literally given to us everything, including His own life. There is no greater love than this. This is the love of God toward us. God is pleased by pleasing us. This is why He created us.

What is the meaning of life?

The meaning of life is determined by our Creator who designed us and determined what life should mean to us. John 5:11-12, indicates “that God hath given to us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life.” From this verse, we know that God intends for us to have eternal life and that this life is in Jesus Christ. Thus, the meaning of life is in establishing a personal relationship with Jesus Christ..

SALVATION

What must I do to be saved?

The Bible says: (1) Believe in Jesus Christ (John 3:15-16), (2) Repent of your sins (Luke 13:3), (3) Call upon Jesus Christ to save you (Romans 10:13).

Is there anything else I must do to be saved?

No. Ephesians 2:8-9 says, "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." Any effort on your part to get to heaven is a work. You must depend completely on the work of Jesus.

Are believing, repenting, and calling works?

No. (1) The Bible says in Galatians 2:16, "...even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Because the Bible says salvation is not by works, Its exhortation to believe, repent, and call cannot be considered works. (2) Believing, repenting, and calling are acknowledgments to God that you are helpless and in need of His help. Thus, these things are a surrender of yourself to God's mercy rather than an attempt to impress Him for a reward.

How can you be so certain that you are saved?

Because First John 5:13 says that you can know that you have eternal life if you believe in Jesus Christ. Confidence in your salvation is directly related to your confidence in Jesus Christ. I know with 100% certainty that I am saved because I am 100% confident in Jesus Christ.

Being so confident about your salvation sounds arrogant.

If my confidence was in myself, my works, and my accomplishments, I would be arrogant. However, my confidence is in the person, the works, and the accomplishments of Jesus Christ, not myself. I place all of my confidence in Him because I have no confidence in my ability to get into heaven. Moreover, I know I would not be able to sustain any effort on my part to secure my salvation. However, I know that Jesus' efforts will endure perfectly forever.

Is it possible to believe in God and not in Jesus Christ for salvation?

No. Acts 4:12 says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." In John 14:6, Jesus says of Himself, "I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father, but by me."

If a person accepts Christ as Lord and Savior, does it mean that his past, present and future sins are forgiven?

When a person is saved, his past sins are forgiven (Romans 3:25). He also experiences the new birth which results in a new nature spiritually. This new nature is imputed with the righteousness of God (Second Corinthians 5:21; Romans 3:22; 4:11). In other words, a Christian has two natures: (1) in the flesh, he remains carnal and sinful, and (2) spiritually he is righteous and cannot sin. This is why Paul said in Romans 7:22 that he delighted in the law after the inward man though in the body he always sinned. Further, this new, spiritual nature explains why First John 3:9 says that those born of God cannot sin (in the Greek: not able to sin). Thus, there are no present or future sins that affect the salvation of believers. In light of Romans 6:23, a Christian cannot lose his salvation because his inward man cannot sin. If you do not sin, you do not die. This is the reason for eternal security of the believer. The unchanged body on the other hand, dies and never makes it to heaven. Instead, the saints will receive a new glorified body. No verse in the Bible says that sins are forgiven past, present, and future.

If one cannot lose his salvation, how do you explain Revelation 22:19?

Revelation 22:19 is a severe warning to those who would alter the message of John's revelation. Because the Bible is clear that one cannot lose his salvation, having one's part in the book of life refers to loss of inheritance not salvation. The biblical cross reference for this is First Corinthians 3:11-15. Specifically, verse 15 indicates that

loss will be suffered, but he will still be saved. In the book of life, one's name is recorded for salvation and for his subsequent and rightful inheritance. If one squanders his inheritance, as did the prodigal son (Luke 15:11), he will suffer loss, and his part regarding his inheritance will be taken away, including his part in the holy city, and blessings described in the book of Revelation. Verses of the Bible do not contradict one another, interpretations do. Such passages are good because they challenge you to study and meditate carefully on the Word of God. It makes you a better student of the Word. A harmonizing of the Scriptures is the means to discovering the truth of Its message. By drawing on the principles established throughout the Bible, one can determine what a passage does or does not mean.

Can I lose my salvation once I am saved?

No (First Corinthians 3:15).

Is it possible for a Christian to lose his salvation?

No. Once you are saved, you are always saved. This is called eternal security. Psalm 37:28 says, "For the LORD loveth judgment, and forsaketh not his saints; they are preserved for ever." Jude 1:1 says that those sanctified by God are "preserved in Jesus Christ." In John 10:28, Jesus says, "I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of my hand." This is why spiritual life in Christ is called eternal life. It is a relationship with Jesus Christ (life) that will never end (eternal).

Why is it impossible for Christians to lose their salvation?

The reason a Christian cannot lose his salvation is because at the moment of salvation, God makes him righteous spiritually (Second Corinthians 5:21). God cannot sin because He is righteous. Therefore, if you are made with His righteousness, you cannot sin. Further, because death is the consequence of sin, if you cannot sin, you cannot die.

How can you say that a Christian cannot sin when it is obvious that Christians do sin?

First John 3:9 says, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." There are two natures in a Christian. In the physical flesh or outward man, there is sin (Romans 7:17-18). In the spirit or inward man, there is righteousness and therefore conformity to the law of God (Romans 7:22). Christians struggle with temptations to sin in the flesh. This part of the Christian is not born again. However, spiritually, they are born again and always serve the law of God and cannot sin. Thus, when a Christian dies, his sinful body stays in the grave, but his righteous spirit goes to heaven.

Does John 9:41 indicate that one is saved because he realizes he is a sinner regardless of his belief in Jesus Christ?

No. Jesus is explaining to the Pharisees that they will remain sinners as long as they deny that they have sin. Confession of sin is essential to having your sins forgiven. The context shows that this is not to the exclusion of believing in Jesus Christ (John 9:35-38). Jesus is addressing Pharisees who are upset because Jesus healed a blind man. This healed man came to Jesus and confessed believing in Him as the Son of God. Jesus used this incident of giving sight to a blind man to teach the Pharisees about judgment that comes to those who are blind to their sins (denial). This is especially relevant because the Pharisees had told the healed man that he could not teach them because he was born in sins (John 9:34), implying of course that they were without sin. Further indication of their own spiritual blindness is their denial of Jesus as the sinless Son of God (John 9:24). Jesus put them in their place. Read the entire passage, John 9:1-41, and you will see that the point is about sin and believing in Christ, not about seeing sin without believing in Jesus Christ.

Does God really want to save everyone?

Yes. Second Peter 3:9 states, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." First Timothy 2:4 states that it is God's desire for, "all men to be saved, and to come unto the knowledge of the truth." And First Timothy 2:6 states that Jesus "gave himself a ransom for all, to be testified in due time." Hebrews 2:9 declares that Jesus "by the grace of God should taste death for every man."

If Jesus died for everyone, is everyone saved?

No. Salvation for everyone is made possible because of Jesus' death. However, this only makes the gift of salvation available. To be saved, one must accept this gift and surrender his life to Christ. As with the marriage supper parable in Matthew 22:4-8, the meal was paid and provided for everyone, but only those who accepted the invitation benefited from it.

Do works contribute to salvation because they result from faith?

No. The fruit of works resulting from faith occurs because one has already been saved by faith. Salvation does not result because of works or the continuance of works. Once you are saved, you are always saved because of the perfect and enduring work of Christ involved in your salvation. Works are evidence of your salvation and your true faith in Christ, not your ticket to be saved. Galatians 2:16 shows that unlike faith and belief, works and the law are not the means of salvation saying, "a man is not justified by the works of the law, but by the faith of Jesus Christ, even we have believed in Jesus Christ, that we might be justified by the faith of Christ, and not by the works of the law: for by the works of the law shall no flesh be justified." Galatians 3:11 explains, "that no man is justified by the law in the sight of God, it is evident: for, the just shall live by faith." These verses are very clear that faith is associated with belief for salvation and that works is associated with law which will not save you. Romans 3:28 says, "therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law."

If works is not a part of salvation, how do you explain James 2:24?

The context of this verse involves demonstrating to men that you have faith in God (James 2:18). Thus, Abraham is used as an example of being justified in the eyes of God with faith and justified in the eyes of men by works. No where in this passage is there mention of works resulting in salvation. Romans 4:2 corroborates this explanation by saying, "if Abraham were justified by works, he hath whereof to glory; but not before God." Romans 4:5-6 says, "But to him that worketh not, but believeth on him that justifieth the ungodly, his faith is counted for righteousness. Even as David also describeth the blessedness of the man, unto whom God imputeth righteousness without works." To say that James teaches that Abraham or anyone else is saved by works is to contradict explicit passages of the Bible.

What is the meaning of being "born of water" in John 3:5?

"Born of water" refers to the process of breaking waters from the womb in physical birth. Jesus is explaining to Nicodemus that in order to see the kingdom of heaven, it is necessary to be born physically and then to be born again spiritually. Jesus explains the meaning of "born of water" in verses 6 & 7 saying, "that which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit. Marvel not that I said unto thee, Ye must be born again." Some erroneously use this verse to suggest that water baptism is the born again experience. However, among other problems this explanation poses, this would involve three births: (1) of the flesh, (2) of water baptism, and (3) of the Spirit. The passage is very clear about posing only two births: of the flesh and of the spirit.

Is salvation by repentance and faith or by faith and repentance?

These phrases are sometime used to indicate which comes first in salvation: faith or repentance. The Bible says that both are necessary (Ephesians 2:8-9 and Luke 13:3). However, faith precedes repentance and gives one a reason to repent. Romans 10:17 says that faith comes when one hears the Gospel. Subsequently, a person who believes the truth of the Gospel, the guilt of personal sin, and the need for mercy and salvation in Jesus Christ, will repent and turn his life over to Christ. Without an understanding of the Gospel gained through faith, there is no need to repent.

Is having faith the same as believing?

No. Hebrews 11:1 explains that "faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. Further, Hebrews 11:3 shows that, "Through faith we understand that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen were not made of things which do appear." Thus, faith enables us to understand and provides us with spiritual evidence of truths that require spiritual discernment. Believing is our response to the understanding gained by faith. Because the words are closely associated, they are often used interchangeably as synonyms. However, they are different.

When is a believer actually saved: now or later?

The moment one believes, he is saved. There is no waiting period. In John 3:18, Jesus says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already." This statement shows that as soon as one believes, he is no longer condemned. Moreover, in John 5:24, Jesus says that, "Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that heareth my word, and believeth on him that sent me, hath everlasting life, and shall not come into condemnation; but is passed from death unto life." Believers have eternal life now, will never be condemned later, and are immediately passed into life from death. First John 3:14 also confirms this by saying, "We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren." Knowing that we have passed from death unto life indicates that we know we are saved now.

Is it possible that God will give everyone one more chance to repent and believe after we die?

No. Jesus says in John 8:24, "I said therefore unto you, that ye shall die in your sins: for if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins." Also, Hebrews 9:27 says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." These passages show that you must believe before you die because after death, you will be judged.

What does it mean to die in your sins?

Ezekiel 3:20 shows that this means that God will not remember any good done forever by saying, "Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand."

Why does God use men instead of angels to preach the Gospel?

God uses men because changed lives are what convinces people of the power and truth of the Gospel message. God could have used rocks, trees, animals. However, these would become common place experiences and ignored.

Is it possible to be born again without a born again "experience?"

Having an experience or memory of feelings is not important to salvation. Being born again occurs when Christ saves you in response to your acceptance of His gift for salvation. The new birth refers to the change that occurs in you spiritually. Any experience other than this depends on one's personal response to the realization of what God has done to them. However, such "experiences," if they occur, are the result of salvation and not the cause of salvation. Therefore, it is possible to be born again and not have an emotional experience.

Why do many believe there is no hope for those who die without knowing Christ?

Acts 4:12 says, "Neither is there salvation in any other: for there is none other name under heaven given among men, whereby we must be saved." Also, John 3:18 says, "He that believeth on him is not condemned: but he that believeth not is condemned already, because he hath not believed in the name of the only begotten Son of God." For this reason, we believe that salvation comes only through Jesus Christ.

Will you still be condemned to hell even if you sincerely think you are saved but you really are not saved?

Yes. The definition of salvation is that you are saved from condemnation. Salvation is only for those who trust in Jesus Christ to forgive them of sin and to give them eternal life. Sincerity in any other person will not save you (Acts 4:12). Sincerity in works will not save you (Matthew 7:22-23).

SIN

What is sin?

Sin is anything that is contrary to the will of God. Therefore, failure to conform to any part of God's law is sin. First John 3:4 says, "Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law." And because God is righteous, and everything He does is right, then all unrighteousness is sin (First John 5:17). Also, because faith enables one to understand God's will, then "whatsoever is not of faith is sin" (Romans 14:23). Still further, James 4:17 explains that "to him that knoweth to do good, and doeth it not, to him it is sin."

Are some sins worse than others?

Yes. Obviously adultery, homosexuality, or murder are greater sins than driving faster than the speed limit or giving someone a proud look. When God gave Israel their laws, the rule of punishment was eye for eye and tooth for tooth (Exodus 21:24). This shows that punishment should equal the crime, and some punishments were greater than others because the sins were greater.

If some sins are worse than others, why is it often said that to God all sins are the same?

As Romans 6:23 points out, "the wages of sin is death." All sins, regardless of which ones, are worthy of condemnation. A person who never commits "big" sins like murder, rape, adultery, etc. will be condemned to hell the same as one who has committed all of the "big" sins. The reason for this is that sin of any kind in one's life is evidence of a sin nature. Thus, James 2:10 says, "whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all." With God, sin is a heart issue. What you do is simply a manifestation of what you are. This is why salvation requires the miracle of being born again and being given a new righteous nature (First Corinthians 5:21). God must change what you are to make you qualified to enter heaven. Doing your best is never good enough to be saved because you cannot change what you are.

Where in the Bible does it say that all sins are the same?

In Matthew 5:19, Jesus says, "Whosoever therefore shall break one of these least commandments, and shall teach men so, he shall be called the least in the kingdom of heaven: but whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven." The idea here is that even the least of all commands is just as bad as any other. For example, Matthew 5:21-22 says, "Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time, Thou shalt not kill; and whosoever shall kill shall be in danger of the judgment: But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell fire."

Do we sin because we are sinners, or are we sinners because we sin?

We sin because we are sinners. Jeremiah 17:9 tells us that "The heart is deceitful above all things, and desperately wicked." Also, Romans 3:10 says, "As it is written, There is none righteous, no, not one." Further, David said in Psalms 51:5 "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity; and in sin did my mother conceive me." The Scriptures are very clear about concluding all under sin because everyone is born with a sinful nature. Adam and Eve, on the other hand, were sinners because they sinned. It was this same nature that we now possess. However, up until the time they sinned, they were not sinful or sinners.

Do we inherit a sin nature from our parents?

Yes. You inherit the sin nature that has been passed on from generation to generation since the time of Adam and Eve.

Does having a sin nature mean that I inherit guilt or does it mean, as some would say, that I just inherit a "want to" or desire to sin?

Romans 5:12 tells us that "Wherefore, as by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; and so death passed upon all men, for that all have sinned." The sin nature which allows us to sin is inherited, but each of us are guilty of sin only when we sin.

If I inherit a sin nature with an inclination to sin, then is God promoting sin?

No. You receive your sin nature from Adam not from God. Adam was created perfect and without sin. However, he was created with the ability to disobey God. At the time, he had only one law that he was accountable for in the garden: do not eat the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil. When he ate the fruit, his eyes were open to know good and evil, which is the law. Knowing the law makes us accountable. When his eyes were opened, he became accountable for all the law. The sin in the garden illustrates the truth of James 2:10 “For whosoever shall keep the whole law, and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.”

If we inherit a sinful nature, then why do most believe that babies will go to heaven?

Babies go to heaven because they are not accountable for sin. Personal accountability occurs when they are mature enough to understand right and wrong. Paul’s personal testimony of this fact establishes this truth. In Romans 7:9, he says, “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.” The law existed before he was born. Therefore, what he means by being alive without the law is being alive without accountability to it.

Why are babies allowed into heaven though they still have a sin nature?

Condemnation and separation from God is based on our choice in moral awareness. Though babies possess a sin nature, they are not accountable for the resulting sins of their nature. We are guilty of sin and condemned for sin only when we are morally aware of the law. Where there is no law (moral accountability), there is no sin; and where there is no sin, there is no death. In Romans 7:9, Paul described the transition from innocence to accountability saying, “For I was alive without the law once: but when the commandment came, sin revived, and I died.”

If humans are sinners by nature, why did Jesus tell the woman to go and sin no more (John 8:11)?

There are two correct ways to understand His statement. First, the priority concern would be for the woman’s soul, and this would require that she be saved and receive a new nature (a righteous nature through the new birth). Having a new nature of righteousness means that she would no longer sin, and subsequently, she would be qualified to go to heaven. Second, Jesus would command her not to sin anymore (do not commit adultery again) because this is the right thing to do. Throughout the Bible, God exhorts people not to sin. Likewise, even as Christians, we are exhorted not to sin (Galatians 5:25).

Why does God tolerate the influence of sin as long as He does?

Second Peter 3:9 tells us that God is longsuffering and not willing that any should perish. God wants everyone to have every opportunity to be saved. He is not quick to destroy people. The fires of hell are too horrible to condemn people too soon. God knows the right time to call everything to an end.

Why does God allow man to sin and be condemned?

God made man different than the rest of creation. Rather than create another tree, a rock, or a bug that possess no compassion and ability to love, God created man. Unlike other creatures, man has moral awareness and responsibility. Man’s greater abilities come with greater expectations and accountability.

Must God punish sin and condemn souls to hell?

Yes. God is righteous and just. He cannot allow sin to go unpunished. Allowing sin to go unpunished would make Him unrighteous and unjust. This is impossible for God to do. However, if God did let sin go unpunished, creation would be without law and order. It would be chaos forever. God’s consistency is what gives hope for triumph of law and order, peace and safety, and eternal security.

Were Adam and Eve created sinful?

No. They were created perfect and sinless. However, the fact that they sinned showed that they did not have a righteous nature because a righteous nature cannot sin. Their nature allowed them to choose sin. Up until they sinned, they were not sinners nor considered unrighteous because they had not violated any laws.

Do we sin because Adam sinned?

Yes and no. Yes because Romans 5:12 explains that sin entered the world (humanity) by one man, Adam. On the other hand, we are condemned because we each choose to sin just as Adam chose to sin (Romans 5:14).

How did Adam introduce sin into the world?

Romans 5:13-17 explains that before one is judged for sin, there must be a law. This shows that accountability for sin is required before being judged. Knowledge of law makes us accountable, and law is a statement of good and evil, right and wrong. Genesis 3:5, 22 tell us that when Adam and Eve ate the fruit of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, they became knowledgeable of the law. This made them accountable and subsequently they died. It is this knowledge of good and evil that Adam acquired that is passed on to us that makes us accountable to sin. Romans 2:14-15 tells us that the law of God is written in the hearts of men. This makes all of us knowledgeable of right and wrong and thus accountable to the law. If we choose to sin, we die.

Is it possible to be not accountable for sin?

Yes. Paul indicated in Romans 7:8-9 that he was alive until the law came. Because the law existed prior to his birth, he must have been referring to his awareness of the law. This is called moral awareness or age of accountability. There was a time in Paul's life that he was not accountable for sin and alive.

Did the Jews understand the problem of sin?

Some did, but none had an excuse not to understand. Ezekiel 18:4 says that the soul that sins shall die. The Jews knew that sin was wrong. Further, Psalm 119:3 instructed the Jews that those blessed of God do not sin. But everyone sins (Romans 3:23)! This instruction was to show them that they were not good enough to go to heaven. They needed God's help! Thus, the law served as school master to bring them and everyone else to Christ (Galatians 3:24).

How does the Christian who has committed sin go on without continual fear that God will punish him when he knows he deserves to be punished?

It is important to remember, that the sin is past and the consequences are determined. Once restored through confession and repentance, God wants you to do your very best by putting the past behind you and looking forward toward the goal for the prize of the high calling. He has forgiven you, so now you should forgive yourself. You should strive to serve God, and live the remainder of your days walking in the Spirit.

Does God judge Christians for the present and future sins of the flesh?

Though these sins do not affect one's salvation, Christians will be judged for them and suffer loss (First Corinthians 3:15). This accountability shows that Christians can and are expected to control the sinful desires of the flesh.

Does Romans 6:23, which says the wages of sin is death, apply to Christians?

Yes. Because the body is not changed and remains carnal and sinful, it will die and not go to heaven. It is replaced with a new glorified, sinless body at the resurrection of the saints. However, the born again spirit of a Christian lives and goes to heaven because it no longer sins.

Why must a Christian ask for God's forgiveness if his sins are already forgiven?

A Christian's relationship with God is affected by the way he lives in the flesh. Though salvation is not an issue, and the born again spirit does not sin, a carnal Christian experiences God's chastisement (Revelation 3:19) and loss of His manifested personal pleasure (John 14:21, 23). Obedient Christians are blessed by the manifestation of God's friendship. When a Christian sins, he must restore his experience of pleasure and friendship with God by confessing his sins and asking forgiveness just as any parent-child relationship is restored when injured by sin.

Is a lost person capable of feeling bad when he sins?

Yes. Romans 2:15 indicates that the lost have a sense of guilt for doing wrong saying, "Which shew the work of the law written in their hearts, their conscience also bearing witness, and their thoughts the mean while accusing or else excusing one another." Feelings will vary from person to person, however, the experience of a guilty conscience before God is real.

Is it possible for a person to not feel guilty for doing wrong?

Yes. Second Corinthians 4:4 describes the affect of Satan on the lost mind, “In whom the god of this world hath blinded the minds of them which believe not, lest the light of the glorious gospel of Christ, who is the image of God, should shine unto them.” Likewise, Romans 1:28 says that there comes a time when God gives up on the lost saying, “And even as they did not like to retain God in their knowledge, God gave them over to a reprobate mind, to do those things which are not convenient.” Also, First Timothy 4:2 refers to a dead conscience saying, “Speaking lies in hypocrisy; having their conscience seared with a hot iron.”

JUDGMENT

Is it possible for people from isolated tribes to be saved?

Salvation is possible for people anywhere in the world. A missionary shared in a conference how God used him to reach a village in the Amazon. During a flight to a meeting, the plane engine malfunctioned, and he crashed in a remote area of the Amazon. People from a tribe found him and took him to their village. He was taken to a hut where an elderly lady lived. She told him that God had sent him to her because she knew there was a God but did not know who He was. She asked God to send someone to her to tell her about Him. The missionary shared the Gospel with her, and she prayed to accept Jesus Christ into her heart. The Biblical basis for this story, and others like it, is that God desires that all men be saved (First Timothy 2:4). He desires that none should perish (Second Peter 3:9). Thus, we can conclude that anyone sincerely desiring to know Him will hear the Gospel.

Is it possible for people who have never heard of the Gospel to be saved?

No. The apostle Paul wrote in Romans 1:16 that the Gospel of Christ is the power of God unto salvation. Acts 4:12 tells us that salvation is in none other than Jesus Christ. Further, Jesus said in John 8:24, “...if ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins.” In John 14:6 He said, “...I am the way, the truth, and the life: no man cometh unto the Father but by me.”

How can God condemn people who have never heard the Gospel?

God does not condemn people because they never heard the Gospel. He condemns them because of their sin. Everyone chooses to sin, and therefore everyone deserves to die. The wages of sin is death. Romans 1:18 tells us that the wrath of God is revealed to everyone who holds the truth in unrighteousness. Verse 19 tells us that knowledge of God is manifest to them. Verse 20 says that the nature of God is clearly seen and understood from the observation of creation and that they are without excuse. Romans 2:14-15 explain that people not instructed in the knowledge of God show the conscience of God’s law (knowledge of right and wrong) in themselves. Thus, people choose to sin and reject God (Romans 1:21). Further, Romans 1:21 indicates that everyone knows God at some point in their life by saying “when they knew God.” Therefore, everyone makes a conscious decision to reject Him. Romans 5:12 points out that all men die because all men have sinned. Thus, condemnation is for sin, not for failing to hear the Gospel.

Why did God create people if He knew they would sin and end up in hell?

God’s knowledge of people’s free will decisions to reject Him is based on the fact that they would and do exist. God knew it in eternity past because it happened. Questions arise from this such as could God have avoided creating man altogether, or could He have created just those who would accept Him, and how can God be compassionate and create people He knew would be condemned? The answer to these questions lie in the fact that God desires none to perish. The fact that most do perish is the result of man’s choice not God’s. He does not and cannot be held responsible or be charged with lacking compassion for other’s decisions. Further, He is not obligated or responsible to deny Himself or anyone else pleasure and benefit of fellowship and existence because some prefer rebellion. Condemnation is not the fault of God creating man but rather the fault of man rejecting his Creator. Thus, bearing no responsibility for condemnation, God, being full of love and compassion, could fill creation, unhesitatingly, with free will beings and give them the personal choice to accept life or death.

Would God condemn a man for sin without giving him opportunity to hear how to be saved through Jesus Christ?

From appearances of how things are in the world, the answer would be yes. However, because of God's desire to save all people and examples of how God made it possible for some in remote villages to hear of His Gospel, we can conclude that God will send messengers to anyone who has a sincere desire to know Him. In other words, if people die without hearing the Gospel, it is because they would not accept it anyway. The Bible clearly indicates that God will go to any lengths to save souls.

Will God condemn people who have been taught to believe in a false religion from early childhood and to reject the Gospel of Jesus Christ?

Yes. Salvation is only through Jesus Christ- no other name will do (Acts 4:12). The sins of the fathers will be passed on from generation to generation and the children's teeth will be set on edge when their fathers have eaten sour grapes (Jeremiah. 31:29). Nonetheless, every individual is condemned because of a personal desire to sin regardless of their training.

Why are the lost condemned forever?

God is just, and everything He does is fair and balanced. Every crime is equaled with an appropriate consequence. The principle of justice is summed in Exodus 21:24 saying, "Eye for eye, tooth for tooth, hand for hand, foot for foot." Sin is a crime and an offense against an eternal, infinite God. Therefore, the only appropriate, fair, and just punishment must be eternal in magnitude. Anything less than eternal condemnation for sin against God would be unjust, and it is impossible for God to be unjust.

If God loves man, why does He condemn most to hell?

God condemns those who reject Him and choose to ignore Him. Because God is loving, He will not force Himself on man to believe or to obey. He simply gives man the choice between doing right in order to live in heaven or doing wrong and living in hell. The fact is, most will choose to reject God in spite of God's desire and love for them (Matthew 7:13-14).

DEATH

What is death?

The Bible defines spiritual life and death in First John 5:12 saying, "He that hath the Son hath life; and he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." If you have a relationship with Jesus Christ, you are alive spiritually. If you do not have a relationship with Jesus Christ, you are dead and separated from God. Physical death is generally considered the time when one's brain activity ceases. It is noteworthy that the Bible associates physical death with the departure of the soul from the body (Genesis 35:18).

What is the second death?

The second death is mentioned in Revelation 21:8 and refers to the time when condemned souls are cast into the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. The first death is the physical death and the second death is spiritual.

If unbelievers are already spiritually dead before they die physically, why is the lake of fire called the second death?

Unbelievers are dead and condemned (John 3:18), but the execution of their judgment is postponed until after their physical death. This gives them opportunity to be saved. Thus, the finality of their spiritual and eternal death occurs after physical death making it the second death.

Is hell a real place?

Yes. Hell is a place reserved for the eternally condemned souls (Matthew 23:33). In Isaiah 14:15, God says to Satan, "Yet thou shalt be brought down to hell, to the sides of the pit." In Matthew 10:28, Jesus warns us to,

“...fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell.” Hell is a place of fire as indicated by Matthew 18:9 which says, “... it is better for thee to enter into life with one eye, rather than having two eyes to be cast into hell fire.” A description of the reality and experience of a man in hell is given in Luke 16:23 which says, “And in hell he lift up his eyes, being in torments....”

Is death forever or just temporary?

We will exist forever either alive in Christ in heaven or dead and separated from Christ in hell. Daniel 12:2 says, “And many of them that sleep in the dust of the earth shall awake, some to everlasting life, and some to shame and everlasting contempt.” The condemned will spend eternity in the fires of hell forever.

How is it possible to burn in the fires of hell forever and not be burned up?

Like a rock in a fire place experiencing the burning heat of the fire, so do souls experience the burning flames of hell without being burned up.

Do babies go to heaven when they die?

Yes. King David said of his baby that died, in Second Samuel 12:19-23, that he would go to him. This shows us that babies go to heaven.

If babies are born with a sin nature, why do they go to heaven when they die?

Babies go to heaven because of their lack of accountability to the law. In Romans 7:9, Paul indicates that he was alive without the law but died when it came. This moment of the law coming to him is called the *age of accountability*. The law existed thousands of years before Paul, so what did he mean by saying that he lived before it came? He is referring to a time when he became morally aware and had a sense of right and wrong before God. Prior to this time in his life, he was alive because he was not personally accountable to law. He was too immature. Condemnation is the result of sin (Romans 6:23), but there is no sin where there is no law (Romans 5:13). Thus, one must be morally accountable to the law before he is condemned for sin. (See more on law.)

What happens to a Christian when he dies?

The Bible shows us in Genesis 35:18 and in First Kings 17:22 that people die when their souls depart from their bodies. Their souls, having been redeemed and born again, immediately go to heaven. Evidence of this happening is when Jesus told the thief on the cross that they would be together in paradise that very day (Luke 23:43). Also, in Luke 16:22-23, Lazarus and the rich man were both aware of their existences after they died, one being in heaven and the other in hell. In contrast, the body is not born again and, therefore, remains in the earth: “dust to dust and ashes to ashes.” The bodies of deceased saints are still in their tombs or graves. For others, their bodies have been burned, eaten, or decayed. Eventually, all physical bodies will be recycled back into the elements of the physical earth. When a Christian dies, what happens to his soul is far more important than what happens to his body.

What does the Bible mean when it says those sleeping in the dust of the earth will rise to everlasting life or to everlasting contempt?

Daniel 12:2 is referring to the two destinies that all people must choose between. Because the dead are already experiencing life in heaven or death in hell, “sleeping in the dust” is a way a saying that these have died and their physical bodies are a part of the dust of the earth. Daniel uses the term “awake” to describe the resurrection when all saints will receive new bodies and the lost will be formally sentenced to eternal death.

What does it mean that the dead in Christ will rise?

The dead in Christ (physically dead but spiritually alive) will rise when Jesus returns to rapture the saints. This rising refers to the saints receiving their new, glorified bodies (First Thessalonians 4:16; First Corinthians 15:52). Because these bodies will last throughout eternity in righteousness, they are completely different than the physical bodies we know of now.

When do the lost go to hell?

Hebrews 9:27 tells us that “it is appointed to every man to die once and after that the judgment.” Immediately after a lost person dies, he will begin spending time in hell awaiting his formal sentence of condemnation even as did the rich man mentioned in Luke 16:23. Though all lost are condemned already (John 3:18), at the Great White

throne judgment, the lost will come from death and hell to be formally sentenced to hell forever (Revelation 20:13).

Is it possible for people to be raised from the dead?

Hebrews 9:27 says that it is appointed unto man to die once and after this the judgment. Once we die, we will not be returning. There are a couple of instances when Jesus raised the dead, one time for Paul, one time for Elisha, Lazarus, and then at the crucifixion when the graves were opened. However, according to Hebrews, this will not happen again.

HUMAN SUFFERING

How can a loving God allow pain and misery in the world?

Pain and misery are the consequences of sin. God allows us to experience the consequences of sin to show us how bad it is. Out of love, He reaches out to us to deliver us from our sin. Out of mercy, He offers forgiveness in spite of our rebellion and rejection of Him. It would be unloving and unmerciful of God to deny us the experience of the horrors of sin. If in the midst of sin and suffering, we deny God and blame Him for our troubles, how much more we would use the excuse that we do not need God because there are no problems and no pain associated with our sins. In fact, most people would deny that there is sin if there is no pain.

How can one believe in a loving God's existence when there is so much misery and evil in the world?

This question has nothing to do with the existence of God though most people do not recognize the distinction. Questions pertaining to why and how God did things deal with His motives and intentions. This already assumes His existence. Agreeing or disagreeing with why He did the things the way He did (like freewill) has nothing to do with His existence anymore than your disagreement with me affects my existence.

Why does God allow bad things to happen to good people?

There are no good people in the world. Some are better and kinder than others. But the Bible says that, "all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God." (Romans 3:23). For this reason, every person regardless of age, religion, sex, etc., are subjected to the same hardships that are common to everyone (First Corinthians 10:13).

Why does God allow innocent victims and babies to suffer at the hands of bad people?

Such inflicted misery is the result of sin. God allows such events to occur to demonstrate to us that sin touches every life, shows no mercy, and has no favorites. The blame for such misery belongs on criminal, but the responsibility for suffering belongs to all of us because we are all guilty of sin. Every time we sin, we are accepting the guilt and the consequences of sin. Sin is horrible and atrocious.

If God is just and omnipotent, why does He allow injustice to occur?

God allows injustice and all sins to happen to teach us to be outraged by sin. We are wrong to blame God for our suffering, outrage, and injustice. Every time we choose to sin, we are rejecting the kind of world God wants to give us. We have no one to blame but ourselves. Next time you sin, remember that you have chosen not to live by God's laws and therefore have forsaken the peace and security of life He offers. You have chosen to live in a world where everyone else chooses to live by their own rules—a dog eat dog world of rebellion, pain, and sorrow.

Did God create sin?

No. Sin is a violation of God's will. It is contrary to the will of God. Obviously, God does only that which He wills to do. He cannot violate His own will, therefore it is illogical to say that God created sin.

Why does Isaiah 45:7 say that God creates evil?

The meaning of this word *evil* refers to things that bring sorrow, pain, and woe. God creates punishment for sin and wickedness. He does not create sin or wickedness.

Did God sin by creating beings who could choose to sin?

No. Sin is will and action contrary to the will of God. God does not violate His own will and therefore cannot sin. It is obvious that it was His will to create beings with a will of their own.

Is God's will arbitrary?

No. He reveals His will to us through the Bible and in our consciences which have remained unchanged since the beginning of man. Further, the Bible says that God is unchanging, so His will and the rules that He expects us to live by will always be the same. God's will is the same yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

Why didn't God create things that could not sin?

He did. Most of what God has created cannot choose to sin. The sun, the stars, trees, dogs, and bugs all do what they were created to do.

Why did God create beings who could sin, if He does not like sin?

The Bible does not give an answer to this specific question. However, it does tell us why He created. Creating such beings was in addition to creating everything else that cannot choose to sin. According to the Bible, in Revelation 4:11, He created all things for His pleasure. What is the pleasure of God? Ephesians 1:5-7 and John 3:16 show that God takes pleasure in loving us and giving to us. By giving His life for us, He demonstrated His perfect love for us (John 15:13). This shows that God created us out of love. It can be concluded then that God desired to create every kind of thing (with freewill and no freewill) with nothing less than the pure motive of love and willingness to endure the subsequent offense of doing so. It is a common experience that love causes people to be long suffering, even with the children we bring into this world. God is the way. First Peter 3:9 says, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance."

Does the failure of man and angels (sin and condemnation) show that God has failed?

No. Are good parents blamed for the stubborn rebellion of a child? God is a perfect parent and has done everything for us to guide us into doing right. It is important to put the blame of sin where it belongs, namely, with those who choose to sin. God successfully created us and gave us instruction and conscience. He successfully provides help for us and with great patience endures our rebellion against Him and our accusations against Him. He gives us every opportunity to repent and to turn to Him for forgiveness. Blaming God for your failure is an attempt to avoid personal guilt of doing wrong.

I would not sin if God would show me more plainly what He expects.

Romans 3:19 says, "Now we know that what things soever the law saith, it saith to them who are under the law: that every mouth may be stopped, and all the world may become guilty before God." The fact is, you do not even do the things you ALREADY know to do (Romans 2:15). God is not at fault. You are at fault. Accept your guilt and humble yourself before God for His help.

If God is perfect, how could He have created an imperfect creation?

God's creation was perfect. Imperfection is the fault of this creation choosing sin and imperfection.

Why would a perfect God allow His creation to choose imperfection? Doesn't such a choice show flaw in the creation?

No. The "ability" to choose is not an imperfection. Imperfection is the consequence of choosing not to conform to God's perfect design and rules. Such a choice is called sin.

Giving creation the ability to sin suggests a flaw in the design if a perfect creation is desired. Was not imperfection inevitable and therefore giving the ability to choose imperfection a fault in the design? Is this not like saying the potter built a flawed pot with a crack in it?

The fault is not in the Creator or in His design but the result of the creation's choices. Unlike a flawed pot, humans choose to create flaws in themselves by choosing not to follow the guidelines of their Creator.

Why did God not create things that could not be flawed, condemned, and imperfect?

He did and still is. Most of what God has created does exactly what it was created to do. As for angels and men, who have chosen the way of sin, God offers redemption and a new birth experience (Colossians 1:20). He gives them the choice to be restored to their original, perfectly created state.

SATAN

Who is Satan?

Satan is a very real being. He is powerful, vicious, and wickedly deceptive. His goal is to rule the world and to lord over all. He wants the throne of God, and he is willing to do anything to acquire it. Everything he does results in destruction, misery, and death. Beware of this monstrous creature.

Where in the Bible is the fall of Satan referred to?

Isaiah 14:12-19 and Ezekiel 28:15-19 describe Satan's fall from heaven, glory, and prestige. Ezekiel uses the King of Tyrus as an analogy of Satan. We know this because of verses 13-14. Verse 15 indicates that he was perfect at one time, and verse 14 indicates that he was the anointed cherub that covered the throne. He was the sum of wisdom and beauty.

Was Satan always evil?

No. At one time Satan's name was Lucifer. He was the covering Cherub in heaven. This identifies him as being the primary angel before the throne of God. Ezekiel 28:11-19 describes the perfect wisdom and beauty that he once possessed and how he lost it.

What caused Satan to lose his position in heaven?

Ezekiel 28:15 says, "thou wast perfect in they ways from the day that thou wast created, till iniquity was found in thee." Like man, Satan was created perfect and with a free will that allowed him to reject God's Word in his life. Ezekiel 28:16-17 indicates that he became proud because of his wealth, position, wisdom, and beauty. Isaiah 14:13-14 reveals that his vanity led him to try to takeover of God's throne. Thus, he was cast out of heaven.

How did Satan fall from heaven?

Satan's fall involved being banished from his position in heaven and being exiled to earth. However, Job 1:6 shows that this banishment did not prevent him from approaching the throne of God and speaking to God. Just as one may speak of a corporate manager losing his position in a company, it is understood that this does not exclude his physical presence from the office building twenty-four hours a day.

Why doesn't God banish Satan from earth?

The world would not be different without him. If Satan was not in control, someone else would be. People want to control and plunder others. That is the way of man. Satan's presence on earth allows people a choice of kings. Why does God allow Satan to hurt, tempt, and deceive people? God allows people to choose peace and safety in Him or strife and danger in sin. Suffering and misery result from people choosing to reject God and His commands. People are responsible for choosing and making the world they live in. It is only right and fair to let them live in the world they help to make and to experience the consequences of their choices. Satan simply capitalizes on the decisions people make.

If God is the creator of the world and Lord over all, then how is it that Satan is called the god of this world (Second Corinthians 4:4)?

Satan is the god of this world because man has rejected God and serves the purposes of Satan. However, just as earthly government are structured in hierarchies such as federal over state and state over cities, God rules over Satan and the world.

FREEWILL

Do humans have a free will?

Yes. This can be demonstrated by examples in the Bible describing man doing things that were contrary to the will and desires of God (Matthew 23:37; Isaiah 30:15-16; Joshua 24:15).

Is it possible for a human not to sin?

According to the Bible, everyone sins (Romans 3:23), are born and shapen in iniquity (Psalm 51:5), are unrighteous (Romans 3:10); and cannot do good (Romans 3:12).

Does having a sinful nature mean that a person can only do evil and never do anything good?

No. Biblical examples show that people do things that are considered good and righteous by the standard of God's law (e.g. offering sacrifices, praying for salvation, tithing, reading the Bible). Having an unrighteous nature means that one also chooses to do evil. And according to the Bible, everyone chooses to sin. This is why Jesus said in Matthew 19:26 that it is impossible for man to get into heaven. Thus, it is needful for God to save us.

Is it possible to have free will if the flesh is unrighteous by nature?

Yes. Bible examples and exhortations show us that people have the ability to choose between doing right or wrong and between two choices that are both good or both bad.

Why does the Bible say that none doeth good (Romans 3:12)?

This describes the failure of man to be good enough to go to heaven. Revelation 21:27 says that there will be no sin in heaven, and Habakkuk 1:13 shows that this is because God cannot look upon iniquity. Thus, one must be as good as God to go to heaven. But this requires a miracle! We cannot change our unrighteous nature, therefore, we must depend on God to do this for us. This is called being born again which results in receiving a new righteous nature. Because God is spirit, being born again is a spiritual experience. The outward flesh stays the same, but the inward spiritual man is made new in righteousness. When a Christian dies, his carnal body will be left behind but his righteous spirit will enter heaven. No one is good without a righteous nature.

If the Bible says that all sin and that none are good, then how is it possible that we have free will?

Because the Bible also says: (1) that we can choose, and (2) we are held accountable for our choices. The Bible is telling us that we choose to sin and will always choose to sin. Not "always" in the sense that we choose sin every moment and never choose to do anything that is good. Rather we will choose to sin throughout our lives. We do not have to choose sin, but according to the Bible, we do and will continue to do so.

How can surrender and service to Christ be considered freedom rather than enslavement?

The apostle Paul described himself as a willing bond servant to Christ. This is real freedom because the alternative is to live for self in a world with others who live for themselves. Such a world is void of peace, safety, and security. It is a dog eat dog world of rape and plunder. There are no restraints to do as you please even if it involves destruction and harm to others. After all, a world of true freedom is achieved when everyone does as he pleases. In contrast, Christ offers an alternative. He offers first of all, salvation from sin and the subsequent condemnation. Second, He offers a lifestyle of constraint and discipline that produces a world of peace, safety, and security. The choice is yours. Because Christ gives you a choice, you not a slave but a willing servant.

If people are either servants to Christ or slaves to Satan, is there really such a thing as freedom?

Being saved frees us from the condemnation and bondage of sin. Because of this, we are also free of Satan's authority over us. This freedom comes at the price of Jesus' death on our behalf. When we give our lives to Him and ask for salvation, we choose freely, on our own, to surrender our lives over to Him. Unlike Satan, Christ gives us the freedom to choose how we will live. As a Christian, you can live for Christ or for Satan, in the Spirit or in the flesh, in righteousness or in unrighteousness.

Does having freedom in Christ mean that there is no consequences and no accountability?

No. Freedom in Christ means that you have the freedom to choose how you will live. The consequences of such decisions remain unchanged. Fortunately, in Christ, saints are free to choose the life and resulting consequences. The unsaved have no other choice but to continue in deception, darkness, and condemnation. Apart from Christ, there is no freedom or deliverance from such bondage.

GOD

Is there only one God?

Yes. Isaiah 45:5 declares “I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me....” Also, First Corinthians 8:5-6 says, “For though there be that are called gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be gods many, and lords many,) But to us there is but one God”

How is it possible for Jesus to be God if there is only one God?

God is three persons: the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost. Together they are one God. There are no other gods. Each of these three persons are identical in every way. Each is omnipresent, omniscient, omnipotent, and omnificient. Each loves to an infinite degree, and loves righteousness and justice. As a result of knowing, feeling, and thinking exactly the same way, they all act and conclude identically. They are in absolute harmony and oneness in every way. One cannot be distinguished from the other. When Philip asked Jesus to show him the Father, “Jesus saith unto him, Have I been so long time with you, and yet hast thou not known me, Philip? he that hath seen me hath seen the Father; and how sayest thou then, Shew us the Father?” (John 14:8-9). In John 10:30, Jesus declared, “I and my Father are one.” This statement provoked the Jews to pick up stones to stone Him because He was claiming to be God (John 10:31).

How can Jesus be God when He says that He is not all-knowing in Mark 13:32?

In this verse, Jesus says, “But of that day and that hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels which are in heaven, neither the Son, but the Father.” In becoming human, Jesus relinquished personal exercise of His omniscience and omnipresence to the Father and the Spirit. Nonetheless, through them, He exercises His Godhood qualities. He did this in order to fulfill the role of being man’s redeemer (Hebrews 2:16-18). He is God manifested in the flesh (First Timothy 3:16). Philippians 2: 6-8 says of Him that He, “being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God: But made himself of no reputation, and took upon him the form of a servant, and was made in the likeness of men: And being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.” He does not consider being equal with God a crime of robbing the position of God for Himself because He is God.

If Jesus is God, who was He praying to in the garden?

Jesus addressed God the Father as His God. In like fashion, Hebrews 1:8 shows that the Father also addresses Jesus as God: “But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom.” Thus, we have a personal glimpse into how each of the three persons of the godhead address each other.

How do you know that you are praying to the true Christ of God if you do not pray using His Hebrew name?

The true Christ of the Bible has many names, and translations of those names do not redirect your prayers to someone else. There have been many others named Joshua in the Hebrew language. Likewise, Jesus said in Matthew 24:5 that there would be false prophets calling themselves Christ and using His name. The fact is, a name identifies a person, the person does not identify the name. It is the person of Jesus Christ who is known by His teaching, His work, and His association with the Bible that is the correct Christ. He answers to many names in any translation.

Are there any verses that prove God is triune?

The father in heaven is called God: John 6:27 says, "Labour not for the meat which perisheth, but for that meat which endureth unto everlasting life, which the Son of man shall give unto you: for him hath God the Father sealed."

Jesus is called God: Hebrews 1:8 says, "But unto the Son he saith, Thy throne, O God, is for ever and ever: a sceptre of righteousness is the sceptre of thy kingdom." Also, John 20:28 says, "And Thomas answered and said unto him, My Lord and my God."

The Holy Spirit is called God: Acts 5:3-4 says, "But Peter said, Ananias, why hath Satan filled thine heart to lie to the Holy Ghost, and to keep back part of the price of the land? Whiles it remained, was it not thine own? and after it was sold, was it not in thine own power? why hast thou conceived this thing in thine heart? thou hast not lied unto men, but unto God."

All three are individual personalities: Mark 1:9-11 says, "And it came to pass in those days, that Jesus came from Nazareth of Galilee, and was baptized of John in Jordan. And straightway coming up out of the water, he saw the heavens opened, and the Spirit like a dove descending upon him: And there came a voice from heaven, saying, Thou art my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased."

Yet there is but one God: Isaiah 45:5 says, "I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me."

How can God be in hell as indicated by Psalm 139:8?

"If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there." This verse shows two truths. First, God is omnipotent, and there is no place in all of creation that God is not present. Second, all things consist by Him. Colossians 1:17 says that "...by him all things consist." Hell could not exist without the sustaining presence of God to maintain its existence.

How can God be in hell if He cannot look upon iniquity (Habakkuk 1:13)?

God's presence and God's fellowship are different. Satan was in the presence of God at the throne with the angels (Job 1:6). Satan's presence in heaven and God's presence in hell in no way indicate that God condones or is accepting of sin. On the contrary, God hates sin. He does not have fellowship with sin and takes no pleasure in sin. He tolerates it only to long enough to give people opportunity to be saved (Second Peter 3:9).

How do you receive the Holy Spirit?

Luke 11:13, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children: how much more shall your heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to them that ask him?"

What does the Holy Spirit do?

The Holy Spirit is God not an it. Some of the things He does can be found in the following verses:

-Romans 8:16 "The Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirit, that we are the children of God."

-Romans 8:26 "Likewise the Spirit also helpeth our infirmities: for we know not what we should pray for as we ought: but the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered."

-Romans 8:27 "And he that searcheth the hearts knoweth what *is* the mind of the Spirit, because he maketh intercession for the saints according to *the will of God*."

-John 15:26 "But when the Comforter is come, whom I will send unto you from the Father, *even* the Spirit of truth, which proceedeth from the Father, he shall testify of me."

Is there anything that God cannot do?

Definitely yes! God cannot sin. He cannot lie (Titus 1:2). He cannot be unrighteous.

If God is omnipotent, how is it possible that He cannot do some things?

God exercises His unlimited power to do all things that are righteous and good. The idea that God must be able to do anything (square circles, sin, etc.) is a man-made definition of God. The true, living God does only those things that are orderly, good, just, righteous, and loving.

Why does James 1:13 say that God cannot be tempted with evil, yet Psalm 106:14 says that Israel

tempted God in the desert?

Like many words, the word “temptation” has more than one meaning. For example, the word “cry” can mean to weep or sob; to beg or plead; to publicly proclaim; or to refer to relative distance as in “a far cry.” The word “temptation” can mean to provoke to do evil; or to test someone’s motives or abilities; or to be proven by someone else; or to be enticed by personal lust. God is not tempted by personal desire of lust to sin, and He does not provoke others to sin. When God does tempt people, He is proving to others, and often to themselves, what they truly believe deep within (which God already knows as in the case with Abraham and Job). Similarly, people tempt God by demanding of Him to prove His word. However, God seldom caters to the demands (temptations) of people to prove Himself. Satan tempted Jesus by designing tests to prove Jesus’ identity and to tempt Him to sin. Of course, Jesus resisted all temptations. As God, he cannot be tempted.

Why does the Bible say in some places that God does not repent and in other places say that He does repent?

The word “repent” has two meanings: (1) to change, and (2) to have sorrow. God does not change (repent) His nature or desires. He is always the same. The change (repentance) He makes is determined by the actions and decisions of people. Thus, instead of blessing Israel, as he would have liked to, He often cursed them because of their failure to be

faithful to Him. As for sorrowing, sin causes God great sorrow, and for this reason, the Bible refers to Him as repenting or being sorrowful in response to sin (e.g., Genesis 6:7; or First Samuel 15:11).

Does God’s foreknowledge require that He predestine the future?

No. God is not bound by the dimension of time. He did not have to program everything to happen in the beginning to know the future. Also, He did not have to think through the cause and effect relationships to know the future. This would not only limit God to time and sequential thought, but it would also mean that all of man’s decisions are nothing more than predictable cause and effect results. The fact is that Jesus said in John 8:58 that “before Abraham, I am.” This indicates that the past, present, and future are present tense to Him. Is this possible? Only recently has science discovered that time is not constant. Thus, time can be compressed and dilated, sped up and slowed down. With this new information about time and the realization that there is much more that we do not know, it is reasonable to conclude that God views events in time at one time like a single picture.

Is it true that as man is, God was, and as God is, man will become?

No. Man was created, and God is eternal. Also, man is unrighteous and in need of God’s help. God, on the other hand, has always been righteous and needs no one’s help.

John 1:18 says that no one has seen God, but in Genesis 32:30, Jacob said he saw God face to face? How can this be?

Jesus is God (John 1:1, 14; 1Timothy 3:16), and it is He whom men have seen. However, God the Father has not been seen by men which is whom John 1:18 is speaking.

Why was it necessary that God die for our sins?

If Jesus is not God, then salvation is not possible because only God was qualified to die for our sins to redeem us. Anyone less than God would have been imperfect, unable, and unwilling. The sacrifice for sin required that the Lamb of God be perfect and without sin. There is none good, perfect, and sinless but God Himself. Second, because the punishment for sin requires an infinite death (eternal separation from God), only God, who is infinite, could fulfill that infinite quantity of punishment. Anyone else would still be in hell paying for sin with no hope of ever fully paying for it. Third, only God could be truly willing to accept the punishment for us because He would have perfect understanding of what punishment He was accepting. Anyone else would lack the ability to comprehend infinite punishment and, therefore, by reason of limited comprehension, could never be truly willing to accept such a punishment.

If Jesus is God, then are you saying that God died on the cross?

Yes. And if we apply that 1John 5:12 definition of life and death, God the Father died too because separation from the Son is death. This is not a death of ceasing to function and exist. This is a death of separation in relationship.

JESUS CHRIST

Who is Jesus Christ?

God, the Word of God, God in the flesh, Lord of Lords, King of Kings, The only Savior of man. (John 1:1 & 14; John 20:28; Isaiah 9:6)

Could Jesus have sinned during his earthly walk prior to his ascension?

Absolutely not. As John 1:1 points out, Jesus is God, and God cannot sin. There is no sin in Him. He is perfect, righteous, and holy. If He could have sinned, He would not be God.

Could Jesus be tempted to sin?

Hebrews 4:15 explains that Jesus was tempted in every point even as we are yet without sin. He was without sin because He is God, and God cannot sin. His righteous nature will not allow it.

How could Jesus be tempted if one is tempted by his own sinful desires (James 1:14)?

Jesus was tempted by the human nature of His body as well as by Satan and sinners. However, He resisted all temptations and never yielded to them. This is why Jesus is our captain of salvation. He took our conqueror (human sin in His flesh) and conquered it, then He crucified it on the cross. He literally dominated sin and put it to death.

How could Jesus have a human nature and still be God?

Jesus was God since eternity past. He became a man and took on the human nature in order to be our high priest (Hebrews 2:14-18). He was God in a human body (First Timothy 3:16). Thus, as God, His righteous nature overruled and dominated all sinful desires in the human flesh.

Was Jesus' flesh and blood molecular or non-molecular in structure?

Jesus was born human with human flesh just like you and me. Hebrews 10:5 says that God prepared a body for Christ. We know that this was a human body because He is called the Son of man (Matthew 16:13), He was born of a human mother, and Hebrews 2:16-17 explains that "he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham. Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a merciful and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God, to make reconciliation for the sins of the people." Thus, Jesus' body was fully and molecularly human.

Was Jesus in a sinless body?

No. Second Corinthians 5:21 explains that He was made "to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him." This is another indication that Jesus' body was of the same flesh as ours descended from Adam. Our human nature is sinful, thus by taking on a human body, He was made sin. Nonetheless, His body served only as a "temple" in which He dwelled.

If Jesus had a sinful, human body, would this not mean that He sinned?

No. Hebrews 4:15 explains that "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin." Jesus was tempted by all the sins we are tempted by because He had the same body that we have (the flesh and nature of Adam). However, Jesus did not yield to any temptations and remained sinless. The importance of this fact cannot be overstated. Whereas we are conquered by sin, Jesus conquered our conqueror. He then killed it (the body of sin) on the cross and thereby liberated us from its bondage. "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ (First Corinthians 15:55).

If Jesus was God, then how could He have been tempted?

Because Jesus is God, He had a righteous nature that prevented Him from being tempted to sin (James 1:13). Jesus was never tempted by His own desires. He was never provoked to sin by His own lust. His temptations came from His carnal, human body or from Satan, or from people. For example, Psalm 78:56 tells us that Israel "tempted and provoked the most high God." This describes the actions of the people not the desire of God to sin.

How could Jesus have a physical human body if He did not have a physical human father?

God created both Adam and Eve without physical, human parents. From these two created human bodies came a lineage of human bodies called humanity, all possessing the nature of Adam. Likewise, it was God who made the human body for Christ which was conceived in Mary.

Are Jesus and the Christ the same person?

The Christ of the Bible is known as Jesus Christ, and He has many names such as Emmanuel, King of kings, Lord of lords, the mighty God, the everlasting Father, and the Prince of Peace. The name *Jesus* means Savior and *Christ* means anointed. First Timothy 3:16 tells us that He is God manifest in the flesh. Jesus Christ, as a person, is the anointed Savior of the world.

Was Jesus fully human?

Jesus was fully human in the flesh (John 1:14, Hebrews 2:14,17; Second Corinthians 4:11; First Timothy 3:16).

What did Jesus look like? Is He anything like most paintings I see?

Popular pictures of Jesus show Him to be typically a tall, beautiful, fair-skinned, frail Anglo-Saxon. However, Jesus was Jewish, so His features were not Anglo-Saxon. He was a carpenter's son, so He more than likely was rugged in appearance and build. The following verses in Isaiah 53:1-5 say of Him, "Who hath believed our report? and to whom is the arm of the LORD revealed? For he shall grow up before him as a tender plant, and as a root out of a dry ground: he hath no form nor comeliness; and when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." As for the long hair, unless He was a Nazarite as well as a Nazarene, he would more than likely have short hair because short hair was customary in Rome at that time, and the Bible says it is a shame for a man to have long hair.

If Jesus had a human body of unrighteousness, how is it possible that He did not sin?

Jesus was God in a human body. His flesh desired sin and wanted to sin, but He brought it under control and prevented it from sinning. This is why Hebrews 4:15 says, "we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin."

Was Jesus *Homo sapien*?

Yes. The term *Homo sapien* is a taxonomic name defined to refer to the group of animals we know as man. Some try to redefine Jesus as being nonhuman because He was also God. However, the Bible is very clear about his body being of the same flesh as *Homo sapien* (Hebrews 2:14).

Was Jesus just as human as Adam and Eve?

No. Adam and Eve were fully human: body, soul, and spirit. Adam and Eve were created beings. Jesus, on the other hand, was God manifest in the flesh and as a spiritual being was not created. Physically, He was just as human as Adam, Eve and the rest of us. Spiritually, however, He was God. Unlike us, He existed spiritually in eternity past, and there was no need to be created. All He did was make a human body.

Was Jesus like Adam and Eve before they sinned?

No. Adam and Eve were created with their own nature (their own righteousness). This nature could allow them to sin. However, Jesus, being God, was righteous since eternity past. Unlike Adam and Eve, Jesus could not sin because it is impossible for a righteous God to sin.

Why did Jesus come to earth?

Luke 19:10 tells us, "For the Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." If it were possible for man to save himself, Jesus would not have come. If it were possible for man to live a righteous life without sin, Jesus would not have come. We need Jesus to come and save us from our sins.

Why did Jesus become human?

Hebrews 2:9 tells us that He became man to taste death for us. Hebrews 2:14 tells us that He became human to destroy the power of death through His death. Hebrews 2:17 tells us that He became human so that He could be a faithful and high priest to us. In other words, so that we could relate to Him as being like us in the flesh. The bottom line is that Christ took upon Himself the sinful nature of man in the flesh. Whereas we succumb to sin and

consequently die (Romans 6:23), He brought the sin of humanity under control, subdued it, conquered it, and then slew it. Jesus Christ came to do what we could not do. He is the captain of our salvation because He conquered our conqueror. As Hebrews 2:16 explains, He did this by taking on our nature (the nature of Abraham), not the nature of angels or of some other created thing. In addition, Jesus came at a time in history that fulfilled the typology of the Gospel recorded over generations of humanity. Just as man is under the law of sin and death prior to being saved by grace through faith in Jesus Christ, so likewise, Israel's relationship with God was governed by law prior to Christ's coming. However, after Christ, the old law was done away with and a new covenant of grace was established (His church). Being in Israel and the church have nothing to do with one's salvation. However, the typology of Israel, Christ, and the church is the message of the Gospel in history!

When Jesus was a boy , what name did his mother use to call him?

In Luke 2:48, his mother called him "Son" (*teknon*). There is no other quote in the Bible of Mary addressing her Son. However, Matthew 1:21 records the angel saying that His name shall be called Jesus (*Iesous*, ee-ay-sooce). This is the Greek word for Joshua (yeh-ho-shoo'-ah) in Hebrew. Also, He was to be called Emmanuel (em-man-oo-ale, Matt. 1:23). Isaiah 9:6 lists several names for Him saying, "...his name shall be called Wonderful, Counsellor, The mighty God, The everlasting Father, The Prince of Peace." In Revelation 19:13, Jesus is called the Word of God. Like many people today, Jesus has many names to go by including the translations of these many names into different languages. And just like many people today, He answers to them all when people are addressing Him.

Why would Jesus become man to conquer sin if He is God?

If Jesus were not God, He could not have conquered sin. That fact is that Hebrews 4:15 tells us that He was tempted in every point even as we are, yet without sin. But only God is without sin! There is none good but God. Jesus must be God. He conquered sins by bringing the carnal flesh of humanity into subjection to His righteous nature.

What is the meaning of Jesus dying for our sins?

Romans 6:23 says that the wages of sin is death, and Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned and come short of the glory of God. Thus, as Romans 3:10 declares, there is none good. This means that everyone is guilty of sin and worthy of the death penalty (condemnation in hell). However, condemnation is forever, so Jesus, offered to be our substitute, that is, to suffer the death penalty for us. Being God, Jesus was able to die for everyone for an infinite penalty at one time. This is what He did. Now He offers this payment for sin to anyone who wants to accept it. The choice is between giving yourself over to sin and condemnation or to Christ and life.

If Adam had not sinned, would the death of Christ be necessary?

No. Christ came to offer Himself as a sacrifice on our behalf by tasting "death for every man" because of sin (Hebrews 2:9). Death is the payment for sin. If there is no sin to pay for, death is not necessary.

Did Jesus forgive his executioners?

Yes. Luke 23:34 records Jesus saying, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do."

Did Jesus go to hell during the time His body was in the grave?

No. Jesus told the thief on the cross, "Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise" (Luke 23:43). Hell is not paradise.

If Jesus did not go to hell after His crucifixion, what do First Peter 3:19-20 and 4:6 mean?

The spirits in prison refer to the dead, lost and condemned souls. First John 5:12 gives us the Biblical definition of life and death saying that, "He that hath the Son hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God hath not life." A person can be dead spiritually though alive physically. These are unbelievers in the prison of carnal sinful flesh. To interpret this passage as meaning that souls were preached to in hell for the purpose of being saved would cause a contradiction with Hebrews 9:27 which says, "And as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." Once you die, there is no more opportunity to be saved.

BAPTISM

What is baptism?

Baptism is a church ordinance of immersing believers in water. The Word *baptism* means immersion and has been transliterated rather than translated in our English Bible. The true meaning of the word reveals the actual practice of baptism involving complete immersion into water rather than sprinkling or pouring.

Is there more than one kind of baptism?

Yes. Hebrews 6:2 mentions the doctrine of baptisms, and a study of verses containing the word *baptism* shows three major types of baptisms: (1) baptism into a common or shared experience, e.g., First Corinthians 11:2; (2) baptism into association or identity with someone, e.g., Romans 6:3-4; and (3) baptism into a physical substance such as water, e.g. Matthew 3:11. Other examples of baptisms include being baptized into the church (First Corinthians 12:13), with fire or the Spirit (Matthew 3:11), and into death (Luke 12:50).

Why does the Bible mention the “doctrine of baptisms” in Hebrews 6:1 but says there is only one baptism in Ephesians 4:5?

The context of Ephesians 4:5 is about unity of the Spirit, and there is only one kind of baptism that will add a believer to Christ’s church. Paul’s reference to one baptism refers to the shared and common experience of the church ordinance of water baptism. Baptism is the prerequisite that God requires before adding believers to His church (See questions under Church). Every believer is in the family of God and is expected to make a covenant with God and other believers in a local, new testament church to serve Him. Until a believer is baptized in water under new testament church authority, he is not included in the church.

What is the importance of baptism in Acts 22:16?

Paul is recounting his meeting with Ananias (Acts 9:17) and cites three instructions that were given to him: (1) arise, (2) be baptized, and (3) call upon the name of the Lord. Baptism is the first step expected of Christians after they get saved and is a part of the great commission, so Paul was being instructed as any new Christian would be. The statement of “washing away sins” is associated with the third instruction of calling upon the name of the Lord. Some erroneously link washing away sins with baptism, but this is not consistent with other verses nor with the grammar of the verse.

What is the purpose of baptism?

The church ordinance of water baptism is the prerequisite God requires before He will add a believer to a local new testament church. Thus, it is important and explains why Peter commanded Cornelius to be baptized (Acts 10:48). Second, baptism is a believers public announcement that a believer is identified with Christ through salvation, that he has repented of sin and is determined to forsake sin even as Christ did, and that he is committed to living as an obedient follower for Christ in Christ-likeness.

Does Acts 2:41 indicate that believers are added to the church by baptism?

No. It indicates that everyone who was saved was baptized and subsequently added to the church. Acts 2:47 clarifies how the new baptized believers were added to the church saying that God added to the church. First Corinthians 12:18 also says that God sets members in the church as it pleases Him. God will not add a believer to His church until he is baptized. Thus, baptism is a prerequisite work that God requires as a condition to be fulfilled before He adds a believer to a local new testament church.

What was the meaning of John’s baptism in Mark 1:4?

John’s baptism of repentance for the remission of sins was a ministry of preparation for the Son of man, and John was known as the voice in the wilderness preparing the way of the Lord. Those who believed the message of John were exhorted to show evidence of repentance from their sins for remission by being baptized. Thus, John’s baptism identified believers with the teachings of John and the coming Messiah He spoke of.

Is baptism necessary for salvation?

No. Baptism is a work done by men. Salvation is the work of God. All that God requires for salvation is that you acknowledge that there is nothing you can do to be worthy of salvation and that you surrender yourself to Him to depend on Him 100% for salvation. Unlike baptism, according to the Bible, believing, repenting, and calling are not works. Baptism, on the other hand, is a work that lost as well as saved can do. Because baptism is not important in order to be saved, Paul told the Corinthians in First Corinthians 1:17 that “Christ sent me not to baptize, but to preach the Gospel.” The Gospel is the message that saves people explaining that you must believe, repent, and call on the name of Jesus to be saved. Obviously, Paul teaches that baptism is not a part of the Gospel message of salvation.

Is baptism considered a work even if it is not a part of the Jewish law?

Yes. A work is any effort on the part of lost and saved men to gain the favor of God. Unlike baptism, believing, repenting, and calling on the name of the Lord are things that the lost do not do. Anyone who believes, repents, and calls on the name of the Lord will be saved. In contrast, baptism will not save though many lost people try.

How do you explain First Peter 3:20-21 if you do not think baptism is important to salvation?

This is a good example of how people accept a teaching without thinking about the verse. Noah and his family were immersed in the ark and saved from the water which was used to destroy the world. The Greek text in verse 20 refers to them being saved through (*dia*) the water. Verse 21 clarifies any confusion about the idea that water baptism saves by saying, “not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God.”

Are you saying that baptism is not important?

Not at all. All Christian works are important to proving that God’s will and ways are perfect, good, and acceptable (Romans 12:1-2; Matthew 3:15; Luke 7:29). Doing right and living Christ-like is the best way to live. Such a lifestyle blesses the soul and enriches one’s relationship with Christ. However, works are the result of salvation, not the cause of salvation. True Christians manifest works of righteousness because they are already saved and believe that such a lifestyle is the best lifestyle. In contrast, the religious-lost work in order to obtain and to keep salvation and believe that they cannot know whether they are saved until judgment day when their works will be judged. However, Revelation 20:13 shows that the destiny of those judged by their works is not eternal life in heaven.

If baptism is not necessary for salvation, why is it a part of the great commission?

Baptism is the prerequisite work God requires after one is saved in order to become a member of His local church, His house of witness in the world. Because the local church, as an institution, is God’s focus of ministry to reach the world, it is imperative that all Christians be baptized and joined to a true new testament church (This is why Peter commanded the Gentiles to be baptized in Acts 8:36-38). The four commands in the great commission are: go, disciple, baptize, and teach. Christians who want to participate in God’s plan for reaching the world God’s way will apply all four commands. They will go to the lost, teach others how to be saved, encourage them to be baptized in order to participate in a local church ministry, and then instruct these new Christians in how to live a victorious, fulfilled life in Christ.

What empowerment does a Christian receive when he is baptized?

In Acts 1:8, Jesus speaks of receiving power from the Holy Ghost. This power to witness throughout the world was manifested in the early church on the day of Pentecost and on later occasions when new Christians were baptized. It is evident that one does not have to be a baptized believer to be persuasive or a great witness. Apollos, for example, is described as an “eloquent man, and mighty in the scriptures, . . . , instructed in the way of the Lord; . . . fervent in the spirit, . . . [and] spake and taught diligently the things of the Lord.” Yet, he had “only the baptism of John” and was in need of being instructed “more perfectly” in the way of God (Acts 18:24-26). Likewise, in Luke 9:49-50, a man who was not numbered among the disciples of Christ was “casting out devils in [Jesus’] name. This man possessed spiritual power because of the Word of God in spite of his lack of identity with the disciples. Thus, the power received from the Holy Ghost by baptized believers is power that serves church related activities of witness such as enhanced personal gifts as members in particular in a local new testament church (First

Corinthians 12:27). It also refers to the collective power of baptized believers covenanted together in a new testament church to fulfill the Great Commission and to sustain the pillar and ground of the truth (Matthew 28:19-20; First Timothy 3:15).

What is the meaning of Acts 2:38?

In this verse, Peter answers a question posed to him (Acts 2:37) about what one must do to participate in the fulfillment of Joel's prophecy (Acts 2:16). Peter explains that they must (1) repent and (2) be baptized in order to (1) receive forgiveness of sins and (2) receive the gift of the Holy Ghost, respectively. Some explain this verse incorrectly saying that baptism is necessary for forgiveness of sins. Peter's answer shows that the results parallel the actions, namely, that repentance is necessary for forgiveness, and that baptism is necessary for spiritual empowerment described in Joel's prophecy. This understanding is corroborated by Acts 10:43 which says, "that through his name whosoever believeth in him shall receive remission of sins." Also, whereas Acts 2:38 answers a general question of "what must we do" to be a part of Joel's prophecy, Acts 16:30 answers the more specific question of "what must I do to be saved" saying, "believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved." The more specific question gets a more specific answer pertaining to salvation. Baptism is not in the answer.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH

What is a Christian?

In *Young's Exhaustive Concordance*, the word *Christian* means to belong to Christ and was first used to refer to the disciples in Antioch (Acts 11:26). These Christians were identified as followers or disciples of Christ because of what they believed and taught, and how they lived.

Is a Christian a disciple?

Today the word *Christian* is used to refer to anyone who believes in Jesus Christ whether or not he follows the teachings of Christ as a Spirit-filled believer. The word *disciple* means to be a follower of Jesus Christ. Thus, a person can belong to Christ (be born again and saved), but not be a follower of Christ (obedient to the teachings of Christ.)

How can a person be a Christian and not be a disciple?

Many believers are carnal Christians. This means they yield to the desires of the flesh and live by the values and teachings of the world. Carnal Christians are saved, but lack the lifestyle and convictions of a Spirit-filled Christian.

What is a Spirit-filled Christian?

A Spirit-filled Christian refers to a believer who is yielded to the Spirit of God and desires to live in obedience to the Word of God. Ephesians 5:18 compares being under the influence of alcohol with that of the Spirit. Rather than being under the influence of alcohol, one should be under the influence of the Spirit. The lesson is that believers should be under the influence and control of the Spirit of God and nothing else.

What does it mean to be a carnal Christian?

Carnality describes how one lives and thinks. If a believer does not live and think the way Christ does, as the Spirit of God leads, then that believer is carnal. In First Corinthians 3:1, Paul describes the Corinthian believers as "carnal" and "babes in Christ." Carnality is typical of new, immature Christians but is too prevalent among many older believers as well.

Are Carnal Christians saved?

Yes. First Corinthians 3:1-3 refers to the Christian Corinthians as babes in Christ who were carnal. Carnal Christians will be judged, but they will still be saved (First Corinthians 3:15).

Do carnal Christians have the Spirit of God?

Yes. All Christians have the Spirit of God in them. According to Ephesians 1:13, after we believe, we are “sealed with that holy Spirit of promise.” Further, Ephesians 4:30 says that we “are sealed unto the day of redemption” by the Holy Ghost. Once you have the Spirit of God, you always have Him.

How can one have the Spirit of God as a Christian but not be Spirit-filled?

Having the Spirit of God, as mentioned in Ephesians 1:13 and 4:30, indicates that the Spirit of God claims us for Christ and is always with us. To be Spirit-filled, however, as mentioned in Ephesians 5:18, indicates that one is under the obedient control and influence of the Spirit of God. Carnal Christians have the Spirit of God but are not Spirit-filled. They do the will of their flesh and of the world rather than the will of God.

Is it true that God does not hear the prayers of a sinner?

This statement refers to Psalm 66:18 which says, “If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me.” What this means is that God will not acknowledge and honor prayers from unrepentant sinners.

If God is omnipresent and all-knowing, how is it possible that He does not hear and know about all prayers?

God hears all prayers and knows all thoughts of sinners. However, God will not honor prayers of sin and ignores requests made by unrepentant sinners.

How can I consistently overcome a carnal lifestyle and live a victorious Spirit-filled life?

God has given you three resources to help you mature spiritually and experience a victorious life in Christ. The Bible is food for the soul; the Spirit is comfort and aid to us; and the local, new testament church is for your encouragement. You need all three resources to help you fulfill the first and great command to love God with all your heart, soul, and mind. It is imperative that you utilize all three resources to pursue this first command and to live a victorious Christian life.

How can I overcome bad habits and temptations?

Make out a daily activity schedule for yourself to evaluate what you do with your time. Next, make adjustments in your schedule and activities to include those things you should and want to do such as utilizing the three resources. Share your schedule and goals with your pastor, spiritual leader, or friend who will hold you accountable and help you make improvements. Work hard to recondition your lifestyle for at least thirty days. This length of time has been shown to be critical for developing new habits.

Why do I still sin after I am saved?

Though the spirit is changed, the body remains unchanged. Thus, Christians have two natures: righteousness in the spirit and unrighteousness in the flesh. This is why Paul said of himself that when he wanted to do good, evil was always present in him (Romans 7:21).

What should I do to resist sin?

Love God more than anything else (Matthew 22:36-40).

How can I learn to love God?

Loving God begins with salvation, and then nurtured with prayer, learning the Word of God, fellowshiping with saints in a local, new testament church who love God, and obeying God’s commands. If you do not love God as you should, then ask Him to teach you.

How can I truly know God rather than know about God?

By being saved and nurturing your relationship with Christ.

Is my tendency to be carnal and to give in to sin an indication that I am not saved?

Such a tendency is certainly characteristic of the lost. However, it is possible for a Christian to struggle with temptations and sin. In fact, for some it is possible to become so carnal that they forget they were even saved (Second Peter 1:9). Paul described himself as struggling with sin in Romans 7:15-25 saying that evil was always present with him though his inward man always served God. None the less, in Second Corinthians 13:5, Paul wisely advises

that you examine yourself to see if you are in the faith. Because salvation is based on your trust in and surrender to Jesus Christ, your works can only raise your confidence or doubts. They do not determine your destiny.

I doubt the reality of my salvation because I so easily turn to sin, revel in it, and consistently live in defeat. My life has not changed even though I do not doubt the message of the Gospel. Do I really know God?

There is no way to authoritatively give you an answer to this question. However, your need is one of two things: (1) you need to be saved, or (2) you need to nurture your relationship with God. Confidence in your salvation depends on your continuance to grow in Him (Second Peter 1:6-9). Failure to do so results in doubt. Nonetheless, one good evidence that you manifest is concern for your salvation.

How can I be "transformed by the renewing of my mind" so that my desire for God is stronger than my desire for the flesh?

Transforming your mind requires the salvation experience and the reconditioning process. The new man inside already loves God and desires to do right. However, the old man in the flesh is unchanged and continues to love sin (Romans 7:18, 21). Therefore, you must commit yourself to bringing your body under subjection to the spirit. You need to cleave to good and flee evil. You need to study the Bible, pray, and attend the assembly of a local new testament church. You need spiritual role models. You need to call out to God for help. All of these things are the beginning of rebuilding a new life in the flesh for Christ. The body is not changed, therefore, you will have to fight it for the rest of your life. Fortunately, it can be reconditioned, and new habits can be formed to reduce the force of carnal temptations. This is the process of transforming and renewing your mind.

Will I be judged for my lifestyle after I am saved?

Yes. First Corinthians 3:11-15 explains that Christians will be judged resulting in reward or loss. Regardless of the outcome, verse 15 says you will still be saved.

Are Christians judged for sins that have been forgiven?

After you become a Christian, your past sins are forgiven (Romans 3:25) and forgotten (Psalm 103:12). However, once you become a Christian, sins are forgiven but there is judgment (First Corinthians 3:11-15). This judgment is for reward and loss not for your soul's salvation or condemnation.

Can I sin and live it up without worry?

You should worry. The born again Christian is new in his spirit (Second Corinthians 5:17) and has new desires. Failure to forsake a carnal lifestyle suggests that you did not repent. This is why Paul challenged some at Corinth to examine themselves to see if they were truly saved (Second Corinthians 13:5). In addition, the chastisement of God is not pleasant (Hebrews 12:6), nor is the judgment of God (First Corinthians 3:11-15).

Are Christians perfect?

No. Paul was a good example of being Christian, but he still struggled with sin (Romans 7:15-23).

What is the unpardonable sin?

In Mark 3:29, Jesus says that blaspheme against the Holy Ghost will not be forgiven. This refers to resisting the conviction of the Holy Ghost to repent and to believe in Jesus Christ. Because the Lord convicts people continuously in spite of their resistance to His Spirit, we can conclude that this sin is not unpardonable until death (Hebrews 9:27).

Am I less human if I do not live like Jesus Christ?

No. Though the words *human* or *humanity* are not found in the Bible, to be human (mankind, born of Adam and Eve) includes being sinful by nature. Humans can be distinguished from each other by their attributes such as gender, race, etc. Likewise, there are humans who are lost and those who are saved: unrighteous in spirit and righteous in spirit, born of the flesh and born again of the spirit. We are exhorted to be like Christ not in order to become more human but in order to become more righteous (making the body conform to the righteousness that we already possess spiritually).

Did saints living before Christ have an excuse to sin?

No. All people, saints and heathen, before, during, and after Christ's coming have no excuses for sin (Romans 1:20; 2:15).

What is the meaning of "let patience have her perfect work?"

James 1:4 refers to the idea of trials of faith working out patience or contributing to the development of patience. Enduring trials causes you to wait on the Lord, and continual experience in trials increases the understanding you gain by faith that God is in control and that you have nothing to worry about. This exercising of faith and the subsequent patience brings about spiritual maturity and confidence in understanding God and living for Him. When you understand that God is in control, there is no concern about needs and wants for anything. Instead, there is contentment in the knowledge that God is in control and that all you need is in Him. In this, you become "perfect and entire, wanting nothing."

What is the meaning of "godly edifying" (*oikonomia*) mentioned in First Timothy 1:4?

This term refers to being built up: as in edification and empowerment. Paul instructs Timothy, and us, to avoid those things which do not build us up spiritually, make us stronger, and wiser in Christ.

What did Paul mean when he said he "exhorted, comforted, and charged" the Thessalonian church to live worthy of God (First Thessalonians 2:11)?

The word *exhort* is applied by one leading and setting the example of following the Lord. Paul said in First Corinthians 11:1, "Follow me even as I follow the Lord." Paul described to the Thessalonians his example of serving the Lord throughout his letter to them, such as in First Thessalonians 2:1-10 and 4:1-3. You will find this exhortation of pleading and commanding to follow Paul's example in all of his letters. The word *comforted* refers to consoling others with your own personal experiences. Paul was doing this in First Thessalonians 2:2 by pointing out that he shared the experiences of hardship with those in Thessalonica. In Second Corinthians 1:4-6, Paul shows us the importance of sharing like experiences with others and how this comforts. An important part of discipling others to walk worthy of the Lord is to be able to sympathize with them and to share with them how you handle hardship and what things comfort you. The word "charged" is applied by holding others accountable to fulfill their responsibilities. People are more motivated to do what is inspected in addition to being expected. As Christians, our testimony to others makes our message credible. These three words are a part of all that goes into discipling others for Christ. Ultimately, discipleship is a complex interplay of many factors involved in living for Christ and sharing that lifestyle with others. A good summation of discipling others to walk worthy of the Lord is found in Second Timothy 2:2 which says, "And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."

I have sinned since becoming a Christians, and now I am afraid that I cannot be forgiven.

God is in the "business" of forgiving. Second Peter 3:9 reminds us how longsuffering God is by saying, "The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, as some men count slackness; but is longsuffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance." God is very patient and merciful. His desire is to gain your fellowship. When we sin, God wants us to remember His promise in First John 1:9, "If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." God will forgive. The real problem is whether you will accept it and forgive yourself.

CRUCIFIXION AND RESURRECTION OF JESUS CHRIST

Why was Jesus crucified two thousand years ago and not at the beginning of the world?

God has written the Gospel of salvation in the history of mankind. His coming marked a transition from law with Israel to grace with his church. He used Abraham as the typology of the original promise for salvation, the nation of Israel as the typology of being lost under the law, and the church as the typology of being saved under grace. Thus, Christ came at the point in history to show that He is the means whereby transition from being lost to being saved occurs. Prior to Him coming into one's life, there is bondage to the law but the promise of salvation to all believers. After coming into one's life, there is salvation by grace. Thus, Christ came at the appropriate time in man's history to demonstrate the Gospel message. This is a testimony to the fact that God is in control of "His story."

Why is Jesus' death on the cross considered a moment of triumph?

The death of Jesus Christ was an eternal triumph because through His death, everyone can be freed from the condemnation of sin. If Christ had not died, salvation would not be possible. Romans 6:23 explains that the wages of sin is death, and Romans 3:23 says that all have sinned. The wages of sin is more than physical death, it is spiritual death, which involves separation from God and culminates in eternal condemnation. Revelation 21:8 describes the punishment of the condemned in the lake which burns with fire and brimstone. Because God is just, He requires that sin be paid for (eternal death). However, because God is merciful, He desires to make that payment for sins on our behalf. Praise the Lord for His mercy, because if we (as finite beings) were to pay for our sins, we would be in hell forever. God (being an eternal being), on the other hand, is able to pay for unlimited sins to an infinite degree quicker than the blink of an eye. Thus, the death of Christ on the cross makes it possible for us to be forgiven of our sins and to be saved from eternal condemnation! "O death, where is thy sting? O grave where is thy victory? The sting of death is sin; and the strength of sin is the law. But thanks be to God, which giveth us the victory through our Lord Jesus Christ" (First Corinthians 15:55-57).

Why did Christ cry out to the Father saying, "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me" (Matthew 27:46, Mark 15:34)?

This statement indicates that the Father separated Himself from his Son. The Bible teaches that Christ took upon Himself our sins, and in so doing suffered death because the wages of sin is death. This death is more than a physical death, it is a spiritual death—a separation from God. Thus, when Christ died on the cross for our sins, He experienced more than a physical death, He experienced spiritual death and separation from His Father. His cry to God indicated that He died spiritually.

If Jesus died on Good Friday, why do we call it good?

Good Friday is so named because it represents the provision of God for man's salvation. Though the death of Christ was cruel and tragic (an appropriate illustration of the consequences of sin), Jesus' death was followed by His resurrection (showing victory over sin, death, and the grave). This is good.

Did Jesus really die on a Friday?

No. Matthew 12:40 says that, "as Jonas was three days and three nights in the whale's belly; so shall the Son of man be three days and three nights in the heart of the earth." There are not three days and three nights between Friday evening and Sunday morning. In addition, Matthew 27:57 tells us that Jesus was buried in the evening. If Jesus was buried Friday evening, He would have been in the grave only two nights and one day. Some argue that the three days and three nights are not to be taken literally and cite John 19:31 to show that Jesus died on Friday the day before the Saturday Sabbath. However, John 19:31 explains that the Sabbath was a "high day," which means that it was not a regular Saturday Sabbath. Leviticus 23:5-7 explains that the day before the feast of unleavened bread was a holy convocation in which no work was to be done. Such Sabbath days were called high Sabbaths and could occur any day of the week. At the time Jesus was crucified, the high Sabbath occurred on Thursday, the fifteenth of the Jewish month Abib. Thus, Jesus was buried Wednesday evening. The three evenings Jesus spent in the grave were Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday and the three days were Thursday, Friday, and Saturday.

How could Jesus rise Saturday evening when the Bible says He rose Sunday?

Jesus did rise Sunday on the first day of the week. Unlike our days and nights which begin and end at 12:00am, the Jewish evening and day begins and ends at 6:00pm. Thus, our Saturday night beginning at 6:00pm is the beginning of the Jewish Sunday night. So, in Jewish terms, Jesus was in the grave Thursday, Friday, and Saturday nights and Thursday, Friday, and Saturday days. Jesus rose on Sunday at the end of Saturday at 6:00pm, which is the beginning of Sunday or the dawning of the first day of the week.

How can you say that Jesus rose in the evening and not in the morning?

When the women arrived at the tomb, Jesus was already gone. If He had stayed in the grave the night before He rose, He would have been in the grave four nights which is not correct, or He would have been buried in the morning on Thursday, which is not correct either. The only biblically consistent time for Jesus' resurrection is at the end of Saturday at 6:00pm which is the beginning of Sunday by Jewish reckoning.

If the stone covering Jesus' tomb was so heavy that many men were required to move it, how did the women expect to move the stone when they returned to apply additional burial spices to the body of Christ?

According to Mark 16:3, they were wondering the same thing: "And they said among themselves, Who shall roll us away the stone from the door of the sepulchre?". Apparently, because Jesus had many followers, there was reason to think that others might be at tomb as well.

Why did Jesus tell Mary not to touch Him (John 20:17) and yet allowed the women to hold His feet in Matthew 28:9?

These are two different incidences. Between the time Jesus saw Mary outside the tomb and meeting the women on their way to tell the disciples of His empty tomb, He had ascended to His Father in heaven.

BEFORE THE CROSS

Before Christ's birth, were people saved by faith in the Messiah or by the old testament law?

The Gospel of salvation by grace through faith in the Savior Jesus Christ is and has been the ONLY provision of God for man's salvation. Titus 1:2 tells us that the promise of eternal life in Jesus Christ was made before the world began. Luke 1:70 and Acts 3:21 say that holy prophets have declared salvation in Jesus Christ (the Messiah of God) since the world began. Job stated that he knew that his redeemer lived (Job 19:25). In Romans 4: 1-5, Paul explains that Abraham was not saved by works but by believing God. In fact, he is the example of how everyone should be saved (Romans 4:12-13 & 23-25). King David understood that salvation was by grace and not by works (Romans 4:6-7). Therefore, salvation was, is, and always will be by faith in the Messiah or Christ Jesus.

Were old testament believers born again?

Absolutely. Habakkuk 1:13 explains that God cannot look at sin. Therefore, heaven is a perfect place. There is no sin in heaven (Revelation 21:27). The only way to go to heaven is to be sinless. This requires a miraculous change in nature that cannot occur by washing, being baptized, or doing good works. All saved people must be born again of God – starting all over with a new, righteous nature. Jesus explained this to the Pharisee Nicodemus in John 3:1-6 and marveled that a leader of Israel did not already understand this. Jesus' reaction shows that the doctrine of being born again was nothing new.

How could people be saved and have their sins forgiven prior to Jesus Christ dying on the cross?

Whereas man waits for things to happen and is bound by the dimension of time, God is not. God identified Himself to Moses as "I AM." Jesus said of Himself in John 8:58, "Before Abraham was, I am." For God, everything is present tense. He did not have to wait for Christ to die and pay for the sins of man. As far as He is concerned, it already happened before He created the world. Therefore, the Gospel message was preached before the world began (Titus 1:2).

What was the purpose of Israel's covenant of law with God if it had nothing to do with their salvation?

This question was posed by Paul in Romans 3:1 after he explained that salvation was the same for Jews and Gentiles. Israel was chosen by God to be a testimony to the world of God's goodness. However, the privilege of this status was a condition of law in that if they obeyed God, they would be blessed; and if they disobeyed Him, they would be cursed. Their testimony to the world is that you do not want your relationship with God to be governed by law. Seek for grace (Psalm 119:1-3)! Thus, Israel's role in history was to show that a relationship with God conditioned on law will always fail. In contrast, the church's role in history is to show that a relationship with God based on grace will not fail. Sadly, due to the moral frailty of man, these typologies are not properly represented.

LAWS

What is the law of God?

The law of God refers to the governing set of rules that reflects the standards enforced by God. It dictates right and wrong, morality, and sin.

Is the law of Moses the same as the law of God?

The law of Moses is also referred to as the law of God because it was law given to Moses by God. Therefore, it is God's law. It contains laws from God that apply universally as well as to the Jews only, as part of their personal covenant with Him. The law of Moses is also called the law of thy mother (Proverbs 1:8), the law of truth (Malachi 2:6), the law of the fathers (Acts 22:3), the law of the Jews (Acts 25:8), the law of righteousness (Romans 9:31), the law of commandments (Ephesians 2:15), and the law of a carnal commandment (Hebrews 7:16).

What is the law of sin and death?

The law of sin and death is a universal constant that governs every person's relationship with God. It is as constant as the law of gravity or the law of momentum. The law is very simple: if you sin, you die.

Are there other universal laws in the Bible in addition to the "law of sin and death?"

There are many laws described in the Bible. The universal, constant laws include: the law of the Spirit of life in Christ Jesus which delivers from the law of sin and death (Romans 8:2), the law of works and the law of faith (Romans 3:27), the law of mind (the new mind of righteousness with desires to do right) and the law of sin (Romans 7:23), the law of Christ (Galatians 6:2), and the law of liberty (James 2:12). These unchanging, eternal laws describe "forces" or rules that apply to everyone at all times.

COVENANTS, OLD AND NEW

What is the difference between the Pentateuch and the Torah?

The Pentateuch means five books and refers to the first five books of the Bible: Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. The Torah means law and refers to these five books as the law of Moses or of God.

Do old testament laws apply to those under the new covenant?

No. Old testament laws were between God and Israel. Hence, we do not sacrifice animals, stone children for disobedience to parents, or put people to death for working on the Sabbath.

Are you saying that under the new testament Christians do not have to obey the ten commandments?

No. Read through the new testament Bible, and you will see all ten commandments mentioned among the many exhortations to be righteous. The new testament between Christ and His church includes the ten commandments

as well as practices that are unique to the church such as baptism and communion. It is not surprising that the two covenants given by God would include many of the same commands.

Why did God not restate the ten commandments in the new covenant?

He does though not as a list. The emphasis of the new testament is love for God. Loving God results in surrender to Him and fulfillment of His will. A person who loves God will do everything God commands (John 13:21&23). Thus, in Matthew 22:37 “Jesus said unto him, Thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thy heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy mind.” After stating the second command, He says in verse 40, “On these two commandments hang all the law and the prophets.” Whereas the old testament emphasizes law and conformity by fear, the new testament emphasizes love and conformity by willingness and desire.

Why was the old testament law so severe?

The old testament was a covenant between God and Israel. The conditions were simple: (1) obey God’s law and be blessed, and (2) disobey God and be cursed. The purpose of the old testament was to demonstrate that a relationship with God based on law and good works is impossible. It is impossible for man to conform to God’s standards in order to maintain a good relationship with Him (Galatians 2:16; 3:11). Thus, the old testament was a lesson on how salvation must be by grace and not by works (Ephesians 2:8-9). The apostle Paul explains that the law served as a school master to bring people to Christ for mercy and grace rather than for reward due to works (Galatians 3:24). Because sin is so grievous to God and must be punished, the penalties for disobedience (sin) were severe. As Second Corinthians 3:6 explains, “the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life.”

Why is the new testament different from the old testament?

The old testament illustrates what it is like to have a relationship with God based on law. It is severe, full of curses, and impossible to maintain blessings. It showed that salvation by works is impossible. The new testament illustrates what it is like to have a relationship with God based on grace and mercy rather than law. It is designed to demonstrate what it means to be born again and changed by Christ. Christians desiring to live for Christ enter the new testament by baptism and are added to a church. Christians in a church agree to and are expected to voluntarily conform to Christ’s commands as a witness of how good, perfect, and acceptable God’s will is. Whereas Jews were expected to conform to God’s law out of fear of punishment, Christians are expected to conform to God’s commandments out of love for Him and as a manifestation of the righteousness God imputes to all believers.

Is keeping the Sabbath a commandment of the new testament?

No. There is no such commandment.

Why do Christians not observe the old testament Sabbath practice?

The purpose of the Sabbath is clearly stated in Exodus 31:16 to be a sign between Israel and God. It was a part of the old covenant between God and Israel (Deuteronomy 24:7). The old commandments in the old covenant were abolished in Christ. Ephesians 2:15 explains, “Having abolished in his flesh the enmity, even the law of commandments contained in ordinances; for to make in himself of twain one new man, so making peace. This is why Paul cautions us about making a big deal of having a “special” day (Romans 14:5 and Galatians 4:10).

If there is no statement in the new testament telling Christians to stop observing the Sabbath, should they not continue the practice?

As for basing continual observance of the Sabbath because there is no verse that spells it out, there would be inconsistency in not observing the other non-ceremonial laws as well such as stoning people for serving other gods rather than God (Deuteronomy 17:2-7), for seeking familiar spirits (Leviticus 20:27), for blaspheming God (Leviticus 24:16), for cursing parents (Exodus 21:17), etc. There are numerous non-ceremonial laws that are not observed today because they are a part of the old covenant. It is sufficient that to know that the old covenant was abolished and that the new covenant replaced it. The old testament is to learn from and the new testament is our set of commands.

Why do you say that the old testament laws were replaced by new testament commands?

Hebrews 8:13 says, “A new covenant, he hath made the first old. Now that which decayeth and waxeth old is ready to vanish away.” Also, Hebrews 12:24 says, that “Jesus [is] the mediator of the new covenant.” Therefore

those serving Christ are made “able ministers of the new testament; not of the letter, but of the spirit: for the letter killeth, but the spirit giveth life” (Second Corinthians 3:6). The new covenant has replaced the old.

If the old covenant is replaced by the new, then why did Jesus say that He did not come to destroy the law?

Jesus fulfilled the law and the prophecies of the old covenant. In Him and the new covenant that He established, He was fulfilling all the old commandments. Hebrews 9:7-8 and Hebrews 10:1 explain that the old covenant was faulty because it could not make people righteous and perfect. It was not faulty in its standards (Galatians 3:16-22). Thus, Jesus Christ came to make it possible for people to attain the standards of the old testament law in Him. Having done this, He set up a new covenant that did not destroy the old but rather completed it. The differences between the old and new covenants reflect Christ’s fulfillment of the old.

Why do many Christians today not follow the dietary laws of the old testament?

Dietary laws forbidding certain foods were given under the old testament, the new testament does not restrict food except for conscience and testimony. In Romans 14:1-4, Paul says, “Him that is weak in the faith receive ye, but not to doubtful disputations. For one believeth that he may eat all things: another, who is weak, eateth herbs. Let not him that eateth despise him that eateth not; and let not him which eateth not judge him that eateth: for God hath received him.” He continues in verse 6 saying, “He that eateth, eateth to the Lord, for he giveth God thanks; and he that eateth not, to the Lord he eateth not, and giveth God thanks.”

Does a change of old testament dietary laws or any law of the old testament suggest that God has changed?

Not at all. God’s covenant with Israel was unchanging. The conditions were clearly stated, and the expectations were clearly stated. God’s dissolution of the old covenant was part of the contract (Matthew 23:37). The first covenant represented the law and the impossibility of man being able to fulfill the law to be righteous and to gain God’s pleasure. Thus, Paul explains in Hebrews 8:7-8 that God had planned to make a new covenant with Israel that would be better than the first. It was better because it could make one righteous and acceptable in the eyes of God. The old covenant of law could not do this. It could only show what God required of them. The change in covenants was not the result of a change in God but in the plan and method of God as dictated by His contract with men. It was His plan to change the covenant.

Does God’s command to Peter, in Acts 10:15, indicate that all food is clean and not to be considered unclean?

Yes. Though the vision was preparing Peter to minister to Gentiles (unclean), God uses illustrations that are consistent with righteousness and law. He does not use illustrations that violate His commands.

Is it possible that, in First Timothy 4:3, reference to meats that have been created by God to be received with thanksgiving are meats that are clean rather than unclean?

No. As Romans 14: 14 points out, all meats are clean: “I know, and am persuaded by the Lord Jesus, that there is nothing unclean of itself: but to him that esteemeth any thing to be unclean, to him it is unclean.”

Are dietary laws important to our witness?

Romans 14:17 says, “For the kingdom of God is not meat and drink; but righteousness, and peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost.”

CHURCH

What authority does God recognize as representative of Him and responsible to carry out His work on earth?

In Matthew 16:18, Jesus said He would build His church. In Matthew 28:19-20, He commissioned His church to go, teach, baptize, and teach all nations. In First Timothy 3:15, the church is referred to as the pillar and ground of the truth. Ephesians 4: 12 says that the church is for the perfecting of the saints, the work of the ministry, and the edifying of the body of Christ. Though there are many kinds of churches, there is only one kind that is recognized by Christ that He has engaged with the new testament. Thus these churches are sometimes referred to as new testament churches.

What is a New Testament church?

Churches that adhere to the teachings and patterns of the new testament for their doctrine and practice, rather than traditions, are new testament churches. This would involve the doctrines of: 1) salvation by grace and eternal security without works, 2) the Bible as the final authority of God's inspired truth, and 3) the church as local, visible, authorized assemblies of baptized believers covenanted to fulfill the Great Commission.

Is the church the same as the family of God?

No. The family of God includes all believers. Everyone who believes in Jesus Christ is born again into the family of God and are brothers and sisters in Christ. The church is made of scripturally baptized believers in membership with a new testament church. Many believers are not in the church.

Is it necessary to be a member of a church to be saved?

No. Salvation is by grace through faith in Christ Jesus. Membership in a church is not a part of one's salvation experience.

Of all the churches in the world, how does one find the correct church?

This is an involved subject and will only be outlined here in four points.

1. Proper lineage is essential.

A. In Biblical terminology, kind produces kind. Thus, to be a true church, it must be organized and born from a true church. God grants church authority through already existing churches.

B. Churches that have organized themselves without the sponsorship of another church are not churches. For example, Joseph Smith's Latter Day Saints (Mormons) and Mary Baker Eddy's Christian Science.

C. Churches organized from dead, heretical churches are not true churches. Dead churches lose their authority from God to represent Him and have no authority to give to another. This does not affect churches that were born out of a living church which later died.

D. Though proper lineage is difficult to prove because of church persecution and destruction of records, it is possible to eliminate most churches based on improper lineage. For example, when the Catholic church corrupted the doctrine of the Gospel it died and all Protestant churches that subsequently descended from her are without authority: Lutheran, Dutch Reform, Methodist, Presbyterian, etc.

E. Churches should be able to establish evidence of a heritage of proper lineage. Though the lineage of a church may not be traceable to the original church in Jerusalem, it should have the traditions and association that identifies it with churches known to have the proper lineage. For example, the Baptists, the Mennonites, and the Brethren have a heritage that associates them with the Brethren in Wales who have traced their lineage to the church of Jerusalem through ancestors other than the Catholic church who considered church lineage important.

2. Proper doctrine is vital

A. A true church adheres to the doctrines of the Apostles (Acts 2:42). Thus, a true church believes that God is the creator of the universe and all that is in it; that Jesus Christ is God come in the flesh, was crucified, buried, and resurrected, and is the Savior of the world; that salvation is by grace through faith in the work of Jesus Christ and not by any other means; that the Bible is inspired by God and given to us to teach us truth.

B. The examples of the seven churches in Asia (Revelation 2 & 3) show that churches can corrupt and be

in danger of losing their status as true churches (Revelation 2:5 & 3:1). However, these churches and the Corinthian church also show that churches corrupt slowly and can have unbiblical doctrines and practices while still being alive.

C. If one is unsure about God's leading, it is safer to choose a church that is unquestionably sound in the majority as well as the critical doctrines.

3. Spiritual guidance is important.

A. God wants every believer to be a baptized participant in His church. The example of the early church in Acts is that everyone who was saved was baptized and added to the church. Peter commanded Cornelius to be baptized which shows us the importance of baptism (Acts 10:48).

B. Any believer open to God's Spirit will be led to a true church. Because God wants you to be in a church and you desire the same thing, he will lead you. It is an important part of your spiritual growth and development (Ephesians 4:12-16).

4. My personal evaluation of churches is that Independent Baptist churches which are unaffiliated with conventions and man-made organizations are true churches. Many Baptist churches (even in conventions) are true churches, but there is corruption taking place in the doctrines of the Bible, church, and Gospel. The corruption is going to increase. Most unaffiliated Baptists are the closest to being true churches.

Of what importance is church lineage to a church's claim that it is a true new testament church?

Lineage is an absolute necessity for the succession of authority to be a true church. The doctrine and practice of receiving authority from a true new testament church is based on the principle that "kind produces kind." A study of church succession in the book of Acts shows that each church was "birthed" by someone authorized by another church. The progression of all churches begin with the church at Jerusalem. The indication of proper authority is emphasized by the examples of laying on of hands, for example, in the case of Paul and the church at Antioch (Acts 13:3), and then Paul on the disciples of Apollos (Acts 19:6). This authority is transferred by means of baptism; hence we read of examples such as the great commission to go, teach, "baptize," and teach (Matthew 28:19-20), the response of those hearing Peter to be baptized (Acts 2:38, 41), and Peter's command to baptize the Gentiles who manifested church empowerment (Acts 10:48). Baptism without proper authority is shown to be powerless and illegitimate by the examples of Apollos' problem (Acts 18:25) and Simon's desire to pay for the power (Acts 8:18). Thus, church to church transfer of authority by conditions of the new testament and by means of baptism is the only example of legitimate transfer of church authority and empowerment. There is no transfer of authority by any other means because there is no other authority on earth but Christ's new testament church.

If church lineage is an absolute key doctrine, why did God not preserve accurate records or church "family trees" that go all the way back to the first church? After all, He preserved his Word and the lineage of Israel in spite of persecutions, etc., why would He not preserve indisputable records of the lineage of his bride, the true church?

One can only surmise an answer as to "why" God did not preserve a record of church lineage. However, I can explain to you why preserving a historical record is not absolutely critical. To believe and practice church succession demands that a church insist on receiving proper authority from a recognized authority. For example, the assembly of people in England who came to be known as Baptists understood the doctrine of church succession and sent a man to Wales to receive church authorized baptism from the church known as the Brethren. He was authorized by that church to take that authority and baptize the assembly in England thereby passing on church authority. Thus, the doctrine forces each church to receive authorized baptism from a recognized new testament church. Adherence to the doctrine of church succession forces preservation of the lineage whether the records have been preserved or not. Gaps in the recorded of church history do not pose a problem to a church's authority.

By church name and year, how far back can most churches trace their lineage?

Most churches have traced their lineage back only a few generations. Its assurance that it is in the proper lineage is the adherence to the doctrine of church succession. This doctrine is held by our mother church, who in turn practices this doctrine, which in turn assures that their mother church and subsequently each mother church in times past is and was a recognized authority. Thus, adherence to the doctrine assures that a proper lineage was maintained.

If a church's doctrine aligns completely with independent Baptist church doctrine on every issue except

the doctrine of church lineage, is that church considered a true church or a false church?

A church can corrupt in many doctrines and still be a true church. Examples of this can be seen throughout the New Testament as churches were being rebuked for holding to false teachings. In Revelation 3 & 4, churches were threatened with removal of their lampstands and lose of their status as true, living churches. They were still churches during and leading up to the time of the rebuke. However, without correction they were going to become churches without authority. A church that corrupts in the doctrine of church succession immediately becomes suspicious. Without a proper doctrine of church succession, that church will approve unauthorized baptism and mission work. Its membership role will be replaced by people lacking scriptural baptism. We know that Satan will do his best to destroy that church by such means. All mission works from its ministries will become suspect. Anyone understanding the doctrine of church succession will avoid it. Such a church as this will inevitably lose its authority. When this occurs is up to God.

It is my understanding that many Baptist churches in the past were Calvinists. If a church's lineage traced back to a Calvinist Baptist church, does that make all churches that derived from that church nonscriptural and therefore not true churches?

Calvinism raises doubts about a church's status as a true new testament church. However, there are degrees of Calvinism, and the Bible does not indicate at what point the Lord removes the lampstand. Further, churches can corrupt and become false churches after they have legitimately authorized other churches. Churches authorized prior to the corruption of their mother church are OK.

When did the Church begin?

It was conceived in the mind of God before the world began, and it was complete and fully functional on the day of Pentecost. During the transition period from Israel to the church, several events took place. Jesus:

- (1) gathered and trained the apostles (the Gospels).
- (2) ended His covenant of law with Israel (Matthew 23:37-39). Prior to this denunciation, He had referred to the temple as His house.
- (3) sealed His covenant with the church on the cross (Acts 20:28).
- (4) commissioned the church before His ascension (Matthew 28:19-20).
- (5) empowered the church on the day of Pentecost (Acts 1:8; 2:1-12).

What is the Baptist bride?

To answer your question, four points must be established.

1. The church is not the family of God. For example, the church at Jerusalem was made up of believers, but it did not include all believers.

2. The church is composed of baptized believers in covenant with each other and with God to fulfill the great commission. This is why as soon as believers were saved they were baptized and added to the church (Acts 2:41). Notice that the Great Commission requires the church because of the command to baptize.

3. The church is referred to as Christ's bride (Ephesians 5:24 & 32).

4. There is a marriage supper in heaven with Christ, the bride, and the guests (Revelation 19:7-9). The presence of guests shows that not every born-again child of God will be in the bride. Because the church includes only baptized believers in covenant with a true church, and the church is referred to as the bride of Christ, it is obvious that not all believers are not in the bride. It is argued that the church only represents the relationship that Christ has with all believers. However, it cannot be denied that believers in the church definitely establish a different relationship with Christ and are more fully in obedience to His Word than those who are not baptized and not in membership with a true church. This is just one of many rewards and distinctions God makes between believers (First Corinthians 3:14-15).

The Baptist bride is based on the answer to the question of which is the true church today. Baptists have the proper heritage and the right doctrine. Therefore, because the bride is the church and Baptist churches are true churches, then churches that are doctrinally sound Baptists are the bride. Most other churches have a corrupted heritage or doctrine.

Where in the Bible does it say that membership in a church is protective?

Ephesians 4:11-14 describes the role of church leaders which includes, "... perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ," and "That we henceforth be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness, whereby they lie in wait to deceive." We live in a world of wolves, deception, and lies. God gave us His church to sustain the teaching of truth (Matthew 16:18; 1 Timothy 3:15). This is why we should be baptized and added to a church (Acts 2:41 & 10:48), and assemble more often as the times become more intensely evil (Hebrews 10:25).

Does a false church lack the presence of the Holy Spirit?

The Holy Spirit is present everywhere. His work on earth is to work in the world to reprove it of sin, righteousness, and judgment (John 16:8-11). Thus, He is present even in a false church. What a false church lacks is the approval, authority, and empowerment of the Holy Spirit to be a true church.

Can anyone attending a false church truly be saved?

Salvation is determined by responding to the Gospel message not by membership in a church. Therefore, it is possible for a person to hear the Gospel message while attending a false church and be saved. However, if a false church has corrupted in its message of the Gospel, hearing the true message is unlikely.

Is it possible for a believer to be a member of a false church?

Salvation does not guarantee that a person will always do right. This is obvious because of the many rebukes to the saints throughout the Scriptures. Second Peter 1:9 indicates that some saints become so carnal that they forget that they were purged and saved from their sins. Any saint who can go this far in thought can do anything in deed. Thus, carnal saints can attend false churches. This has nothing to do with their salvation.

Are churches born out of splits approved by God?

Church splits are the result of rebellion, and rebellion is not approved by God. Members of churches who do not follow the leadership of the pastor God has given to the church, are not authorized to start their own church.

What is necessary to start a new church?

The Biblical pattern in the book of Acts is organization, approval, and authorization by another New Testament church.

What is the function of leaders in Christianity? And how does that relate to the meaning of Christianity as a whole?

First Timothy 3 and Titus 1 show that a church leader must be a good role model of Christianity. In addition, Acts 20:28 and Ephesians 4:11-16 show that leaders are overseers over flocks to guard them from wolves and heresy. Leaders have an important role in discerning the direction of God, providing sound teaching, and discipling the saints.

Do you believe a preacher should be trained in a seminary?

God has supplied preachers with all that they need in His local new testament churches. Ephesians 3:21 says, "Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen." Further, the church is Christ's personal organization on earth to do His work His way (Matthew 16:18), and is fully empowered by Him to perfect the saints to do the work of His ministry, to edify, and to protect (Ephesians 4:11-16). It is no wonder then that the church is called the pillar and ground of the truth (First Timothy 3:15). This does not mean that a preacher cannot benefit from the resources and education opportunities of seminaries or any other training institution. However, they are not necessary.

Why do many churches not provide training for their congregations and young preachers?

The church that Jesus built will always exist on earth until He returns (Matthew 16:18). However, there are many churches if not most that will fail in some way (Revelation 2 & 3). One of the contributing factors to this failure is lack of study and teaching of God's word. Sadly, there is a lot of shallow training resulting from lazy study habits, and lack of self-control and discipline. This is not God's failure. It is the failings of man. Because so many churches have abandoned their responsibility to be the training institutions of God's people, non-church training

centers have become popular. They offer specialized training and expert teachers on a variety of subjects. Pastors have consequently felt inadequate and sent young preachers to seminaries. But the effect has been devastating on churches. Sending young preachers away from their churches means a loss of leadership that God has raised up in that church. It leaves churches anemic and weak. In addition, many young preachers have been corrupted by false teachings that creep into seminaries.

Are denominations bad?

Denomination designations are very good. One can readily identify a church's doctrinal positions, its lineage, and practices by its denominational association and thereby avoid false teachings as well as readily identify sound churches. Though each individual church needs to be examined independently, a church's alignment with a particular denomination says something about that church's position on doctrinal purity.

What is wrong with the ecumenicalism?

This movement has the noble idea of uniting all Christians to show oneness rather than division in Christ. Christ wants unity as Ephesians 4:13 indicates, saying, "Till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure of the stature of the fulness of Christ." However, Christ desires unity in truth not in spite of truth. This is the problem with ecumenicalism. Truth is being sacrificed for the sake of the appearance of unity. The fallacy of this is shown by Amos 3:3 which says, "Can two walk together, except they be agreed?" Ecumenicalism is producing a facade of unity and corrupts the Gospel message by downplaying doctrinal importance. True unity is only achieved in Christ who is the way, the truth, and the life. It makes a difference what you believe.

Is Christianity a religion?

Yes, according to James 1:27. It has been popular to say that Christianity is not a religion but a relationship with Jesus Christ. But this downplay of religion is misleading to many because it suggests that salvation does not involve repentance. This is a false Gospel of unrepentance. Also, it misleads Christians to think that obedience and conformity to the word of God, other than believing in Christ, is unimportant. While lifestyle or works has nothing to do with salvation, conforming to the Word of God is important to spiritual growth and maturity. The intent of the above statement is noble in its attempt to distinguish Christianity from other religions and to emphasize how one is saved, but the results and implications are disastrous. A better description of Christianity is the statement that it is more than a religion, it is a personal relationship with Jesus Christ.

What is religion?

Religion is described in James 1:26-27 as a way of living and worship. It is the set of practices approved of by a particular belief. According to James 1:27, "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself unspotted from the world." Such activity expresses the heart of the Christian faith which is to express love and compassion.

Is a man qualified for an ordained office (pastor or deacon), if he is married to a divorced woman?

No. Though the Bible does not list this as one of the disqualifications in First Timothy 3 or Titus 1, the role of the ordained office is clear. Those in an ordained position are marked as role models (See also, Philippians 3:17). No man is perfect, however, there should be evidence of a life devoted to God and behavior that is above reproach. Marrying a divorced woman violates a pattern of marriage that God desires, and so questions are raised as to its legitimacy in an ordained position. This is not to say that divorcees are permanent outcasts of the church and of God's work. Everyone makes mistakes and live in imperfect circumstances. They should be encouraged to serve Christ and to be active participants in the church and the great commission. They have a testimony of how to recover and to do right. God's love for them is the same as it is for anyone else. The only restriction they have is holding an ordained office.

Why does God place restrictive qualifications on the ordained offices?

The offices of the bishop (pastor) and the deacon are set aside by God for individuals who can serve as an example to others of how God wants us to live. These men and their families are responsible to be role-models of the Christian faith. In First Timothy 4:12, Paul tells Timothy, "Let no man despise thy youth; but be thou an example of the believers, in word, in conversation, in charity, in spirit, in faith, in purity." Further, we are instructed to "be

followers together of me [Paul], and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample” (Philippians 3:17). The set of qualifications for the ordained office are found in First Timothy 3:1-15 and Titus 1:5-9. Notice that First Timothy 3:4 & 11 include the examples of wives and children.

How will preachers in a weak teaching church be trained if not at a seminary?

There are many good materials (literature and video) to be obtained and good teaching preachers of various specialties to be visited or to invite for training seminars. A church serious about doing its job as God instructs them to do will discover that God provides for all needs.

Should a pastor perform the marriage ceremony of a Christian and a non-Christian?

The commandment given in Second Corinthians 6:14 is to “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” If God says not to marry in this manner, a man of God must refuse to perform such a wedding. To do otherwise, would be to disobey God and to violate his responsibility as a role-model of Christianity.

How should I treat elders in the church?

1 Timothy 5:17 says, “Let the elders that rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially they who labour in the word and doctrine.” Hebrews 13:17 says, “Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.” Hebrews 13:7 says, “Remember them which have the rule over you, who have spoken unto you the word of God: whose faith follow, considering the end of their conversation.” And, Hebrews 13:24 says, “Salute all them that have the rule over you, and all the saints.”

Is it acceptable for a Christian to attend Buddhist temples or churches of other religions?

This is not good for two reasons. Number one, the Lord organized His church (local new testament churches) to mature Christians, for His work of ministry, for edifying saints, and to protect them from every wind of doctrine (Ephesians 4:11-16). Therefore, Christians are exhorted to not forsake the assembling of themselves (Hebrews 10:24-25). The Bible makes it imperative that Christians attend a biblical church to which He has added them (First Corinthians 12:18). Number two, participating in a non-Christian religion corrupts your testimony. Paul explains in Romans 14:7 that your life affects others. In verses 12-20, Paul argues that whereas it is possible to eat sacrifices offered to false gods because you know the true God, it is impossible to avoid confusing and offending those who do not know better. For the sake of a consistent and true testimony, avoid participating in false religions.

Why do most Christians not worship on the Saturday Sabbath?

According to Exodus 31:13, the Saturday Sabbath was a sign between God and Israel, saying, “Speak thou also unto the children of Israel, saying, Verily my Sabbaths ye shall keep: for it is a sign between me and you throughout your generations; that ye may know that I am the LORD that doth sanctify you.” Anyone who violated this covenant and worked on the seventh day of the week was to be put to death (Exodus 31:15). Work included using fire, collecting sticks, farming, and any kind of labor (Exodus 35:3). The Saturday Sabbath was a part of the old testament. As for the proper day for Christians to worship, Acts 20:7 tells us that the disciples met on the first day of the week to hear Paul preach. Also, First Corinthians 16:2 tells us that “Upon the first day of the week let every one of you lay by him in store, as God hath prospered him....” Obviously, Christians were meeting on the first day of the week. Interestingly, Acts 5:42 shows that “daily in the temple, and in every house, they ceased not to teach and preach Jesus Christ.” In fact, Hebrews 10:25 suggests that assembling together should increase in frequency as the day of Christ approaches. Whereas the seventh day of the week was a Sabbath day for Israel under the old testament, there is no particular day of the week designated to be a sign or Sabbath under the new testament. Therefore, Colossians 2:16 instructs to “Let no man therefore judge you in meat, or in drink, or in respect of an holy day, or of the new moon, or of the Sabbath days.”

What is communion?

Communion is one of two ordinances Christ gave to His church. Communion involves eating unleavened bread (no yeast) and drinking unleavened (nonalcoholic) grape juice in the setting of a church gathering. In First Corinthians 11:25, Paul reminds us that Jesus said, “This cup is the new testament in my blood: this do ye, as oft as ye drink it, in remembrance of me.” Thus, communion is a time to remember how and what Christ did to make

it possible for you to enter into the new testament with Him. It is a time of renewing your vow and commitment to Him. It is a time to thank Him. Communion is also called the Lord's Supper

How often should communion be taken?

The Bible does not say how often it should be taken. It simply says as often as you do this, remember Christ. In light of the seriousness of communion and the consequences of taking it unworthily (First Corinthians 11:27-33), each church should seek the Lord's invitation to partake in the communion with Him and do as He directs.

Can anyone participate in communion?

No. As First Corinthians 11:29-30 points out, "he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh damnation to himself, not discerning the Lord's body. For this cause many are weak and sickly among you, and many sleep." This damnation is not a condemnation of the soul to hell or loss of salvation. It is loss of health even to the point of death. Another passage that shows selection of qualified participants is First Corinthians 5:7-8 which says, "Purge out therefore the old leaven, that ye may be a new lump, as ye are unleavened. For even Christ our Passover is sacrificed for us. Therefore let us keep the feast, not with old leaven, neither with the leaven of malice and wickedness; but with the unleavened bread of sincerity and truth." Communion is only for Christians who have entered into the new covenant with Christ by being baptized in a new testament church, and are sincere about fulfilling that covenant. Because of these conditions, communion is properly done within a church congregation as "closed" communion not close or open.

What is closed communion?

Closed communion refers to limiting participation of communion to the congregation of each local new testament church. Christians should take communion only with those of their own local church. First Corinthians 5:7-13 shows that a church has responsibility to clear its rolls of unrepentant Christians before taking communion. Church members have made a commitment to one another to serve Christ and to be accountable to each other. For this reason, a church has authority to discipline its own members by removing offenders of the covenant from the rolls of church membership. Obviously, this cannot be done with Christians who not members. First Corinthians 5:12-13 indicates that if a church is faithful to discipline an offending member, then God will continue the discipline or judgment. The goal of all discipline, regardless of the degree of severity, is to reconcile the offender with God and the church.

What is church discipline?

Church discipline is the practice of reconciling members with God and with their church. When a member chronically violates the new testament covenant (the exhortations on how to live, think, and talk as stated in the new testament of the Bible) and refuses to repent, his church (a local new testament body of believers) has the responsibility to encourage, rebuke, and reprimand him. In Matthew 18:15-18 shows the stages of discipline. First, the offender of the covenant is confronted by an individual. If there is no repentance, two or more people are to confront the offender so that there will be witnesses of the encounter. Third, if the offender continues to refuse the counsel to repent, the church is to be told of the situation, confirmed by the witnesses of the second encounter. At this point, the offender has the choice to repent or to be removed from the rolls of the church. Hence, Jesus says, in Matthew 18:18 that whatever is loosed on earth will be honored and loosed in heaven. This means that the offender is no longer a member of Christ's church. He, nonetheless, is still saved and is a lifetime member of God's family. The offender is to be treated as a "heathen man and a publican." This means that he should be treated as any other unbeliever, who disregards God, Christ, His Word, and His new covenant, with the intent to reconcile to God (Second Corinthians 5:18-20).

What is wrong with using alcohol for communion?

The Bible associates leaven (yeast cells) with sin, and leaven is required to ferment grape juice in order to produce alcohol. Leaven converts the natural sugars in grapes into the waste product called alcohol. Proponents of alcohol for communion argue that using alcohol is using the end product of fermentation and therefore the end of the leaven (yeast) in the drink. This would be a valid point if it was the end point. However, this is not the case. Allowed to continue its metabolic pathway, alcohol is further broken down into vinegar, which is further broken down into methane gas or carbon dioxide, etc. Each of these pathways requires another "leaven." It is true that alcohol kills many microorganisms, but it also serves as food for many other leavens.

Why should unfermented, nonalcoholic grape juice be used for communion?

In the Bible, leaven is associated with sin. The idea of a little leaven leavening the whole lump describes how sin spreads. A single cell of yeast doubling every thirty seconds, will produce billions of cells within just fifteen minutes to ferment sugars into alcohol. This is quite a shocking picture of sin spreading! The alcohol represents the consequence of sin, like the transition of a woman from virgin to whore. Unfermented grape juice better represents the picture of Christ's sinlessness, untainted by sin, pure and undefiled. It represents substance that has been unchanged by leaven (sin).

SPIRITUAL GIFTS

Does God still demonstrate His power through ministries of healing and other miracles?

Though God does work miracles today, (I have been personally healed by Him from cancer), this is not the emphasis of God's work. Ministries of signs and miracles are dangerous. Jesus said that an evil and adulterous generation seeks after signs. Paul warned the Thessalonians that Satan would deceive the very elect with signs and wonders. The display of signs by miracles were for convincing Jews to return to the God of their Fathers. As Paul explained in First Corinthians 14:22-25, the tongues ministry was a sign for unbelieving Jews.

Doesn't a ministry of miracles prove claims of the Bible?

Verifying truth and the presence of God is based on His Word and personal conviction by the Spirit of God not on signs. His Word is the means of testing all spirits and signs. If there is no conformity to the Word of God, which does not change, then the signs and miracles in one's ministry are not good. Sadly, many involved in ministries emphasizing tongues, signs, and miracles disregard the Bible for experience and feelings. This is very dangerous because emotions are unreliable for determining truth. When feelings become the basis for experiencing God, Satan can produce all kinds of miracles and signs to make people feel good.

Is tongues speaking, as practiced in the charismatic movement, valid?

No. The tongues of the charismatic movement is uncontrolled and emotionally induced. The fact that many who speak in tongues believe salvation is by good works rather than by grace alone is evidence that the charismatic tongue phenomenon is not Holy Spirit induced. It is as false as their Gospel.

If the Corinthians spoke in tongues, why is it wrong to do so today?

It is not wrong to speak in tongues induced by the Spirit of God. However, the charismatic tongues of today are discredited by their failure to conform to the Word of God which is the means of testing all spirits to determine if they are of God. First Corinthians 14:27-34 give specific rules to control emotionally induced tongues. There should be not less than two and not more than three tongues speakers in the assembly. Each should speak one at a time. They should speak only if there is an interpreter (one who understands the language) present. Because the spirits are subject to the prophets, there is no excuse for violating the rules. Every meeting should be orderly and controlled. Women should not be involved in speaking in tongues (First Corinthians 14:34).

Why do you say that speaking in tongues no longer valid today?

First Corinthians 13:8 says, "Charity never faileth: but whether there be prophecies, they shall fail; whether there be tongues, they shall cease; whether there be knowledge, it shall vanish away." This verse tells us to expect an end to the signs ministry. This is consistent with the sign ministry God used to indicate His approval of the former houses of witness: the tabernacle and the temple. In both cases (Exodus 40:34-35 & 1 Kings 8:9-11), God's *shekinah* glory filled the tent and building at its dedication to signify that the house of witness was ready to be used. Likewise, the church (local assemblies of scripturally baptized believers) are His house of witness today. On the day of Pentecost, God manifested His approval and readiness of this new house of witness with the miracle of tongues-speaking in the dialects that hearers understood. As with the *shekinah* glory, the manifestations of tongues was a temporary sign for initiating the church ministry.

Why were the rules of tongues speaking imposed on the Corinthians in First Corinthians 14:27-34 and not on those in the book of Acts?

The tongues practiced by the Corinthians were emotionally induced babble. The tongues of Pentecost and of the two incidents later recorded were Holy Spirit induced. It was common for Corinthians to corrupt everything from morals to doctrine. The culture of Corinth was so perverted that the city was referred to as the “sink of iniquity.” Those who were corrupted by the culture were said to be corinthianized. The tongues of the Spirit were corinthianized by the Corinthian church. Thus, the tongues experience had to be restricted. It was not forbidden for two reasons: (1) Paul did not want to prevent genuine tongues speaking, and (2) there is nothing wrong with being excited about the Lord as long as it is controlled and sober.

How were the tongues of Corinth different from Pentecost?

A study of the Acts’ accounts shows that tongues of the Spirit were always associated with Jews, with church empowerment, with convincing Jews of a truth, with the Holy Spirit, with listeners who understood the language, with proclaiming God’s Word, with spontaneous experience not induced by emotion, and had no constraints. The corinthianized tongues were associated with Gentiles, were not associated with church empowerment, could not be understood by listeners, were being sought after, and required constraint.

If Paul did not forbid the Corinthians to speak in tongues, why should it be forbidden today?

Paul’s instruction on tongues discouraged the abuse of tongues. His main theme was that tongues should edify. The tongues of Corinth did not edify others (First Corinthians 14:2), they were selfish (First Corinthians 14:4), they were uncertain and meaningless sounds (First Corinthians 14:6-12), thus, they were not of the Spirit (First Corinthians 14:7). In First Corinthians 14:21-22, Paul states that tongues were for ministering to unbelieving Jews, and in verses 23-26, he shows how their experience was not in line with the purpose of tongues.

Is it right to speak in tongues to yourself?

Tongues of the Spirit, as with all gifts from God, are given in order to edify others. In First Corinthians 14:13-15, Paul discouraged privately speaking in tongues that could not be understood. He said of himself that he would not pray or sing in his spirit without understanding. Regardless of how good the experience makes one feel, it is not of God unless there is understanding.

ESCHATOLOGY AND HEAVEN

What persuaded you that the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine is correct?

I held to the persuasion of a post-tribulation return of Christ until a question came to my mind about the presence of lost people during the millennial reign. If Christ destroys all the lost at Armageddon (Revelation 16:1-21, 19:11-21) and transforms all the saints in the twinkling of an eye upon His return (First Corinthians 15:52), then the millennial reign will begin with (1) Christ and (2) only saints with glorified bodies—thus, neither marrying nor being given in marriage (Matthew 22:30; Luke 20:35). So, where do all the lost come from that Satan gathers together at the end of the millennial reign (Revelation 20:7-8)? The post-tribulation position is in trouble here.

****The fallacy of post tribulation thinking:**

Premise 1: When Christ returns, all saints will be transformed into their glorified bodies.

Premise 2: Glorified saints will not have children.

Conclusion 1: When Christ returns at the end of the tribulation only glorified saints will occupy the earth during the millennial reign.

Conclusion 2: There are no children or lost in the millennial reign.

Conclusion 3: This scenario contradicts the Bible describing Satan gathering lost people at the end of the millennial reign.

On the other hand, if the millennial reign begins with (1) Christ, (2) glorified saints (including those transformed in the twinkling of an eye at the rapture), AND (3) those saved during the tribulation period (who continue in mortal bodies on into the millennial reign marrying and having children), then we know where the lost come from during the millennial reign. They are the children and descendents of the saved saints in mortal bodies. Some of these children will undoubtedly be saved, but others will reject Christ. Thus, the pre-tribulation rapture is the best scenario of end times because it is consistent with Scripture.

Is Matthew 13:24-30 consistent with the pre-tribulation rapture doctrine?

The idea of the parable of the tares in Matthew 13:24-30 is to show that saints and lost people will be living together on earth until the judgment day. Lost and saved will be living together until the rapture and after the rapture (the 144,000 and the subsequent saved). They are not completely separated until after the millennial reign (Revelation 20:7-15). Thus, to strictly apply this parable to the complete separation of saints from the lost, the timing would apply to the very end of the world as we know it and the beginning of the new heavens and earth. Until this happens, the Lord will return two more times: (1) at the rapture and (2) at the end of the tribulation period which is the beginning of the millennial reign. The real message of the parable is God's desire to protect the wheat from God's judgment. This is consistent with the purpose of the rapture which is the "beginning of the end." In preparation for judgment, the Lord removes His saints from harm (or seals them for protection from His judgment, (cf Revelation 7:1-8 and 9-17). After the rapture, God begins His judgment of the world by: (1) removing His blessings that man takes for granted, Revelation 8:7-12; (2) removing His blessing of restraining demoniacs from inflicting misery on man, Revelation 9:1-21; and (3) His personal affliction and judgment on the lost, Revelation 16:1-21, 19:11-21.

Why are words not found in the Bible such as pre- and post-tribulation used in Biblical teaching to describe a particular teaching?

Words are symbols of meaning and are useful tools for communicating ideas. A single word can be used to sum up an explanation of many ideas. Instead of referring to the doctrine of Christ's return prior to the seven years of tribulation described in the book of Revelation, one can communicate the same idea by simply saying the doctrine of pre-tribulation. People who are troubled by such word usage fail to understand the nature of language. One can only wonder how such people justify translating the Greek and Hebrew texts of the original autographs into other languages with words that do not exist in either the Greek or Hebrew vocabulary.

When will Jesus Christ return?

Jesus says in Matthew 24:36, "But of that day and hour knoweth no man, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only."

When will the world end as depicted in Revelation?

But of that day and hour knoweth no *man*, no, not the angels of heaven, but my Father only (Matthew 24:36).

What signs indicate that His return is imminent?

In Matthew 24, Jesus lists several signs that will signal His imminent return. These include, 1) "many shall come in my name, saying, I am Christ; and shall deceive many." 2) "And many false prophets shall rise, and shall deceive many." 3) "ye shall hear of wars and rumours of wars:" 4) "For nation shall rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom: and there shall be famines, and pestilences, and earthquakes, in divers places." 5) "Then shall they deliver you up to be afflicted, and shall kill you: and ye shall be hated of all nations for my name's sake." 6) "And then shall many be offended, and shall betray one another, and shall hate one another." 7) "And because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold." 8) "And this gospel of the kingdom shall be preached in all the world for a witness unto all nations; and then shall the end come." 9) "But as the days of Noe were, so shall also the coming of the Son of man be." 10) "For as in the days that were before the flood they were eating and drinking, marrying and giving in marriage, until the day that Noe entered into the ark." There are other signs as well, but all appear to be in place right now. Christ could return at anytime.

If Christ's return is imminent, should we not be warning people?

Definitely! That has been the commission and exhortation of Christ since the beginning. Even while He was on earth, He was announcing that the kingdom of God was at hand. And Paul cautions in First Thessalonians 5:6,

“Therefore let us not sleep, as do others; but let us watch and be sober.” In Second Corinthians 6:2, Paul quotes God saying, “For he saith, I have heard thee in a time accepted, and in the day of salvation have I succoured thee: behold, now is the accepted time; behold, now is the day of salvation.” And in Romans 13:11, he says, “And that, knowing the time, that now it is high time to awake out of sleep: for now is our salvation nearer than when we believed.” The time to warn others of Christ’s return began 2,000 years ago. Everyday we are closer to that becoming a reality.

When the Lord returns for His church, what will happen to unborn children of women who do not know Christ?

The Bible does not describe such a situation. However, we can be assured from First Timothy 2:3-4 and Second Peter 3:9 that God will not return if there is any chance of saving one more soul. Nonetheless, there will undoubtedly be babies born during the seven year tribulation period whether at the beginning or at the end. Therefore, it is possible that God would allow babies to continue their developmental process in the mother.

After the rapture and tribulation, will it be possible for saints to choose to sin or disobey God as did Lucifer in the beginning?

No. As Second Corinthians 5:21 points out, believers are made with the righteousness of God. This born again experience takes place in your spirit not in your flesh. Thus, Paul says in Romans 7:22 that in spite of the sin and resistance to do good in the flesh, his inward man (spirit) serves God. Being made the righteousness of God means that you have His nature imputed to you (cf Romans 4:6, 23-24). If your spirit is made righteous, then your spirit cannot sin (First John 3:9). Once in heaven, you will have a glorified body which will never sin either. This is how the Lord preserves the saints forever— once saved, always saved. Lucifer and the fallen angels had their chance to be changed, but they chose to rebel. They were never imputed with the righteousness of God. The remaining angels who chose Christ were (Colossians 1:20).

Who is the antichrist?

Anyone who denies Jesus Christ as God come in the flesh to save us from our sins is of the spirit of antichrist. First John 4:3 says, “And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that spirit of antichrist, whereof ye have heard that it should come; and even now already is it in the world. Likewise, Second John 1:7 states, “For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confess not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh. This is a deceiver and an antichrist.”

However, there is THE antichrist mentioned in First John 2:18 which says, “Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.” This ultimate antichrist is Satan himself. All those who deny Christ, align themselves with Satan. However, there is another antichrist that Satan empowers during the last three and half years of tribulation to rule the world. For a clearer description of antichrist (666), read Revelation 12 and 13.

When will the Antichrist appear?

Revelation 12:13-14 indicates that Satan will be cast down to the earth and persecute Israel for three and half years. The woman is Israel and the “time, and times, and half a time” refer to three and a half years. Daniel 9:27 states that Antichrist will arise in abomination in the middle of the last seven years of tribulation. This means that he will appear and desecrate the temple for the last three and half years of tribulation.

Will the raptured believers be present on earth during the thousand year reign of Christ?

Yes. Revelation 20:6 says, “Blessed and holy is he that hath part in the first resurrection: on such the second death hath no power, but they shall be priests of God and of Christ, and shall reign with him a thousand years.” All believers will be in the first resurrection and will not suffer the second death which is condemnation for sin (cf Romans 6:23).

Will believers in heaven feel pain and sorrow for lost loved ones?

No. Revelation 21:4 says of those in the new heaven and new earth that, “God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.”

How does the kingdom of God differ from the kingdom of heaven?

The Kingdom of God is wherever God is King. This means that His Kingdom is in heaven (the Kingdom of Heaven) as well as in surrendered hearts. In Luke 17:21, Jesus says, "Neither shall they say, Lo here! or, lo there! for, behold, the kingdom of God is within you." The saved have the kingdom of God within them, and are looking forward to entering into the Kingdom of Heaven, which is also called the Kingdom of God.

How does the holy city differ from heaven?

The holy city is the capitol city of heaven where God's throne is located. According to Second Peter 3:9-13, there will be a new heaven and a new earth to replace the old as we know it now. This new heaven and earth will be the utopia mankind has pursued since the garden of Eden (Revelation 21:1-5). Within this new, divine creation, the city of God or the holy Jerusalem will reside. Some will live within the city and others will live outside of the city throughout the new earth, ruling as kings and priests or occupying as residents.

What does the city of God look like?

Some speculate it is a pyramid, a sky scraper, and a flying comet. However, and not surprisingly, the Bible presents a different, more realistic picture. The city of God will be located on the mountain of God. Jerusalem sits on Mount Zion. The new Jerusalem will encompass the entire mountain 1600 miles wide, long, and tall. Residents of the city will dwell on the mountain of God in much the same way as they have in the old Jerusalem. However, the river of life will pour from the top of the mountain where the throne of God resides and flow down the slopes in cascading water falls, and beautiful rivers making its way throughout the earth. There is no sea in the new heavens and earth, so the river of life flowing from the throne of God will be the source for all water in heaven.

When we die, will we look the same age in heaven?

The Bible does not tell whether there are different appearances of age in heaven. Obviously there will be no bodies showing disease or deterioration due to old age, and, therefore, it can be concluded that everyone will appear fully mature and in their prime.

Is there gender in heaven?

Galatians 3:28 says, "There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male nor female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." In Mark 12:25 Jesus says, "For when they shall rise from the dead, they neither marry, nor are given in marriage; but are as the angels which are in heaven."

Will we recognize our loved ones in heaven?

Yes. Notice that King David anticipated that he would go to his baby in heaven (Second Samuel 12:23). Also, Jesus described in Luke 16:24 that the rich man recognized Lazarus and Abraham.

If we recognize loved ones in heaven, will we have a tendency to love them more than others and show partiality?

You will love everyone in heaven without partiality just as Christ loves everyone. On earth, we are subject to the fickleness of carnal flesh. In heaven we will have a new glorified body.

MUSIC

Is the devil an angel of music?

There is no verse in the Bible that says Satan is or was an angel of music. More than likely, the association between Satan and music is made because Cain's great grandson, Jubal, was the father of musicians who played the harp and organ. However, Cain's rebellion against God and the killing of Abel does not mean that whatever he and his descendants were skilled at were induced by the talents of Satan. Another common association of music with Satan is the music of rebellion and sensuality. Certain kinds of music can be sinful, provoke lust and sin, and be used by Satan. However, this does not make him "the angel" of music.

Why is Christian rock music not Christian?

The obvious issue of music involves association or identity. The Bible exhorts Christians to be conformed to the image of Christ and to boldly be identified with Him. We do so by wearing His uniform of love, peace, patience, etc. (Galatians 5:22-23). In Ephesians 4 and 5, Christians are told to forsake the things of carnality and to walk in Christlikeness. James 4:4 says, friendship with the world is enmity with God. The point is that there are things in any given society which are identified with the world (rebellion, lust, drunkenness, drugs, promiscuity). Rock music as with faddish hair styles, baggy clothes of today, etc. show affiliation with the world (whether it be true or not in the individual's mind). Clothes, music, hair styles, jewelry, mannerisms, and speech are all a part of one's uniform and identity. This is how members of gangs are often identified. But, not just gang members. Your choice of uniform shows who or what you are attracted to and associated with. As a Christian, you should wear the uniform of Christlikeness and affiliation. Rock music is synonymous with rebellion, drugs, and promiscuity. More importantly, rock music affects one's emotions and disposition which promotes carnality and rebellion. Many rock singers and followers have written numerous articles on the power of rock music to influence people. To combine Christian words to such music creates an obvious contradiction. The outcome is carnal Christianity which has the name and words of Christ but is not of Christ. James 3:11-12 questions this kind of combination by asking does a fountain give both sweet and bitter water, and does a fig tree yield olives? The obvious answer is no.

Are you saying that believers who listen to rock music are not Christian?

No. I am saying that Christian rock is not Christian and that believers should not be associated with it. Being a Christian is determined by your faith in Christ. Listening to rock music does not make you unsaved any more than being saved makes a carnal lifestyle Christian.

Isn't Christian rock a good way to bring unbelievers to Jesus Christ?

No. Admittedly, some have been brought to the Lord because of Christian rock in spite of the rock music. However, this is not a good practice because it promotes a false Gospel of no repentance. The Holy Spirit convicts hearts to flee sin, to leave the world and to surrender to Christ. The reasoning used to justify Christian rock is dangerous. For example, should Christians become bar hoppers, whoremongers, and sodomites to reach drunks, prostitutes, and homosexuals? If some are saved from ministries such as these, it is in spite of the approach. When Christ came to men, He won them by being different. He came to them and talked to them, but He never participated in their sin. Instead, He encouraged them to follow Him. Jesus led people away from sin and promoted repentance. In fact, He said in Luke 13:3 that unless one repents, he will perish. Christian rock attempts to cloak the Gospel message in carnality to make it more appealing and acceptable to the lost. It is more acceptable because one does not have to repent. This results in false a Gospel and false professions of faith. The outcome is frightening and tragic as Matthew 7:22-23 points out. Many will come to the Lord having done many wonderful works in His name, and He will declare to them that He never knew them.

MARRIAGE, DIVORCE, AND SINGLE ISSUES

What is marriage according to the Bible?

In Genesis 2:24, God says, "Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife: and they shall be one flesh." The commitment between a man and a woman to live as one flesh for the rest of their lives is marriage. Though different cultures celebrate the initial marriage covenant between a husband and wife differently, the result is the same—a lifelong commitment to each other.

Can a man and woman make a marriage vow of lifelong commitment to each other without a ceremony?

Yes, as long as it is recognized by the law of the land. God honors the laws of the land and we should too. We must avoid all appearance of evil as First Thessalonians 5:22 says to "Abstain from all appearance of evil." To do this, a marriage commitment should be public knowledge and in conformity to the laws of the land.

What does it mean to be unequally yoked in Second Corinthians 6:14?

The verse reads, “Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers: for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?” The context of this exhortation is a plea to separate from alliance with unbelievers. This is often applied to marriage, but it applies to any activity that would attempt to unite good and evil and threaten to harm the testimony and spiritual well-being of saints due to compromise and influence to forsake Christ.

Does God approve of polygamy?

No. Having more than one wife would involve adultery. Jesus explains in Matthew 5:28 “That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” Adultery is pursuing someone that you are not married to. Obviously, one would have to commit adultery to pursue more than one mate. In addition, the Bible states the rules for church leaders in First Timothy 3:2 saying, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife.” Pastors are held up as examples for others to follow. Thus, Biblical marriage is between one man and one woman.

Does God forbid divorce and remarriage?

No. However, He does discourage it. When talking to the Pharisees who questioned Him about divorce, Jesus told them, “because of the hardness of your hearts [Moses] suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so” (Matthew 19:8). Further, he said, “And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” This shows that Jesus does not approve of divorce and states plainly the implications of remarriage.

Did Jesus say that divorce is sin?

Matthew 19:7-9 records Jesus’ answer to this question saying, “They say unto him, Why did Moses then command to give a writing of divorcement, and to put her away? He saith unto them, Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so. And I say unto you, Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” One commits adultery because in God’s eyes marriage unites two as one as long as they live. The one exception for divorce is for the cause of fornication though Jesus indicates that even in this case divorce is frowned upon. However, for hardness of heart (that is, because it is hard to accept), He permits it.

Is it wrong to divorce?

Jesus was asked this same question in Matthew 19:3. His answer was “Have ye not read, that he which made *them* at the beginning made them male and female, And said, For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh? Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.”

If divorce is wrong, then why was it permitted under the old covenant?

Jesus’ answer to this question is in Matthew 19:8 saying, “Moses because of the hardness of your hearts suffered you to put away your wives: but from the beginning it was not so.” Thus, it is Jesus’ position that divorce was and is wrong. It occurs because of hardness of heart. However, it does occur and therefore, God gave instruction on how to formally grant a divorce in writing. God’s position on divorce is clear; therefore, giving instruction does not indicate approval of divorce. Divorce is the result of sin either by one or both partners refusing to honor a vow to God and spouse.

Why is divorce wrong?

In Matthew 19:5-6, Jesus says, “For this cause shall a man leave father and mother, and shall cleave to his wife: and they twain shall be one flesh. Wherefore they are no more twain, but one flesh. What therefore God hath joined together, let not man put asunder.” Marriage is a covenant and union that represents the relationship between Christ and His church (Ephesians 5:22-33). A broken marriage does not show this testimony. Divorce is a broken promise, which is the sin of covenant breaking.

Is the spouse who does not want divorce in sin when divorce takes place?

No. First Corinthians 7:15 says, “But if the unbelieving depart, let him depart. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in such cases: but God hath called us to peace.” This means that he is no longer obligated to fulfill any marital responsibility to the offending spouse.

Does Matthew 5:31-32 make divorce in the case of adultery ok?

No. This verse says, “It hath been said, Whosoever shall put away his wife, let him give her a writing of divorcement: But I say unto you, That whosoever shall put away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery: and whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery.” This verse explains how to grant a divorce and how to think about remarriage. A man does not cause his wife to commit adultery if she has already done this herself.

Is Jesus suggesting in Matthew 19:9 that divorce is all right in the case of adultery?

No. In Matthew 19:9, Jesus says, “Whosoever shall put away his wife, except *it be* for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery: and whoso marrieth her which is put away doth commit adultery.” He is explaining how God looks at remarriage. This has nothing to do with divorce.

Is it wrong to remarry?

Remarriage is adultery (Matthew 19:9). However, it does and will happen. First Corinthians 7:15 indicates that God will not demand that remarriage be prevented though He does not approve of it. In this case, peace triumphs over burden. Trying to simplify and harness the results of sin (divorce) is no easy task. The fact is, divorcees (especially the unwilling victims of divorce) are subject to all the temptations of loneliness, passions, and needs that are a part of any single life. This condition subjects them to temptations of sin that can be remedied by marriage. God shows what is right, but shows mercy toward those who need to be married.

If you divorce because of your spouse’s adultery and therefore are not committing adultery by remarrying (Matthew 19:9), does this suggest that divorce and remarriage for the cause of an adulterous spouse is ok?

No. God states plainly that He does not approve of divorce (Matthew 19:3). However, it does happen, and He describes in Matthew 19 how He views the question of adultery when one divorces or remarries.

Is there any acceptable reason for divorce?

Divorce (“putting away”) is not right for any reason because divorce is the result of sin by either one or both partners. It should be noted however that many spouses are unwilling divorcees due to the hardness and rebellion of their spouse. Such “victims” of divorce are not in sin.

Should a “marriage victim” endure a relationship at all costs?

If the other spouse has put them away by leaving them for another or by abandoning them, they are not obligated to endure the bondage of that relationship (1 Corinthians 7:15). Further, the Bible does not require that a spouse endure violence and harm. Such abuse is a failure on the part of the offending spouse to “put away” his/her spouse.

Is a “marriage victim” sinning by divorcing a spouse that has put them away?

No (1 Corinthians 7:15). The marriage victim is simply formalizing what has been declared by the actions of the offending spouse. There is often legal and liability benefits to be gained by being formally divorced.

Is it all right for a man to be ordained even though he is divorced?

No. First Timothy 3:2 states that a man must be the husband of one wife. Remarriage is adultery, and it is not the role model God wants before His people.

If a man is “put away” and is an unwilling divorcee, is he still disqualified from an ordained position in the church?

Yes. The role of the ordained office is a family affair not just the individual man (1 Timothy 3:4). It is a greater tragedy when one’s ministry is harmed because of others. However, it happens. This does not exclude a man from serving and exercising all of his gifts and talents in ministry. He is simply, yet tragically, disqualified from the

ordained office.

Do the qualifications of the ordained offices listed in 1Timothy 3 and Titus 1 indicate that a man must be married in order to be a pastor?

No. A single man can be a pastor.

If divorce is sin, did God sin when He divorced Israel?

Jeremiah 3:8 says, “And I saw, when for all the causes whereby backsliding Israel committed adultery I had put her away, and given her a bill of divorce; yet her treacherous sister Judah feared not, but went and played the harlot also.” God does not sin. Israel betrayed Him, and put Him away, thus, He formally acknowledged her divorce from Him.

Does God’s divorce of Israel for adultery justify divorce between a husband and wife for adultery?

Divorce is not justifiable. In the context of this question, it is a formal recognition that one partner has already divorced or put away his/her spouse by committing adultery.

Is a divorced man qualified to pastor a church?

No. First Timothy 3:2 lists qualifications of a pastor which includes, “A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife....” Titus 1:6 concurs with this saying, “If any be blameless, the husband of one wife....” The testimony of the pastor should be one of example. Divorce is not an example to role model before a congregation.

If divorce for the cause of fornication is permitted, would a man be qualified to pastor if he divorces his adulterous wife?

No. He is unable to exemplify marriage before his congregation and role model the testimony of Jesus Christ and His church.

Why should a man be disqualified from pastoring if divorce is the result of his wife’s adultery?

Marriage takes two willing partners, so then the wife is as much a part of the success of the pastoral office as her husband is in this regard. The wife’s failure can and will affect her husband and her children though they be innocent. Warfare, spiritual or physical, brings casualties on the innocent as well as the criminal. The pastoral office has qualifications that Christ chose for the purpose of representing His relationship with His church regardless of fault.

If First Timothy 3:2 and Titus 1:6 do not say anything about a man being divorced, does that indicate that a divorced man can pastor as long as he is married to one woman?

Jesus indicates in Matthew 19:5-9 that divorcees who remarry commit adultery. Such language shows that in God’s eyes the original couple is still married. The marriage testimony in the pastoral office should be a role model of at least staying together.

Should a divorcee be allowed to join a church or serve in the church?

A divorcee, man or woman, can serve God and be a vital part of serving in the church. The only offices Biblically restricted would be the pastor and deacon.

Is it possible to serve God after divorce and or remarriage?

Absolutely. God desires that everyone, regardless of their mistakes and failings, follow and serve Him. In fact, God expects every Christian to live for Him and to be engaged in ministry. He will hold us all accountable for our decision to be discipled and to disciple regardless of our marital status.

How is it possible to undo such a sin as adultery once you have remarried?

Sins cannot be undone only forgiven. God forgives sin, reconciles, and heals wounds for those in genuine repentance (First John 1:9). Any relationship produced in sin will always suffer in some way. Like physical wounds and scars, there may be loss of quality in living. However, once healed, even those with disabilities continue to live life to its fullest as they are able.

If you remarry, are you forever in adultery?

Adultery occurs when one breaks his/her marriage vow of fidelity to his/her spouse (Matthew 5:32). A look at the example of King David shows he experienced a one time punishment for adultery. He was not continually being punished everyday he was married to Bathsheba. Having remarried and made a new covenant with a new spouse, do not seek to break that vow too.

Why does the Biblical position on divorce and remarriage lack compassion for the emotional needs of people?

The Bible simply describes what God's best plan is for people. Hurt is the result of sin and human failure not a lack of compassion in God. Jesus stated that divorce was allowed for hardness of heart and unwillingness of people to refrain from remarriage even as victims in marital failure. Marriage is much more than companionship, it is a typology of Christ's fidelity to His bride. It is a responsibility to protect that message by making marriage work for a lifetime. Recognizing the seriousness of marriage as a lifelong commitment to one person and the implications of failure, the disciples responded saying, "If the case of the man be so with his wife, it is not good to marry" (Matthew 19:10).

Are you suggesting that it is better not to marry?

No. God invented marriage and intended for men and women to marry (Genesis 2:24; Matthew 19:5-6).

Why does God forbid premarital sex?

Marriage is a depiction of one's relationship with God (Ephesians 5:22-33). We are designed to be one with Him. However, that relationship requires a commitment (belief and repentance results in God fulfilling His promise to redeem you and to establish fellowship). This fellowship is based on both God and man's willingness to be committed to each other. It is a permanent relationship. It is a faithful relationship. A sexual relationship between a man and woman joins the two as one flesh (First Corinthians 6:16). In order to be a testimony of the kind of relationship God has with believers, such a union must occur under the conditions of a lifelong pledge of fidelity and commitment to love each other. In addition, there are other good reasons not to engage in premarital sex: (1) God says it is wrong (First Corinthians 7:2), (2) Pregnancies result in ill-advised marriages, abortion, or a bad environment for children, (3) Promiscuity, (4) Risk of contracting sexually transmitted diseases, (5) Loss of a unique relationship with one person, (6) Produces insecurity and jealousy, (7) Contributes to weakening social stability, increases selfishness, and loss of integrity.

How far is "too far" before marriage?

If sensual thoughts in your heart toward anyone other than your spouse is lust, then any behavior that provokes lust should be avoided. First Corinthians 7:1 says, "Now concerning the things whereof ye wrote unto me: It is good for a man not to touch a woman. Nevertheless, to avoid fornication, let every man have his own wife, and let every woman have her own husband." Sexual behavior needs to be contained within the covenant of marriage.

What is sexual activity?

Any contact or behavior that produces sensual stimulation in yourself or another person. This includes more than physical contact. People engage in sexual behavior by the way they talk, dress, and act. Everything from phone pornography to low cut dresses to flirtation are sexual behaviors.

What kind of sexual activity is sinful?

Any sexual activity outside the bounds of marriage between a man and a woman is wrong. Such activities would include pornography, premarital stimulation, adultery, and lustful thoughts. Proverb 6:25 warns by saying "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids." In Matthew 5:28 Jesus says, "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart."

MEN AND WOMEN

Does First Corinthians 11:14 really mean that a man should not have long hair, or is it referring to the covering of Christ?

First Corinthians 11:14 states that, “Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him?” The statement is clearly referring to the physical length of hair on a man’s head. The comparison with that of a woman’s hair is unmistakable. To understand the explanation of this hair issue, it is necessary to understand that everything we do and say is a testimony to others about Christ and our relationship to Him. The way we look to others also conveys a message. Thus, hair length in itself is of no importance. However, the testimony conveyed by hair length reflects upon your willingness to obey and identify with Christ.

If it is shameful for a man to wear long hair, why was Samson required to have long hair to retain his strength and Nazarites such as John the Baptist required to not to cut their hair (Numbers 6)?

Appearance follows the principle of identity by association. Samson’s long hair as a Nazarite was a uniform indicating a vow he had with God. His appearance was distinctly different from all others and recognized by others as being a trait of devotion to God. We do not have Nazarites today, and no one thinks of long hair as a sign of devotion to God. To the contrary, long hair today identifies one with a culture of rebellion, femininity, and anti-establishment. It is disobedience to God (First Corinthians 11:14).

Is it a shame for a woman to have short hair?

First Corinthians 7:3-16 says, “But I would have you know, that the head of every man is Christ; and the head of the woman *is* the man; and the head of Christ *is* God. Every man praying or prophesying, having *his* head covered, dishonoureth his head. But every woman that prayeth or prophesieth with *her* head uncovered dishonoureth her head: for that is even all one as if she were shaven. For if the woman be not covered, let her also be shorn: but if it be a shame for a woman to be shorn or shaven, let her be covered. For a man indeed ought not to cover *his* head, forasmuch as he is the image and glory of God: but the woman is the glory of the man. For the man is not of the woman; but the woman of the man. Neither was the man created for the woman; but the woman for the man. For this cause ought the woman to have power on *her* head because of the angels. Nevertheless neither is the man without the woman, neither the woman without the man, in the Lord. For as the woman *is* of the man, even so *is* the man also by the woman; but all things of God. Judge in yourselves: is it comely that a woman pray unto God uncovered? Doth not even nature itself teach you, that, if a man have long hair, it is a shame unto him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her: for *her* hair is given her for a covering. But if any man seem to be contentious, we have no such custom, neither the churches of God.”

In First Timothy 2:9, women are told to dress appropriately, not in expensive clothing. But the Proverbs 31 woman is revered for clothing her family in pure and fine linen (verse 22). Is this a contradiction?

In Timothy, Paul is warning women to be modest and not to appear dressed as the whores and pagan women of the day. Clothing fashion is often a uniform that associates us with a class of people. For example, gangs wear a particular brand and style of shoes, or pants, or sport a hair style or flash hand signals or wear a symbol on their clothes. Some people want to be identified with the “punk” culture of rebellion by dying their hair unnatural colors. Merchandise engineers have capitalized on marketing clothing that is associated with sports stars and movie heroes. Thus, clothing fashion often reflects how one desires to be identified in culture. The virtuous woman described in Proverbs is being praised for being industrious and responsible which is reflected in providing her family with clothing that reflects such qualities. Thus, one’s values and character is reflected in the uniform or clothing they choose to wear.

Does the Bible teach women to submit to men?

Yes. There is no way around the fact that God expects women to submit themselves to the leadership of men. First Timothy 2:11-12 says, “Let the woman learn in silence with all subjection. But I suffer not a woman to teach, nor to usurp authority over the man, but to be in silence.”

Why does God expect women to submit to men?

First Timothy 2:14-15 explains, "For Adam was first formed, then Eve. And Adam was not deceived, but the woman being deceived was in the transgression." This shows us that the order of authority has nothing to do with gender talent, intelligence, or ability. The authority order is a reminder of the creation order and the sin that occurred in the garden of Eden. Biblical authority order by gender is a fulfillment of roles or typologies to remind and teach us about Biblical truths, namely, creation not evolution, the bondage of sin, and the need for salvation.

What does it mean that women are to be silent in the church?

First Corinthians 14:34-35 instructs to, "Let your women keep silence in the churches: for it is not permitted unto them to speak; but they are commanded to be under obedience, as also saith the law. And if they will learn any thing, let them ask their husbands at home: for it is a shame for women to speak in the church." The context of this verse is dealing with speaking in tongues and prophesying in a church's general assembly. Because of the confusion generated in the Corinthian church by tongues speaking, Paul rebukes them and sets down rules whereby order can be maintained. Keeping the women silent is one way of doing this. Tongues speaking churches today are usually dominated by women who are caught up in the emotion of the environment. This should not be allowed. Also, controversy undoubtedly resulted from Paul's restrictions on tongues speaking, and the women were not to engage in public debate with church leadership. Nonetheless, under normal circumstances within a woman's sphere of influence, she is expected to engage in praying and prophesying (First Corinthians 11:5).

What is the Biblical position on women preachers?

First Timothy 3:2 says, "A bishop then must be blameless, the husband of one wife..." In addition, Titus 1:6 says, "If any be blameless, the husband of one wife..." Obviously, a woman cannot fulfill the requirements of being a bishop (pastor, preacher) by being the husband of one wife.

Why does First Timothy 2:15 say that women are saved through child bearing?

In preceding verses, Paul has described the role women have been assigned to fulfill in relationship to men. In verse fourteen, he explains that a woman's role is due in part to Eve being in transgression due to deception. Nevertheless, he explains in verse fifteen, "she shall be saved in childbearing, if they continue in faith and charity and holiness with sobriety." In other words, women save the reputation of their gender by showing they can provide sound, godly leadership as demonstrated in the lives of their children.

Is it justified to judge parents by the actions of their children?

No. Good parenting increases the likelihood of a child making good decisions just as bad parenting increases the likelihood of children making bad decisions. However, children make their own decisions and must assume responsibility for their own choices. Nonetheless, it is obvious that a child's decisions do reflect upon his parents by association, justified or not.

KILLING, MURDER, AND CRIMES

Why does God command not to kill, and then command Israel to kill?

The ten commandments show us how to live peacefully and safely in a community. Killing each other for sport, hatred, etc. results in a society of fear and suffering. In contrast, killing for defense or judgment protects a community's (nation, etc.) peace, safety, and stability. Hostile communities under governments of communism or Nazism for example, threaten the well-being of free citizens. They seek to kill, destroy, and dominate other communities. Such killers must be stopped. This usually requires war and killing because they do not stop except by force. For this reason, God told Israel to fight and kill their enemies. For this reason, king David and other leaders of Israel have fought and killed their enemies. Likewise, there are killers in communities which are a menace to society. The death penalty eliminates their threat to society and helps to cause would-be murderers to control themselves. The end result is a safer and more peaceful community.

Why would God command the Israelites to kill the Amalekites when the ten commandments teach not to kill?

There are different Hebrew words for “kill.” In the ten commandments, the word means to murder. The other words mean to put to death or to slay. The idea of murder is to unlawfully or unjustly kill someone. Is there such a thing as lawful killing?

Yes. God established lawful killing as a punishment for certain crimes such as murder. Killing is not unlawful when used as appropriate punishment, defense, or protection as dictated by God and his law.

Why did God command Israel to kill other tribes of people like the Amalekites?

God uses nations to judge other nations (Daniel 4:17; Habakkuk 1:12). Judgment comes because of sin and rejection of God. Though God is longsuffering, there comes a time when people reach a point of no return. They will only get worse and corrupt others to reject God. The way to stop this trend is to eliminate the corruption. For example, God wiped the world-slate clean and started all over after Noah’s flood. He does the same thing on local levels. He will do the same thing at the end of the world which may be soon.

Is the death penalty Biblical and approved of by God?

Yes. In the Old Testament, God Himself set up a system of law and penalties which included the death penalty. Deuteronomy 21:22 says, “And if a man have committed a sin worthy of death, and he be to be put to death....” God still uses the death penalty for sin (Romans 6:23). Also, First John 5:16 indicates that there is a sin unto death which refers to crimes that are worthy of the death penalty.

The woman at the well was living in adultery and by the laws of the land should have been stoned to death. Why did Jesus not have this woman stoned?

Jesus said that He did not come to judge but to save (John 12:47). His ministry was to change lives and to show grace. Jesus came to save people from the law, sin, and death. This does not mean that He condoned sin or despised laws. It was up to the authorities of the land to enforce the laws. For this particular, more likely she was set up. Notice that the man was not brought before Christ.

Was Jesus a pacifist?

Jesus is God, and we know that God is no pacifist. Jesus came at a time when Israel was conquered as a nation, and He demonstrated how to live under a dominating, hostile government. It was not in Israel’s power to rise up and reassert itself as a nation by physical force. Thus, the Bible shows us how to live in both a free society and a conquered society. Jesus showed that through His teachings, He could rule as king in individual hearts regardless of social status, race, or geography. This is why He said that His kingdom was from within you (Luke 17:21). Presently, Jesus is winning souls and citizens through His teachings in both free and hostile communities. For those in a hostile, controlling community, they should fight with the sword of God’s Word. For those in a free community, they should fight with both physical and spiritual swords.

HUMAN DESIGN

Where does one’s soul come from?

The soul and spirit begin with physical life at conception. The phenomenon of identical twins shows us that this is so. Each identical twin begins as the same cell, but in the process of dividing, a portion of cells separate. They carry the same genetic code but form two independent personalities. In addition to being two distinct people physically, they are two different souls and two different spirits though having begun as one. This shows that there is a spiritual dimension associated with the physical world. Though this spiritual reality is not detectable by physical senses, it is clear from our illustration that it behaves very much like the physical. Thus, it could be argued that the DNA code is both physical and spiritual and gives rise to both the physical and spiritual parts of people. The Biblical basis for such a claim is found in Romans 3:10 and John 3:3-6. Because man is unrighteous, he must be born again.

He must experience a nature change. When one is born of God, he is changed spiritually not physically. This indicates that the spiritual nature of man, as well as the physical nature, is unrighteous. Where did this spiritual, unrighteous nature come from? From his parents. It did not come from God. Therefore, the best conclusion is that we are born with it, having inheriting it from our parents through birth.

Are the soul and the spirit different?

God designed man with a body, a soul, and a spirit. In First Thessalonians 5:23, Paul indicates the whole person consists all three parts saying, "I pray God your whole spirit and soul and body be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." Moreover, in Hebrews 4:12, Paul distinguishes between the soul and spirit saying, "For the word of God is quick, and powerful, and sharper than any twoedged sword, piercing even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart." The soul and spirit are different.

How can the soul and spirit be different if both are spiritual parts of man?

Just as your leg and arm are both physical but different, so are your soul and spirit both spiritual but different.

How does the soul differ from the spirit?

The soul is the core of your being. Wherever your soul is that is where you are. Your soul is your seat of reason, morality, and identity. Your spirit is to the soul what your body is to the soul. It has spiritual senses to detect the spiritual world. Notice when Lazarus and the rich man died (Luke 16:22), their bodies stayed on earth. Yet, the rich man is described as remembering his earthly life, thinking, talking, hearing, seeing, and feeling. His soul was able to interact with Abraham spiritually because of his spirit.

If my soul is me and the part of me that thinks, how is that drugs that affect my physical body also affect my thinking?

The physical body is extremely complex and contributes a great deal to the total makeup of your personality, emotions, and intellect. Your brain has memory cells, it secretes chemicals that affect your emotions, and has neural networks that allow for learning and thinking. Information from the physical world is passed on to your soul through your body. The design of your body is such that often you respond to your environment with reflex rather than brain activity. This is called the reflex arc. Oftentimes you interact with your environment with brain activity rather than soul activity. Nonetheless, your soul is aware of all activity just as your brain is aware of reflex activity after the fact. Thus, drugs or damage to the brain can physically affect your thinking skills.

In what ways does my body affect my soul?

Your body determines the limitations of how your soul can express itself. For example, if you wanted to speak but lacked a tongue, your soul would have to communicate by means of sign language or some other means. Likewise, your body filters and "colors" information it feeds to your soul. For example, if you are color blind, there is a lack of full color being seen. If you were on drugs, your brain would send altered perceptions of your world or even hallucinations. The sum of your soul, spirit, and body contribute, as a complete package, to your overall personality.

Is it possible for drugs to interfere with a person's salvation, conviction, and understanding about sin?

Absolutely. Regardless of a drug's legal status, the effects can be such that one's state of consciousness is affected. People can be put to sleep, experience loss of inhibitions, loss of short and long term memory, and loss of judgment to make good decisions. This is why we are exhorted in Ephesians 5:18 not to be drunk with wine, but instead to be filled with the Spirit. This is not an admonition against medicinal usage of drugs. It is an exhortation to be under the influence of the Spirit of God rather than the abusive use of alcohol or any other kind of drug, person, habit, etc.

MISCELLANEOUS

Does the Bible contain all that God has or ever will reveal to man?

The Bible contains all that man needs to know to provide guidance and discernment. This is why Revelation 22:19 is strategically placed historically and Biblically because it says, “And if any man shall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God shall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and from the things which are written in this book.” Nonetheless, this does not mean that God has ceased to reveal things to man. John 16:13 tells us that the Holy Ghost is sent to guide us into all truth. In Luke 10:22, Jesus says that He will reveal Himself to people. Also, the Lord reveals personal blessings such as He did with Simeon (Luke 2:26). Philippians 3:15 tells us that God will reveal things to us. Nonetheless, all of today’s revelation is subject to being examined with the truths already revealed in the Word of God to test its conformity to truth and, subsequently, its credibility. No revelation of the Spirit of God will contradict and change the Word of God in any way as indicated by Revelation 22:19.

Why do people stick to one kind of Bible?

The Bible claims to be the inspired word of God. For this reason, many people insist on using a Bible translation that is representative of the words God inspired and not the words of what someone thinks God says (e.g. paraphrases like the Living Bible). Some Bibles claim to be translations that are true to the meaning of the words but give great liberty to the translators to tell you what a verse means rather than tell you what words God used (dynamic equivalence, e.g., NIV). All Bibles except for the KJV, are translations out of the inferior eclectic texts which strive to incorporate representation of all manuscripts rather than strive for accurate representation of the original inspired autographs. People who want to know what words God used, and place great importance on reading a translation that represents the autographs, use the KJV.

Why do the genealogies that include Adam leave out Cain and Abel? Were they not his sons?

The genealogy listed in Luke 3 shows the lineage of Jesus back to Adam through his third son, Seth (Genesis 4:25). Adam had sons and daughters according to Genesis 5:4. Cain and Abel are not listed in the genealogies because they are not ancestors to Jesus.

Is it possible for a Christian to be demon possessed?

No. Christians cannot be possessed by Satan or a demon in terms of being owned. Every Christian is owned or possessed by Christ. However, it is possible for Christians to be controlled, influenced, and/or oppressed by Satan and demons. Jesus Himself was tempted and oppressed (harassed) in the wilderness by Satan though He never yielded to temptation. Christians are also tempted, influenced, and oppressed by demons as part of the spiritual warfare (Ephesians 6:11-14). Some stand strong and resist the influence as did Christ, and others yield to sin and often end up hindering or working against Christ.

Should Christians be inclusive or exclusive about their religion?

Jesus’ example of ministry illustrates how we should think about our ministry to others. He was kind and gentle, giving and instructive. His message is: “come unto Him” and that “He alone is the way, the truth, and the life.” His invitation for salvation is open to everyone and anyone. He does not exclude anyone from the opportunity to be saved. However, He does judge those who do not believe in Him by telling them they are wrong. He called the Pharisees snakes and open sepulchers. He ran the moneychangers out of the temple with a whip. In doing these things, Jesus was not being malicious. He was pointing out their error. Some people listen to reason, some to significant emotional events, and others do not listen at all. Thus, Jesus’ example shows that we should be inclusive in invitation to salvation, and exclusive in wrong thinking and action. Wrong thinking leads to eternal condemnation. It is better to confront people now with their error than to avoid confrontation now and let them be condemned later.

Why did God allow the Philistines to capture the ark as described in First Samuel 4?

God used the Philistines to remove the ark from Israel as a testimony to all that God was no longer pleased with Israel at that time. Israel was not following the Lord, and the priest Eli was neglecting his responsibilities as the

priest and prophet of Israel. First Samuel 3:1 reveals that “the word of the Lord was precious in those days” meaning that it was not being taught. Also, First Samuel 3:3 shows that the lamp of God in the temple had gone out due to neglect by the priests and was symbolic of the light of God going out in Israel. Because of these sins and others, God sent a messenger to Eli in First Samuel 2:27-34 to proclaim judgment against Israel and Eli which would involve Israel’s defeat in battle, the death of Eli’s sons, and the removal of God’s ark from the temple.

Why haven’t human bones been found with dinosaur bones?

1. Very few representative organisms are found in fossil form.
2. Fewer organisms are found buried together unless they lived symbiotically or in very close proximity. Occasionally, mass grave yards are found containing a variety of organisms due to mass deposition.
3. Because most fossilized organisms are deposited, the sorting of organisms by body size, density, and geographical location largely determine the collection or separation of organisms to be fossilized. Thus, most fossil groups occur separated and distinct from others.
4. Two sites have reported findings of human and dinosaur fossil footprints together (the Pauloxy river in Glenrose, Texas and another site in New York).

Where or why, doesn’t the Bible mention anything about pre-historic man or of dinosaurs?

The Bible begins at the beginning of creation of all things (Genesis 1 & 2; Exodus 20:11). Pre-historic man (Australopithecus, etc.) are creations of man’s vain imaginations guided by evolutionary doctrine. Dinosaurs are part of the creation on day six (Genesis 1:24-25) and fit the descriptions of behemoth and leviathan in Job 40:15-24 and Job 41:1-34, respectively.

When was the apostle Paul saved?

The account of Paul’s conversion (Acts 9:3-17) does not specify when he was actually saved. He could have been saved anytime between his encounter with Jesus on the road to Damascus and his meeting with Ananias.

Did Josiah die in Megiddo (Second Kings 23:29, 30) or in Jerusalem (Second Chronicles 35:23, 24)?

Josiah was mortally wounded in Megiddo during battle with Neco. Thus, Second Kings tells us where he received the wound that killed him. Second Chronicles clarifies the event by telling where he actually expired. Such descriptions are common in the Scriptures. For example, John 4:1 says that Jesus baptized more than John did. However, John 4:2 clarifies that it was Jesus’ disciples, in association with Jesus, who did the actual baptizing. Abbreviated statements and clarifications describing the same event are not contradictions or false statements.

Are there other people in the universe?

No. Romans 8:21 tells us that the creation groans in travail and will be delivered from corruption. Romans 11:25, the book of Revelation, and the prophesies of the Bible indicate that judgment, end time events, the new heaven and earth, etc., are based solely on human events on earth. This suggests that we are alone. Second Peter 3:9 shows that God does not want any to perish, therefore, it is more than reasonable to conclude that earth history and future is based on human earth events alone. We are not waiting for others on other planets to also be saved.

Are there female angels?

Interestingly, all references in the Bible without exception are male names. Nonetheless, it is likely there is no gender distinction among angels because they do not marry or reproduce (Matthew 22:29-30).

Do the women with wings mentioned in Zechariah 5:9 indicate that there are female angels?

No. Zechariah’s vision is allegorical as indicated by the woman in the ephah. There is no explanation of who the women with wings are or what they represent in the vision other than they carry the ephah and its contents to Shinar.

Does use of male gender names indicate that angels are male?

No. Because God uses men for leadership throughout the Scriptures, it is Biblically consistent that the angels have male names.

What is the common name of the Acacia tree?

There are several species of the acacia genus all of which are gum trees. Gum arabic, used in manufacturing adhesives, confectionery, and pharmaceuticals, is obtained from several species of acacia. In the Bible, these trees are called shittim trees.

Is it wrong to drink alcohol?

Yes. Proverbs 20:1 warns that “Wine is a mocker, strong drink is raging: and whosoever is deceived thereby is not wise.” Also, Proverbs 23:31 cautions to “Look not thou upon the wine when it is red, when it giveth his colour in the cup, when it moveth itself aright.” In addition to such warnings, there is a principle to observe based on being a personal temple of God and treating your body as such (First Corinthians 3:16). For the priests of the temple, Leviticus 10:9 instructs, “Do not drink wine nor strong drink, thou, nor thy sons with thee, when ye go into the tabernacle of the congregation, lest ye die: it shall be a statute for ever throughout your generations.”

If drinking alcohol is wrong, why did Jesus make wine at the Cana wedding (John 2:3-10)?

Jesus made a wine that was not alcoholic. There are two kinds of wines in the Bible: alcoholic and non-alcoholic. The context of passages makes it clear which is being talked about. For example, Proverbs 3:10 says, “So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.” New wine is fresh juice that has not been fermented, yet it is referred to as wine. To further illustrate Biblical references to non-alcoholic wines, consider Jesus’ illustration of filling an old wine skin with new wine (Luke 5:37). Yeast cells naturally occur on grape skins so that old wine pouches that have already been used to contain wine also contain the residue of fermenting yeasts from the previous juice. The bursting of an old wine skin occurs due to the gasses produced by fermentation. If the wine was already fermented into alcohol, there would be no concern about placing new wine into old wine skins, and the illustration would be meaningless. In light of strong Biblical warning to avoid alcoholic wine and strong drink, it is obvious that the wine Jesus made was unfermented.

If alcohol is forbidden in the Bible, why does Paul tell Timothy to drink wine?

In First Timothy 5:23, Paul tells Timothy to “use a little wine for thy stomach’s sake and thine often infirmities” rather than to drink water. The reason for this instruction is obvious. The wine was being used medicinally. Some contend that if this were a reference to alcoholic wine, it would be no different than the many medicines that are used today to treat illnesses and surgeries which compromise one’s senses. Such usage of drugs does not compromise the Biblical position of being filled with the Spirit rather than wine anymore than pulling an ox out of a ditch on the Sabbath compromised the law of the Sabbath (Luke 14:5). However, the wine mentioned is most probably grape juice because it served as a substitute for water and would be far better for stomach problems than alcohol.

Does First Timothy 3:8 allow deacons to drink wine in moderation?

First Timothy 3:8 says that deacons should not be given to much wine. Although being given to much wine is specifically forbidden, the verse does not state that permission is granted to drink small quantities of wine. Clearly, the Scriptures teach to avoid strong drink. Thus, whereas this verse states the qualification that deacons should not be given to much wine, they should also conform to other passages of Scripture and not indulge in any wine just as bishops have been instructed in First Timothy 3:3.

Why does God give instruction on purchasing strong drink in Deuteronomy 14:26?

As with most things that we purchase or own, the good or bad of such things is determined by how we use them. Alcohol had a legitimate use as medicine or anesthesia in the same way many other drugs, that are otherwise illegal to use, are beneficial and lawful today.

Why did God turn Lot’s wife into salt rather than something else?

The Bible does not explain why salt was the substance of choice. Interestingly, when a city was conquered and judged, its fields were salted to prevent vegetative growth. It was the final act of conquest to doom the city to complete desolation. Other speculations could be proposed to make good sermon material, but none would be authoritative.

If a thousand years to us is like one day to God, is it possible that the six days of creation are figurative

rather than literal?

No. First, the references to time comparisons between God and man in Psalm 90:4 and Second Peter 3:8 are not correlations for measuring time. These verses are simply pointing out that a long time to us is no time to God. Second, the days of creation are described as the cycle of an evening and a morning. This is how the Jewish twenty-four hour, literal day was accounted for. In addition, other passages referring back to the creation event repeat the claim that the earth was created in six days. For example, Exodus 20:11 says that God created the heaven and the earth and everything in them in six days. Likewise, Exodus 31:17 says, “for in six days the LORD made heaven and earth, and on the seventh day he rested.” The apostle Paul refers to the first literal seven days in Hebrews 4:4. There is no textual justification to suggest that the Genesis account of creation is not literal. In fact, attempts to make the days longer make the passage ridiculous. Consider, for example, plant life surviving thousands of years before the sun is created.

How can homosexuality be sin if one is born this way?

1. Homosexuality is sin. You cannot grow spiritually living in sin. Romans 1:26-27
2. Sin is a choice, and the Bible says to flee it. Romans 12:9
3. Everyone is born and shapen in sin, therefore, there is no excuse for the sin of homosexuality any more than there is an excuse for any other sin. Psalm 51:5
4. Through Jesus Christ you can be cleansed from all sin. 1 John 1:7
5. You can control all sin. 1 Corinthians 9:27; Philippians 4:13

What is wrong with gossip?

Gossip hurts relationships, reputations, and personal character. The Bible clearly forbids it by saying in Second Thessalonians 3:11, “For we hear that there are some which walk among you disorderly, working not at all, but are busybodies,” and in First Timothy 5:13, “And withal they learn *to be* idle, wandering about from house to house; and not only idle, but tattlers also and busybodies, speaking things which they ought not.”

Who was Cain’s wife?

Adam and Eve were the first man and woman. Cain was their son. Therefore, Cain’s wife was one of his many sisters (Genesis 5:4) or relatives.

Where did Nod come from?

The name “Nod” means wandering exile. Such a name suggests that it was a city founded by Cain or a city that was named because of him.

Where is the garden of Eden?

Genetic studies indicate that humanity began in the Mesopotamia region. This would coincide with Scripture references of earliest civilizations. However, the Bible does not say where the garden was located.

Why did God put the snake in the garden of Eden if He knew that he would tempt Adam and Eve?

God allowed Satan to be present in the garden to show Adam the choice that he would inevitably make anyway. The temptation to sin was already in Adam. Satan was merely a catalyst not the cause of Adam’s sin.

Could you please tell me how it is that people suffer from stigmata? Is it a phenomenon sent from God? And if it is, why does He do this to people?

Stigmata were used in the old covenant when Israel was in a contractual relationship with God. Jesus ended this covenant in Matthew 23. God does not use stigmata today (Luke 13:4).

Is it possible to pray without doubting and receive anything we ask for?

In Mark 11:22-23, Jesus speaks of the prayers that move mountains prayed without doubt. The key to such prayers is praying in faith. This means that you know what to pray for before you believe it.

Does failure to receive answers to our prayers indicate a lack of faith?

It means that you have not prayed with understanding of what God’s will is.

Is it ok to pray to saints?

No. In Matthew 6:9, Jesus says, "After this manner therefore pray ye: Our Father which art in heaven, Hallowed be thy name." The only person we are instructed to pray to is the Father in heaven through one mediator, Jesus Christ. First Timothy 2:5 states, "there is one God, and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus."

Is it possible to live 120 years just as Abraham did?

There is no Biblical reference to indicate lifespan limitations. Praying for it would require faith (knowing this is what God wants you to pray for).

Are ghosts products of active imaginations or demons?

According to the Bible, spiritual beings (ghosts) are either demons, Satan, or the Spirit of God. There are no references saying that the spirits of people remain on earth as ghosts. Nonetheless, it is possible to hallucinate and see imaginary things including ghosts.

What does the Bible say about cremation?

There are no verses in the Bible that deal with the subject. However, the examples of Abraham and Jacob indicate that they requested to be buried in Canaan. Also, God gave Israel instruction in Deuteronomy 21:23 on what to do with the body of one hanged on a tree by saying, "but thou shalt in any wise bury him that day." Though the word "bury" does not mean cremation was not practiced, when indicated, it is definitely used for non-cremated bodies such as for Abraham's, the bones of Joseph, and the body of Jesus. Jewish tradition is to bury without cremation.

How does the Bible define nakedness?

Exodus 28:42 defines nakedness by saying, "And thou shalt make them linen breeches to cover their nakedness; from the loins even unto the thighs they shall reach." The thigh begins at the knee.

Did God create the races?

God created Adam from whom Eve was made and from whom all other humans have descended by procreation (birth).

Where did the races of humans come from?

The races of humans come from the genetic variability that occurs due to mutation of the DNA molecule and in the expression of genes in individuals. This is not evolution which claims change is unlimited. Changes that occur are definitely confined to each population kind. For humans, races are the result of change and confined to the human population.

How do we know that all races of humans come from Adam?

First Corinthians 15:22 says, "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive." All humans die in Adam because all humans have received Adam's sinful nature by birth. All humans come from Adam and have the same need, namely, salvation in Jesus Christ.

Was Jesus a victim of the death penalty?

No. Jesus was not a victim of anyone or anything. He was in full control the whole time by coming to earth as a man with the purpose in mind to die for the sins of the world. John 18:4-6 shows that Jesus was in control of His own betrayal saying, "Jesus therefore, knowing all things that should come upon him, went forth, and said unto them, Whom seek ye? They answered him, Jesus of Nazareth. Jesus saith unto them, I am he.... As soon then as he had said unto them, I am he, they went backward, and fell to the ground." Matthew 4:6 shows that He had guardian angels at His disposal to protect Him saying, "He shall give his angels charge concerning thee: and in their hands they shall bear thee up, lest at any time thou dash thy foot against a stone." In John 10:15, Jesus says, "... I lay down my life for the sheep."

Do you think that Jesus opposes the death penalty?

No. Jesus does not oppose the death penalty. He said in Matthew 5:17,z "Think not that I am come to destroy the law, or the prophets: I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil." The law requires death for terrible crimes.

Doesn't the execution of innocent people like Jesus, suggest that the death penalty is wrong?

No. The death penalty is the proper consequence for heinous crimes. However, the execution of innocent people suggests the need for extreme caution and for doubt to favor life rather than death. For this reason, our judicial system promotes innocence prior to being proven guilty and requires convincing evidence "beyond doubt" in order to implement the death penalty.

Why are there so many different religions?

Religions are the result of both man's vain imagination (Romans 1:21-23) and Satan's strategy to prevent people from seeing the truth (Second Corinthians 4:3-4, 11:13-15). When people reject God, they reject truth (John 14:6). Subsequently, they replace truth with false explanations of origins, lifestyle, God, salvation, etc. False religions abound because people who reject the true God abound. As for Satan's role in religions, promoting and encouraging counterfeit religions is a part of his strategy to confuse and deceive people.

Should there be only one religion?

Yes. There should only be one, true religion in the world- God's. However, this requires everyone's acceptance of Jesus Christ and His truth (Acts 4:12). Until this happens, there will never be a single religion in the world.

Is a single one world religion possible?

Yes. When everything is in subjection and in conformity to Christ, then there will be a single religion (First Corinthians 15:28). Until then, man will make vain attempts to form ecumenical organizations, and Satan will attempt to force a single world religion (Revelation 13:15).

Why can only Jewish people have the "Jewish faith", or is that just stereotyping?

Historically, Jews have been united in one religion, Judaism. However, for many this was ritual conformity, political conformity, social conformity, and religious conformity rather than doctrinal conformity. Today, Jews are involved in many different religions though the country of Israel is still dominated by historical Judaism.

What does "kicking against the pricks" mean in Acts 9:5?

A prick was often an iron goad used for urging on oxen, horses, and other beasts of burden. Sometimes pricks were placed behind the heels of mules pulling carts to prevent them from kicking the cart.

Is it sinful to look at pornography if you're not addicted?

Jesus says in Matthew 5:28 "But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her hath committed adultery with her already in his heart." And James 1:14-15 says, "But every man is tempted, when he is drawn away of his own lust, and enticed. Then when lust hath conceived, it bringeth forth sin: and sin, when it is finished, bringeth forth death." Sin is not determined by addiction. It is determined by the will of God. Proverbs 6:25 warns, "Lust not after her beauty in thine heart; neither let her take thee with her eyelids."

Do animals have souls?

Yes. Ecclesiastes 3:21 speaks of their souls saying, "Who knoweth the spirit of man that goeth upward, and the spirit of the beast that goeth downward to the earth?"

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