

## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

The Bible is unlike any other book because the very words were breathed (inspired) by God and they still contain God's breath (His life) and they are our spiritual food: *God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, the servant of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.*<sup>2Tim.3:16</sup> *Life is spiritual. Your physical existence doesn't contribute to that life. The words that I have spoken to you are spiritual. They are life.*<sup>Jn.6:63</sup> Jesus answered, *'It is written: Man doesn't live only on bread. He also lives on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'*<sup>3Matt.4:4</sup> But remember the difference between **exegesis** and **eisogesis**. Exegesis is the process of getting "out" ('ex') of the text what is truly there in the first place. The opposite to **exegesis** is **eisogesis** which is the process of putting "into" the text something that wasn't intended by the author and is almost a "blank cheque" for you to make the Bible say whatever you want!

To do **exegesis**, the correct principles of Bible interpretation (hermeneutics) need to be understood. **The first principle is context.** Always read the entire passage/chapter/book before preaching from a single verse. **The second principle is consistency.** Never interpret a text so that your interpretation contradicts the overall message of Scripture.

Base your answers on clear New Testament teaching (it's alright to use OT references to illustrate NT doctrine, but don't base your doctrine only on OT verses). Don't be afraid of using other references studies besides the Bible—even Paul did that: *When you come, bring the cloak that I left with Carpus at Troas, and my scrolls, especially the parchments.*<sup>2Tim.4:13</sup> But just be careful that you don't get side-tracked from the main purpose of the Bible—which is to explain God's plan of salvation to mankind through Jesus Christ, His Son and our Saviour!

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15/12/2021

### Psalm 19

Video: *That's Just Your Opinion*

**Have you seen God's salvation?** *Lord, now You are letting Your servant depart in peace, according to Your word; for my eyes have seen Your salvation which You have prepared before the face of all peoples, a light to bring revelation to the Gentiles and the glory of Your people Israel.*<sup>Lk.2:29-32</sup>

### Questions

**Is it possible to know what God has prepared for us?**

**What is the difference between believing in your head (learning) and believing in your heart (revelation)?**

**How can we get revelation?**

**How can we open the eyes of other people?**

**How can we get rid of gloom?**

**How can we see God's salvation?**

### Comments

**Is it possible to know what God has prepared for us?**

What was hidden in the OT has been revealed in the NT and these “secret” things of God—the mysteries—are all about Jesus

*We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began. None of the rulers of this age understood it, for if they had, they would not have crucified the Lord of glory. However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. 1Cor.2:6-10 So then, men ought to regard us as servants of Christ and as those entrusted with the secret things of God. Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. 1Cor.4:1-2*

*Now to him who is able to establish you by my gospel and the proclamation of Jesus Christ, according to the revelation of the mystery hidden for long ages past, but now revealed and made known through the prophetic writings by the command of the eternal God, so that all nations might believe and obey him—to the only wise God be glory forever through Jesus Christ! Amen. Rom.16:25-27*

*Surely you have heard about the administration of God's grace that was given to me for you, that is, the mystery made known to me by revelation, as I have already written briefly. In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus. I became a servant of this gospel by the gift of God's grace given me through the working of his power. Although I am less than the least of all God's people, this grace was given me: to preach to the Gentiles the unsearchable riches of Christ, and to make plain to everyone the administration of this mystery, which for ages past was kept hidden in God, who created all things. His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. Eph.3:2-11*

**We should pray for understanding**

*I pray that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*<sup>Eph.2:17-19</sup>

**The Holy Spirit reveals God to us:**

*But when he, the Spirit of truth, comes, he will guide you into all the truth. He will not speak on his own; he will speak only what he hears, and he will tell you what is yet to come. He will glorify me because it is from me that he will*

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receive what he will make known to you. All that belongs to the Father is mine. That is why I said the Spirit will receive from me what he will make known to you.<sup>Jn.16:13-15</sup>

### God reveals His plans and purposes through the Scriptures:

Be good to your servant while I live, that I may obey your word. Open my eyes that I may see wonderful things in your law.<sup>Ps.119:17-18</sup>

When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, "Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?"<sup>Lk.24:30-32</sup>

In that day the deaf will hear the words of the scroll, and out of gloom and darkness the eyes of the blind will see.<sup>Is.29:18</sup>

The LORD will fulfil [his purpose] for me; your love, O LORD, endures forever—do not abandon the works of your hands.<sup>Ps.138:8</sup>

Many are the plans in a man's heart, but it is the LORD's purpose that prevails. What a man desires is unfailing love; better to be poor than a liar.<sup>Prov.19:21-22</sup>

For this purpose [reason] the Son of God was manifested, that He might destroy the works of the devil. <sup>1Jn.3:8</sup>

### What is the difference between believing in your head (learning) and believing in your heart (revelation)?

Learning is from our ability and we all have differing abilities including the ability to reason. Most of us are not academics and do not understand the intricacies of science or arts even though we enjoy the benefits of them. For instance, if we only know English, we won't be able to translate other languages!

Revelation is a spiritual gift from God and is not dependant on our IQ or even our experience. "But what about you?" he asked. "Who do you say I am?" Simon Peter answered, "You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God." Jesus replied, "Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven."<sup>Matt.16:15-17</sup>

### However, revelation does require a pure heart and a willingness to seek God.

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.<sup>2Tim.2:7</sup>

### If we resist the Holy Spirit we will lose what we have

"The knowledge of the secrets of the kingdom of heaven has been given to you, but not to them. Whoever has will be given more, and he will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what he has will be taken from him. This is why I speak to them in parables: "Though seeing, they do not see; though hearing, they do not hear or <sup>Att.13:11-13</sup>

"He replied, I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what he has will be taken away.<sup>Lk.19:26</sup>

### How can get we revelation?

#### Meditate on God's Word

Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.<sup>2Tim.2:7</sup>

Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you.<sup>Matt.7:7</sup>

Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. [Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, dividing the word of truth aright. ]<sup>2Tim.3:15-16</sup>

#### Stay close to Jesus

All things have been committed to me by my Father. No one knows who the Son is except the Father, and no one knows who the Father is except the Son and those to whom the Son chooses to reveal him.<sup>Jn.10:22</sup>

Jesus declared, "Believe me, woman, a time is coming when you will worship the Father neither on this mountain nor in Jerusalem. You Samaritans worship what you do not know; we worship what we do know, for salvation is from the Jews. Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in spirit and truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in spirit and in

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truth.” The woman said, “I know that Messiah” (called Christ) “is coming. When he comes, he will explain everything to us.” Then Jesus declared, “I who speak to you am he.”<sup>Jn.4:21-26</sup>

### How can we open the eyes of other people?

#### Be the salt and light we are supposed to be

You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled underfoot. You are the light of the world. A town built on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven.<sup>Matt.5:13-16</sup>

### How can we get rid of gloom?

#### Fix our eyes on Jesus

Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart.<sup>Heb.12:2-3</sup>

#### Focus on the Word of God

To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness. Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honor Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.<sup>Is.8:20-9:2</sup>

See, darkness covers the earth and thick darkness is over the peoples, but the LORD rises upon you and his glory appears over you. Nations will come to your light and kings to the brightness of your dawn. Lift up your eyes and look about you: All assemble and come to you;<sup>Is.60:2-3</sup>

#### The Christian hope is glory not gloom:

the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.<sup>Col.1:27-28</sup>

**In fact, gloom should not be part of our lifestyle.** Of course, we can't help feeling sad or despondent but we can help being sad and despondent.

So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body, for youth and vigour are meaningless. Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come.<sup>Ecc.11:10-12:1</sup>

You have not come to a mountain that can be touched and that is burning with fire; to darkness, gloom and storm; to a trumpet blast or to such a voice speaking words that those who heard it begged that no further word be spoken to them, because they could not bear what was commanded: “If even an animal touches the mountain, it must be stoned.” The sight was so terrifying that Moses said, “I am trembling with fear.” But you have come to Mount Zion, to the heavenly Jerusalem, the city of the living God. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the judge of all men, to the spirits of righteous men made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel. <sup>Heb.12:18-24</sup>

### How can we see God's salvation?

#### In Jesus

“Father, I want those you have given me to be with me where I am, and to see my glory, the glory you have given me because you loved me before the creation of the world.”<sup>Jn.17:24</sup>

Then Jesus said, “Did I not tell you that if you believed, you would see the glory of God?”<sup>Jn.11:40</sup>

A voice of one calling: “In the desert prepare the way for the LORD\*; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the

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*rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. For the mouth of the LORD has spoken.”Is.40:3-5*

**Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people**

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01/12/2021

**Advent**

**Ps.18:30-40**

**Questions:**

**What does “Advent” mean?**

**Can we be sure of the accuracy of the Bible accounts of Jesus’ nativity?**

**What was John the Baptist’s ministry?**

**What was the significance of incense in the Temple worship of the Old Testament?**

**What is the Christian fulfilment of the Temple incense?**

**How can we prepare for Jesus’ next Advent?**

*Video: The Temple -Herod's Crowning Glory*

Temple started 19/20B.C and within 18 months it was in use, but the building work was not completed until A.D.64 and it was destroyed in A.D.70.

**Temple of Herod:**

In the eighteenth year (20-19 B.C.) of his reign Herod rebuilt the Temple on a more magnificent scale. He had adorned many cities and had erected many heathen temples; and it was not fitting that the temple of his capital should fall beneath these in magnificence. Probably, also, one of his motives was to placate the more pious of his subjects, whose sentiments he had often outraged.

The Jews were loath to have their Temple pulled down, fearing lest it might not be rebuilt. To demonstrate his good faith, Herod accumulated the materials for the new building before the old one was taken down. The new Temple was rebuilt as rapidly as possible, being finished in a year and a half, although work was in progress on the out-buildings and courts for eighty years. As it was unlawful for any but priests to enter the Temple, Herod employed over a 1,000 of them as masons and carpenters.

*They replied, “It has taken forty-six years to build this temple, and you are going to raise it in three days?” Jn.2:20*  
*Some of his disciples were remarking about how the temple was adorned with beautiful stones and with gifts dedicated to God. But Jesus said, “As for what you see here, the time will come when not one stone will be left on another; every one of them will be thrown down.” “Teacher,” they asked, “when will these things happen? And what will be the sign that they are about to take place?” He replied: “Watch out that you are not deceived. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am he,’ and, ‘The time is near.’ Do not follow them. When you hear of wars and uprisings, do not be frightened. These things must happen first, but the end will not come right away.” Then he said to them: “Nation will rise against nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be great earthquakes, famines and pestilences in various places, and fearful events and great signs from heaven. But before all this, they will seize you and persecute you. They will hand you over to synagogues and put you in prison, and you will be brought before kings and governors, and all on account of my name. And so you will bear testimony to me. But make up your mind not to worry beforehand how you will defend yourselves. For I will give you words and wisdom that none of your adversaries will be able to resist or contradict. You will be betrayed even by parents, brothers and sisters, relatives and friends, and they will put some of you to death. Everyone will hate you because of me. But not a hair of your head will perish. Stand firm, and you will win life. When you see Jerusalem being surrounded by armies, you will know that its desolation is near. Then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains, let those in the city get out, and let those in the country not enter the city. For this is the time of punishment in fulfilment of all that has been written. How dreadful it will be in those days for pregnant women and nursing mothers! There will be great distress in the land and wrath against this people. They will fall by the sword and will be taken as prisoners to all the nations. Jerusalem will be trampled on by the Gentiles until the times of the Gentiles are fulfilled. There will be signs in the sun, moon and stars. On the earth, nations will be in anguish and perplexity at the roaring and tossing of the sea. People will faint from terror, apprehensive of what is coming on the world, for the heavenly bodies will be shaken. At that time they will see the Son of Man coming in a cloud with power and great glory. When these things begin to take place, stand up and lift up your heads, because your*

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*redemption is drawing near.” He told them this parable: “Look at the fig tree and all the trees. When they sprout leaves, you can see for yourselves and know that summer is near. Even so, when you see these things happening, you know that the kingdom of God is near. Truly I tell you, this generation will certainly not pass away until all these things have happened. Heaven and earth will pass away, but my words will never pass away. Lk. 21:5-33*

### Comments:

#### What does “Advent” mean?

Advent means “coming” and usually refers to Jesus’ coming—either 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Coming. However, the expression “second coming” does not appear in the Bible and we should not confuse the **Lord’s coming** with the **Lord’s return!**

*Then the sign of the Son of Man will appear in heaven, and then all the tribes of the earth will mourn, and they will see the Son of Man coming on the clouds of heaven with power and great glory. Matthew 24:30*

It’s eye opening to realise what this verse does not say. It does not say that Christ will appear on the earth. Again Christ is using Old Testament language to convey His message:

*I was watching in the night visions, and behold, One like the Son of Man, coming with the clouds of heaven! He came to the Ancient of Days, and they brought Him near before Him. Daniel 7:13*

Christ appears to be quoting Daniel 7:13. This verse gives us increased insight into what Christ is saying in Matthew 24:30. Many have assumed that Christ is describing His *descent to earth*. But these verses actually describe an **ascent to the Father** (*the Ancient of Days*). This is why we must reject links made between *First Thessalonians 4:17*, which **describes Christ descent**, and *Matthew 24:30*.

#### They are two separate events!

Christ is stating (and Daniel 7:13 affirms), that His *parousia* will be with the clouds of Heaven- not earth! The expression “*the Lord coming on the clouds*” and its variants are Old Testament metaphors describing God judging a nation. These times are often described as a day of the Lord.

*He lays the beams of His upper chambers in the waters; He makes the clouds His chariot; He walks upon the wings of the wind; He makes the winds His messengers, Flaming fire His ministers. Psalm 104:3-4*

*“Behold, he goes up like clouds, And his chariots like the whirlwind; His horses are swifter than eagles. Woe to us, for we are ruined!” Jeremiah 4:13*

*For the day is near, Even the day of the LORD is near; It will be a day of clouds, A time of doom for the nations. Ezekiel 30:3*

What is also enlightening is the following verse in Daniel 7 from where Christ is quoting. It is my conviction that Christ is describing the **close of the Old Covenant** and the **beginning of His Kingdom on earth** (not a “*millennial reign*” but a **New Covenant Kingdom**). Otherwise Matthew 16:28 not only makes no sense, it actually makes Christ a liar!

*“Assuredly, I say to you, there are some standing here who shall not taste death till they see the Son of Man coming in His kingdom.” Matthew 16:28*

#### Can we be sure of the accuracy of the Bible accounts of Jesus’ nativity?

Yes! Because it was written during the lifetime of those who witnessed Jesus’ nativity, we can be sure of its historical accuracy.

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught. Lk. 1:1-4*

#### What was John the Baptist’s ministry?

To be a prophet like Elijah and prepare people to receive the Messiah



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*A voice of one calling: "In the desert prepare the way for the LORD; make straight in the wilderness a highway for our God. Every valley shall be raised up, every mountain and hill made low; the rough ground shall become level, the rugged places a plain. And the glory of the LORD will be revealed, and all mankind together will see it. Is.40:3-5*

*"I will send my messenger, who will prepare the way before me. Then suddenly the Lord you are seeking will come to his temple; the messenger of the covenant, whom you desire, will come," says the LORD Almighty. Mal.3:1*

*"See, I will send the prophet Elijah to you before that great and dreadful day of the LORD comes. He will turn the hearts of the parents to their children, and the hearts of the children to their parents; or else I will come and strike the land with total destruction." Mal.4:5-6*

*In those days John the Baptist came, preaching in the wilderness of Judea and saying, "Repent, for the kingdom of heaven has come near." This is he who was spoken of through the prophet Isaiah: "A voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Prepare the way for the Lord, make straight paths for him.'" Matt.3:1-3*

*John replied in the words of Isaiah the prophet, "I am the voice of one calling in the wilderness, 'Make straight the way for the Lord.'" Now the Pharisees who had been sent questioned him, "Why then do you baptize if you are not the Messiah, nor Elijah, nor the Prophet?" "I baptize with water," John replied, "but among you stands one you do not know. He is the one who comes after me, the straps of whose sandals I am not worthy to untie." Jn.1:23-27*

*And they asked him, "Why do the teachers of the law say that Elijah must come first?" Jesus replied, "To be sure, Elijah does come first, and restores all things. Why then is it written that the Son of Man must suffer much and be rejected? But I tell you, Elijah has come, and they have done to him everything they wished, just as it is written about him." Mk.9:11-13*

*From the days of John the Baptist until now, the kingdom of heaven has been subjected to violence, and violent people have been raiding it. All the prophets and the Law prophesied until John. And if you are willing to accept it, he is the Elijah who was to come. Whoever has ears, let them hear. Matt.11:12-15*

### What was the significance of incense in the Temple worship of the Old Testament?

Incense symbolised prayers reaching God

*May my prayer be set before you like incense.* Ps.141:2

*And when he had taken it, the four living creatures and the twenty-four elders fell down before the Lamb. Each one had a harp and they were holding golden bowls full of incense, which are the prayers of God's people. And they sang a new song, saying: "You are worthy to take the scroll and to open its seals, because you were slain, and with your blood you purchased for God persons from every tribe and language and people and nation. You have made them to be a kingdom and priests to serve our God, and they will reign on the earth." Ren.5:8-10*

*Another angel, who had a golden censer, came and stood at the altar. He was given much incense to offer, with the prayers of all God's people, on the golden altar in front of the throne. The smoke of the incense, together with the prayers of God's people, went up before God from the angel's hand.* Ren.8:3-4

### What is the Christian fulfilment of the Temple incense?

We can pray effectively because we know our prayers reach God

*This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him.* 1Jn.5:14-15

*Therefore I tell you, whatever you ask for in prayer, believe that you have received it, and it will be yours. And when you stand praying, if you hold anything against anyone, forgive them, so that your Father in heaven may forgive you your sins." Mk.11:24-25*

*The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.* Jas.5:16

*Ask and it will be given to you; seek and you will find; knock and the door will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives; the one who seeks finds; and to the one who knocks, the door will be opened.* Matt.7:7-8

### How can we prepare for Jesus' next Advent?

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people.

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*The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.* 1Pet.4:7-11

*And do this, understanding the present time: The hour has already come for you to wake up from your slumber, because our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. The night is nearly over; the day is almost here. So let us put aside the deeds of darkness and put on the armour of light. Let us behave decently, as in the daytime, not in carousing and drunkenness, not in sexual immorality and debauchery, not in dissension and jealousy. Rather, clothe yourselves with the Lord Jesus Christ, and do not think about how to gratify the desires of the flesh.* Rom.13:11-14

*Be patient, then, brothers and sisters, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop, patiently waiting for the autumn and spring rains. You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!* Jas.5:7-9

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone.* Col.4:2-6

A lady once asked John Wesley how he would spend the intervening time, if he knew he would die at midnight tomorrow. His reply: "Why madam, just as I intend to spend it now. I would preach this evening at Gloucester, and again at five tomorrow morning; after that I would ride to Tewkesbury, preach in the afternoon, and meet the societies in the evening. I would then go to Rev. Martin's house, who expects to entertain me, talk and pray with the family as usual, retire to my room at 10 o'clock, commend myself to my heavenly Father, lie down to rest, and wake up in Glory." Wesley was then asked what he would do if he knew his Lord would return at that time the next day and he replied: "I would go to bed and go to sleep; wake up in the morning, and go on with my work, for I would want Him to find me doing what he had appointed."

Yes, we must remain ready because: *the Son of Man will come at an hour when you do not expect him.* Lk.12:40

**Be dressed and ready for service!**

## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

24/11/2021

**The LORD Is Peace.** *So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it The LORD Is Peace.*<sup>Jdg.6:24</sup>

**Ps.18:20-30**

Video: *Solomon Temple build 1King8*

### Questions

**What is the difference between God's peace and the world's peace?**

**What marks Christianity out from all other religions?**

**What is the purpose of Scripture?**

**How would you answer someone who asks: *If God is with us, then why has this happened to us?***

**What is a "sacrifice"?**

**What sacrifices does God desire from us?**

### What is the difference between God's peace and the world's peace?

The world's peace is usually a cessation of war; it is about comfort and taking life easy; it is dependent on circumstances.

*What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.* Matt.16:26-27

*Then he said to them, "Watch out! Be on your guard against all kinds of greed; life does not consist in an abundance of possessions." And he told them this parable: "The ground of a certain rich man yielded an abundant harvest. He thought to himself, 'What shall I do? I have no place to store my crops.' "Then he said, 'This is what I'll do. I will tear down my barns and build bigger ones, and there I will store my surplus grain. And I'll say to myself, "You have plenty of grain laid up for many years. Take life easy; eat, drink and be merry." ' "But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' "This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God." Lk.12:15-21*

**God's peace is the reign of Jesus Christ who is the Prince of Peace.** God's peace is being reconciled to God through Jesus Christ. God's peace is experienced through being in His presence and having no guilt or shame.

*But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit. Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone.* Eph.2:13-20

### What marks Christianity out from all other religions?

God becoming human in Jesus and Jesus rising from the dead with an immortal body  
Jesus is not 1/2 God and 1/2 man — a god-man hybrid but truly God and truly human

*In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning... The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us. We have seen his glory, the glory of the one and only Son, who came from the Father, full of grace and truth.* Jn.1:1-2;14

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel,* 2Ti.2:8

*In your relationships with one another, have the same mindset as Christ Jesus: Who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be used to his own advantage; rather, he made himself nothing by taking the very nature of a servant, being made in human likeness. And being found in appearance as a man, he*

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*humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*Phil.2:5-11

**Nicene Creed:** *We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father.*

### What is the purpose of Scripture?

**Teach, encourage, inspire, spiritually feed.** The Bible was written for the express purpose of teaching us, encouraging us and giving us hope:

*For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*Rom.15:4-6

*Now those things happened as examples for us. They are supposed to keep us from longing for evil things, as the people of Israel did... Those things happened to them as examples for us. They were written down to warn us who are living at the time when God's work is being completed. So be careful. When you think you are standing firm, you might fall. You are tempted in the same way all other human beings are. God is faithful. He will not let you be tempted any more than you can take. But when you are tempted, God will give you a way out so that you can stand up under it.*<sup>1Cor.10:6-13</sup>

*However, continue in what you have learned and found to be true. You know who your teachers were. From infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures. They have the power to give you wisdom so that you can be saved through faith in Christ Jesus. Every Scripture passage is inspired by God. All of them are useful for teaching, pointing out errors, correcting people, and training them for a life that has God's approval. They equip God's servants so that they are completely prepared to do good things.*2Tim.3:14-17

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Man does not live on bread alone, but on every word that comes from the mouth of God.'"*Matt.4:4

*As for God, his way is perfect; the word of the LORD is flawless. He is a shield for all who take refuge in him.*Ps.18:30

*For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.*Ps.33:4

*My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favour and a good name in the sight of God and man. Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones. Honour the LORD with your wealth, with the firstfruits of all your crops; then your barns will be filled to overflowing, and your vats will brim over with new wine.*Prov.3:1-10

*I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*Ps.119:11

### How would you answer someone who asks: *If God is with us, then why has this happened to us?*

**You can't blame God for everything that goes wrong in life.**

*I have seen something else under the sun: The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. [12] Moreover, no one knows when their hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.*Eccl.9:11-12

*But time and unpredictable events overtake all of them.*GW

*God controls the timing of every event. He also controls how things turn out.*NIRV

*Sooner or later bad luck hits us all.*TM

*It is all decided by chance, by being in the right place at the right time.*NLT

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*This is what the LORD says: "Let not the wise boast of their wisdom or the strong boast of their strength or the rich boast of their riches, but let the one who boasts boast about this: that they have the understanding to know me, that I am the LORD, who exercises kindness, justice and righteousness on earth, for in these I delight," declares the LORD. Jer.9:23-24*

**Choices have consequences.** If people can make choices, then they have to take responsibility for their actions—and actions have re-actions. **But there is also another factor in life—the devil and his cohorts.** Until people submit to God's authority, there will always be conflict—but even after we submit to God's authority, we are still capable of opposing God and missing His standard for our life. However, one final day God will bring everything under His total authority

*For as in Adam all die, so in Christ all will be made alive. But each in turn: Christ, the firstfruits; then, when he comes, those who belong to him. Then the end will come, when he hands over the kingdom to God the Father after he has destroyed all dominion, authority and power. For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet." Now when it says that "everything" has been put under him, it is clear that this does not include God himself, who put everything under Christ. When he has done this, then the Son himself will be made subject to him who put everything under him, so that God may be all in all. 1Cor.15:22-28*

### What is a sacrifice?

Sacrifice in Hebrew comes from the word for slaughter and because often the meat was eaten by person offering it, sacrifice also meant "feast". Sometimes the whole offering was dedicated to God as in Burnt Offering, but usually the worshippers and the priests shared the food.

### Ruth Heflin "Glory":

Several years ago bumper stickers appeared everywhere bearing the slogan, **"Praise the Lord anyhow!"** The meaning was, *"Praise God whether you feel like it or not. If you come dragging in from work and you've had a miserable day, just pick yourself up and start praising God anyhow."* When I heard anybody say that, it disturbed my spirit. I asked the Lord why that concept troubled me so much. He showed me in the Old Testament that when any sacrifice was offered to God it had to be perfect, without blemish. We were being taught that we could offer any old praise to God and it would be accepted. I said, "But, Lord, it's true. There are times when we come to the House of God that we don't feel well. We don't always feel like praising You. There is an element of truth to this teaching. Show me the answer to it." We all learned a verse concerning the sacrifice of praise: *By him therefore let us offer the sacrifice of praise to God continually, that is, the fruit of our lips giving thanks to his name.*<sup>Hebrews 13:15</sup> It certainly does speak of *"the sacrifice of praise."* But when many use this verse, they do so with an understanding of the word "sacrifice" that never existed in Old Testament thinking. The Jews had many faults, but they never complained about what they had to offer to God. "Sacrifice" to us has become that which is difficult to do, that which we seemingly have to pay a price for. So, people say, "Let's offer the 'sacrifice' of praise" — meaning, "whether we feel like it or not." One day I was reading Isaiah: *I create the fruit of the lips.*<sup>Isaiah 57:19</sup> It suddenly dawned on me that if we are to offer the "sacrifice," and the sacrifice is *"the fruit of [our] lips,"* and if God creates it, it shouldn't take a great effort on our part. When we come into the House of the Lord, we can say, "Lord, create praise within me." Then suddenly, we begin to feel a little bubbling up from the innermost part of our being, and we find a "hallelujah," an "amen," a "praise the Lord," or some other word of praise coming forth. We find ourselves praising in ways that we have never praised before.

### What sacrifices does God desire from us?

#### God wants us to offer our whole life to Him as a sacrifice:

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed*

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*by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*Rom.12:1-2

**This includes our vocabulary.** What we say is important and we should be openly saying good things about God (which is praise):

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that openly profess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*Heb.13:15-16

*As you come to him, the living Stone—rejected by humans but chosen by God and precious to him—you also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ... But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy.*1Pet.2:4-5;9-10

**Our worship is more than just words— we should back up our words with action:**

*Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. I have received full payment and have more than enough. I am amply supplied, now that I have received from Epaphroditus the gifts you sent. They are a fragrant offering, an acceptable sacrifice, pleasing to God. And my God will meet all your needs according to the riches of his glory in Christ Jesus.*Phil.4:14-19

*With what shall I come before the LORD and bow down before the exalted God? Shall I come before him with burnt offerings, with calves a year old? Will the LORD be pleased with thousands of rams, with ten thousand rivers of oil? Shall I offer my firstborn for my transgression, the fruit of my body for the sin of my soul? He has showed you, O man, what is good. And what does the LORD require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.*Mic.6:6-8

*Therefore, when Christ came into the world, he said: "Sacrifice and offering you did not desire, but a body you prepared for me; with burnt offerings and sin offerings you were not pleased. Then I said, 'Here I am—it is written about me in the scroll—I have come to do your will, my God.'"Heb.10:5-7*

*Jesus said, "It is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. But go and learn what this means: 'I desire mercy, not sacrifice.'<sup>[Hos.6:6]</sup> For I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners."*Matt.9:12-13

17/11/2021

**Peace for our time!**

*Video WW1 Chaplains 20.39*

**Ps.18:6-19**

**Questions**

What is “peace”?

How can we have peace?

Can we have peace when all around us is in turmoil?

What should we do if we are not at peace?

What does “*the LORD make his face to shine upon you*” mean?

**Comments**

**What is “peace”?**

**True peace is not an absence of war but the reign of the Prince of Peace—Jesus Christ:**

*Too long have I lived among those who hate peace. I am for peace; but when I speak, they are for war.* Ps.120:6-7  
*Christ himself is our peace.* Eph.2:14

*For to us a child is born, to us a son is given and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end.* Is.9:6-7

*He will proclaim peace to the nations. His rule will extend from sea to sea and from the River to the ends of the earth.* Zech.9:10

**How can we have peace?**

**True peace doesn't come just from prayer but from knowing God and Jesus Christ:**

*Grace and peace be yours in abundance through the knowledge of God and of Jesus our Lord.* 2Pet.1:2

**It is through the Scriptures that we know God and knowing God and the Scriptures keeps us safe, sound and secure:**

*Great peace have those who love your law and nothing can make them stumble.* Ps.119:165

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.* Col.3:15-16

*The Lord gives strength to the weary and increases the power of the weak. Even youths grow tired and weary, and young men stumble and fall; but those who hope in the LORD will renew their strength. They will soar on wings like eagles; they will run and not grow weary, they will walk and not be faint.* Is.40:29-31

**Error and deception come from ignorance of God and His Word**

*You are in error because you do not know the Scriptures or the power of God.* Matt.22:29

**If we pay attention to God's Word, we will enjoy God's peace:**

*If only you had paid attention to my commands, your peace would have been like a river, your well-being like the waves of the sea.* Is.48:18

**Peace is integral to God's character:**

*But the LORD said to him, “Peace! Do not be afraid. You are not going to die.” So Gideon built an altar to the LORD there and called it Jehovab Shalom—The LORD Is Peace.* Jdg.6:23-24

**And so peace is a natural by-product of our relationship with God—a fruit of the Spirit:**

*Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace to those on whom his favour rests.* Lk.2:14

*The Lord said, ‘I will go with you and give you peace.’* Ex.33:14

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*

*[But what happens when we live God's way? He brings gifts into our lives, much the same way that fruit appears in an orchard—things like affection for others, exuberance about life, serenity. We develop a willingness to stick with things, a sense of compassion in the heart, and a conviction that a basic holiness permeates things and people. We find*

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*ourselves involved in loyal commitments, not needing to force our way in life, able to marshal and direct our energies wisely. Legalism is helpless in bringing this about; it only gets in the way.]Gal.5:22-23*

### Can we have peace when all around us is in turmoil?

**Yes because God brings peace by His presence:**

*“You believe at last!” Jesus answered. “But a time is coming, and has come, when you will be scattered, each to his own home. You will leave me all alone. Yet I am not alone, for my Father is with me. I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.”Jn.16:31-33*

*The Lord said, ‘I will go with you and give you peace’.*Ex.33:14

*Jesus himself stood among them and said to them, ‘Peace be with you.’*Lk.24:6

### What should we do if we are not at peace?

**Speak to our soul and praise God**

*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.*Ps.42:5

*Show me your ways, LORD, teach me your paths. Guide me in your truth and teach me, for you are God my Saviour, and my hope is in you all day long.*Ps.25:4-5

### What does “the LORD make his face to shine upon you” mean?

**God's presence is like sunshine**

*The heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands... It rises at one end of the heavens and makes its circuit to the other; nothing is hidden from its heat. The law of the LORD is perfect, reviving the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes.*Ps 19:1-8

**A shining face is a smiling face, a pledge of God's good favour**

*Restore us, O God; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved... Restore us, O God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved... Restore us, O LORD God Almighty; make your face shine upon us, that we may be saved.*Ps 80:3, 7, 19).

The “countenance” is the face or the expression of one's face. For God to lift up his countenance involves taking notice of and treating his people with favour. Peace (Hb. *shalom*) involves more than the English sense of “lack of war”; it means total well-being.

*“Men listened to me expectantly, waiting in silence for my counsel. After I had spoken, they spoke no more; my words fell gently on their ears. They waited for me as for showers and drank in my words as the spring rain. When I smiled at them, they scarcely believed it; the light of my face was precious to them.*Job 29:21-24

*Offer right sacrifices and trust in the LORD. Many are asking, “Who can show us any good?” Let the light of your face shine upon us, O LORD. You have filled my heart with greater joy than when their grain and new wine abound. I will lie down and sleep in peace, for you alone, O LORD, make me dwell in safety.*Ps 4:5-8

*My times are in your hands; deliver me from my enemies and from those who pursue me. Let your face shine on your servant; save me in your unfailing love. Let me not be put to shame, O LORD, for I have cried out to you; Ps.31:15- Redeem me from the oppression of men, that I may obey your precepts. Make your face shine upon your servant and teach me your decrees. Streams of tears flow from my eyes, for your law is not obeyed.*Ps.119:134-136



## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

10/11/2021

**Acts 29!**

*Video WW1 Chaplains 59:40*

**Ps.18:1-6**

**Questions**

**How does God speak to us?**

**How can we be sure that it is God who is speaking to us?**

**Can we speak on God's behalf?**

**What does it mean to belong to Jesus Christ?**

**What is the value of a human being?**

**Are we responsible for other people's lives?**

**What blessings are there in sharing our faith (what we believe about Jesus Christ)?**

**Comments**

**How does God speak to us?**

**God speaks in many ways BUT ALWAYS in agreement with the Scriptures and especially in line with the New Covenant.**

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Heb.1:1-3*

**However, God will use any circumstance to get our attention**

*When I think my bed will comfort me and my couch will ease my complaint, even then you frighten me with dreams and terrify me with visions, so that I prefer strangling and death, rather than this body of mine. I despise my life; I would not live forever. Let me alone; my days have no meaning. Job.7:13-16*

*For God does speak—now one way, now another—though man may not perceive it. In a dream, in a vision of the night, when deep sleep falls on men as they slumber in their beds, he may speak in their ears and terrify them with warnings, to turn man from wrongdoing and keep him from pride, to preserve his soul from the pit, his life from perishing by the sword. Or a man may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in his bones, so that his very being finds food repulsive and his soul loathes the choicest meal. His flesh wastes away to nothing, and his bones, once hidden, now stick out. His soul draws near to the pit, and his life to the messengers of death. Yet if there is an angel on his side as a mediator, one out of a thousand, to tell a man what is right for him, to be gracious to him and say, 'Spare him from going down to the pit; I have found a ransom for him'—then his flesh is renewed like a child's; it is restored as in the days of his youth. Job.33:14-25*

**And we can expect God to give us dreams and visions**

*'Fellow Jews and all of you who live in Jerusalem, let me explain this to you; listen carefully to what I say. These men are not drunk, as you suppose. It's only nine in the morning! No, this is what was spoken by the prophet Joel: "In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. Acts.2:14-18*

**How can we be sure that it is God who is speaking to us?**

**When God speaks to us, He never contradicts New Covenant teaching.**

*God is not human, that he should lie not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Nu.23:19*

*Don't be deceived, my dear brothers. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Jas.1:16-18*

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*For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law... The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a better hope is introduced, by which we draw near to God. And it was not without an oath! Others became priests without any oath, but he became a priest with an oath when God said to him: "The Lord has sworn and will not change his mind: 'You are a priest forever.'"* Heb.7:12-21

**Because our spirit and soul are so closely linked together we can easily think we have heard from God in our spirit when in fact we have thought it in our mind.**

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.* Heb.4:12

**And the devil can even appear as an angel of light,**

*And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such people are false apostles, deceitful workers, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants also masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.* 2Cor.11:12-14

**That is why discernment is so important**

*My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet.* Prov.3:21-24

*The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him? But we have the mind of Christ."* 1Cor.2:14-16

*And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless until the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God.* Phil.1:9-11

### Can we speak on God's behalf?

**Yes—and with authority.**

**A prophet is a spokesperson**

*Then the LORD said to Moses, "See, I have made you like God to Pharaoh, and your brother Aaron will be your prophet. You are to say everything I command you, and your brother Aaron is to tell Pharaoh to let the Israelites go out of his country."* Ex.7:1-2

*My message and my preaching were not with wise and persuasive words, but with a demonstration of the Spirit's power, so that your faith might not rest on men's wisdom, but on God's power. We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we speak of God's secret wisdom, a wisdom that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began... We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words.* 1Cor.2:5-13

### What does it mean to belong to Jesus Christ?

**All that we are and all that we have, is actually God's! We are His "property" and His "slaves" but He this also means that God has ultimate responsibility for us.**

*And why do you worry about clothes? See how the lilies of the field grow. They do not labour or spin. Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendour was dressed like one of these. If that is how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and tomorrow is thrown into the fire, will he not much more clothe you, O you of little faith? So do not worry, saying, 'What shall we eat?' or 'What shall we drink?' or 'What shall we wear?' For the pagans*

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*run after all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well. Therefore do not worry about tomorrow, for tomorrow will worry about itself. Each day has enough trouble of its own.* Matt.6:28-34

### What is the value of a human being?

*Every human being is created in God's image and who can ever put a price on a human soul. No one can redeem the life of another or give to God a ransom for them—the ransom for a life is costly, no payment is ever enough.* Ps.49:7-8

### Are we responsible for other people's lives?

**Yes and no!**

**We are not responsible for other people's actions but we are responsible for how we treat others**

*Then the LORD said to Cain, "Where is your brother Abel?" "I don't know," he replied. "Am I my brother's keeper?"* Gen.4:9

*Because of this, God in his wisdom said, 'I will send them prophets and apostles, some of whom they will kill and others they will persecute.' Therefore this generation will be held responsible for the blood of all the prophets that has been shed since the beginning of the world, from the blood of Abel to the blood of Zechariah, who was killed between the altar and the sanctuary. Yes, I tell you, this generation will be held responsible for it all.* Lk.11:49-51

### If we don't bear a true witness to Jesus Christ we will be faithless not faithful

*'His master replied, 'Well done, good and faithful servant! You have been faithful with a few things; I will put you in charge of many things. Come and share your master's happiness!' ... 'His master replied, 'You wicked, lazy servant! So you knew that I harvest where I have not sown and gather where I have not scattered seed? ... For whoever has will be given more, and they will have an abundance. Whoever does not have, even what they have will be taken from them. And throw that worthless servant outside, into the darkness, where there will be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'* Matt.25:23-30

### What blessings are there in sharing our faith (what we believe about Jesus Christ)?

And when we share our faith, we receive a double blessing. We receive the blessing of obedience because we are doing what Jesus commissioned us to do:

*Jesus, undeterred, went right ahead and gave his charge: "God authorized and commanded me to commission you: Go out and train everyone you meet, far and near, in this way of life, marking them by baptism in the threefold name: Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Then instruct them in the practice of all I have commanded you. I'll be with you as you do this, day after day after day, right up to the end of the age."* Matt.28:18-20

And we also receive the blessing of understanding our inheritance in Jesus:

*I pray that you will be active in sharing what you believe. Then you will completely understand every good thing we have in Christ.* Phile.1:6

Faith is much more than a mental ascent to Christianity because faith is spiritual; however, faith is a knowing—it is a certainty:

*I pray to the God of our Lord Jesus Christ. God is the glorious Father. I keep asking him to give you the wisdom and understanding that come from the Holy Spirit. I want you to know God better. I also pray that your mind might see more clearly. Then you will know the hope God has chosen you to receive. You will know that the things God's people will receive are rich and glorious. And you will know his great power. It can't be compared with anything else. It is at work for us who believe. It is like the mighty strength God showed when he raised Christ from the dead.* Eph.1:17-20

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**Shake the snake into the fire!** But Paul shook the snake off into the fire and suffered no ill effects. Acts.28:5

### Questions

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What is an angel?

Who is the devil?

How can the devil harm us?

How can we protect ourselves from the devil's deception?

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### Are you truly grateful for your daily food?

*He took some bread and gave thanks to God in front of them all. Then he broke it and began to eat. They were all encouraged.* Acts 27:35-36

### Psalm 17:10f

*Video: 2Thess New Cov and Kingdom  
Alzheimer's Society – Bookcase Analogy*

### Questions:

**What does “There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Gal.3:28 mean?**

**What does it mean to be “holy”?**

**Do the OT food regulations apply to Christians?**

**What principles about life (including food) that apply to Christians?**

**Is there any spiritual value in fasting?**

### Comments:

**What does this mean?**

*“There is neither Jew nor Greek, slave nor free, male nor female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus.” Gal.3:28”*

There is no hierarchy within the Church as we are all brothers and sisters under our Father God's headship with Jesus as our Elder brother

*But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters. He says, “I will declare your name to my brothers and sisters; in the assembly I will sing your praises.” And again, “I will put my trust in him.” And again he says, “Here am I, and the children God has given me.” Heb.2:9-13*

Of course there are still gender, racial and social differences but these must not affect our relationship with God or each other. We still need to respect authority and obey leaders but within the Church no-one has more value than anyone else and spirituality is determined by maturity not by gender, race or social status.

*Equality is about making sure all people are treated fairly. This doesn't mean everyone has to be treated the same - it's about ensuring that access to opportunities are available to all, by taking account of the differing needs and capabilities of individuals. Diversity is recognising and valuing these differences and ensuring all different types of people contribute to society. It's the many different parts of a person's character and identity make them unique. It's important to understand someone's differences so that you can include them and treat them equally and fairly.*

*By faith in Christ you are in direct relationship with God. Your baptism in Christ was not just washing you up for a fresh start. It also involved dressing you in an adult faith wardrobe—Christ's life, the fulfilment of God's original promise. In Christ's family there can be no division into Jew and non-Jew, slave and free, male and female. Among us you are all equal. That is, we are all in a common relationship with Jesus Christ. Also, since you are Christ's family, then you are Abraham's famous “descendant,” heirs according to the covenant promises. Gal.3:26-29*

That is why slavery is so abhorrent.

*We know that the law is good if one uses it properly. We also know that the law is made not for the righteous but for lawbreakers and rebels, the ungodly and sinful, the unholy and irreligious, for those who kill their fathers or mothers, for murderers, for the sexually immoral, for those practicing homosexuality, **for slave traders** and liars and perjurers—and for whatever else is contrary to the sound doctrine that conforms to the gospel concerning the glory of the blessed God, which he entrusted to me. 1Tim.1:8-11*

**What does it mean to be “holy”?**

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Holy means sacred, pure and clean; separated or dedicated to God—*i.e.* separated from sin and therefore consecrated to God. Holiness is not a abstinence of the flesh but a new heart—and an acknowledgement of God’s forgiveness. A Christian is **already holy** in their spirit (*spirit* is “*heart*”; it was made in God’s image and recreated at conversion) but a Christian is also **being made holy** in their soul (*soul* is “*personality*” that was inherited from natural parents).

*We are sending this letter to you, the members of God's church in Corinth. You have been made holy because you belong to Christ Jesus. God has chosen you to be his holy people.<sup>1Cor.1:2</sup> But now He has reconciled you by Christ's physical body through death to present you holy in His sight, without blemish and free from accusation.<sup>Col.1:22</sup> God is the God who gives peace. May he make you holy through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept free from blame. May you be without blame from now until our Lord Jesus Christ comes. The One who has chosen you is faithful. He will do all these things.<sup>1Thess.5:23-24</sup> I want to know Christ better. I want to know the power that raised him from the dead. I want to share in his sufferings. I want to become like him by sharing in his death. Then by God's grace I will rise from the dead. I have not yet received all of those things. I have not yet been made perfect. But I move on to take hold of what Christ Jesus took hold of me for. Brothers and sisters, I don't consider that I have taken hold of it yet. But here is the one thing I do. I forget what is behind me. I push hard toward what is ahead of me. I move on toward the goal to win the prize. God has appointed me to win it. The heavenly prize is Christ Jesus himself. All of us who are grown up in the faith should see things that way.<sup>Phil.3:8-15</sup>*

External things, including food, will not make us unholy or take us away from God—it is our own heart that does that: *After he had left the crowd and entered the house, his disciples asked him about this parable. "Are you so dull?" he asked. "Don't you see that nothing that enters a man from the outside can make him `unclean'? For it doesn't go into his heart but into his stomach, and then out of his body." (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods "clean.") He went on: "What comes out of a man is what makes him `unclean.' For from within, out of men's hearts, come evil thoughts, sexual immorality, theft, murder, adultery, greed, malice, deceit, lewdness, envy, slander, arrogance and folly. All these evils come from inside and make a man `unclean.'"<sup>Mk.7:17-23</sup>*

### Do the OT food regulations apply to Christians?

**No!**

Some Christians think that God forbids certain foods because “*God’s Word is eternal*” and He “*doesn’t change His mind*”. But the OT laws consist of moral laws and social laws. The moral laws reflect God’s nature and values—such as the 10 commandments—and these don’t change because God doesn’t change. (The Sabbath Day commandment become obsolete when the New Birth was introduced under the New Covenant—Hebrews 4 explains that the Sabbath is a type of Salvation where we cannot do any work for our salvation but enter God’s rest by faith.

*For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from his own work, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will fall by following their example of disobedience.<sup>Heb.4:8-11</sup>*

The other OT laws were social laws and specifically for the nation of Israel whilst they were under the Old Covenant—and when the New Covenant came, these laws became obsolete

*By calling this covenant “new,” he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and aging will soon disappear. Now the first covenant had regulations for worship and also an earthly sanctuary... When Christ came as high priest of the good things that are already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not man-made, that is to say, not a part of this creation... For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance—now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.<sup>Heb.8:13-9:15</sup>*

During the transition from OT to NT, some regulations over-lapped: *Instead we should write to them, telling them to abstain from food polluted by idols, from sexual immorality, from the meat of strangled animals and from blood.<sup>Acts.15:20</sup> (written AD49/50)* Later those regulations were dropped: Just a year later (AD 51) when Paul wrote to the Church at Thessalonica, he made no mention of food: *As for other matters,*

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brothers and sisters, we instructed you how to live in order to please God, as in fact you are living. Now we ask you and urge you in the Lord Jesus to do this more and more. For you know what instructions we gave you by the authority of the Lord Jesus. It is God's will that you should be sanctified: that you should avoid sexual immorality.<sup>1Thess.4:1-3</sup>

Nine years after that (AD 57/58), Paul clearly explained that all food is “clean” and may be eaten: *As one who is in the Lord Jesus, I am fully convinced that no food is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for him it is unclean. If your brother is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy your brother for whom Christ died. Do not allow what you consider good to be spoken of as evil.*<sup>Rom.14:14-16</sup> “Everything is permissible”—but not everything is beneficial.

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will **abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons.** Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and **order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth.** For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.<sup>1Tim.4:1-5</sup>

**What principles about life apply to Christians? (including food)**

**Preferring one another in love**

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*<sup>Eph.4:1-3</sup>

*You, my brothers, were called to be free. But do not use your freedom to indulge the sinful nature; rather, serve one another in love. The entire law is summed up in a single command: “Love your neighbour as yourself.” If you keep on biting and devouring each other, watch out or you will be destroyed by each other.*<sup>Gal.5:13-15</sup>

**All things are permissible but not all things are beneficial**

*“Everything is permissible”—but not everything is constructive. Nobody should seek his own good, but the good of others. Eat anything sold in the meat market without raising questions of conscience, for, “The earth is the Lord's, and everything in it.”*<sup>1Cor.10:23-33</sup>

**Is there any spiritual value in fasting?**

**There is no spiritual value in fasting (other than obedience if God tells you to fast)**

*They said to him, “John's disciples frequently fast and say prayers, and so do the disciples of the Pharisees. But your disciples eat and drink.” Jesus asked them, “Can you force wedding guests to fast while the groom is still with them? The time will come when the groom will be taken away from them. At that time they will fast... People don't pour new wine into old wineskins. If they do, the new wine will make the skins burst. The wine will run out, and the skins will be ruined. Rather, new wine is to be poured into fresh skins. No one who has been drinking old wine wants new wine. He says, ‘The old wine is better!’”*<sup>Lk.5:33-39</sup>

Jesus left His Disciples for 3 days and 3 nights (and you could also count 10 days between His ascension and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit) but He is with us now as much (actually more than) as when He was on earth.

*“If you love me, you will obey what I command. And I will ask the Father, and he will give you another Counsellor to be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept him, because it neither sees him nor knows him. But you know him, for he lives with you and will be\* in you. I will not leave you as orphans; I will come to you. Before long, the world will not see me anymore, but you will see me. Because I live, you also will live.”*<sup>Jn.14:15-19</sup>

So we should never be pressurised to fast (*Can you force wedding guests to fast while the groom is still with them?*)

**However, there is great value in a disciplined lifestyle, of being in control of your desires (including the desire to eat).** Going without food for a time can be of physical and mental benefit.

*No immoral, impure or greedy person—such a person is an idolater—has any inheritance in the kingdom of Christ and of God.*<sup>Eph.5:5</sup>

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*Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly. For physical training is of some value, but godliness has value for all things, holding promise for both the present life and the life to come. This is a trustworthy saying that deserves full acceptance. That is why we labour and strive, because we have put our hope in the living God, who is the Saviour of all people, and especially of those who believe. 1Tim.4:7-10*

OT example of people wanting to keep themselves spiritually pure in a pagan situation. *But Daniel resolved not to defile himself with the royal food and wine, and he asked the chief official for permission not to defile himself this way... Daniel then said... "Please test your servants for ten days: Give us nothing but vegetables to eat and water to drink. Then compare our appearance with that of the young men who eat the royal food, and treat your servants in accordance with what you see." So he agreed to this and tested them for ten days. At the end of the ten days they looked healthier and better nourished than any of the young men who ate the royal food. So the guard took away their choice food and the wine they were to drink and gave them vegetables instead. To these four young men God gave knowledge and understanding of all kinds of literature and learning. And Daniel could understand visions and dreams of all kinds.*<sup>Dan.1:8-17</sup>



20/10/2021

## The God of the Second Chance

*You should have taken my advice... Then you would have spared yourselves this damage and loss. But now I urge you to keep up your courage, Because not one of you will be lost.*<sup>Acts27:21-22</sup>

### Psalm 17:1-9

Video: Rom12 Marks of a Christian

### Questions

**Is there a difference between an easy life and an enjoyable life?**

**How can we overcome the difficulties we face?**

**Can Christians get another chance if they make a mess of their life?**

### Comments

**Is there a difference between an easy life and an enjoyable life?**

**Yes! Nowhere in the Bible are promised an easy life**

**Adam's sin has affected the whole world**

*"Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return.*<sup>Gen.4:17-19</sup>

*The race is not to the swift or the battle to the strong, nor does food come to the wise or wealth to the brilliant or favour to the learned; but time and chance happen to them all. Moreover, no one knows when their hour will come: As fish are caught in a cruel net, or birds are taken in a snare, so people are trapped by evil times that fall unexpectedly upon them.*<sup>Eccl.9:11-12</sup>

**Jesus has redeemed us from the curse**—but it is the curse of the law not the curse of Adam's sin. For all who rely on the works of the law are under a curse, as it is written: "Cursed is everyone who does not continue to do everything written in the Book of the Law." Clearly no one who relies on the law is justified before God, because "the righteous will live by faith." The law is not based on faith; on the contrary, it says, "The person who does these things will live by them." Christ redeemed us from the curse of the law by becoming a curse for us, for it is written: "Cursed is everyone who is hung on a pole." He redeemed us in order that the blessing given to Abraham might come to the Gentiles through Christ Jesus, so that by faith we might receive the promise of the Spirit. <sup>Gal.3:10-14</sup>

**The result of Adam's sin will stay with us until we die or until Jesus returns**—the redemption of our body

*We know that the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption to sonship, the redemption of our bodies. For in this hope we were saved. But hope that is seen is no hope at all. Who hopes for what they already have? But if we hope for what we do not yet have, we wait for it patiently.*<sup>Rom.8:22-25</sup>

**Jesus has promised trouble to Christians**

*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember the words I spoke to you: 'No servant is greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the One who sent me.*<sup>Jn.15:18-21</sup>

*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*<sup>Jn.16:33</sup>

**However, God has promised us a good life, a wholesome, enjoyable, satisfying life—if we honour Him**

*It is good for people to eat, drink, and enjoy their work under the sun during the short life God has given them, and to accept their lot in life. And it is a good thing to receive wealth from God and the good health to enjoy it. To enjoy*

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*your work and accept your lot in life—this is indeed a gift from God. God keeps such people so busy enjoying life that they take no time to brood over the past.*<sup>Ecd.5:18-20</sup>

*Children, obey your parents as believers in the Lord. Obey them because it's the right thing to do. Scripture says, "Honour your father and mother." That is the first commandment that has a promise. "Then things will go well with you. You will live a long time on the earth."*<sup>1Eph.6:1-3</sup>

### **If we don't honour God, we can expect trouble**

*What sorrow awaits those who argue with their Creator.*<sup>Is.45:9</sup>

### **Trouble may not be instant, but it will surely come**

*Surely God is good to Israel, to those who are pure in heart. But as for me, my feet had almost slipped; I had nearly lost my foothold. For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked. They have no struggles; their bodies are healthy and strong. They are free from common human burdens; they are not plagued by human ills. Therefore pride is their necklace; they clothe themselves with violence. From their callous hearts comes iniquity; their evil imaginations have no limits. They scoff, and speak with malice; with arrogance they threaten oppression. Their mouths lay claim to heaven, and their tongues take possession of the earth. Therefore their people turn to them and drink up waters in abundance. They say, "How would God know? Does the Most High know anything?" This is what the wicked are like—always free of care, they go on amassing wealth. Surely in vain I have kept my heart pure and have washed my hands in innocence. All day long I have been afflicted, and every morning brings new punishments. If I had spoken out like that, I would have betrayed your children. When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Surely you place them on slippery ground; you cast them down to ruin. How suddenly are they destroyed, completely swept away by terrors!*<sup>Ps.73:1-19</sup>

### **How can we overcome the difficulties we face?**

#### **By trusting God.**

*In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*<sup>1Jn.5:3-5</sup>

#### **Trusting God (faith) is not just a simple platitude but a conscious and deliberate giving of ourselves to God—our past, present and future, with the confidence/assurance that He is in charge.**

*So here's what I want you to do, God helping you: Take your everyday, ordinary life—your sleeping, eating, going-to-work, and walking-around life—and place it before God as an offering. Embracing what God does for you is the best thing you can do for him. Don't become so well-adjusted to your culture that you fit into it without even thinking. Instead, fix your attention on God. You'll be changed from the inside out. Readily recognize what he wants from you, and quickly respond to it. Unlike the culture around you, always dragging you down to its level of immaturity, God brings the best out of you, develops well-formed maturity in you.*<sup>Rom.12:1-2</sup>

#### **Jesus is in charge because He is Lord.** Although Jesus is Lord because He is God, He was made a little lower than the angels during His time on earth when He humbled himself by becoming human

*"What is man that you are mindful of him, the son of man that you care for him? You made him a little lower than the angels; you crowned him with glory and honour and put everything under his feet." In putting everything under him, God left nothing that is not subject to him. Yet at present we do not see everything subject to him. But we see Jesus, who was made a little lower than the angels, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone.*<sup>Heb.2:6-9</sup>

#### **Jesus was obedient to His Father—to the point of dying for us—and God has now exalted Him to the highest place (where He is no longer lower than angels)**

*And being found in appearance as a man, he humbled himself by becoming obedient to death—even death on a cross! Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and every tongue acknowledge that Jesus Christ is Lord, to the glory of God the Father.*<sup>Phil.2:8-11</sup>

#### **As Lord, Jesus has all authority and will keep us spiritually safe**

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*My sheep listen to my voice. I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they will never die. No one can steal them out of my hand. My Father, who has given them to me, is greater than anyone. No one can steal them out of my Father's hand. I and the Father are one.*<sup>Jn.10:27-30</sup>

*Holy Father, you have given me your name; now protect them by the power of your name so that they will be united just as we are. During my time here, I protected them by the power of the name you gave me. I guarded them so that not one was lost, except the one headed for destruction, as the Scriptures foretold.*<sup>Jn.15:11-12</sup>

### Can Christians get another chance if they make a mess of their life?

**Yes!**

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose.*<sup>Rom.8:28</sup>

*By faith Isaac blessed Jacob and Esau in regard to their future.*<sup>Heb.11:20</sup> *Esau said to his father, "Do you have only one blessing, my father? Bless me too, my father!" ... His father Isaac answered him, "Your dwelling will be away from the earth's richness, away from the dew of heaven above. You will... serve your brother. But when you grow restless, you will throw his yoke from off your neck."*<sup>Gen.27:38-40</sup>

The Hymn puts it this way:

*The vilest sinner out of hell, Who lives to feel his need, Is welcome to a Throne of Grace, The Saviour's blood to plead. It speaks of pardon, full and free, Through Christ, the Lamb once slain; Whose blood can cleanse the foulest soul, And take away all stain.*

**God has promises for overcomers** (remember, these promises were made to people who had been told to repent (*i.e.* *Ephesus: Yet I hold this against you: You have forsaken the love you had at first. Consider how far you have fallen! Repent and do the things you did at first. If you do not repent, I will come to you and remove your lampstand from its place.*<sup>Rev.2:4-5</sup>))

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God... The one who overcomes will not be hurt at all by the second death... To the one who overcomes, I will give some of the hidden manna. I will also give that person a white stone with a new name written on it, known only to him who receives it... To the one who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations... The one who overcomes will, like them, be dressed in white. I will never blot out the name of that person from the book of life, but will acknowledge their name before my Father and his angels... Him who overcomes I will make a pillar in the temple of my God. Never again will they leave it. I will write on them the name of my God and the name of the city of my God, the new Jerusalem, which is coming down out of heaven from my God; and I will also write on them my new name... To the one who overcomes, I will give the right to sit with me on my throne, just as I overcame and sat down with my Father on his throne.*<sup>Rev.2:7;11;17;26;3:5;12:21</sup>

06/10/2021

## It shouldn't happen to a Christian!

*"I appeal to Caesar"*<sup>Acts 25:11</sup>

### Psalm 16

Video: *Philippians 2*

### Questions

How can we ensure that we don't carry the burdens of our concerns?

Describe God's character

How can we have the same character as God?

Are rulers of countries placed there by God or people? (re: Divine rights of Kings)

What involvement should a Christian have in society?

How can we use the world's resources for God's Kingdom?

### Comments

#### How can we ensure that we don't carry the burdens of our concerns?

Although we can't un-think a thought, we can replace our thoughts and mind values—and the best replacement is the Word of God.

**Praise** (*praise = eulogy, which means: "to say good words"*)

*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.* Ps. 42:5; 119:43:5

*But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus, and not only by his coming but also by the comfort you had given him. He told us about your longing for me, your deep sorrow, your ardent concern for me, so that my joy was greater than ever.* 2 Cor. 7:6-7

**Prayer.** Prayer is communion with God, where we first and foremost show our appreciation of Him by our praise and thanks; and in prayer we should also give our concerns to God—and then leave our concerns with Him (and also the burden of our concerns).

*"Not so, my lord," Hannah replied, "I am a woman who is deeply troubled. I have not been drinking wine or beer; I was pouring out my soul to the LORD. Do not take your servant for a wicked woman; I have been praying here out of my great anguish and grief." Eli answered, "Go in peace, and may the God of Israel grant you what you have asked of him." She said, "May your servant find favour in your eyes." Then she went her way and ate something, and her face was no longer downcast.* 1 Sam. 1:15-18

*Cast your cares on the LORD and he will sustain you; he will never let the righteous fall.* Ps. 55:22

*Humble yourselves under the mighty power of God, and at the right time he will lift you up in honour. Turn all your anxiety over to God because he cares for you. Keep your mind clear, and be alert.*<sup>1 Pet. 5:6-8</sup>

### Obedience—doing the right thing

*The LORD looked with favour on Abel and his offering, but on Cain and his offering he did not look with favour. So Cain was very angry, and his face was downcast. Then the LORD said to Cain, "Why are you angry? Why is your face downcast? If you do what is right, will you not be accepted? But if you do not do what is right, sin is crouching at your door; it desires to have you, but you must rule over it."* Gen. 4:4-7

**Confession** *homologeō* ὁμολογέω, to speak the same thing (*homos*, "same," *lego*, "to speak"). A burden shared is a burdened halved. In psychology it is called "*catharsis*"—meaning "purged" or "cleansing". Therefore confess [admit] your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous man is powerful and effective. [Acknowledge your faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed: for the prayer of a righteous man availeth much, if it be fervent. Geneva Bible] Jas. 5:16

### Describe God's character

**God is gracious, loving and compassionate**

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.*<sup>Ps. 103:8</sup>

**God is holy**

*But just as he who called you is holy, so be holy in all you do; for it is written: "Be holy, because I am holy."*<sup>1 Pet. 1:15-16</sup>

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### God is righteous

*The LORD is righteous in all his ways and loving toward all he has made. Ps. 145:17*

*Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?" Gen 18:25*

*Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom. You love righteousness and hate wickedness; Ps. 45:6-7*

### How can we have the same character as God?

We already do have the same character as God in embryonic form—we need to mature

*Through these he has given us his very great and precious promises, so that through them you may participate in the divine nature, having escaped the corruption in the world caused by evil desires. For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. But if anyone does not have them, he is near-sighted and blind, and has forgotten that he has been cleansed from his past sins. 2Pet. 1:4-9*

*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure. 1Jn. 3:2-3*

*In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. 1Jn. 4:17-18*

### Are rulers of countries placed there by God (Divine rights of Kings)?

The tension between God's sovereignty and people's free-will has been debated for millennia—and will continue to be debated. Has God created the world and left it to its own devices or does God intervene in our day-to-day activities? If God does intervene, does He only intervene in response to prayer? And if He does, then how much prayer and by whom? What about physical laws such as gravity, mortality, times and seasons?

*As long as the earth endures, seedtime and harvest, cold and heat, summer and winter, day and night will never cease. Gen. 8:22*

*Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail. They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. Lam. 3:22-23*

God is Sovereign—He is Omnipotent, Omnipresent, Omniscient—and Omnibenevolent.

But God has set mankind to oversee His creation

*So God created man in his own image, in the image of God he created him; male and female he created them. God blessed them and said to them, "Be fruitful and increase in number; fill the earth and subdue it. Rule over the fish of the sea and the birds of the air and over every living creature that moves on the ground." Gen. 1:27-28*

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. Gen. 2:15*

The Divine Rights of Kings asserts that a monarch is not accountable to any earthly authority (such as a parliament) because their right to rule is derived from divine authority. Thus, the monarch is not subject to the will of the people, of the aristocracy, or of any other estate of the realm. It then follows that only divine authority can judge a monarch, and that any attempt to depose, dethrone or restrict their powers runs contrary to God's will and may constitute a sacrilegious act. It is often expressed in the phrase by the *Grace of God*, which has historically been attached to the titles of certain reigning monarchs. Richard I of England was kidnapped on his way back from the Crusades and at his trial at Speyer Germany in 1193 declared: "I am born in a rank which recognizes no superior but God, to whom alone I am responsible for my actions", and it was Richard who first used the motto "*Dieu et mon droit*" ("God and my right") which is still the motto of the Monarch of the United Kingdom. Henry VIII of England declared himself the Supreme Head of the Church

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of England, and exerted the power of the throne more than any of his predecessors. It was further developed by James VI of Scotland (1567–1625) and came to the fore in England under his reign as James I of England (1603–1625). Louis XIV of France (1643–1715) strongly promoted the theory as well. Before the Reformation the anointed king was, within his realm, the accredited *vicar of God* for secular purposes; after the Reformation he (or she if queen regnant) became this in Protestant states for religious purposes also. In England, it is not without significance that the sacerdotal vestments, generally discarded by the clergy – dalmatic, alb and stole (liturgical vestments) – continued to be among the insignia of the sovereign (see Coronation of the British monarch).

The divine right of kings was the main issue of the English Civil War, the Royalists holding that "all Christian kings, princes and governors" derive their authority direct from God, the Parliamentarians that this authority is the outcome of a contract, actual or implied, between sovereign and people.

The Magna Carta made the king promise that justice would not be sold to the highest bidder, that due process and the laws of the land would be observed, and that the right to trial by jury was entrenched. These provisions underpinned the development of a genuine rule of law in succeeding centuries, especially after the Glorious Revolution of 1688 created a truly independent judiciary by doing away with the Crown's former right to hire and fire judges at will.

### However, we should respect our leaders—both political and spiritual

*Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin. "My brothers," he said, "I have always done my duty to God. To this very day I feel that I have done nothing wrong." Ananias the high priest heard this. So he ordered the men standing near Paul to hit him on the mouth. Then Paul said to him, "You pretender! God will hit you! You sit there and judge me by the law. But you yourself broke the law when you commanded them to hit me!" Those who were standing near Paul said, "How dare you talk like that to God's high priest!" Paul replied, "Brothers, I didn't realize he was the high priest. It is written, 'Do not speak evil about the ruler of your people.'" (Ex 22:28)<sup>Acts.23:1-5</sup>*

### What involvement should a Christian have in society?

We are to be "salt and light"

*You are the salt of the earth. But if the salt loses its saltiness, how can it be made salty again? It is no longer good for anything, except to be thrown out and trampled by men. You are the light of the world. A city on a hill cannot be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a bowl. Instead they put it on its stand, and it gives light to everyone in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before men, that they may see your good deeds and praise your Father in heaven.* Matt.6:13-16

There is a good argument not to get too involved in society

*Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus. No one serving as a soldier gets involved in civilian affairs—he wants to please his commanding officer. Similarly, if anyone competes as an athlete, he does not receive the victor's crown unless he competes according to the rules. The hardworking farmer should be the first to receive a share of the crops. Reflect on what I am saying, for the Lord will give you insight into all this.* 2Tim.2:3-7

*Jesus said, "My kingdom is not of this world. If it were, my servants would fight to prevent my arrest by the Jews. But now my kingdom is from another place."* Jn.18:36

*But our citizenship is in heaven. And we eagerly await a Saviour from there, the Lord Jesus Christ.* <sup>Phil.3:10</sup>

However, we are to pray for national leaders and prayer without action can be a "cop-out"

*The first thing I want you to do is pray. Pray every way you know how, for everyone you know. Pray especially for rulers and their governments to rule well so we can be quietly about our business of living simply, in humble contemplation. This is the way our Saviour God wants us to live.* <sup>1Tim.2:1-3</sup>

God also expects us to be good citizens of our country.

*Everyone must submit to governing authorities. For all authority comes from God, and those in positions of authority have been placed there by God. So anyone who rebels against authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and they will be punished... The authorities are God's servants, sent for your good. But if you are doing wrong, of course you should be afraid, for they have the power to punish you. They are God's servants, sent for the very purpose of punishing those who do what is wrong. So you must submit to them, not only to avoid punishment, but also to keep*

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*a clear conscience... Pay your taxes and government fees to those who collect them, and give respect and honour to those who are in authority.*<sup>Rom.13:1-7</sup>

### **How can we use the world's resources for God's Kingdom?**

Resources such as our Legal system (which is based on the Magna Carta), our Parliamentary system of the National Governments and Local Governments, the Emergency Services and the NHS, State Benefits, Gift Aid, *etc.*

The system of the world is only opposed to God when it opposes God and the resources of the world should be used for the Kingdom's advantage (which is also our advantage too):

*Use your worldly resources to benefit others and make friends. Then, when your earthly possessions are gone, they will welcome you to an eternal home.*<sup>Lk.16:9</sup>

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### Psalm 15

Video: Intro Jude and Revelation -9:18

**I worship the God of our ancestors:** *I worship the God of our ancestors. I am a follower of the Way of Jesus... I believe everything that agrees with the Law. I believe everything written in the Prophets. I have the same hope in God that these men have. I believe that both the godly and the ungodly will rise from the dead.* <sup>Acts.24:14-15</sup>

### Questions

Define “worship”

How can liturgy and songs help us in worship?

Do we worship the same God that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped?

How is Christianity different from Judaism?

What does it mean to be “Christian”?

How important is the Bible to our worship?

What is the Christian’s hope?

### Comments

#### Define “worship”

Our English word “worship” is derived from the Old English word “*weorþscipe*”, meaning worthiness or worth-ship—to give worth to something. We were created with a purpose—and that purpose is to worship God:

*Worship the Lord your God. He is the only one you should serve.* <sup>Lk.4:8</sup>

To worship God is to pay respect to God but because **true worship** is a heart issue, our homage must be a genuine reflection of both our lips and our lives.

*Offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.* <sup>Rom.12:1</sup>

*God is spirit. His worshipers must worship him in spirit and in truth.* <sup>Jn.4:24</sup>

#### How can liturgy and songs help us in worship?

Music affects our emotions and can be a valuable help in worship.

*Saul's attendants said to him, “An evil [distressing/disturbing] spirit that was sent by God is terrifying you. Give us an order to look for someone who can play the harp. He will play it when the evil spirit that was sent by God comes on you. Then you will feel better.” So Saul said to his attendants, “Find someone who plays the harp well. Bring him to me.” One of the servants said, “I've seen someone who knows how to play the harp. He is a son of Jesse from Bethlehem. He's a brave man. He would make a good soldier. He's a good speaker. He's very handsome. And the LORD is with him.” ...When the evil spirit that was sent by God would come on Saul, David would get his harp and play it. That would help Saul. He would feel better, and the evil spirit would leave him. 1Sam.16:15-23*

However, songs can also be a distraction or even a disruption, if the music or words don't harmonise with what we know about God. That is why we must be careful to watch the theology of the songs we sing. (Song writers are not theologians)

Christian songs should be an exclamation of the wonders of Christ in God. They should excite us, especially when articulated by gifted poets and composers. By *singing and making melody in our hearts to the Lord* we can savour the great Bible truths. The Gospel has the most exalted themes on earth, such as: the glory of the Son of God! the mystery of His incarnation! His incredible life! the fathomless depths opened at Calvary and the awesome vistas of His Resurrection! Worship is about God's greatness, but **Christian worship is extoling what Jesus was, what Jesus is, Jesus did, what Jesus does.** Jesus is the reason we worship and it is the Holy Spirit who gives us the ability to speak and sing—no other faith on earth has that distinction!

The OT is full of songs—the Psalms are actually a hymn-book:

*My heart, O God, is steadfast; I will sing and make music with all my soul.* <sup>Ps.108:1</sup>

And so of course, the early Church sang psalms and hymns together:



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*What then shall we say, brothers and sisters? When you come together, each of you has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. Everything must be done so that the church may be built up.*<sup>1Cor.14:26</sup>

*be filled with the Spirit, speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>Eph.5:18-20</sup>

And we should “teach one another” through our singing:

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the message of Christ dwell among you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom through psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit, singing to God with gratitude in your hearts. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*<sup>Col.3:15-17</sup>

**But we are Christians and under the New Covenant—if we base our songs on the Psalms alone will lose the wonder of our salvation!** We have a right in Church to expect songs with **Christian content**. Isaac Watts (1674–1748) actually revised all but twelve of the 150 psalms “to make David speak like a Christian” because he was committed to directing the attention of worshippers the person and work of Jesus Christ. Today congregations fervently sing lines that sometimes have no identifiable Bible base—often no deity is named and some could be sung by followers of any religion. John Wesley was always anxious that his brother Charles’ verses should have sound theology and we need to be careful that the hymns and songs we use give expression to the wonderful works of God in Christ.

And if liturgy (*i.e.* a structured form of worship) is based on the Bible (but in particular, the New Covenant) then borrowed prayers from other Believers can also be really helpful—*e.g.* “*The Puritan Prayers*” *etc.*

### **Do we worship the same God that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped?**

Yes we do worship the same God that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped, **but we don’t worship in the same way** that Abraham, Isaac and Jacob worshipped—or David, or Isaiah, or even John the Baptist. **We are New Covenant Believers**

*If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood (for on the basis of it the law was given to the people), why was there still need for another priest to come—one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when there is a change of the priesthood, there must also be a change of the law... For the law appoints as high priests men who are weak; but the oath, which came after the law, appointed the Son, who has been made perfect forever. The point of what we are saying is this: We do have such a high priest, who sat down at the right hand of the throne of the Majesty in heaven, and who serves in the sanctuary, the true tabernacle set up by the Lord, not by man.*<sup>Heb.7:11-8:2</sup>

### **How is Christianity different from Judaism?**

Judaism before Jesus was God’s appointed religion and involved following the Law as delivered by Moses. Moses prophesied about a coming Messiah who would bring spiritual deliverance

*Moses said, ‘The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me. He will be one of your own people. You must listen to everything he tells you. Those who do not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.’ ‘Samuel and all the prophets after him spoke about this. They said these days would come. What the prophets said was meant for you. The covenant God made with your people long ago is yours also. He said to Abraham, ‘All nations on earth will be blessed through your children.’ God raised up Jesus, who serves him. God sent him first to you. He did it to bless you. He wanted to turn each of you from your evil ways.’*<sup>Acts.3:22-26</sup>

Judaism before Jesus was looking forward to the Messiah. Judaism after Jesus is a denial that Jesus is the Messiah (Christ)—and of everything that God has done through Him.

Christianity is a Christ-religion and a Christian is a follower of Christ—and we have Jesus Christ in Person not just Promise!

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*The former regulation is set aside because it was weak and useless (for the law made nothing perfect), and a **better hope** is introduced, by which we draw near to God. Heb.7:18-19*

*Remember those earlier days after you had received the light, when you endured in a great conflict full of suffering. Sometimes you were publicly exposed to insult and persecution; at other times you stood side by side with those who were so treated. You suffered along with those in prison and joyfully accepted the confiscation of your property, because you knew that you yourselves had better and lasting possessions. So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. Heb.10:32-35*

*Those who want to impress people by means of the flesh are trying to compel you to be circumcised. The only reason they do this is to avoid being persecuted for the cross of Christ. Not even those who are circumcised keep the law, yet they want you to be circumcised that they may boast about your circumcision in the flesh. May I never boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, through which the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world. Neither circumcision nor uncircumcision means anything; what counts is the new creation. Peace and mercy to all who follow this rule—to the Israel of God. Gal.6:12-16*

The early Church struggled to shake off their Old Covenant roots, but when the Temple was destroyed it finalised the transition from Old to New Covenant.

### What does it mean to be a “Christian”?

A Christian is a follower of Christ—of the Way

Six times in the New Testament, Believers are called “Followers of the Way.”

*Acts.9:2; Acts.19:9,23; Acts.22:4; Acts.24:14,22*

The only way to God is through Jesus Christ.

Jesus said: *I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me. Jn.14:6*

Because Believers were dogmatic in their conviction that Jesus is Christ and is the only way to God and thus for salvation, they were persecuted and given the name “Christian” (little “*christs*”) to ridicule them.

*The disciples were called Christians first at Antioch. Acts11:26*

But it is better to be right and ridiculed for it, than to be wrong and live a comfortable life.

*If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you. If you suffer, it should not be as a murderer or thief or any other kind of criminal, or even as a meddler. However, if you suffer as a Christian, do not be ashamed, but praise God that you bear that name. 1Pet.4:14-16 For I envied the arrogant when I saw the prosperity of the wicked... When I tried to understand all this, it troubled me deeply till I entered the sanctuary of God; then I understood their final destiny. Ps.73:3;16-17*

Because we are in Christ (that is, our identity is joined to Jesus’ identity), we too are anointed.

*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come. 2Cor.1:21-22*

A Christian is God’s “anointed-one”—**anointed and empowered by God**—and this is not an insult but an **honour**: *The apostles went out of the High Council overjoyed because they had been given the honour of being dishonoured on account of the Name. Acts.5:41*

Anointed means smeared and painted with the Holy Spirit

*Get up, you officers, **oil** the shields!* *Jl.21:5* He says, “I will build myself a large palace with spacious upper rooms.” He cuts windows in its walls, panels it with cedar, and **paints** its rooms red. *Jer.22:14*

### How important is the Bible to our worship?

The Bible is our only point of reference about God. Of course we have traditions and cultural values but they must never usurp the Scriptures

*But I want you to continue to follow what you have learned. Don't give up what you are sure of. You know the people you learned it from. You have known the Holy Scriptures ever since you were a little child. They are able to teach you how to be saved by believing in Christ Jesus. God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for*

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*training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.* 2Tim.3:14-17

**Praying with the borrowed words of the Bible** is the best way to build our relationship with God on a solid basis. In his book *Psalms: The Prayer Book of the Bible*, Bonhoeffer writes, “We learn to speak to God because God has spoken to us and speaks to us. ... God’s speech in Jesus Christ meets us in the Holy Scriptures. If we wish to pray with confidence and gladness, then the words of Holy Scripture will have to be the solid basis of our prayer.”

### What is the Christian’s hope?

#### Resurrection from the dead—unto eternal life

*Paul, a servant of God and an apostle of Jesus Christ for the faith of God’s elect and the knowledge of the truth that leads to godliness—a faith and knowledge resting on the **hope of eternal life**, which God, who does not lie, promised before the beginning of time, and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Savior,* Tit.1:1-3

*Having been justified by his grace, we might become heirs having the **hope of eternal life**. This is a trustworthy saying,* Tit.3:7-8

*I have the same hope in God that these men have. I believe that both the godly and the ungodly will rise from the dead. Although Paul had the same hope in God as his fellow Jews, Paul also had faith—which they didn’t. Now faith is **confidence** in what we **hope** for and **assurance** about what we do not see.* Heb.11:1

Many religions teach that there is life after death and some even teach that there is a judgement but only Christianity teaches that we can know for sure that we will rise to everlasting life. This is because God has already judged us, found us guilty and paid the penalty for our sins.

*He suffered the things we should have suffered. He took on himself the pain that should have been ours. But we thought God was punishing him. We thought God was wounding him and making him suffer. But the servant was pierced because we had sinned. He was crushed because we had done what was evil. He was punished to make us whole again. His wounds have healed us. All of us are like sheep. We have wandered away from God. All of us have turned to our own way. And the LORD has placed on his servant the sins of all of us.* Is.53:4-6

#### The Christian’s hope is a certain hope not a might-be hope!

*We who have fled to take hold of the **hope** offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this **hope** as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure. It enters the inner sanctuary behind the curtain, where Jesus, who went before us, has entered on our behalf.* Heb.6:18-20

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a **living hope** through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade—kept in heaven for you, who through faith are shielded by God’s power until the coming of the salvation that is ready to be revealed in the last time.* 1Pet.1:3-5

#### Holiness (purity)

*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this **hope** in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.* 1Jn.3:2-3

*Therefore, since we have been justified through faith, we have peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ, through whom we have gained access by faith into this grace in which we now stand. And we rejoice in the **hope of the glory** of God. Not only so, but we also rejoice in our sufferings, because we know that suffering produces perseverance; perseverance, character; and character, **hope**. And **hope does not disappoint us**, because God has poured out his love into our hearts by the Holy Spirit, whom he has given us.* Rom.5:1-5

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**God expects that every man (and woman) will do their duty.**

*My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.* <sup>Acts.23:1</sup>

**Psalm 14**

*Video: Ephesians 2*

**Questions**

**What is our Christian duty?**

**What does “*Jesus is Lord*” really mean?**

**Does it matter what we say—what our conversation and vocabulary is like?**

**Does it matter how we live—our lifestyle, our behaviour, our dress-code, the company we keep?**

**How much effort do we need to make to live a Christian life?**

**How can we be confident that we will do our duty toward God?**

Comments

**What is our Christian duty?**

**Our chief duty as Christians is to love God—totally**

*“Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?” Jesus replied: “ Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ This is the first and greatest commandment.<sup>Matt.22:36-38</sup>*

To love God means to honour and obey Him—and to reverence and respect Him.

*The LORD our God has secrets known to no one. We are not accountable for them, but we and our children are accountable forever for all that he has revealed to us, so that we may obey all the terms of these instructions.<sup>Deut.29:29</sup>*

The **Westminster Shorter Catechism** consist of 107 questions about Christian Doctrine together with answers from Scripture. It was completed in 1647 by the Westminster Assembly with the assistance of Commissioners from the Church of Scotland, as a part of the Covenanted uniformity in religion betwixt the Churches of Christ in the kingdoms of Scotland, England and Ireland.

**Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?** A. Man’s chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

**Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?** A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

**Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?** A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

**Our duty also includes proclaiming the good news about Jesus Christ—to testify about our faith:**

*Your **duty** is to go and preach about the Kingdom of God.<sup>Lk.9:60</sup>*

*Yet I have written you quite boldly on some points to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles. He gave me the priestly **duty** of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit. Therefore I glory in Christ Jesus in my service to God.<sup>Rom.15:15-17</sup>*

Our testimony is seen as much as it is heard and so we **have a duty to honour God by the way we live.** God has given us an abundant life:

*My purpose is to give them a rich and satisfying life.<sup>Jn.10:10</sup>*

This abundant life includes being joyful and enthusiastic

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice! Phil.4:4*

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.<sup>Rom.12:11-12</sup>*

and He expects us to use the gifts He has given

*Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work.<sup>2Cor.9:7-8</sup>*

*Command those who are rich in this present world not to be arrogant nor to put their hope in wealth, which is so uncertain, but to put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment.<sup>1Tim.6:17</sup>*

**What does “Jesus is Lord” really mean?**

**Jesus is Lord means that He is Sovereign—He is in control of everything**

*I now realize how true it is that God does not show favouritism but accepts men from every nation who fear him and do what is right. You know the message God sent to the people of Israel, telling the good news of peace through **Jesus Christ, who is Lord of all.** Acts.10:34-36*

*For this very reason, Christ died and returned to life so that he might be the **Lord of both the dead and the living.**Rom.14:9*

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Therefore God exalted him to the highest place and gave him the name that is above every name, that at the name of Jesus every knee should bow, in heaven and on earth and under the earth, and **every tongue confess that Jesus Christ is Lord**, to the glory of God the Father. Phil.2:9-11

**Jesus is our Lord means that He is our Master, that we belong to Him and we are His obedient servants—which means that we are saved!**

“The word is near you; it is in your mouth and in your heart,” that is, the word of faith we are proclaiming: That if you confess with your mouth, **“Jesus is Lord,”** and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with **your mouth that you confess and are saved.** As the Scripture says, “Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame.” Rom.10:8-11

Therefore I tell you that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, “Jesus be cursed,” and no one can say, **“Jesus is Lord,”** except by the Holy Spirit. 1Cor.12:3

**Our confession of this simple statement: “Jesus is Lord” means that our whole life is dedicated to God’s service. Our daily life is an act of worship because we are serving God: Whatever you do, work at it with all your heart, as working for the Lord, not for men, since you know that you will receive an inheritance from the Lord as a reward. It is the Lord Christ you are serving.** Col.3:23-24

**Jesus is Lord also means that we follow His example:**

When he had finished washing their feet, he put on his clothes and returned to his place. “Do you understand what I have done for you?” he asked them. **“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another’s feet. I have set you an example** that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them. “I am not referring to all of you; I know those I have chosen. But this is to fulfil this passage of Scripture: ‘He who shared my bread has turned against me.’” Jn.13:12-18

**Why do you call me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ and do not do what I say?** As for everyone who comes to me and hears my words and puts them into practice, I will show you what they are like. They are like a man building a house... Lk.6:46-48

So then, just as you **received Christ Jesus as Lord**, continue to live in him, rooted and built up in him, strengthened in the faith as you were taught, and overflowing with thankfulness. See to it that no one takes you captive through hollow and deceptive philosophy, which depends on human tradition and the basic principles of this world rather than on Christ. Col.2:6-8

## Does it matter what we say—what our conversation and vocabulary is like?

**Yes!**

Anyone who speaks a word against the Son of Man will be forgiven, but anyone who speaks against the Holy Spirit will not be forgiven, either in this age or in the age to come. Make a tree good and its fruit will be good, or make a tree bad and its fruit will be bad, for a tree is recognized by its fruit. You brood of vipers, how can you who are evil say anything good? For out of the overflow of the heart the mouth speaks. The good man brings good things out of the good stored up in him, and the evil man brings evil things out of the evil stored up in him. But I tell you that men will have to give account on the day of judgment for every careless word they have spoken. For by your words you will be acquitted, and by your words you will be condemned.” Matt.12:32-37

Wise men store up knowledge, but the mouth of a fool invites ruin. Prov.10:14

The tongue has the power of life and death, and those who love it will eat its fruit. Prov.18:21

We all stumble in many ways. If anyone is never at fault in what he says, he is a perfect man, able to keep his whole body in check. Jas.3:2

Your sin prompts your mouth; you adopt the tongue of the crafty. Your own mouth condemns you, not mine; your own lips testify against you. Job.15:5-6

Eliphaz wasn’t speaking the truth about Job but nevertheless our mouths can still condemn us!

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*After the LORD had said these things to Job, he said to Eliphaz the Temanite, "I am angry with you and your two friends, because you have not spoken of me what is right, as my servant Job has." Job.42:7*

### Does it matter how we live—our lifestyle, our behaviour, our dress-code, the company we keep?

**Yes**

*Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame. 1Cor.15:33-34*

*Do not make friends with a hot-tempered person, do not associate with one easily angered, or you may learn their ways and get yourself ensnared. Prov.22:24-25*

**Respect**

You dress for hunting not merely as a courtesy to the farmer whose land you intend to gallop but also because you are rising to the occasion. Dressing places ritual and ceremony at the centre of society where they belong. Egalitarians dislike this. Through ceremonial dress people show their respect for rules, offices and hierarchies, and recreate the image of courtliness.

*Roger Scrouton, On Hunting, p.40*

### How much effort do we need to make to live a Christian life?

No effort to become a Christian but we should make every effort to live as a Christian—by making the right choices

*But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Heb.5:14  
Therefore the Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel. He will eat curds and honey when he knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right. But before the boy knows enough to reject the wrong and choose the right, the land of the two kings you dread will be laid waste. Is.7:14-16*

In the NIV translation we are told 8 times to "make every effort":

*Make every effort to enter through the narrow door, because many, I tell you, will try to enter and will not be able to. Lk 13:24*

*Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Rom.14:19*

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. Eph.4:3*

*Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience. Heb.4:11*

*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. Heb.12:14*

*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge... For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 2Pet.1:5-8*

*Therefore, my brothers and sisters, make every effort to confirm your calling and election. For if you do these things, you will never stumble, and you will receive a rich welcome into the eternal kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. 2Pet.1:10-11*

*So then, dear friends, since you are looking forward to this, make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him. 2Pet.3:14*

### How can we be confident that we will do our duty toward God?

*God will complete what He has started:*

*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil.1:6*

*Therefore, my dear friends, as you have always obeyed—not only in my presence, but now much more in my absence—continue to work out your salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you to will and to act in order to fulfil his good purpose. Phil.2:12-13*

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*In love he predestined us for adoption to sonship through Jesus Christ, in accordance with his pleasure and will—to the praise of his glorious grace, which he has freely given us in the One he loves. Eph. 1:5-6*



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## Psalm 13

### God has chosen you—so what are you waiting for?

*God has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all people of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.*<sup>Acts.22:14-16</sup>

### Questions

**Why should we keep the basics of our Christian faith simple, sound and scriptural?**

**What does it mean to be God's Chosen People?**

**What does it mean to know God's Will?**

**What does it mean to see God?**

**What does it mean to hear from God?**

**What does it mean to be God's Witness?**

### Comments

### Why should we keep the basics of our Christian faith simple, sound and scriptural?

The Bible is meant to be understood

*So when you see standing in the holy place 'the abomination that causes desolation,' spoken of through the prophet Daniel—let the reader understand—then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains.*<sup>Matt.24:15-16</sup> (also <sup>Mk.13:14</sup>)

But we need our spiritual eyes opened in order to understand spiritual truths

*He said to them, "This is what I told you while I was still with you: Everything must be fulfilled that is written about me in the Law of Moses, the Prophets and the Psalms." Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, "This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem.*<sup>Lk.24:44-47</sup>

*The secret things belong to the LORD our God, but the things revealed belong to us and to our children forever, that we may follow all the words of this law.*<sup>Deut.29:29</sup>

And our faith is also simple

*He called a little child and had him stand among them. And he said: "I tell you the truth, unless you change and become like little children, you will never enter the kingdom of heaven. Therefore, whoever humbles himself like this child is the greatest in the kingdom of heaven.*<sup>Matt.18:2-4</sup>

Although some of the Scripture may appear difficult to understand, **we do have the mind of**

### Christ

*Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*<sup>2Pet.3:15-16</sup>

*This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: "For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?" But we have the mind of Christ.*<sup>1Cor.2:13-16</sup>

*But their minds were made dull, for to this day the same veil remains when the old covenant is read. It has not been removed, because only in Christ is it taken away. Even to this day when Moses is read, a veil covers their hearts. But whenever anyone turns to the Lord, the veil is taken away.*<sup>2Cor.3:14-16</sup>

### What does it mean to be God's Chosen People?

*For many are invited [called], but few are chosen.*<sup>Matt.22:14</sup>

**We are not chosen because of our own natural qualities but because of God's grace**

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*Brothers, think of what you were when you were called. Not many of you were wise by human standards; not many were influential; not many were of noble birth. But God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things—and the things that are not—to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before him. It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let him who boasts boast in the Lord.” 1Cor.1:26-31*

### **Jesus was God’s chosen Servant**

*Aware of this, Jesus withdrew from that place. Many followed him, and he healed all their sick, warning them not to tell who he was. This was to fulfil what was spoken through the prophet Isaiah: “Here is my servant whom I have chosen, the one I love, in whom I delight; I will put my Spirit on him, and he will proclaim justice to the nations. He will not quarrel or cry out; no one will hear his voice in the streets. A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out, till he leads justice to victory. In his name the nations will put their hope.” Matt.12:15-21*

### **As God’s Chosen people, we are to be like Jesus**

*Therefore, as God’s chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Col.3:12*

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his wonderful light. Once you were not a people, but now you are the people of God; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. 1Pet.2:9-10*

To be chosen shows God’s sovereignty

*I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master’s business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you to go and bear fruit—fruit that will last. Then the Father will give you whatever you ask in my name. This is my command: Love each other. Jn.15:15-17*

### **But we are chosen for a purpose—to bear fruit and to share in Jesus’ glory:**

*But we ought always to thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God chose you to be saved through the sanctifying work of the Spirit and through belief in the truth. He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ. So then, brothers, stand firm and hold to the teachings we passed on to you, whether by word of mouth or by letter. 2Thess.2:13-15*

### **To know God has chosen us gives us confidence**

*But you, O Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. Is.41:8-10*

*They will make war against the Lamb, but the Lamb will overcome them because he is Lord of lords and King of kings—and with him will be his called, chosen and faithful followers. Rev.17:14*

### **We can know that we are chosen because we responded to the Gospel**

*For we know, brothers loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words, but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and with deep conviction. You know how we lived among you for your sake. You became imitators of us and of the Lord; in spite of severe suffering, you welcomed the message with the joy given by the Holy Spirit. 1Thess.1:4-6*

### **What does it mean to know God’s Will?**

#### **To know God’s will means to learn about it AND do it**

*“Then he said: ‘The God of our fathers has chosen you to know his will and to see the Righteous One and to hear words from his mouth. You will be his witness to all men of what you have seen and heard. And now what are you waiting for? Get up, be baptized and wash your sins away, calling on his name.’ Acts.22:14-16*

*Whoever does God’s will is my brother and sister and mother.” Mk.3:35*

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*“What do you think? There was a man who had two sons. He went to the first and said, ‘Son, go and work today in the vineyard.’ ‘I will not,’ he answered, but later he changed his mind and went. ‘Then the father went to the other son and said the same thing. He answered, ‘I will, sir,’ but he did not go. ‘Which of the two did what his father wanted?’”Matt.21:28-31*

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as living sacrifices, holy and pleasing to God—this is your spiritual act of worship. Do not conform any longer to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind. Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.Rom.12:1-2*

*“My food,” said Jesus, “is to do the will of him who sent me and to finish his work.Jn.4:34*

*Do not work for food that spoils, but for food that endures to eternal life, which the Son of Man will give you. On him God the Father has placed his seal of approval.” Then they asked him, “What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”Jn.6:27-29*

*Jesus answered, “My teaching is not my own. It comes from him who sent me. If anyone chooses to do God's will, he will find out whether my teaching comes from God or whether I speak on my own.Jn.7:16-17*

*Obeys them not only to win their favour when their eye is on you, but like slaves of Christ, doing the will of God from your heart. Serve wholeheartedly, as if you were serving the Lord, not men, because you know that the Lord will reward everyone for whatever good he does, whether he is slave or free*

*So do not throw away your confidence; it will be richly rewarded. You need to persevere so that when you have done the will of God, you will receive what he has promised.Heb.10:35-36*

*The world and its desires pass away, but the man who does the will of God lives forever.1Jn.2:17*

### What does it mean to see God?

Few of us will see the resurrected Jesus physically as Paul did, **but we can all see Jesus spiritually when we meet together (i.e. be aware of His presence with us).**

*Where two or three people meet together in my name, I am there with them.Matt.18:20*

*So when you are assembled and I am with you in spirit, and the power of our Lord Jesus is present.1Cor.5:4*

**However, we don't need feelings to have faith—there is a greater blessing of believing without “seeing”:**

*Because you have seen me, you have believed; blessed are those who have not seen and yet have believed.Jn.20:29*

**We can also see Jesus in the Scriptures:**

*The Scriptures you study give witness about me.Jn.5:39 Then Philip began with that same part of Scripture. He told him the good news about Jesus.Acts.8:35*

**To see God means to see the spiritual realities**

*After this I looked, and there before me was a door standing open in heaven. And the voice I had first heard speaking to me like a trumpet said, “Come up here, and I will show you what must take place after this.” At once I was in the Spirit, and there before me was a throne in heaven with someone sitting on it. And the one who sat there had the appearance of jasper and carnelian. A rainbow, resembling an emerald, encircled the throne. Surrounding the throne were twenty-four other thrones, and seated on them were twenty-four elders. They were dressed in white and had crowns of gold on their heads. From the throne came flashes of lightning, rumblings and peals of thunder. Before the throne, seven lamps were blazing. These are the seven spirits of God. Also before the throne there was what looked like a sea of glass, clear as crystal. In the centre, around the throne, were four living creatures, and they were covered with eyes, in front and in back. The first living creature was like a lion, the second was like an ox, the third had a face like a man, the fourth was like a flying eagle. Each of the four living creatures had six wings and was covered with eyes all around, even under his wings. Day and night they never stop saying: “Holy, holy, holy is the Lord God Almighty, who was, and is, and is to come.”Rev.4:1-8*

### What does it mean to hear from God?

**Today, God speaks to us through Jesus:**

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom also he made the universe.Heb.1:1-2*

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Although we base our faith on all of the Scriptures, we must read them in the light of Jesus' life, death, resurrection and ascension because we are New Covenant Believers.

*But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*<sup>Mat.13:16-17</sup>

**To hear from God means that we are open and sensitive to the Holy Spirit and the Scriptures so we discern what is our soul and what is our spirit**

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*Heb.4:12

**What does it mean to be God's Witness?**

**A witness tells of what they have personally seen and heard**

*We proclaim to you what we have seen and heard, so that you also may have fellowship with us. And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ. We write this to make our joy complete.*1Jn.1:3-4

*As for us, we cannot help speaking about what we have seen and heard.*<sup>Acts.4:20</sup>

Testifying about Jesus doesn't mean that we all have to knock on doors or preach on the streets—but it does mean talking about Him.

**Testifying is sharing what we believe (and in the sharing of what we believe we have a greater understanding):**

*that the sharing of your faith may become effective by the acknowledgment of every good thing which is in you in Christ Jesus.*<sup>Phile.1:6</sup>

*But make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord. Always be ready to give an answer to anyone who asks you about the hope you have. Be ready to give the reason for it. But do it gently and with respect. Live so that you don't have to feel you've done anything wrong. Some people may say evil things about your good conduct as believers in Christ. If they do, they will be put to shame for speaking like that about you. It is better to suffer for doing good than for doing evil if that's what God wants.*<sup>1Pet.3:15-17</sup>

08/09/2021

## The Purpose of Prophecy

*Philip the evangelist, had four unmarried daughters who prophesied... a prophet named Agabus... said: The Holy Spirit says...<sup>Acts.21:8-11</sup>*

### Psalm 12

Video: 1Cor.14

### Questions

What is prophecy?

Can anyone prophesy?

Is there a difference between OT Prophets and NT Prophets?

What should we do when we are given a prophecy?

Are we obliged to act on a prophecy (even if a respected and reputable person gives it)?

How do we ensure that we are not deceived by people purporting to “hear from God”?

### Comments

#### What is prophecy?

Prophecy is predominately forth-telling but it can be fore-telling as well.

However, NT Prophecy is primarily **Edification, Exhortation and Encouragement:**

*But the one who prophesies speaks to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort.<sup>1Cor.14:3</sup>*

The gift of prophecy, when rightly guarded and controlled by the infallible written Word, is a means of high and true spiritual elevation for individual and church. But when used according to the dictates of the human mind without regard to the Scriptures, it can be the means of sinking both individual and church to the depths of despair. It is not to be wondered at that an all-wise God has stated in unmistakable language and defined in the clearest possible manner the uses and purposes of this extraordinary gift.<sup>G.Jeffreys</sup>

True prophecy will never contradict Scripture and so we must always test prophecy with Scripture as interpreted under the New Covenant (*i.e.* through the death, resurrection and ascension of Jesus Christ and the outpouring of the Holy Spirit).

*The word of the prophets is made more certain. We have that word. You must pay attention to it. It is like a light shining in a dark place. It will shine until the day Jesus comes. Then the Morning Star will rise in your hearts.*

*Above all, here is what you must understand. No prophecy in Scripture ever came from a prophet's own understanding. It never came simply because a prophet wanted it to. Instead, the Holy Spirit guided the prophets as they spoke. So prophecy [*i.e.* Scripture] comes from God.<sup>2Pet.1:19-21</sup>*

#### Can anyone prophesy?

Yes and No!

Non-Christians can't prophesy because they do not have the Holy Spirit

*However, as it is written: “No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him”—but God has revealed it to us by his Spirit. The Spirit searches all things, even the deep things of God. For who among men knows the thoughts of a man except the man's spirit within him? In the same way no one knows the thoughts of God except the Spirit of God. We have not received the spirit of the world but the Spirit who is from God, that we may understand what God has freely given us. This is what we speak, not in words taught us by human wisdom but in words taught by the Spirit, expressing spiritual truths in spiritual words. The man without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him, and he cannot understand them, because they are spiritually discerned. The spiritual man makes judgments about all things, but he himself is not subject to any man's judgment: “For who has known the mind of the Lord that he may instruct him?” But we have the mind of Christ.<sup>1Cor.2:9-16</sup>*

God can use non-Christians in the same way that He can use anything

God used a donkey

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*When the donkey saw the angel of the LORD, she lay down under Balaam, and he was angry and beat her with his staff. Then the LORD opened the donkey's mouth, and she said to Balaam, "What have I done to you to make you beat me these three times?" Nu.22:27-28*

God used Caiaphas the High Priest.

*Then one of them, named Caiaphas, who was high priest that year, spoke up, "You know nothing at all! You do not realize that it is better for you that one man die for the people than that the whole nation perish." He did not say this on his own, but as high priest that year he prophesied that Jesus would die for the Jewish nation, and not only for that nation but also for the scattered children of God, to bring them together and make them one. So from that day on they plotted to take his life. Jn.11:49-53*

The Priests' hierarchy (including the High Priest) were of the party of Sadducees who were anti-Christ as well as anti-God

*Then the high priest and all his associates, who were members of the party of the Sadducees, were filled with jealousy. They arrested the apostles and put them in the public jail. Acts.5:17-18*

*When he said this, a dispute broke out between the Pharisees and the Sadducees, and the assembly was divided. (The Sadducees say that there is no resurrection, and that there are neither angels nor spirits, but the Pharisees acknowledge them all.) Acts.23:7-8*

And so Caiaphas could not prophesy as a Believer—but God still used him.

However, there is no reason for us to listen to spiritual advices from non-Christians—or even people who purport to be Christians but peddle heresies or false doctrines.

*Many deceivers, who do not acknowledge Jesus Christ as coming in the flesh, have gone out into the world. Any such person is the deceiver and the antichrist. Watch out that you do not lose what you have worked for, but that you may be rewarded fully. Anyone who runs ahead and does not continue in the teaching of Christ does not have God; whoever continues in the teaching has both the Father and the Son. If anyone comes to you and does not bring this teaching, do not take him into your house or welcome him. Anyone who welcomes him shares in his wicked work. 2Jn.1:7-11*

*Concerning the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ and our being gathered to him, we ask you, brothers, not to become easily unsettled or alarmed by some prophecy, report or letter supposed to have come from us, saying that the day of the Lord has already come. Don't let anyone deceive you in any way, <sup>2Thess.2:1-3</sup>*

### **Is there a difference between OT Prophets and NT Prophets?**

Yes and No!

Prophets under the OT and NT both communicate the Word of God but NT Prophets do not give new revelation about our faith and doctrine—and neither do they give direction

*In the past God spoke to our forefathers through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son, whom he appointed heir of all things, and through whom he made the universe. The Son is the radiance of God's glory and the exact representation of his being, sustaining all things by his powerful word. Heb.1:1-3*

IN the OT God dealt with nations, kingdom and people groups but under the New Covenant God deals with individuals. Thus under the New Covenant, prophets speak to individuals

### **What should we do when we are given a prophecy?**

**Test it!**

*Two or three people should speak what God has revealed. Everyone else should decide whether what each person said is right or wrong. <sup>1Cor.14:29</sup>*

*Do not put out the Spirit's fire; do not treat prophecies with contempt. Test everything. Hold on to the good. Avoid every kind of evil. May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful and he will do it. <sup>1Thess.5:19-24</sup>*

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*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.<sup>1Jn.4:1-2</sup>*

### **Are we obliged to act on a prophecy (even if a respected and reputable person gives it)?**

NO! The local Church is overseen by Overseers and Elders—these are the Pastors and other Church Leaders—not by prophets. We should listen, judge and then do what we believe that the Holy Spirit is saying to us.

In the OT some prophets spoke “lies” in order to test people

*and rode after the man of God. He found him sitting under an oak tree and asked, “Are you the man of God who came from Judah?” “I am,” he replied. So the prophet said to him, “Come home with me and eat.” The man of God said, “I cannot turn back and go with you, nor can I eat bread or drink water with you in this place. I have been told by the word of the LORD: ‘You must not eat bread or drink water there or return by the way you came.’” The old prophet answered, “I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: ‘Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.’” (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house. While they were sitting at the table, the word of the LORD came to the old prophet who had brought him back. He cried out to the man of God who had come from Judah, “This is what the LORD says: ‘You have defied the word of the LORD and have not kept the command the LORD your God gave you. You came back and ate bread and drank water in the place where he told you not to eat or drink. Therefore your body will not be buried in the tomb of your fathers.’” When the man of God had finished eating and drinking, the prophet who had brought him back saddled his donkey for him. As he went on his way, a lion met him on the road and killed him, and his body was thrown down on the road, with both the donkey and the lion standing beside it. 1Kg.13:14-24*

*This is the word that came to Jeremiah from the LORD during the reign of Jehoikim son of Josiah king of Judah: “Go to the Recabite family and invite them to come to one of the side rooms of the house of the LORD and give them wine to drink.” So I went to get Jaazaniah son of Jeremiah, the son of Habazziniah, and his brothers and all his sons—the whole family of the Recabites. I brought them into the house of the LORD, into the room of the sons of Hanan son of Igdaliah the man of God. It was next to the room of the officials, which was over that of Maaseiah son of Shallum the doorkeeper. Then I set bowls full of wine and some cups before the men of the Recabite family and said to them, “Drink some wine.” But they replied, “We do not drink wine, because our forefather Jonadab son of Recab gave us this command: ‘Neither you nor your descendants must ever drink wine. Also you must never build houses, sow seed or plant vineyards; you must never have any of these things, but must always live in tents. Then you will live a long time in the land where you are nomads.’ We have obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab son of Recab commanded us. Neither we nor our wives nor our sons and daughters have ever drunk wine or built houses to live in or had vineyards, fields or crops. We have lived in tents and have fully obeyed everything our forefather Jonadab commanded us... Then the word of the LORD came to Jeremiah, saying: “This is what the LORD Almighty, the God of Israel, says: Go and tell the men of Judah and the people of Jerusalem, ‘Will you not learn a lesson and obey my words?’ declares the LORD. Jonadab son of Recab ordered his sons not to drink wine and this command has been kept. To this day they do not drink wine, because they obey their forefather’s command. But I have spoken to you again and again, yet you have not obeyed me. Jer.35:1-14*

### **How do we ensure that we are not deceived by people purporting to “hear from God”?**

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people.

Be Bible literate

Take counsel from trusted and credible Christians who have experience and a good reputation.

## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

01/09/2021

### Psalm 11

**The Purpose of Preaching:** “speaking many words of encouragement to the people”<sup>Acts.20:2</sup>

### Questions

What is the difference between preaching and other public speaking?

What does it mean to be blessed?

Why is **Church attendance** important?

Why is **fellowship** important?

Why is **reading Scripture** important?

Why is **sharing our Faith** important?

Why is **Prophecy** important?

Why is **the Return of Jesus** important?

Why is **the Grace of God** important?

### Comments

#### What is the difference between preaching and other public speaking?

Preaching is communicating God’s Word

*He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*Eph.2:17-18

*Preach the Word; be prepared in season and out of season; correct, rebuke and encourage—with great patience and careful instruction. For the time will come when men will not put up with sound doctrine. Instead, to suit their own desires, they will gather around them a great number of teachers to say what their itching ears want to hear. They will turn their ears away from the truth and turn aside to myths. [5] But you, keep your head in all situations, endure hardship, do the work of an evangelist, discharge all the duties of your ministry.*2Tim.4:2-5

*and at his appointed season he brought his word to light through the preaching entrusted to me by the command of God our Saviour,*Tit.1:3

*Noah, a preacher of righteousness,*2Pet.2:5

*I am astonished that you are so quickly deserting the one who called you by the grace of Christ and are turning to a different gospel—which is really no gospel at all. Evidently some people are throwing you into confusion and are trying to pervert the gospel of Christ. But even if we or an angel from heaven should preach a gospel other than the one we preached to you, let him be eternally condemned! As we have already said, so now I say again: If anybody is preaching to you a gospel other than what you accepted, let him be eternally condemned!*Gal.1:6-9

#### What does it mean to be blessed?

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who has blessed us in the heavenly realms with every spiritual blessing in Christ.*Eph.1:3

*David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him.”*Rom.4:6-8

#### Why is Church attendance important?

God says we should

It is where God displays His wisdom

It is our spiritual family

Companionship is a 2-way relationship and so is Church commitment. We don’t try to intimidate people into meeting together—but we do provide opportunity for fellowship within the security of spiritual oversight. Church activities should have a spiritual authority that will enable people to reach out to God and receive the help they need from Him—and this is especially important for preaching:

*Let us hold unwaveringly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but*



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*encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*<sup>Heb.10:23-25</sup> *Encourage and rebuke with all authority.*<sup>Tit.2:15</sup>

### Why is fellowship important?

Fellowship is partnership and you cannot be a “sleeping partner” in God’s kingdom.

Fellowship is a participation

Fellowship is a common union

Christian fellowship is more than just attending Church—fellowship is the sharing of our lives because of our partnership in the Gospel. *They devoted themselves to the apostles’ teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer.*<sup>Acts.2:42</sup> Christian fellowship is more than offering empathy or conveying nice thoughts to others—Christian fellowship is a partnership with God and with one another and so it will lead to action. *Therefore if you have any encouragement from being united with Christ, if any comfort from his love, if any common sharing in the Spirit, if any tenderness and compassion, then make my joy complete by being like-minded, having the same love, being one in spirit and of one mind. Do nothing out of selfish ambition or vain conceit. Rather, in humility value others above yourselves, not looking to your own interests but each of you to the interests of the others.*<sup>Phil.2:1-4</sup>

### Why is reading Scripture important?

Faith comes from hearing the Word of God

Word of God is spiritual bread and seed

Word of God in our heart keeps us from sinning

Although we don’t venerate the Bible, we do place a very high value on the Scriptures. Scripture is the only trustworthy point of reference we have about God and His plan of salvation. *You study the Scriptures carefully. You study them because you think they will give you eternal life. The Scriptures you study give witness about me. But you refuse to come to me and receive life.*<sup>Jn.5:39-40</sup> [Paul] *vigorously refuted his Jewish opponents in public debate, proving from the Scriptures that Jesus was the Christ.*<sup>Acts.18:28</sup> We publicly read Scripture because we recognise the importance of hearing the Scriptures: *Devote yourself to the public reading of Scripture, to preaching and to teaching.*<sup>1Tim.4:1</sup> *So faith comes from hearing the message. And the message that is heard is the word of Christ.*<sup>Rom.10:17</sup> We also believe the Bible is inspired by God and is without any falsehood. *God has breathed life into all of Scripture. It is useful for teaching us what is true. It is useful for correcting our mistakes. It is useful for making our lives whole again. It is useful for training us to do what is right. By using Scripture, a man of God can be completely prepared to do every good thing.*<sup>2Tim.3:16-17</sup> Even though no language can be exactly translated into another language, we believe that the Holy Spirit who inspired the original authors also applies the Scripture and makes them alive and life-changing. *For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart. Nothing in all creation is hidden from God’s sight. Everything is uncovered and laid bare before the eyes of him to whom we must give account.*<sup>Heb.4:12-13</sup> *Nay, if there be any mistakes in the Bible, there may as well be a thousand. If there be one falsehood in that book, it did not come from the God of truth.*<sup>Wesley’s Journal</sup> *For everything that was written in the past was written to teach us, so that through the endurance taught in the Scriptures and the encouragement they provide we might have hope. May the God who gives endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude of mind toward each other that Christ Jesus had, so that with one mind and one voice you may glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>Rom.15:4-6</sup> Our Services are planned to help everyone have an accurate knowledge of God by understanding and communicating the meaning of the Bible—especially the **3Rs: Repentance, Remission of sins and Righteousness.**

### Why is sharing our Faith important?

Jesus has commissioned us to go into all the world and preach

Sharing our faith gives us an greater understanding of what we believe

To testify of what you believe about God will always be encouraging—both to those who hear and also to yourself as well: *I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong—that*

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*is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.*<sup>Rom.1:11-12</sup> I pray that you will be active in sharing what you believe. Then you will completely understand every good thing we have in Christ.<sup>Philemon.1:6</sup>

### **Why is Prophecy important?**

Prophecy is a Holy Spirit gift

Prophecy edifies, encourages and exhorts

Prophecy is testifying about Jesus

Prophecy opens closed doors

### **Why is the Return of Jesus important?**

the Return of Jesus is a certainty

the Return of Jesus gives us hope

the Return of Jesus will bring justice and an end to the very last enemy (death)

This world is very temporary and one day each of us will have to take our leave: *What person can live and not die? Who can escape the power of the grave?*<sup>Psa.89:48</sup> *There's a proper time and way for people to do everything.*

*That's true even though a person might be suffering greatly. No one knows what lies ahead. So who can tell a person what's going to happen? He can't stop the wind from blowing. And he doesn't have the power to decide when he will die.*<sup>Ecc.8:6-8</sup> But Believers have a certain hope: *We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.*<sup>Heb.6:19</sup>

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. The one who believes in me will live, even though they die; and whoever lives by believing in me will never die."*<sup>Jn.11:25-26</sup> Believers have the assurance that they will live in the glorious Presence of Jesus after they die: *For the Lord himself will come down from heaven, with a loud command, with the voice of the archangel and with the trumpet call of God, and the dead in Christ will rise first. After that, we who are still alive and are left will be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air. And so we will be with the Lord forever. Therefore encourage one another with these words.*<sup>1Thes.4:16-18</sup> *He died for us so that, whether we are awake or asleep, we may live together*

### **Why is the Grace of God important?**

the Grace of God is the love of God in action and makes us spiritually rich

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*<sup>2Cor.8:9</sup>

the Grace of God makes the sad glad

Joy, Gratitude and Generosity are inextricably linked to Grace as they all come from the same word in the Greek language of the NT. *May our Lord Jesus Christ himself and God our Father, who loved us and by his grace gave us eternal encouragement and good hope, encourage your hearts and strengthen you in every good deed and word.*<sup>2Thes.2:16-17</sup> *I have written to you briefly, encouraging you and testifying that this is the true grace of God. Stand fast in it.*<sup>1Pet.5:12</sup>

## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

25/08/2021

### The Full Gospel or the Fool's Gospel?

#### Questions

What is “*prosperity*”?

Should Christians expect to prosper?

What difference should having peace with God make to our daily lives?

What did Jesus say about being great in God's kingdom?

How does God get our attention when we don't listen to Him?

What does it mean to enjoy life?

*To put their hope in God, who richly provides us with everything for our enjoyment. 1Tim.6:17*

*That it may go well with you and that you may enjoy long life on the earth. Eph.6:3*

*I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3Jn.1:2*

18/08/2021

## Psalm 11

What baptism did you receive?<sup>Acts.19:3</sup>

Video: *This Changed everything* 1.24

## Questions

What is Baptism?

Who should be baptised?

What does Baptism do for us?

Is Baptism essential for salvation?

Why do you think that rebaptism used to be penalised by death?

Do you think that Romans 6:1-14 refers to the Water Baptism of Believers or the conversion of a Believer (which Water Baptism signifies)? [especially vs 4-5 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*]

## Comments

### What is Baptism?

Baptism is literally an immersion or washing and always means “saturated”—either with water, with the Holy Spirit or with emotion.

In a Christian setting baptism is an immersion into God

By the Holy Spirit into Christ’s Body (the Church)—Conversion

By people in water—as a declaration of conversion

By Jesus in the Holy Spirit—empowerment to live for God and be His Witness

### Who should be baptised?

Those who Believe. Believer’s Baptism is for Believers—those who have already been baptised into the Body of Christ.

Believer’s Baptism is an Acknowledgment of Faith in Jesus Christ:

*If you believe with all your heart, you can be baptized. [He answered] I believe Jesus Christ is the Son of God.*<sup>Acts 8:37</sup>

Believers’ Baptism **always follows conversion** and **can never precede it**:

*Each of you must repent of your sins, turn to God, and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ to show that you have received forgiveness for your sins. Then you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit. This promise is to you, and to your children, and even to the Gentiles—all who have been called by the Lord our God.*<sup>Acts.2:38-39</sup>

### What does Baptism do for us?

Believer’s Baptism is the pledge of a clear conscience toward God:

*God was patient while Noah was building the ark. He waited, but only a few people went into the ark. A total of eight were saved by means of water. The water of the flood is a picture of the baptism that now saves you also. The baptism I’m talking about has nothing to do with removing dirt from your body. Instead, it promises God that you will keep a clear sense of what is right and wrong. Jesus Christ has saved you by rising from the dead.*<sup>1Pet.3:20-21</sup>

Believer’s Baptism is an Act of Obedience: *Repent and be baptized, every one of you, in the name of Jesus Christ for the forgiveness of your sins. And you will receive the gift of the Holy Spirit.*<sup>Acts 2:38</sup>

### Is Baptism essential for salvation?

No! Baptism doesn’t save us and neither is it a requirement for serving God, but it serves as an illustration of what Jesus has done for us—that we are **dead** to our old life, **alive** to our new life and spiritually **clean**:

*Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.*<sup>Mk.16:16</sup>

Those who aren’t baptised, reject God’s purpose for their life:

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*All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.*<sup>Lk.7:29-30</sup>

### Why do you think that rebaptism used to be penalised by death?

Religion always keeps people away from God by introducing rules and regulations as an intermediary between people and God. And religion always needs a priest to mediate. But Jesus is our Mediator—pastors, preachers, elders, and other Church giftings bring order and accountability but their function is to bring everyone into maturity not to mediate:

*It was he who gave some to be apostles, some to be prophets, some to be evangelists, and some to be pastors and teachers, to prepare God's people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of men in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will in all things grow up into him who is the Head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*<sup>Eph.2:11-16</sup>

The name Anabaptist means "one who baptizes again". Their persecutors named them this, referring to the practice of baptizing persons when they converted or declared their faith in Christ even if they had been baptized as infants, and many prefer to call themselves "Radical Reformers." [10] Anabaptists require that baptismal candidates be able to make a confession of faith that is freely chosen and so rejected baptism of infants. The New Testament teaches to repent and then be baptized, and infants are not able to repent and turn away from sin to a life of following Jesus. The early members of this movement did not accept the name Anabaptist claiming that infant baptism was not part of scripture and was therefore null and void. They said that baptizing self-confessed believers was their first true baptism: *I have never taught Anabaptism. ... But the right baptism of Christ, which is preceded by teaching and oral confession of faith, I teach, and say that infant baptism is a robbery of the right baptism of Christ. [Hubmaier, Balthasar (1526), Short apology.]*

Roman Catholics and Protestants alike persecuted the Anabaptists, resorting to torture and execution in attempts to curb the growth of the movement. The Protestants under Zwingli were the first to persecute the Anabaptists, with Felix Manz becoming the first Anabaptist martyr in 1527. On May 20 or 21, 1527, Roman Catholic authorities executed Michael Sattler. King Ferdinand declared drowning (called the **third baptism**) "*the best antidote to Anabaptism*". The Tudor regime, even the Protestant monarchs (Edward VI of England and Elizabeth I of England), persecuted Anabaptists as they were deemed too radical and therefore a danger to religious stability.

Emperor Justinian (A.D. 529) made rebaptism one of the two heresies penalized by death (the other being Anti-Trinitarianism). During the Reformation this law was enacted by both Catholics and Protestants against the Anabaptists (Zurich decreed the death penalty for Anabaptists in 1526): "*Since in both ecclesiastical and civil law Anabaptism is forbidden under severe penalties, and since the imperial code decrees and orders, on pain of the highest penalty of death, that no one shall have himself baptized a second time or baptize another . . . .*"

*Martyrs Mirror*, by Thieleman J. van Braght, describes the persecution and execution of thousands of Anabaptists in various parts of Europe between 1525 and 1660. Anabaptism stands out among other groups of martyrs, in the fact that during the reform in the 16th and 17th centuries, 30 to 40 percent of martyrs were women.

### Do you think that Romans 6:1-14 refers to the Water Baptism

of Believers or the conversion of a Believer (which Water Baptism signifies)? [especially vs 4-5 *We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.*]

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If this passage refers to Water Baptism it would mean that the ceremony of Baptism saves us: *If we have been united with him like this in his death, we will certainly also be united with him in his resurrection.* The early Church baptised people immediately they were converted and so there was no need to make any distinction between conversion and baptism.

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### Happy Families

*From one man he made all the nations, that they should inhabit the whole earth; and he marked out their appointed times in history and the boundaries of their lands. God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us.* Acts.17:26-27

### Psalm 10:12-18

**Video:** The Trinity EXPLAINS This!

### Questions

Everything God made was good—so where did evil come from?

Should we blame the devil for our problems?

Jesus defeated the devil at Calvary so why is satan still troubling us?

Will we ever be free from trouble?

How can we overcome our problems?

### Comments

### Everything God made was good—so where did evil come from?

Evil comes from the devil

*He who does what is sinful is of the devil, because the devil has been sinning from the beginning. The reason the Son of God appeared was to destroy the devil's work.* 1Jn.3:8

*“The one who sowed the good seed is the Son of Man. The field is the world, and the good seed stands for the sons of the kingdom. The weeds are the sons of the evil one, and the enemy who sows them is the devil. The harvest is the end of the age, and the harvesters are angels.* Matt.13:37-39

God made all things good in the beginning

*God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.* Gen.1:31

*But do not forget this one thing, dear friends: With the Lord a day is like a thousand years, and a thousand years are like a day.* 2Pet. 3:8

Thousand represents a large number **1000** = large number, when linked with years = long time, equates to “the Kingdom of God”. **144,000** = 12,000 (12 x 1,000 = many redeemed) from 12 tribes (the redeemed)

*Then I heard the number of those who were sealed: 144,000 from all the tribes of Israel... After this I looked, and there before me was a great multitude that no one could count, from every nation, tribe, people and language, standing before the throne and before the Lamb.* Rev.7:4-9

And so there is no need to take the 6 days of creation as 6x24 hours (especially as our 24 hour day is calculated by the earth's rotation round the sun—and the sun wasn't created till the 4<sup>th</sup> day)

*And God said, “Let there be lights in the expanse of the sky to separate the day from the night, and let them serve as signs to mark seasons and days and years, and let them be lights in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth.” And it was so. God made two great lights—the greater light to govern the day and the lesser light to govern the night. He also made the stars. God set them in the expanse of the sky to give light on the earth, to govern the day and the night, and to separate light from darkness. And God saw that it was good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the fourth day.* Gen.1:14-19

The only intimation of the devil's state before he sinned and why he sinned is in Ezekiel

*The word of the LORD came to me: “Son of man, take up a lament concerning the king of Tyre and say to him: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: “You were the seal of perfection, full of wisdom and perfect in beauty. You were in Eden, the garden of God; You were anointed as a guardian cherub, for so I ordained you. You were on the holy mount of God; you walked among the fiery stones. You were blameless in your ways from the day you were created till wickedness was found in you. Through your widespread trade you were filled with violence, and you sinned. So I drove you in disgrace from the mount of God, and I expelled you, guardian cherub, from among the fiery stones. Your*

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*heart became proud on account of your beauty, and you corrupted your wisdom because of your splendour. So I threw you to the earth; I made a spectacle of you before kings. Ezek.28:11-17*

*The seventy-two returned with joy and said, "Lord, even the demons submit to us in your name." He replied, "I saw Satan fall like lightning from heaven. I have given you authority to trample on snakes and scorpions and to overcome all the power of the enemy; nothing will harm you. However, do not rejoice that the spirits submit to you, but rejoice that your names are written in heaven." Lk.10:17-20*

*Then a voice came from heaven, "I have glorified it, and will glorify it again." The crowd that was there and heard it said it had thundered; others said an angel had spoken to him. Jesus said, "This voice was for your benefit, not mine. Now is the time for judgment on this world; now the prince of this world will be driven out. But I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all men to myself." He said this to show the kind of death he was going to die. Jn.12:28-33*

### **Should we blame the devil for our problems?**

Although the devil was the originator of evil, evil now comes from our own heart

*A person's own folly leads to their ruin, yet their heart rages against the LORD. <sup>Pron.19:3</sup>*

*Why aren't my words clear to you? Because you can't really hear what I say. You belong to your father, the devil. You want to obey your father's wishes. "From the beginning, the devil was a murderer. He has never obeyed the truth. There is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his natural language. He does this because he is a liar. He is the father of lies." Jn.8:43-44*

*But your own evil longings tempt you. They lead you on and drag you away. When they are allowed to grow, they give birth to sin. When sin has grown up, it gives birth to death. <sup>Jas.1:14-15</sup>*

*You stiff-necked people! Your hearts and ears are still uncircumcised. You are just like your ancestors: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your ancestors did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was given through angels but have not obeyed it. Acts.7:51-53*

### **Jesus defeated the devil at Calvary so why is satan still troubling us?**

All spiritual beings have the same eternal characteristic as their Creator—*i.e.* they cannot be destroyed. That is why humans are different from animals—animals are not eternal and when they die, that is the end of them (our pets will not be in heaven—or hell)! And so when Jesus defeated the devil, he wasn't destroyed (*i.e.* annihilated) but "bound" or shackled for a long time (*i.e.* a "thousand years" or the present Kingdom of God, which began from Jesus' death and resurrection and will end when Jesus returns and hands the Kingdom over to His Father.

*Then war broke out in heaven. Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon and his angels fought back. But he was not strong enough, and they lost their place in heaven. The great dragon was hurled down—that ancient serpent called the devil, or Satan, who leads the whole world astray. He was hurled to the earth, and his angels with him. Then I heard a loud voice in heaven say: "Now have come the salvation and the power and the kingdom of our God, and the authority of his Messiah. For the accuser of our brothers and sisters, who accuses them before our God day and night, has been hurled down. They triumphed over him by the blood of the Lamb and by the word of their testimony; they did not love their lives so much as to shrink from death. Rev.12:7-11*

Hell was prepared for the devil and his angels because he is spirit and cannot be destroyed:

*Then he will say to those on his left, 'Depart from me, you who are cursed, into the eternal fire prepared for the devil and his angels. Matt.25:41*

*And the devil, who deceived them, was thrown into the lake of burning sulphur, where the beast and the false prophet had been thrown. They will be tormented day and night for ever and ever. Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. Rev.20:10-15*



## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

### Will we ever be free from trouble?

Not is this life

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."*Jn.16:33

*If the world hates you, keep in mind that it hated me first. If you belonged to the world, it would love you as its own. As it is, you do not belong to the world, but I have chosen you out of the world. That is why the world hates you. Remember what I told you: 'A servant is not greater than his master.' If they persecuted me, they will persecute you also. If they obeyed my teaching, they will obey yours also. They will treat you this way because of my name, for they do not know the one who sent me.*Jn.17:18-21

*Be self-controlled and alert. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith,*1Pet.3:8-9

### How can we overcome our problems?

Faith—simple yet complete trust in God—He is our Saviour, protector and provider

*In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.*1Jn.5:3-5

*but every spirit that does not acknowledge Jesus is not from God. This is the spirit of the antichrist, which you have heard is coming and even now is already in the world. You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world.*1Jn.4:3-4

*I write to you, young men, because you are strong, and the word of God lives in you, and you have overcome the evil one.*1Jn.2:14

*Do not be overcome by evil, but overcome evil with good.*Rom.12:21

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04/08/2021

**How do you pray?** *About midnight Paul and Silas were praying and singing hymns to God, and the other prisoners were listening to them.* Acts.16:25

### Psalm 10:1-12

**Video:** Greg Koukl - Faithless Prayer

### Questions

Is there a protocol for praying to God?

Does it matter if people hear us praying?

Can we pray effectively with a bad attitude?

Why should we pray for our national leaders?

What does *“I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding”* 1Cor.14:14-15 mean?

What does *“give thanks in all circumstances”* mean?

What does *“pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing.”* 1Tim.2:8 mean?

If we find ourself in a traumatic situation, how can we pray without being anxious?

### Comments

#### Is there a protocol for praying to God?

**No and Yes!**

**No!** Anyone can call on God’s Name at anytime and at any place.

*“Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* Rom.10:13

**Yes!** We can only come to God in Jesus’ Name.

*Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me.”* Jn.14:6

We also come to God with thanksgiving and praise

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.* Ps.100:4

We must come to God in faith, sincerity and truth

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him.* Heb.11:6

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.”* Jn.4:23-24

*The LORD is near to all who call on him, to all who call on him in truth.* Ps.145:18

#### Does it matter if people hear us praying?

**Yes and No!**

**Yes!** We are to pray to God not to our self or to others. Hypocrites want others to see how ‘religious’ they are.

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by others. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you.* Matt.6:5-6

**No!** Christianity is a personal yet shared faith. Church is always a shared experience.

When you come together each has a....

*When they heard the report, all the believers lifted their voices together in prayer to God: “O Sovereign Lord, Creator of heaven and earth...”* Acts4:24f

#### Can we pray effectively with a bad attitude?

**No!**

*But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.* Matt.6:15

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*Shouldn't you have had mercy on your fellow servant just as I had on you?' In anger his master handed him over to the jailers to be tortured, until he should pay back all he owed. This is how my heavenly Father will treat each of you unless you forgive your brother or sister from your heart."*Matt.18:33-35

*Husbands, in the same way be considerate as you live with your wives, and treat them with respect as the weaker partner and as heirs with you of the gracious gift of life, so that nothing will hinder your prayers.*1Pet.3:7

### **Why should we pray for our national leaders?**

**So that we can live quiet and peaceful lives and so that God's Word can be effective**

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth. For there is one God and one mediator between God and mankind, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all people.*<sup>1Tim.2:1-6</sup>

**What does "I will pray with my spirit, but I will also pray with my understanding"**<sup>1Cor.14:14-15</sup> **mean?**

**We should pray spiritual prayers** (i.e. prayers that are straight from our spirit and inspired by the Holy Spirit) **but we should also pray sensible prayers** i.e. prayers that make sense and are thought through

**What does "give thanks in all circumstances"** mean?

**We should give thanks in (not for) all circumstances.** We should have an attitude of gratitude. A happy, grateful disposition. When we understand that we have been forgiven much we will love much.

**What does "pray, lifting up holy hands without anger or disputing"**<sup>1Tim.2:8</sup> **mean?**

**To lift your hands to God is a sign of submission to Him as well as the gesture of receiving from Him**

*When you spread out your hands in prayer, I hide my eyes from you; even when you offer many prayers, I am not listening.*Is.1:15

**We can lift our hands to God in praise and joyful surrender—or in anger:**

*because he shakes his fist at God and vaunts himself against the Almighty,*Job.15:25

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving [towdah] and his courts with praise [Tehillah]; give thanks [yadah] to him and praise [barak] his name.*Ps.100:4

**Towdah:** used approx. 30 times. Thanksgiving. A sacrifice of praise or thanks before receiving the manifestation—a total agreement with the Word. It is an act of faith beyond which God moves to bring deliverance.

*He who sacrifices thank offerings [towdah] honours me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.*Ps.50:23

Towdah also implies lifting of hands; in Leviticus it is used in connection with offering of thanksgiving which has already been examined for purity.

*Suppose he offers a friendship offering to show he is thankful [towdah]. Then together with the thank offering [towdah] he must offer flat cakes of bread.* Lev.7:12

**Tehillah:** used approx. 57 times. To sing or laud; derived from *hallal* and usually means the singing of *Hallals*

**Judah (Yadah)** used approx. 120 times in OT and means thankful expression of praise. It is from the word meaning to throw out the hand (hence to lift up hands)—hands are an extension of our personalities.

*She conceived again, and when she gave birth to a son she said, "This time I will praise the LORD." So she named him Judah.*Gen.29:35

**Barak:** used approx. 330 times in OT. To kneel bless salute praise. Of all the words for praise, this is the only one that infers some kind of silence Ps.96:2. To *barak* God is to enthrone Him as Lord—to kneel before Him; thus when He no longer has pre-eminence in our lives, we praise (*barak*) someone or something else. This is called a curse:

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*When a period of feasting had run its course, Job would make arrangements for them to be purified. Early in the morning he would sacrifice a burnt offering for each of them, thinking, "Perhaps my children have sinned and cursed [barak] God in their hearts." This was Job's regular custom. Job 1:5*

*Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God. Ps.42:5*

**If we find ourself in a traumatic situation, how can we pray without being anxious?**

**Faith in action is casting our cares onto God.** We have to make a decision to trust God and renew our minds and then do it!

*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God. Ps.42:11*

When I reached the front of the church, Nicky Gumbel asked me what my prayer need was. In ten or fifteen seconds I summarized my problems, saying that I felt 'under attack'. Nicky thumbed through his Bible, and in a quiet, peaceful voice he read me the first few verses of Psalm 37. As soon as I heard the familiar words, 'Trust in the Lord Commit your way to the Lord ... trust in him and he will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun', I remembered how the same prayer had been said for me on the eve of the High Court hearing of Haig v Aitken by members of our Standford Hill prayer and fellowship group.

Almost immediately I realized that I had been sinning with my own failure to trust God. Of course he would sort out the unfair stories about my 'secret Swiss bank account'. Of course he would decide whether or not I should go to Wycliffe. Of course I would get the right answer from him on whether or not I should write the Colson biography and on the related visa problem. Instead of fuming, fretting and getting depressed about these apparent reverses in my life, I should surrender them to God's will. I was being tested and had so far failed the test. I would only pass if I learned the lesson from these pressures and yielded my will to God's will on all of them. This moment of truth brought peace to my troubled soul. I went home that night and said prayers of surrender instead of prayers of request. Nothing happened quickly with the problems, but at least I was content in my heart to be leaving the solutions in God's hands. The solutions duly arrived...

p.187 **Aitken, Jonathan**, "*Porridge and Passion*", Continuum, London, 2005.

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### Psalm 9:11-20

**Video:** *Perfected in Unity - How the Church Can Remain Unified in Christ Despite Differences*

#### Questions

#### **Different but not divided; Bruised but not broken; Best because we are blessed!**

*Then Judas and Silas, both being prophets, spoke at length to the believers, encouraging and strengthening their faith. They stayed for a while, and then the believers sent them back to the church in Jerusalem with a blessing of peace.*<sup>Acts.15:32-33</sup>

**What did Jesus mean by “this is My body which is broken for you;”?**

**How did God show His anger with sin?**

**Why are there still differences and divisions within the Church?**

**Who should decide what is an acceptable difference and what is an unacceptable difference (either doctrine or moral)?**

**Should we place any conditions on divisive people if they want to return?**

**What is the difference between forgiveness and restoration?**

#### Comments

**What did Jesus mean by “this is My body which is broken for you;”?**

Jesus meant that the broken bread represented His broken body. By sharing the bread, Jesus showed that His Body was also to be shared (i.e. the benefits of His broken Body was to be shared and participated in—forgiveness of sins, peace with God, wholeness, unity, etc.).

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.*1Cor.10:16-17

Although Jesus’ body was broken, it was raised a whole body—an immortal body, never to experience pain, death or decay. And we are now part of Jesus’ Body

*Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.* 1Cor.12:27

*So in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others.*Rom.12:5

*After all, no one ever hated their own body, but they feed and care for their body, just as Christ does the church—for we are members of his body.*Eph.5:29-30

#### **How did God show His anger with sin?**

God cannot look upon sin and when Jesus became sin for us, the sun was darkened, showing figuratively that God had forsaken Jesus.

*Your eyes are too pure to look on evil; you cannot tolerate wrongdoing.*Hab.1:17

*From noon until three in the afternoon darkness came over all the land. About three in the afternoon Jesus cried out in a loud voice, “Eli, Eli, lema sabachthani?” (which means “My God, my God, why have you forsaken me?”).*Matt.27:45-46

#### **Why are there still differences and divisions within the Church?**

We are individuals

We still have sin

We are not yet perfected

#### **Who should decide what is an acceptable difference and what is an unacceptable difference (either doctrine or moral)?**

Depends on each situation but generally, the “yard-stick” for doctrine would be the Apostles’ Creed or the Nicene Creed

#### **The Apostles Creed**

I believe in God, the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth;

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I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary. He suffered under Pontius Pilate, was crucified, died, and was buried. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again. He ascended into heaven, and is seated at the right hand of Father. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.

I believe in the Holy Spirit, the holy catholic Church, the communion of saints, the forgiveness of sins, the resurrection of the body, and the life everlasting. Amen.

### **The Nicene Creed**

We believe in one God the Father, the Almighty, creator of heaven and earth, and of all that is, seen and unseen.

We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ, the only Son of God, eternally begotten of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one being with the Father. Through him all things were made. For us men and for our salvation he came down from heaven; by the power of the Holy Spirit he became incarnate from the Virgin Mary, and was made man. For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate; he suffered death and was buried. On the third day he rose again in accordance with the Scriptures; he ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father. He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead, and his kingdom will have no end.

We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life, who proceeds from the Father (and the Son). With the Father and the Son he is worshipped and glorified. He has spoken through the Prophets. We believe in one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church. We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins. We look for the resurrection of the dead, and the life of the world to come. Amen.

### **Moral distinction would be dependent upon what position they have in the Church**

#### **The guides for Leadership are found in 1Timothy and Titus**

*Here is a trustworthy saying: Whoever aspires to be an overseer desires a noble task. Now the overseer is to be above reproach, faithful to his wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money...1Tim.3:1f*

*In the same way, deacons\* are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons...1Tim.3:8f*

*Although I hope to come to you soon, I am writing you these instructions so that, if I am delayed, you will know how people ought to conduct themselves in God's household, which is the church of the living God, the pillar and foundation of the truth... 1Tim.3:14f*

*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might put in order what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, faithful to his wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer manages God's household, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather, he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.Tit.1:5-9*

Those who are not in a public office are not held to the same standard as those who hold a public office in the Church

*Not many of you should become teachers, my fellow believers, because you know that we who teach will be judged more strictly. We all stumble in many ways. Anyone who is never at fault in what they say is perfect, able to keep their whole body in check.Jas.3:1-2*

But we should be in no doubt what God has done for us and live accordingly

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*Or do you not know that wrongdoers will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor men who have sex with men nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God. 1Cor.6:9-11*

### Should we place any conditions on divisive people if they want to return?

Repentance is essential (together with a renouncing of sin

c.f. CofE “baptism” liturgy:

*In baptism, God calls us out of darkness into his marvellous light. To follow Christ means dying to sin and rising to new life with him. Therefore I ask:*

*Do you reject the devil and all rebellion against God?*

***I reject them.***

*Do you renounce the deceit and corruption of evil?*

***I renounce them.***

*Do you repent of the sins that separate us from God and neighbour?*

***I repent of them.***

*Do you turn to Christ as Saviour?*

***I turn to Christ.***

*Do you submit to Christ as Lord?*

***I submit to Christ.***

*Do you come to Christ, the way, the truth and the life?*

***I come to Christ.***

*Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them.*<sup>Lk.17:4</sup>

But even with repentance, it might be necessary to impose some conditions so people are protected—the returning repentant so they don't return to their sins and others so they are protected should the person fall back again.

### What is the difference between forgiveness and restoration?

Forgiveness is unconditional; restoration is conditional on repentance—which involves at least a determination to change

Forgiveness is a clean slate; restoration is keeping the slate clean.

Forgiveness is mending what was broken; Restoration is making it work again.

However, although forgiveness is unconditional (that what Grace is), restoration is conditional on repentance.

*But now God commands all people everywhere to repent.*<sup>Acts.17:30</sup>

*But unless you repent, you too will all perish.*<sup>Lk.13:5</sup>

*Even if they sin against you seven times in a day and seven times come back to you saying 'I repent,' you must forgive them.*<sup>Lk.17:4</sup> *Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*<sup>Matt.3:8</sup>

*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret.*<sup>2Cor.7:10</sup>

*Those whom I love I rebuke and discipline. So be earnest and repent. Here I am! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears my voice and opens the door, I will come in and eat with that person, and they with me.*<sup>Rev.3:19-20</sup>

**Repentance will always include these 5 A's**

**1 Acknowledgement** of the wrong

**2 Apology** for the wrong

**3 Action** of determination to change

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**4 Appreciation** of God's forgiveness

**5 Attitude** of grace, gratitude and gentleness towards God and people

An awareness of forgiveness will prompt great love

*“Two people owed money to a certain moneylender. One owed him five hundred denarii, and the other fifty. Neither of them had the money to pay him back, so he forgave the debts of both. Now which of them will love him more?” Simon replied, “I suppose the one who had the bigger debt forgiven.” “You have judged correctly,” Jesus said. Then he turned toward the woman and said to Simon, “Do you see this woman? I came into your house. You did not give me any water for my feet, but she wet my feet with her tears and wiped them with her hair. You did not give me a kiss, but this woman, from the time I entered, has not stopped kissing my feet. You did not put oil on my head, but she has poured perfume on my feet. Therefore, I tell you, her many sins have been forgiven—as her great love has shown. But whoever has been forgiven little loves little.” Then Jesus said to her, “Your sins are forgiven.” The other guests began to say among themselves, “Who is this who even forgives sins?” Jesus said to the woman, “Your faith has saved you; go in peace.” Lk.7:41-50*



## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

21/07/2021

**What's your normal?** *At Iconium Paul and Barnabas went as usual into the Jewish synagogue. There they spoke so effectively that a great number of Jews and Greeks believed.*<sup>Acts.14:1</sup>

### Psalm 9:1-10

*Video: What Should Christians Be Looking for in a Church*

*The number of positive tests across Kent has risen by more than 70%, taking its total to 5,318 in the seven days to July 15.*

### Questions for the Bible Study

What is a habit?

What godly habits should we form?

What is the Church?

What should Church be like?

What are Biblical essentials for Church?

What can we do to meet those Biblical essentials for Church?

### Comments

#### What is a habit?

A habit is an established custom, a usual practice—something we do without having to think about it and here at our Church we promote habits of faith-full ideals, wholesome practices and godly values—and these will sustain us in times of trouble.

#### What godly habits should we form?

##### Meeting together as Christians (Church)

*Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*Heb.10:25

##### Love and hospitality

*Keep on loving each other as brothers. Do not forget to entertain strangers, for by so doing some people have entertained angels without knowing it.*Heb.13:1-2

##### Praise to God and sharing with others

*Through Jesus, therefore, let us continually offer to God a sacrifice of praise—the fruit of lips that confess his name. And do not forget to do good and to share with others, for with such sacrifices God is pleased.*Heb.13:15-16

#### What is the Church?

Church is always an activity with purpose. We don't come together casually but determine to give our best to God because He deserves it. Worship means worth-ship; what God is worth to me.

Church is a fellowship—a common-union, partnership and a participation (not an agitation)

The word **Church** is from the Greek ἐκκλησία (Eklesia) meaning **a gathering of citizens called out from their homes into some public place for the purpose of deliberating** (deliberating = discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration).

- ♦ **Gathering:** Church is always a *gathering* of people never just 1 or 2 people in their home.
- ♦ **Citizens:** Christians are *citizens* of heaven. This has nothing to do with our natural or first birth but solely to do with our second birth from above:

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and aliens, but fellow citizens with God's people and members of God's household.*Eph.2:19

*But our citizenship is in heaven.* Phil.3:20

- ♦ **Called:** We have responded to God's call and are doing something about it. Church is when we leave our home thinking - lunch, business, family, friends, leisure etc. to worship God with a single mind:

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*His divine power has given us everything we need for life and godliness through our knowledge of him who called us by his own glory and goodness. 2Pet.1:3*

◆ **Public:** Church meets in *public* not in private. We are not a secret society or cult. We are transparent and accountable.

*Now this is our boast: Our conscience testifies that we have conducted ourselves in the world, and especially in our relations with you, in the holiness and sincerity that are from God. We have done so not according to worldly wisdom but according to God's grace. For we do not write you anything you cannot read or understand. And I hope that, as you have understood us in part, you will come to understand fully that you can boast of us just as we will boast of you in the day of the Lord Jesus. 2Cor.1:12-14*

*Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God. 2Cor.2:17*

◆ **Purpose:** Our meetings are deliberate, we intend to take action after hearing the facts: *they received the message with great eagerness and studied the Scriptures every day to see if what Paul said was true. Acts 17:11*

**We are Church when we come together in public to make quality decisions to change after spending time in God's presence.**

**What should the Church be like?**

Happy, joyful, reverent, orderly, accountable, safe, secure.

**Church should be a place where God's glory is tangible.**

*Glory belongs to God, whose power is at work in us. By this power he can do infinitely more than we can ask or imagine. Glory belongs to God in the church and in Christ Jesus for all time and eternity! Amen. Eph.3:20-21*

**We should always honour God and give Him the glory:**

*Hallelujah! For our Lord God Almighty reigns. Let us rejoice and be glad and give him glory! Rev.19:6-7*

**Church should be a place where God displays His Wisdom:**

*His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose that he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Eph.3:10-12*

**The Holy Spirit imparts God's wisdom to us:**

*Now to each one the manifestation of the Spirit is given for the common good. To one there is given through the Spirit the message of wisdom, to another the message of knowledge by means of the same Spirit, to another faith by the same Spirit... All these are the work of one and the same Spirit, and he gives them to each one, just as he determines. 1Cor.12:7-11*

**Church should be a place where God's Word is preached with prayerful and careful preparation.**

*Work hard so you can present yourself to God and receive his approval. Be a good worker, one who does not need to be ashamed and who correctly explains the word of truth. 2Tim.2:15*

*They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage. Neh.8:8*

**Church should be a place where true prophecy is promoted.**

Although Prophecy may foretell, its main purpose is to forthtell—it is about promoting Jesus not predicting the future. True prophecy will always promote Jesus and Jesus' values:

*Worship God! For the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy. Rev.3:10*

*Follow the way of love and eagerly desire spiritual gifts, especially the gift of prophecy... But everyone who prophesies speaks to men for their strengthening, encouragement and comfort... He who prophesies is.. so that the church may be edified. 1Cor.14:1-5*

**Church should be a place where we are committed to one another.**

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had*

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*everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.*<sup>Acts.2:42-47</sup>

*Speak to people for their strengthening, encouraging and comfort... so that the church may be edified.*<sup>1Cor.14:3-5</sup>

**Church should be a joyful place where we find spiritual and emotion strength.** *I was glad when they said to me, "Let us go into the house of the LORD." Our feet have been standing within your gates, O Jerusalem! Jerusalem is built as a city that is compact together, where the tribes go up, the tribes of the LORD, to the Testimony of Israel, to give thanks to the name of the LORD.*<sup>Ps.122:1-4</sup>

The Church described as Jerusalem (Mt. Zion): *These two women serve as an illustration of God's two covenants. The first woman, Hagar, represents Mount Sinai where people received the law that enslaved them. And now Jerusalem is just like Mount Sinai in Arabia, because she and her children live in slavery to the law. But the other woman, Sarah, represents the heavenly Jerusalem. She is the free woman, and she is our mother... And you, dear brothers and sisters, are children of the promise, just like Isaac. But you are now being persecuted by those who want you to keep the law, just as Ishmael, the child born by human effort, persecuted Isaac, the child born by the power of the Spirit. But what do the Scriptures say about that? "Get rid of the slave and her son, for the son of the slave woman will not share the inheritance with the free woman's son." So, dear brothers and sisters, we are not children of the slave woman; we are children of the free woman.*<sup>Gal.4:24-31</sup>

*I saw the Holy City, the new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride beautifully dressed for her husband. And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away." He who was seated on the throne said, "I am making everything new!" Then he said, "Write this down, for these words are trustworthy and true."*<sup>Rev.21:2-5</sup>

**Church should be a place where we encourage and are encouraged.**

Church attendance should not be a formal ritual but a forum to encourage one another:

*And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*<sup>Heb.10:24-25</sup>

**If we don't encourage others when we meet together, we are not Church—even if we call it a "Church Service"!**

That's why we should always bring something to give:

*So here's what I want you to do. When you gather for worship, each one of you be prepared with something that will be useful for all: Sing a hymn, teach a lesson, tell a story, lead a prayer, provide an insight.*<sup>1Cor.14:23</sup>

### What are Biblical essentials for Church?

**Honourable**—especially in honouring Jesus. Church must honour Jesus' eternal identity as well as His human identity. Jesus is co-eternal with the Father, He was born of the Virgin Mary, suffered, died and rose again, ascended to heaven in glory where He reigns and will return in bodily form.

(Jesus is the Word of God and Church must honour the Written Word of God as well as the Living Word of God)

**Credible**—which means some sort of accountability. Church has the responsibility to disciple people. A disciple is a follower or an apprentice—and so a Christian disciple is a follower of Christ. To disciple someone is to train them in righteousness but it reserves the right to bring discipline, in order to protect them and others from wrong doctrine and wrong lifestyle.

*Have nothing to do with godless myths and old wives' tales; rather, train yourself to be godly.* 1Tim.4:7

*Keep reminding God's people of these things. Warn them before God against quarrelling about words; it is of no value, and only ruins those who listen. Do your best to present yourself to God as one approved, a worker who does*

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*not need to be ashamed and who correctly handles the word of truth. Avoid godless chatter, because those who indulge in it will become more and more ungodly. 2Tim.2:14-16*

*“My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Heb.12:5-11*

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of talk but of power. What do you prefer? Shall I come to you with a rod of discipline, or shall I come in love and with a gentle spirit? 1Cor.4:20-21*

### What can we do to meet those Biblical essentials for Church?

Keep our love for God alive and passionate (love is a commitment not just an emotion).

Stay focused on the Word of God—the Written Word of God as well as the Living Word of God

Belong to an organisation that is credible and larger than the local congregation.

Keep Jesus' commands—especially His last ones:

*When they saw him, they worshiped him; but some doubted. Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in\* the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.” Matt.28:17-20*

*He said to them, “Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation. Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned. And these signs will accompany those who believe: In my name... Mk.16:15-17*

*Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures. He told them, “This is what is written: The Christ will suffer and rise from the dead on the third day, and repentance and forgiveness of sins will be preached in his name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. You are witnesses of these things. I am going to send you what my Father has promised; but stay in the city until you have been clothed with power from on high.” Lk.24:45-49*

*You must follow me.” Jn.21:22*

### The Anabaptists.

The Reformation was not pre-planned with a strategy and purpose in view. Rather it evolved because of frustrations with the religious, political and social constraints of the time. What started with an objection to the practice of indulgences, became a fully-fledged ‘Freedom Movement’, with the belief in the importance of Scripture and the doctrine of ‘Justification by Faith Alone’, as core values. When Zwingli, let the town council have the final say on the disposition of the Mass and the use of images, rather than Scripture, some objected. They felt that Zwingli had “abandoned his avowed position of no compromise where the Word of God had spoken.”

With their appetite for change whetted, this group in Zürich was determined to restore the church to N.T. principles. The Chronicle of the Hutterian Brethren records their actions:

After the prayer, Georg Blaurock stood up and asked Conrad Grebel in the name of God to baptize him with true Christian baptism on his faith and recognition of the truth. With this request he knelt down, and Conrad baptized him, since at that time there was no appointed servant of the Word. Then the others turned to Georg in their turn, asking him to baptize them, which he did. And so, in great fear of God, together they surrendered themselves to the Lord. They confirmed one another for the service of the Gospel and began to teach the faith and to keep it. This was the beginning of separation from the world and its evil ways.

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This group was nicknamed ‘*Anabaptists*’ meaning ‘*rebaptized*’, though the label was never used by the Anabaptists themselves and was often vigorously objected to by them because “*of the opprobrium and criminal character attached to the name. [Since] Justinian's time (A.D. 529) rebaptism [was] one of the two heresies penalized by death.*”

**Greg Koukl**

Church should

**Be Objective:**

Have a high view of Scripture i.e., be careful how they uses Scripture. Don't try to find secret information there, or read between the lines, or make metaphors out of historical events. Church should practice their high view of Scripture, not just declare it and a place where you are spiritually fed from the Word of God.

**Be Accountable:**

Be a place where you can be useful. Every Christian has been gifted by the Holy Spirit and there must be opportunities to exercise your spiritual gifts—but with accountability. We must use our gifting to build up the community

**Be Subjective:**

Be a place to call home because you “feel” at home. There must a “feel-good” factor for you.

Also it must be a place where the Leadership is respected. If you lose respect for the leadership it is difficult to be part of it. (Respect is linked to credibility and is earned not imposed.)

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Now when David had served God's purpose in his own generation, he fell asleep.<sup>Acts.13:36</sup>

### Psalm 8

Video: *What Kind of Communication with God Should We Expect\_*

### Questions

**What is God's glory?**

**How were Adam and Eve like God?**

**In what ways are we now like God?**

**What is God's purpose for our life.**

**Can we reject God's purposes for us?**

**How can we fulfil God's purpose for us?**

### Comments

#### What is God's glory?

**God's glory is His presence, which is spiritual yet tangible.** Words used to describe God's glory are: light, awesome, purity, holiness, splendour, beauty, etc.

*Who is like you—majestic in holiness, awesome in glory, working wonders?Ex.15:11*

*God, the blessed and only Ruler, the King of kings and Lord of lords, who alone is immortal and who lives in unapproachable light, whom no one has seen or can see. To him be honour and might forever. Amen.1Tim.6:15-16*

*I did not see a temple in the city, because the Lord God Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. The city does not need the sun or the moon to shine on it, for the glory of God gives it light, and the Lamb is its lamp. The nations will walk by its light, and the kings of the earth will bring their splendour into it. On no day will its gates ever be shut, for there will be no night there.Rev.21:22-25*

#### God's glory is His "clothes"

*The LORD wraps himself in light as with a garment;Ps.104:2*

*Then the LORD spoke to Job out of the storm: "Brace yourself like a man; I will question you, and you shall answer me. "Would you discredit my justice? Would you condemn me to justify yourself? Do you have an arm like God's, and can your voice thunder like his? Then adorn yourself with glory and splendour, and clothe yourself in honour and majesty.Job.40:6-10*

*There he was transfigured before them. His face shone like the sun, and his clothes became as white as the light.Matt.17:2*

#### Also angels' clothes:

*After he said this, he was taken up before their very eyes, and a cloud hid him from their sight. They were looking intently up into the sky as he was going, when suddenly two men dressed in white stood beside them.Acts,1:9-10*

#### How were Adam and Eve like God?

They were people (had a personality), spiritual (different dimension from physical), creative, holy, pure, a unit (united)

#### In what ways are we now like God?

Spiritual (i.e. eternal), Christians are spiritually alive (i.e. in relation with God)

*But we know that when Christ appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. All who have this hope in him purify themselves, just as he is pure.1Jn.3:2-3*

*Dear friends, do not be surprised at the fiery ordeal that has come on you to test you, as though something strange were happening to you. But rejoice inasmuch as you participate in the sufferings of Christ, so that you may be overjoyed when his glory is revealed. If you are insulted because of the name of Christ, you are blessed, for the Spirit of glory and of God rests on you.1Pet.4:12-14*

#### What is God's purpose for our life.

To be saved

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*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* 2Pet.3:9

**To share in the glory of Jesus Christ.**

*He called you to this through our gospel, that you might share in the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.* 2Thes.2:14

**The Westminster Shorter Catechism** consist of 107 questions about Christian Doctrine together with answers from Scripture. It was completed in 1647 by the Westminster Assembly and continues to serve as part of the doctrinal standards of many Presbyterian churches.

**Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?**

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him for ever. [b]

[a]. Ps. 86:9; Isa. 60:21; Rom. 11:36; 1 Cor. 6:20; 10:31; Rev.4:11

[b]. Ps. 16:5-11; 144:15; Isa. 12:2; Luke 2:10; Phil. 4:4; Rev.21:3-4

**Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?**

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, [a] is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him. [b]

[a]. Matt. 19:4-5 with Gen. 2:24; Luke 24:27, 44; 1 Cor. 2:13; 14:37; 2 Pet.1:20-21; 3:2, 15-16

[b]. Deut. 4:2; Ps. 19:7-11; Isa. 8:20; John 15:11; 20:30-31; Acts 17:11; 2 Tim. 3:15-17; 1 John 1:4

**Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?**

A. The Scriptures principally teach what man is to believe concerning God, [a] and what duty God requires of man [b].

[a]. Gen. 1:1; John 5:39; 20:31; Rom. 10:17; 2 Tim. 3:15

[b]. Deut. 10:12-13; Josh. 1:8; Ps. 119:105; Mic. 6:8; 2 Tim.3:16-17

**Can we reject God's purposes for us?**

**No, we can't stop God's purposes because He is Sovereign and greater than any opposition**

*If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.* 1Jn.3:20

*Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid or terrified because of them, for the LORD your God goes with you; he will never leave you nor forsake you.* Deut.31:6 / Heb.13:5-6

**Yes, we can reject God's purposes for our own life if we intentionally oppose God**

*Do not be afraid," Samuel replied. "You have done all this evil; yet do not turn away from the LORD, but serve the LORD with all your heart. Do not turn away after useless idols. They can do you no good, nor can they rescue you, because they are useless. For the sake of his great name the LORD will not reject his people, because the LORD was pleased to make you his own. As for me, far be it from me that I should sin against the LORD by failing to pray for you. And I will teach you the way that is good and right. But be sure to fear the LORD and serve him faithfully with all your heart; consider what great things he has done for you. Yet if you persist in doing evil, both you and your king will perish."* 1Sam.12:20-25

*(All the people, even the tax collectors, when they heard Jesus' words, acknowledged that God's way was right, because they had been baptized by John. But the Pharisees and the experts in the law rejected God's purpose for themselves, because they had not been baptized by John.)* Lk.7:29-30

*If we deliberately keep on sinning after we have received the knowledge of the truth, no sacrifice for sins is left, but only a fearful expectation of judgment and of raging fire that will consume the enemies of God. Anyone who rejected the law of Moses died without mercy on the testimony of two or three witnesses. How much more severely do you think a man deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God under foot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified him, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? For we know him who said, "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," and again, "The Lord will judge his people."\* It is a dreadful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.* Heb.10:26-31

**How can we fulfil God's purpose for us?**

**Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people**

**Keep in step with the Holy Spirit**

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*Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit. Gal5:25*

### **Fix our eyes on Jesus**

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles, and let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us. Let us fix our eyes on Jesus, the author and perfecter of our faith, who for the joy set before him endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such opposition from sinful men, so that you will not grow weary and lose heart. Heb.12:1-3*

### **Set our minds on heavenly things**

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. For you died, and your life is now hidden with Christ in God. When Christ, who is your life, appears, then you also will appear with him in glory. Col.3:1-4*

*Finally, brothers, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Phil.4:8-9*

*And we, who with unveiled faces all reflect [or contemplate] the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his likeness with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit. 2Cor.3:18*



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**Prayer.** *the church was earnestly praying to God for him.* <sup>Acts.12:5</sup>

### Psalm 7:9-17

*Video: Discerning Truth in a Divided World*

### Questions

What is “prayer”?

Can anyone pray?

Is there a difference between talking to God and praying to God? Explain!

How can we pray an “effective prayer”?

What is the difference between “wishing” and “believing”?

Does God answer us if we doubt when we pray?

How should we pray for our political leaders?

Give some examples of prayers in the New Testament

### Comments

#### What is “prayer”?

Prayer from Latin *prex* meaning: *an entreaty*. To pray is to address a deity or an object of worship; also to ask or beseech someone (in general conversation). Thus, to address God is prayer—but Christian prayer (which is now the only true prayer) is communicating with God through Jesus Christ

#### Can anyone pray?

Anyone can talk to God but only Believers can talk to God and be confident that He hears them. The only way to come to God is through Jesus, and so the only way we can communicate with God is in the name of Jesus. We should not get involved with “inter-faith” worship or prayers because they are treating other deities as objects of worship—the 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> Commandments.

*You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself an image in the form of anything in heaven above or on the earth beneath or in the waters below. You shall not bow down to them or worship them;* Ex.20:3-5

#### Is there a difference between talking to God and praying to God? Explain!

Yes! Anyone can talk to God but only Believers can pray. But even New Covenant Believers can end up talking **to** God rather than talking **with** God

*But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do. [People who “worry their prayers” are like wind-whipped waves. Don't think you're going to get anything from the Master that way, adrift at sea, keeping all your options open.]* Jas.1:6-8

#### How can we pray an “effective prayer”?

We must be counted “righteous” by God and pray “in faith”, *i.e.* we must be a Believer and we must have confidence in God

*And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective.* Jas.5:15-16

#### What is the difference between “wishing” or “hoping” and “believing”?

We can be totally convinced that God will give us what we ask for, but **prayer only works if God answers!** If God doesn't answer our prayer, no matter what we hope for or wish in prayer, it won't happen!

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### Does God answer us if we doubt when we pray?

God may answer us, but it will be no credit to us.

*Jesus turned and saw her. "Take heart, daughter," he said, "your faith has healed you." And the woman was healed at that moment.*Matt.9:22

*He said to her, "Daughter, your faith has healed you. Go in peace and be freed from your suffering."*Mk.5:32

*"What do you want me to do for you?" Jesus asked him. The blind man said, "Rabbi, I want to see." "Go," said Jesus, "your faith has healed you." Immediately he received his sight and followed Jesus along the road.*Mk.10:51-52

*Jesus asked, "Were not all ten cleansed? Where are the other nine? Has no one returned to give praise to God except this foreigner?" Then he said to him, "Rise and go; your faith has made you well."*Lk.17:17-19

*But when you ask, you must believe and not doubt, because the one who doubts is like a wave of the sea, blown and tossed by the wind. That person should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Such a person is double-minded and unstable in all they do.*Jas.1:6-8

### How should we pray for our political leaders?

We can and should work and pray for the peace and prosperity of our community because when our community prospers, we too will prosper

*Also, seek the peace and prosperity of the city to which I have carried you into exile. Pray to the LORD for it, because if it prospers, you too will prosper.*Jer.29:7

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*1Tim.2:1-4

*so that they may offer sacrifices pleasing to the God of heaven and pray for the well-being of the king and his sons.*Ezra.6:10

*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves.*Rom.13:1-2

### Give some examples of prayers in the New Testament

*The woman came and knelt before him. "Lord, help me!" she said.*Matt.15:25

*"Sovereign Lord," they said, "you made the heavens and the earth and the sea, and everything in them. You spoke by the Holy Spirit through the mouth of your servant, our father David: "Why do the nations rage and the peoples plot in vain? The kings of the earth rise up and the rulers band together against the Lord and against his anointed one."*

*Indeed Herod and Pontius Pilate met together with the Gentiles and the people of Israel in this city to conspire against your holy servant Jesus, whom you anointed. They did what your power and will had decided beforehand should happen.*

*Now, Lord, consider their threats and enable your servants to speak your word with great boldness. Stretch out your hand to heal and perform signs and wonders through the name of your holy servant Jesus."*Acts.4:24-30

*constantly I remember you in my prayers at all times; and I pray that now at last by God's will the way may be opened for me to come to you.*Rom.1:9-10

*Pray that I may be kept safe from the unbelievers in Judea and that the contribution I take to Jerusalem may be favourably received by the Lord's people there, so that I may come to you with joy, by God's will, and in your company be refreshed. The God of peace be with you all. Amen.*Rom.15:31-33

*In their prayers for you their hearts will go out to you, because of the surpassing grace God has given you.*2Cor.9:14

*Now we pray to God that you will not do anything wrong—not so that people will see that we have stood the test but so that you will do what is right even though we may seem to have failed. For we cannot do anything against the truth, but only for the truth. We are glad whenever we are weak but you are strong; and our prayer is that you may be fully restored.*2Cor.13:7-9

*I have not stopped giving thanks for you, remembering you in my prayers. I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you,*

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*the riches of his glorious inheritance in his holy people, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. Eph.1:16-19*

*I pray that out of his glorious riches he may strengthen you with power through his Spirit in your inner being, so that Christ may dwell in your hearts through faith. And I pray that you, being rooted and established in love, may have power, together with all the Lord's holy people, to grasp how wide and long and high and deep is the love of Christ, and to know this love that surpasses knowledge—that you may be filled to the measure of all the fullness of God. Eph.3:16-19*

*Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, words may be given me so that I will fearlessly make known the mystery of the gospel, for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray that I may declare it fearlessly, as I should. Eph.6:19-20  
And this is my prayer: that your love may abound more and more in knowledge and depth of insight, so that you may be able to discern what is best and may be pure and blameless for the day of Christ, filled with the fruit of righteousness that comes through Jesus Christ—to the glory and praise of God. Phil.1:9-11*

*We always thank God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, when we pray for you, Col.1:3*

*Devote yourselves to prayer, being watchful and thankful. And pray for us, too, that God may open a door for our message, so that we may proclaim the mystery of Christ, for which I am in chains. Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Col.4:2-6*

*We always thank God for all of you and continually mention you in our prayers. 1Thess.1:2*

*Night and day we pray most earnestly that we may see you again and supply what is lacking in your faith. 1Thess.3:10  
With this in mind, we constantly pray for you, that our God may make you worthy of his calling, and that by his power he may bring to fruition your every desire for goodness and your every deed prompted by faith. We pray this so that the name of our Lord Jesus may be glorified in you, and you in him, according to the grace of our God and the Lord Jesus Christ. 2Thess.1:11-12*

*As for other matters, brothers and sisters, pray for us that the message of the Lord may spread rapidly and be honoured, just as it was with you. And pray that we may be delivered from wicked and evil people, for not everyone has faith. But the Lord is faithful, and he will strengthen you and protect you from the evil one. We have confidence in the Lord that you are doing and will continue to do the things we command. May the Lord direct your hearts into God's love and Christ's perseverance. 2Thess.3:1-5*

*The widow who is really in need and left all alone puts her hope in God and continues night and day to pray and to ask God for help. 1Tim.5:5*

*I constantly remember you in my prayers. 2Tim.1:3*

*I pray that your partnership with us in the faith may be effective in deepening your understanding of every good thing we share for the sake of Christ. Phile.1:6*

*Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honourably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. Heb.13:18-19*

*Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord. And the prayer offered in faith will make the sick person well; the Lord will raise them up. If they have sinned, they will be forgiven. Therefore confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed. The prayer of a righteous person is powerful and effective. Jas.5:14-16*

*If you see any brother or sister commit a sin that does not lead to death, you should pray and God will give them life. I refer to those whose sin does not lead to death. There is a sin that leads to death. I am not saying that you should pray about that. All wrongdoing is sin, and there is sin that does not lead to death. 1Jn.5:16-17*

*I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well. 3Jn.2*

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**What has the grace of God done for you?** *When he arrived and saw what the grace of God had done, he was glad and encouraged them all to remain true to the Lord with all their hearts.*<sup>Acts.11:23</sup>

### Psalm 7:1-8

Video: Jonah 4

### Questions

What is “grace”?

What difference has grace made to your life?

What is worship?

How can we worship if we are beset with problems?

How can we set our hearts at rest if we have fear, worry or anxiety?

How can we maintain faith, hope, love, gentleness, gratefulness and gracefulness?

### Comments

#### What is “grace”?

The Greek word for “grace” in the Bible is “*charis*”—from where we get “*charismatic*”. Grace is defined as “*that which causes joy or pleasure for a kindness granted, a benefit, thanks, gratitude; a favour done without expectation of return; the absolutely free expression of the loving kindness of God to us.*” Grace also refers to our manner—gracefulness or elegance.

#### What difference has grace made to your life?

**God’s Grace has made us spiritually rich and graceful for which we are grateful**

*For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you through his poverty might become rich.*2Cor.8:9

**Grace gives us the glory that Jesus has.**

*But we do see Jesus, who was made lower than the angels for a little while, now crowned with glory and honour because he suffered death, so that by the grace of God he might taste death for everyone. In bringing many sons and daughters to glory, it was fitting that God, for whom and through whom everything exists, should make the pioneer of their salvation perfect through what he suffered. Both the one who makes people holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers and sisters.*Heb.2:9-11

**God will not share his glory with another**

*I am the LORD; that is my name! I will not give my glory to another or my praise to idols.*Is.42:8

**But in Christ, we are not “another,” we are one with Him.**

*I have given them the glory that you gave me, that they may be one as we are one: I in them and you in me.* Jn.17:22  
*For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified.*Rom.8:29-30

#### What is worship?

The word “**worship**” comes from the old English word “*weorscipe*” meaning “**worth-ship**” and so worship is basically **expressing what God is worth to us.**

*You are worthy, our Lord and God, to receive glory and honour and power, for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.*Rev.4:11

*Fear God and give him glory, because the hour of his judgment has come. Worship him who made the heavens, the earth, the sea and the springs of water.*Rev.14:7

*Come, let us bow down in worship, let us kneel before the LORD our Maker; for he is our God and we are the people of his pasture, the flock under his care.*Ps.95:6-7

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### **We should only worship God**

*Jesus answered, "It is written: 'Worship the Lord your God and serve him only.' Lk.4:8*

*Do not worship any other god, for the LORD, whose name is Jealous, is a jealous God. Ex.34:14*

*At this I fell at his feet to worship him. But he said to me, "Don't do that! I am a fellow servant with you and with your brothers and sisters who hold to the testimony of Jesus. Worship God! For it is the Spirit of prophecy who bears testimony to Jesus." Rev.19:10*

*As Peter entered the house, Cornelius met him and fell at his feet in reverence. But Peter made him get up. "Stand up," he said, "I am only a man myself." Acts.10:25*

### **Worship of God has to be spiritual and honest (as well as doctrinally correct)**

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth. Jn.4:23-24*

### **And so our conversation and our songs must agree with God's testimony**

*Sanctify (or "set apart for sacred use" or "make holy") them by the truth; your word is truth. John 17:17*

*Anyone who believes in the Son of God has this testimony in his heart. Anyone who does not believe God has made him out to be a liar, because he has not believed the testimony God has given about his Son. And this is the testimony: God has given us eternal life, and this life is in his Son. 1John 5:10-11*

### **There should be order in worship**

*Brothers and sisters, what should we say then? When you come together, every one of you brings something. You bring a hymn or a teaching or a word from God. You bring a message in another language or explain what was said. All of those things must be done to make the church strong. No more than two or three people should speak in another language. And they should speak one at a time. Then someone must explain what was said. If there is no one to explain, the speakers should keep quiet in the church. They can speak to themselves and to God. Only two or three prophets are supposed to speak. Others should decide if what is being said is true. What if a message from God comes to someone else who is sitting there? Then the one who is speaking should stop. Those who prophesy can all take turns. In that way, everyone can be taught and be given hope. Those who prophesy should control their speaking. God is not a God of disorder. He is a God of peace. 1Cor.14:26-33*

### **Worship is giving oneself to God**

*Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God's mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship. Rom.12:1*

### **Worship may involve our singing**

*Hezekiah gave the order to sacrifice the burnt offering on the altar. As the offering began, singing to the LORD began also, accompanied by trumpets and the instruments of David king of Israel. The whole assembly bowed in worship, while the singers sang and the trumpeters played. All this continued until the sacrifice of the burnt offering was completed. 2Chron.29:27-28*

*Worship the LORD with joy! Enter his presence with joyful singing! Acknowledge that the LORD is God! Ps.100:2*

**However, worship is much more than singing songs—it is obedience—doing what God requires willingly and cheerfully:**

*Abraham said to his servants, "Stay here with the donkey while I and the boy go over there. We will worship and then we will come back to you."... "I swear by myself, declares the LORD, that because you have done this and have not withheld your son, your only son, I will surely bless you and make your descendants as numerous as the stars in the sky and as the sand on the seashore. Your descendants will take possession of the cities of their enemies, and through your offspring all nations on earth will be blessed, because you have obeyed me." Gen.22:5-18*

### **How can we worship if we are beset with problems?**

Put our trust (faith and confidence) in God

*Why are you downcast, O my soul? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God. Ps.43:5*

Stay intimate with God

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*Whoever dwells in the shelter of the Most High will rest in the shadow of the Almighty. I will say of the LORD, "He is my refuge and my fortress, my God, in whom I trust." Ps.91:1-2*

### **How can we set our hearts at rest if we have fear, worry or anxiety?**

*Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything. Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God 1Jn.3:18-21*

*I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, Ps.16:8-9*

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light." Matt.11:29-30*

### **How can we maintain faith, hope, love, gentleness, gratefulness and gracefulness?**

**Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people**

**Fix our eyes on Jesus**

*So we fix our eyes not on what is seen, but on what is unseen, since what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal. 2Cor.4:18*

*Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles. And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. For the joy set before him he endured the cross, scorning its shame, and sat down at the right hand of the throne of God. Consider him who endured such Heb.12:1-3*

**Keep focussed on what is pure**

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you. Phil.4:8-9*

**Live grateful and graceful lives**

*Make every effort to live in peace with everyone and to be holy; without holiness no one will see the Lord. See to it that no one falls short of the grace of God and that no bitter root grows up to cause trouble and defile many. Heb.12:14-15*

*How much more severely do you think someone deserves to be punished who has trampled the Son of God underfoot, who has treated as an unholy thing the blood of the covenant that sanctified them, and who has insulted the Spirit of grace? Heb.10:29*

*Let us then approach God's throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Heb.4:16*

*For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith—and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God—not by works, so that no one can boast. Eph.2:8-9*

*Christ's love makes the church whole. His words evoke her beauty. Everything he does and says is designed to bring the best out of her, dressing her in dazzling white silk, radiant with holiness. Eph.5:26-27*

23/06/2021

## Psalm 6

Video: Jonah 3

**New Creation Realities** *Do not call something unclean if God has made it clean.*<sup>Acts.10:15</sup>

### Questions

In what ways are we more than the physical components of our body?

Describe what happens to us at conversion

How does the Bible say we should deal with guilt, stress or anxiety?

What is the new quality of life we have after conversion?

What is the new realm of life we have after conversion?

What is the new pattern of life we have after conversion?

In what ways are we more than the physical components of our body?

### Comments

#### Describe what happens to us at conversion

**If you only knew!!**

Conversion is not the same as joining a club—it is a re-birth into God’s family.

**At conversion, we were born-again—of an incorruptible seed**

*Jesus replied, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can see God’s kingdom without being born again.” “How can I be born when I am old?” Nicodemus asked. “I can’t go back inside my mother! I can’t be born a second time!”*

*Jesus answered, “What I’m about to tell you is true. No one can enter God’s kingdom without being born through water and the Holy Spirit. People give birth to people. But the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised when I say, ‘You must all be born again.’” Jn.3:3-7*

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [or incorruptible], through the living and enduring word of God.*<sup>1Pet.1:23</sup>

Conversion is a supernatural event where God intervenes deep within the human spirit—**conversion is a spiritual event that produces a spiritual experience.**

When someone acknowledges Jesus as their Lord and Saviour by repenting of their sins and turning their life over to Jesus’ rule and control, it is because they are re-born into a new species of being that the Bible calls a ‘new creation’ (actually there are only 2 types of human beings—Believers and unbelievers!).

*Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: The old has gone, the new is here! All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation.*<sup>2Cor.5:17-18</sup>

Our spirit is re-created to have a new configuration and different characteristics.

For example, **the nature of sin in the human spirit is destroyed and the nature of righteousness is implanted in the place of sin nature:**

*For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body of sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin — because anyone who has died has been freed from sin.*<sup>Rom.6:6-7</sup>

**At conversion God takes out our old spirit (heart) and gives us new spirit (heart):**

*And I will give you a new heart, and I will put a new spirit in you. I will take out your stony, stubborn heart and give you a tender, responsive heart. And I will put my Spirit in you so that you will follow my decrees and be careful to obey my regulations.*<sup>Ez.36:26-27</sup>

The spirit that we were born with was dead to God and separated from Him, but our new spirit is alive to God and joined to Him. This new spirit or “heart” animates our soul (personality) in the same way that our physical heart animates our physical body.

*Therefore, brothers, since we have confidence to enter the Most Holy Place by the blood of Jesus, by a new and living way opened for us through the curtain, that is, his body, and since we have a great priest over the house of God, [22] let*

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*us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. Heb.10:19-23*

**At our conversion, our old order of life passed away and we began a new order of life.** The old pattern of life—the way we used to think, see, talk, act, behave and react, went out and a new pattern of life took its place.

*This means that anyone who belongs to Christ has become a new person. The old life is gone; a new life has begun!*<sup>2Cor.5:17</sup>

**At conversion our past was forgiven and we were cleansed from our sin**

*“Come now, let us reason together,” says the LORD. “Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool. If you are willing and obedient, you will eat the best from the land;Is.1:18-19*

**Our conscience was washed and cleaned**

*this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge\* of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.1Pet.3:21-22*

*How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death,\* so that we may serve the living God!Heb.9:14*

*Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.”Acts.23:1*

**We are to keep a good conscience after conversion**

*command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.1Tim.1:3-7*

**We keep our conscience clear by confessing our sin**

*If we claim to be without sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness. If we claim we have not sinned, we make him out to be a liar and his word is not in us. My dear children, I write this to you so that you will not sin. But if anybody does sin, we have an advocate with the Father—Jesus Christ, the Righteous One. He is the atoning sacrifice for our sins, and not only for ours but also for the sins of the whole world.1Jn.1:8-2:2*

*Jesus answered, “Unless I wash you, you have no part with me.” “Then, Lord,” Simon Peter replied, “not just my feet but my hands and my head as well!” Jesus answered, “Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you.”Jn.13:8-10*

**How does the Bible say we should deal with guilt, stress or anxiety?**

*When anxiety was great within me, your consolation brought joy to my soul.Ps.94:19*

*So then, banish anxiety from your heart and cast off the troubles of your body,Eccl.11:10*

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be self-controlled and alert.1Pet.5:6-8*

*“No one can serve two masters. Either he will hate the one and love the other, or he will be devoted to the one and despise the other. You cannot serve both God and Money. “Therefore I tell you, do not worry about your life, what you will eat or drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Is not life more important than food, and the body more important than clothes? Look at the birds of the air; they do not sow or reap or store away in barns, and yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Are you not much more valuable than they? Who of you by worrying can add a single hour to his life?Matt.6:24-27*

**What is the new quality of life we have after conversion?**

**Abundant life**

*The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.Jn.10:10*



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### Righteousness, peace and joy

*For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. Rom.14:17-18*

### What is the new realm of life we have after conversion?

#### Light and life

*But you are a chosen people, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, God's special possession, that you may declare the praises of him who called you out of darkness into his marvellous light. <sup>1Pet.2:9</sup>*

If God has called us into His marvellous light then our lives should be marvellous too! God's marvellous light should surround our life with its magnificence and make us magnificent.

*This is the message we have heard from him and declare to you: God is light; in him there is no darkness at all. If we claim to have fellowship with him and yet walk in the darkness, we lie and do not live out the truth. But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin. 1Jn.1:5-7*

### What is the new pattern of life we have after conversion?

*Whoever is a believer in Christ is a new creation. The old way of living has disappeared. A new way of living has come into existence. God has done all this. He has restored our relationship with him through Christ, and has given us this ministry of restoring relationships. <sup>2Cor.5:17-18</sup>*

### The governing principles for our lives have changed and our behavioural pattern has changed—the way we act and react has changed.

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord. Have nothing to do with the fruitless deeds of darkness, but rather expose them. It is shameful even to mention what the disobedient do in secret. But everything exposed by the light becomes visible—and everything that is illuminated becomes a light. This is why it is said: "Wake up, sleeper, rise from the dead, and Christ will shine on you." Eph.5:8-14*

God's plan is for us to be governed by new spiritual principles which cover every area of life—and so we should know these new spiritual principles, get used to them, adopt them and adjust our life to run in line with them. These new spiritual principles also include our conversation and vocabulary. Like Peter, we must not call something unclean if God has made it clean

*Do not say anything is not pure that God has made 'clean'... But God has shown me that I should not call anyone impure or unclean. <sup>Acts.10:15;28</sup>*

We are already clean because of God's Word:

*You are already clean because of the word I have spoken to you. Remain in me, as I also remain in you. <sup>Jn.15:3-4</sup>*

*Sanctify them by the truth; your word is truth. As you sent me into the world, I have sent them into the world. For them I sanctify myself, that they too may be truly sanctified. Jn.15:17-19*

*Christ loved the church and gave himself up for her to make her holy, cleansing her by the washing with water through the word, and to present her to himself as a radiant church, without stain or wrinkle or any other blemish, but holy and blameless. Eph.5:25-27*

16/06/2021

**Psalm 5**

Video: *Jonah 2*

**What's your Testimony?**

**Questions**

Is our upbringing any advantage to becoming a Christian?

How can we open people's eyes to see God? (*Acts.26:17-18*)

How can we open our own eyes? (*Eph.1:17-21*)

What does "make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord" mean? (*1Pet.3:15*)

How can we keep our testimony reasoned and respectful? (*1Pet.3:15*)

How can we keep our conscience clear? (*1Pet.3:15-16*)

Of all that God has done for you, what one thing is the most memorable and still brings you joy when you recall it? Make that your main testimony!

**Comments**

**Is our upbringing any advantage to becoming a Christian?**

**Yes and No!**

A Christian heritage gives a sound foundation to morals and Bible values but we have to come to faith personal

*So what difference does it make who's a Jew and who isn't, who has been trained in God's ways and who hasn't? As it turns out, it makes a lot of difference—but not the difference so many have assumed. First, there's the matter of being put in charge of writing down and caring for God's revelation, these Holy Scriptures. So, what if, in the course of doing that, some of those Jews abandoned their post? God didn't abandon them. Do you think their faithlessness cancels out his faithfulness? Not on your life! Depend on it... What shall we conclude then? Do we have any advantage? Not at all! For we have already made the charge that Jews and Gentiles alike are all under the power of sin. Rom.3:1-9*

The natural is no advantage to the spiritual—

*We don't place any confidence in physical things, although I could have confidence in my physical qualifications. If anyone else thinks that he can trust in something physical, I can claim even more. I was circumcised on the eighth day. I'm a descendant of Israel. I'm from the tribe of Benjamin. I'm a pure-blooded Hebrew. When it comes to living up to standards, I was a Pharisee. When it comes to being enthusiastic, I was a persecutor of the church. When it comes to winning God's approval by keeping Jewish laws, I was perfect. These things that I once considered valuable, I now consider worthless for Christ. It's far more than that! I consider everything else worthless because I'm much better off knowing Christ Jesus my Lord. It's because of him that I think of everything as worthless. I threw it all away in order to gain Christ and to have a relationship with him. Phil.3:3-9*

And yet God can and does use our natural abilities and giftings! Paul had good academic training which enabled him to write clear, credible and logical doctrinal documents

*Then Paul said: I am a Jew, born in Tarsus of Cilicia, but brought up in this city. Under Gamaliel I was thoroughly trained in the law of our fathers and was just as zealous for God as any of you are today. Acts.22:3*

But Peter also wrote clear, credible and logical doctrinal documents without any academic training!  
*When they saw the courage of Peter and John and realized that they were unschooled, ordinary men, they were astonished and they took note that these men had been with Jesus. Acts.4:13*

**How can we open people's eyes to see God? (*Acts.26:17-18*)**

*I will rescue you from your own people and from the Gentiles. I am sending you to them to open their eyes and turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan to God, so that they may receive forgiveness of sins and a place among those who are sanctified by faith in me.'*

We are to share the good news and God will do the rest

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### **How can we open our own eyes? (Eph.1:17-21)**

*I keep asking that the God of our Lord Jesus Christ, the glorious Father, may give you the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, so that you may know him better. I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe. That power is like the working of his mighty strength, which he exerted in Christ when he raised him from the dead and seated him at his right hand in the heavenly realms, far above all rule and authority, power and dominion, and every title that can be given, not only in the present age but also in the one to come.*

Prayerfully consider the Scriptures and apply Biblical principles to our life

### **What does “make sure in your hearts that Christ is Lord” mean? (1Pet.3:15-16)**

*But in your hearts set apart Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander.*

Be genuine in our faith—not just speak religious words but live them as well.

### **How can we keep our testimony reasoned and respectful? (1Pet.3:15)**

Honour God and good (never the devil or bad)

Honour other people (including their privacy and their reputation). If you can't say anything good, don't say anything at all!

Apply credible sense and common sense to our testimony

*for I am your servant; therefore give me common sense to apply your rules to everything I do. Ps.119:125*

*O Lord, listen to my prayers; give me the common sense you promised. Ps.119:169*

Don't exaggerate and don't embellish

Keep our doctrine within recognised orthodoxy

### **How can we keep our conscience clear? (1Pet.3:15-16)**

Be honest and truthful

Be open to the Holy Spirit (so we don't have a seared conscience)

*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer. 1Tim.4:1-5*

Be Bible literate (so we know what the Bible actually says and not just what other people have said)

**Of all that God has done for you, what one thing is the most memorable and still brings you joy when you recall it? Make that your main testimony!**

09/06/2021

The Spirit told Philip... *Acts.8:29*

## Psalm 4

Video; *Jonah Intro*

### Questions

Can anyone approach God?

If we can approach God, how do we approach Him?

How does God speak to us today?

How can we know whether it is God speaking to us or our own imagination?

How do we apply the knowledge (wisdom) we have of God?

How can we ensure that we stay on the “paths of righteousness”?

### Comments

#### Can anyone approach God?

Yes and No!

If they come through (in the Name of) Jesus God’s Son—Yes!

*Again, I tell you that if two of you on earth agree about anything you ask for, it will be done for you by my Father in heaven. For where two or three come together in my name, there am I with them.* Matt.18:19-20

If they don’t come through (in the Name of) Jesus God’s Son—No!

*Jesus told him: I am the way, the truth, and the life. No one can come to the Father except through me.* Jn.14:6

*Salvation is found in no one else, for there is no other name under heaven given to mankind by which we must be saved.* Acts.4:12

However, anyone can call on the Name of Jesus

*“Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.” For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, “Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved.”* Rom.10:11-13

*‘Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord.’* Lk.13:5

*But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* Jn.20:31

*And whoever welcomes a little child like this in my name welcomes me. But if anyone causes one of these little ones who believe in me to sin, it would be better for him to have a large millstone hung around his neck and to be drowned in the depths of the sea.* Matt.18:5-6

But not all who say they come in Jesus’ name actually do!

*Not everyone who says to me, ‘Lord, Lord,’ will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, ‘Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?’ Then I will tell them plainly, ‘I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!’* Matt.7:21-23

*Some Jews who went around driving out evil spirits tried to invoke the name of the Lord Jesus over those who were demon-possessed. They would say, “In the name of the Jesus whom Paul preaches, I command you to come out.” Seven sons of Sceva, a Jewish chief priest, were doing this. One day the evil spirit answered them, “Jesus I know, and Paul I know about, but who are you?”* Acts.19:13-15

*Watch out that no one deceives you. For many will come in my name, claiming, ‘I am the Christ,’ and will deceive many.* Matt.24:4-5

#### If we can approach God, how do we approach Him?

In the Name of Jesus

*And I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Son may bring glory to the Father. You may ask me for anything in my name, and I will do it.* Jn.14:13-14

*speaking to one another with psalms, hymns, and songs from the Spirit. Sing and make music from your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks to God the Father for everything, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ.* Eph.5:19-20

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*Is anyone among you sick? Let them call the elders of the church to pray over them and anoint them with oil in the name of the Lord.*Jas.5:14

With praise and thanksgiving

*Enter his gates with thanksgiving and his courts with praise; give thanks to him and praise his name.*Ps.100:4

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God.*Phil.4:6

*For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.*Tim.1:4-5

### How does God speak to us today?

Through Jesus

*In the past God spoke to our ancestors through the prophets at many times and in various ways, but in these last days he has spoken to us by his Son,*Heb.1:1-2

Through the Scriptures

*To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. [Follow what the LORD taught you and said to you through me. People who don't speak in keeping with those words won't have any hope in the morning. Tell them, "No, we're going to study the Scriptures." People who try the other ways get nowhere—they are completely in the dark!]*Is.8:20

*from infancy you have known the Holy Scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is God-breathed and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.*2Tim.3:15-17

### How can we know whether it is God speaking to us or our own imagination?

The Holy Spirit is our witness

*The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*Rom.8:16

*Now it is God who makes both us and you stand firm in Christ. He anointed us, set his seal of ownership on us, and put his Spirit in our hearts as a deposit, guaranteeing what is to come.*2Cor.1:21-22

*And you also were included in Christ when you heard the message of truth, the gospel of your salvation. When you believed, you were marked in him with a seal, the promised Holy Spirit, who is a deposit guaranteeing our inheritance until the redemption of those who are God's possession—to the praise of his glory.*Eph.1:13-14

The Holy Spirit gives us peace when we are in agreement with the principles of Scriptures

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*Col.3:15-17

However, we **MUST** stay in fellowship with other **gathered Believers** (that's what the Church is) or we can easily be deceived

*let us draw near to God with a sincere heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water. Let us hold unswervingly to the hope we profess, for he who promised is faithful. And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds. Let us not give up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but let us encourage one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching.*Heb.10:22-25

*Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*Prov.15:22

*A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment [defies all sound judgment].*Prov.18:1

*But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus, his Son, purifies us from all sin.*1Jn.1:7

### How do we apply the knowledge (wisdom) we have of God?

Ask God

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*You know that such testing of your faith produces endurance. Endure until your testing is over. Then you will be mature and complete, and you won't need anything. If any of you needs wisdom to know what you should do, you should ask God, and he will give it to you. God is generous to everyone and doesn't find fault with them. When you ask for something, don't have any doubts. A person who has doubts is like a wave that is blown by the wind and tossed by the sea. A person who has doubts shouldn't expect to receive anything from the Lord. A person who has doubts is thinking about two different things at the same time and can't make up his mind about anything.*Jas.1:3-8

Get to know Jesus better

*It is because of him that you are in Christ Jesus, who has become for us wisdom from God—that is, our righteousness, holiness and redemption. Therefore, as it is written: “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.”*1Cor.1:30-31

Know the Bible

*The proverbs of Solomon, David's son who was king of Israel, given to grasp wisdom and discipline, to understand deep thoughts, to acquire the discipline of wise behaviour—righteousness and justice and fairness—to give insight to gullible people, to give knowledge and foresight to the young—a wise person will listen and continue to learn, and an understanding person will gain direction—to understand a proverb and a clever saying, the words of wise people and their riddles. The fear of the LORD is the beginning of knowledge. Stubborn fools despise wisdom and discipline.*Prov.1:1-7

**How can we ensure that we stay on the “paths of righteousness”?**

Feed on God's Word and rest in the Holy Spirit—make sure we “lay down in green pastures” and follow Jesus “by still waters”

Stay with the flock

*Tell me, you whom I love, where you graze your flock and where you rest your sheep at midday. Why should I be like a veiled woman beside the flocks of your friends? If you do not know, most beautiful of women, follow the tracks of the sheep and graze your young goats by the tents of the shepherds.*SofS.1:7-8

Don't be frightened (fearful), especially by the devil

*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*Jn.16:33

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.*Josh.1:9

*Moses said to the people, “Do not be afraid. God has come to test you, so that the fear of God will be with you to keep you from sinning.”*Ex.20:20

*But you, Israel, my servant, Jacob, whom I have chosen, you descendants of Abraham my friend, I took you from the ends of the earth, from its farthest corners I called you. I said, ‘You are my servant’; I have chosen you and have not rejected you. So do not fear, for I am with you; do not be dismayed, for I am your God. I will strengthen you and help you; I will uphold you with my righteous right hand. All who rage against you will surely be ashamed and disgraced; those who oppose you will be as nothing and perish.*Is.41:8-11

*Then he placed his right hand on me and said: “Do not be afraid. I am the First and the Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*Rev.1:17-18



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### Psalm 3

2Pet.2 Tim. A Corbett

**Like Father, Like Son** *You are just like your fathers.* Acts.7:51

### Questions

**Does God make any distinction between nations, families or gender?**

**Who belongs to God's family?**

**What happened to us when we were born-again?**

**List some advantages of belonging to God's Family.**

**List some family traits that are passed down from our Heavenly Father to us.**

### Comments

**Does God make any distinction between nations, families or gender?**

**Under the Old Covenant God dealt with Nations (see Exodus and Daniel), but under the New Covenant, God deals with individuals**

*This righteousness is given through faith in Jesus Christ to all who believe. There is no difference between Jew and Gentile, for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God, and all are justified freely by his grace through the redemption that came by Christ Jesus. Rom.3:22-24*

*As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved." Rom.10:11-13*

*There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise. Gal.3:28-29*

*In the last days, God says, I will pour out my Spirit on all people. Your sons and daughters will prophesy, your young men will see visions, your old men will dream dreams. Even on my servants, both men and women, I will pour out my Spirit in those days, and they will prophesy. Acts.2:17-18*

**But there are clear distinctions between gender:**

*"But at the beginning of creation God 'made them male and female.' For this reason a man will leave his father and mother and be united to his wife, and the two will become one flesh.' So they are no longer two, but one flesh. Therefore what God has joined together, let no one separate." Mk.10:6-9*

### Who belongs to God's family?

**Those who are born again (from above)**

*Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does. Jn.1:12-13*

*I tell you the truth, no one can see the kingdom of God unless he is born again. [born from above]. Jn.3:3*

*And when you pray, do not be like the hypocrites, for they love to pray standing in the synagogues and on the street corners to be seen by men. I tell you the truth, they have received their reward in full. But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. And when you pray, do not keep on babbling like pagans, for they think they will be heard because of their many words. Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray: 'Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name, your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our debts, as we also have forgiven our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one, for yours is the kingdom and the power and the glory forever. Amen.' Matt.6:5-13*

*See what great love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are! The reason the world does not know us is that it did not know him. Dear friends, now we are children of God, 1Jn.3:1-2*

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### Those who are led by the Holy Spirit

*For those who are led by the Spirit of God are the children of God. The Spirit you received does not make you slaves, so that you live in fear again; rather, the Spirit you received brought about your adoption to sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children. Now if we are children, then we are heirs—heirs of God and co-heirs with Christ, if indeed we share in his sufferings in order that we may also share in his glory.* Rom.8:14-17

### What happens to us when we are born-again?

#### We enter God's Kingdom

*Jesus answered, "Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.' The wind blows wherever it pleases. You hear its sound, but you cannot tell where it comes from or where it is going. So it is with everyone born of the Spirit." Jn.3:5-8*

#### We begin to live spiritually and this life will never end

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [incorruptible], through the living and enduring word of God.* 1Pet.1:23

*Jesus said to her, "I am the resurrection and the life. He who believes in me will live, even though he dies; and whoever lives and believes in me will never die. Do you believe this?" Jn.11:25-26*

*He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created.* Jas.1:18

#### We start to live righteously (in a right relationship with God that changed our day-to-day lifestyle).

*And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him.* 1Jn.2:28-29

*No one who is born of God will continue to sin, because God's seed remains in them; they cannot go on sinning, because they have been born of God. This is how we know who the children of God are and who the children of the devil are: Anyone who does not do what is right is not God's child, nor is anyone who does not love their brother and sister.* 1Jn.3:9-10

*We know that anyone born of God does not continue to sin; the One who was born of God keeps them safe, and the evil one cannot harm them. We know that we are children of God, and that the whole world is under the control of the evil one. We know also that the Son of God has come and has given us understanding, so that we may know him who is true. And we are in him who is true by being in his Son Jesus Christ. He is the true God and eternal life.* 1Jn.5:18-20

#### We have a love for God and His people

*Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, because God is love.* 1Jn.4:7-8

God wrote His laws (rules) on our heart (conscience)

*I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.* Ezek.36:26-27

*You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.* 2Cor.3:3

### List some advantages of belonging to God's Family.

#### We belong; we have a home.

*Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, everyone who sins is a slave to sin. Now a slave has no permanent place in the family, but a son belongs to it forever. So if the Son sets you free, you will be free indeed.* Jn.8:34-36

#### We have a clear conscience.



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*The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!* Heb.9:13-14

*God waited patiently in the days of Noah while the ark was being built. In it only a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.* 1Pet.3:20-22

We are no longer a slave to the fear of death

*Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity so that by his death he might destroy him who holds the power of death—that is, the devil—and free those who all their lives were held in slavery by their fear of death. For surely it is not angels he helps, but Abraham's descendants.* Heb.2:14-16

**We have a pure love and enjoyment.**

*Everyone who believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves the father loves his child as well. This is how we know that we love the children of God: by loving God and carrying out his commands. This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome,* 1Jn.5:1-3

*As I urged you when I went into Macedonia, stay there in Ephesus so that you may command certain men not to teach false doctrines any longer nor to devote themselves to myths and endless genealogies. These promote controversies rather than God's work—which is by faith. The goal of this command is love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith. Some have wandered away from these and turned to meaningless talk. They want to be teachers of the law, but they do not know what they are talking about or what they so confidently affirm.* 1Tim.1:3-7

**List some family traits that are passed down from our Heavenly Father to us.**

**We have God's character**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* Gal.5:22-23

*“The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.* Ex.34:6-7

*The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love.* Ps.103:8

*Return to the LORD your God, for he is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in love, and he relents from sending calamity.* Joel.2:13

*I knew that you are a gracious and compassionate God, slow to anger and abounding in love, a God who relents from sending calamity.* Jonah.4:2

**We live in the light**

*For you were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord. Live as children of light (for the fruit of the light consists in all goodness, righteousness and truth) and find out what pleases the Lord.* Eph.5:8-10

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**Deacons and Disciples.** *So the Twelve gathered all the disciples together. Brothers, choose seven men from among you who are known to be full of the Spirit and wisdom.* <sup>Acts.6:2</sup>

### Questions

**What are the main differences between the Old Covenant and New Covenant?**

**What is the difference between a priest and a pastor?**

**Who can be a minister (servant) in the New Covenant?**

**What are the Scriptural requirements to be a servant of Christ?**

**How can we become great in God's Kingdom?**

### Comments

**What are the main differences between the Old Covenant and New Covenant?**

Old Covenant	New Covenant
Conflict, struggle and unrest	Reconciliation, Rest and Peace: <i>Col.1:19-20; Eph.2:14-18</i>
Law weak and useless	Better and permanent: <i>Heb.7:18-22</i>
Law made man conscious of sin	Conscience is cleansed: <i>1Tim.1:5/19; Acts 23:1; Heb.9:14; 10:22; 13:18</i>
God's law written on stone	God's law written in our hearts: <i>Heb.8:10;10:16; 1Jn.5:10</i>
Man's Responsibility. <i>If you keep...</i>	God's Responsibility: <i>Heb.8:8-10; Eph.3:10</i>
Man fails to be righteous	Jesus is our Righteousness: <i>1Cor.1:30; 2Cor.5:21; Rom.3:21-22</i>
Man provides animals for sacrifices	God provides His Son as the Sacrifice: <i>Jn.1:29; 1Cor.5:7; 1Jn.2:2</i>
Man strives for victory	God gives the victory: <i>1Cor.15:57; 2Cor.2:14</i>
Man separated from God by Veil	Nothing separating man from God: <i>Rom.8:39; Eph.2:7</i>
Sacrifices continually repeated	Christ died once for all: <i>1Pet.3:18; Heb.7:27; 9:26; 10:12</i>
Sin temporarily covered over ( <i>atoned</i> )	Sin forgiven; taken away permanently: <i>Jn.1:29; Lk.24:45-49; Rom.11:27; 1Jn.3:5</i>
Confess sin to approach God	Confess Jesus to approach God: <i>Rom.10:8-10; Heb.4:16;10:19-22</i>
Bondage and slavery	Freedom: <i>2Cor.3:17; Gal.4:26-31; Gal.5:1</i>
Law of sin and death	Law of Spirit and Life: <i>Rom.8:2; 2Cor.3:6</i>
10 Commandments summarized as 2	1 Commandment—Royal law of love: <i>Jn.13:34-35; Gal.5:14; 1Cor.13:13</i>
Shadow and type	Substance and reality: <i>Col.2:14-17; Heb.10:1</i>
Was temporary until the New	Old Covenant is set aside and now obsolete: <i>Heb.8:6/13; 10:9</i>
Priest is a man ( <i>and a descendant of Aaron</i> )	Priest is Jesus: <i>Heb.6:20; 8:1; 10:19-22</i>
Priest's ministry is limited by his life	Jesus' ministry is unlimited by His Resurrection: <i>Heb.7:26f</i>
Worship at Jerusalem	Worship in spirit at the New Jerusalem: <i>Heb.12:22-24; Jn.4:23; Phil.3:3; Gal.4:24-26</i>
God dwells in a place	God dwells in people: <i>Eph.2:22; 1Jn.4:12</i>
People were servants	We are sons and friends (albeit still servants): <i>2Cor.6:18; Rom.1:1; Jn.15:12-15; Gal.3:26; 4:6-7</i>

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### What is the difference between a priest and a pastor?

Priest is a mediator (a go-between) between God and people.

*Then Melchizedek king of Salem brought out bread and wine. He was priest of God Most High, and he blessed Abram,* <sup>Gen.14:18-19</sup>

The priest offers sacrifices and intercedes for others. OT priest had to be from the tribe of Levi AND a descendant Aaron

*After you put these clothes on your brother Aaron and his sons, anoint and ordain them. Consecrate them so they may serve me as priests.* <sup>Ex.28:41</sup>

*The LORD said to Moses, "Speak to the priests, the sons of Aaron, and say to them: 'A priest must not make himself ceremonially unclean...'"* <sup>Lev.21:1f</sup>

*Every high priest is selected from among the people and is appointed to represent the people in matters related to God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins. He is able to deal gently with those who are ignorant and are going astray, since he himself is subject to weakness. This is why he has to offer sacrifices for his own sins, as well as for the sins of the people. And no one takes this honor on himself, but he receives it when called by God, just as Aaron was.* <sup>Heb.5:1-4</sup>

*If perfection could have been attained through the Levitical priesthood—and indeed the law given to the people established that priesthood—why was there still need for another priest to come, one in the order of Melchizedek, not in the order of Aaron? For when the priesthood is changed, the law must be changed also. He of whom these things are said belonged to a different tribe, and no one from that tribe has ever served at the altar. For it is clear that our Lord descended from Judah, and in regard to that tribe Moses said nothing about priests. And what we have said is even more clear if another priest like Melchizedek appears, one who has become a priest not on the basis of a regulation as to his ancestry but on the basis of the power of an indestructible life.* <sup>Heb.7:11-16</sup>

Pastor is a shepherd who cares for sheep. He spiritually cares and feeds for others

*To the elders among you, I appeal as a fellow elder and a witness of Christ's sufferings who also will share in the glory to be revealed: Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.* <sup>1Pet.5:1-4</sup>

### Who can be a minister (servant) in the New Covenant?

Anyone who is part of the New Covenant. All Believers have a calling to serve God and to serve in God's Kingdom—we are all sent by Jesus to go into all the world

*"All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."* <sup>Matt.28:18-20</sup>

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."* <sup>Mk.16:15</sup>

Ministry is serving and we can all do something—we all play a part. However, God has given some servants a specific work to do—and equipped them to serve. See: 1Cor.12. and Rom12.:3-8

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.* <sup>Eph.4:11-13</sup>

*He has saved us and called us with a holy calling, not according to our works, but according to His own purpose and grace, which was given to us in Christ Jesus before time began.* <sup>2Tim.1:9</sup>  
*for God's gifts and his call are irrevocable.* <sup>Rom.11:29</sup>

*I have written you quite boldly on some points, as if to remind you of them again, because of the grace God gave me to be a minister of Christ Jesus to the Gentiles with the priestly duty of proclaiming the gospel of God, so that the Gentiles might become an offering acceptable to God, sanctified by the Holy Spirit.* <sup>Rom.15:15-16</sup>

### What are the Scriptural requirements to be a servant of Christ?

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**To be servant of Christ we must belong to Christ!** However, those who have a more public role should have some experience or they may become conceited and they should credibility or they will bring the Faith into disrepute.

*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach, the husband of but one wife, temperate, self-controlled, respectable, hospitable, able to teach, not given to drunkenness, not violent but gentle, not quarrelsome, not a lover of money. He must manage his own family well and see that his children obey him with proper respect. (If anyone does not know how to manage his own family, how can he take care of God's church?) He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. Deacons, likewise, are to be men worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve as deacons. In the same way, their wives are to be women worthy of respect, not malicious talkers but temperate and trustworthy in everything. A deacon must be the husband of but one wife and must manage his children and his household well. Those who have served well gain an excellent standing and great assurance in their faith in Christ Jesus.*<sup>1Tim.3:1-13</sup>

*The reason I left you in Crete was that you might straighten out what was left unfinished and appoint elders in every town, as I directed you. An elder must be blameless, the husband of but one wife, a man whose children believe and are not open to the charge of being wild and disobedient. Since an overseer\* is entrusted with God's work, he must be blameless—not overbearing, not quick-tempered, not given to drunkenness, not violent, not pursuing dishonest gain. Rather he must be hospitable, one who loves what is good, who is self-controlled, upright, holy and disciplined. He must hold firmly to the trustworthy message as it has been taught, so that he can encourage others by sound doctrine and refute those who oppose it.*<sup>Tit.1:5-9</sup>

### How can we become great in God's Kingdom?

To be great in God's Kingdom we must be the least and a servant

*“You call me ‘Teacher’ and ‘Lord,’ and rightly so, for that is what I am. Now that I, your Lord and Teacher, have washed your feet, you also should wash one another's feet. I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. I tell you the truth, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.”*<sup>Jn.13:13-17</sup>

*“Whoever welcomes this little child in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me welcomes the one who sent me. For he who is least among you all—he is the greatest.”*<sup>Lk.19:48</sup>

*When he noticed how the guests picked the places of honour at the table, he told them this parable: “When someone invites you to a wedding feast, do not take the place of honour, for a person more distinguished than you may have been invited. If so, the host who invited both of you will come and say to you, ‘Give this man your seat.’ Then, humiliated, you will have to take the least important place. But when you are invited, take the lowest place, so that when your host comes, he will say to you, ‘Friend, move up to a better place.’ Then you will be honoured in the presence of all your fellow guests. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, and he who humbles himself will be exalted.”*<sup>Lk.14:7-11</sup>

*They came to Capernaum. When he was in the house, he asked them, “What were you arguing about on the road?” But they kept quiet because on the way they had argued about who was the greatest. Sitting down, Jesus called the Twelve and said, “If anyone wants to be first, he must be the very last, and the servant of all.” He took a little child and had him stand among them.” Taking him in his arms, he said to them, “Whoever welcomes one of these little children in my name welcomes me; and whoever welcomes me does not welcome me but the one who sent me.”*<sup>Mk.9:33-37</sup>

*Also a dispute arose among them as to which of them was considered to be greatest. Jesus said to them, “The kings of the Gentiles lord it over them; and those who exercise authority over them call themselves Benefactors [friends of the people]. But you are not to be like that. Instead, the greatest among you should be like the youngest, and the one who rules like the one who serves. For who is greater, the one who is at the table or the one who serves? Is it not the one who is at the table? But I am among you as one who serves. You are those who have stood by me in my trials. And I confer*

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*on you a kingdom, just as my Father conferred one on me, so that you may eat and drink at my table in my kingdom and sit on thrones, judging the twelve tribes of Israel.*<sup>Lk.22:24-30</sup>

The very least of us in the New Covenant is greater than any of those under the Old Covenant:  
*I tell you, of all who have ever lived, none is greater than John. Yet even the least person in the Kingdom of God is greater than he is!*<sup>Lk.7:41</sup>

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**Confidence:** *God exalted [Jesus] to his own right hand as Prince and Saviour that he might give repentance and forgiveness of sins to Israel.*<sup>Acts.5:31</sup>

### Psalm 1

#### Questions

Define “*confidence*”.

How did the OT portray the coming Messiah (Christ)?

How can we be confident in Jesus’ claim to be the Messiah?

What is the basis for our confidence in God?

How can we be sure that our confidence is real rather than just wishful thinking?

Can we still be confident in God if our life appears a failure?

#### Comments

Define “*confidence*”.

To be **Confident** is to be **certain** about the truth of something.

#### How did the OT portray the coming Messiah (Christ)?

Messiah (Christ) literally means “Anointed One” and so the Messiah was portrayed as Someone who come in power and authority to deliver God’s people from slavery and oppression.

The first hint of the Messiah was right after the Fall when God told the devil:

*And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel.*<sup>Gen.3:15</sup>

His Name: *Tell the people of Zion, ‘Look! Your Saviour [Yeshua-Jesus] is coming!’*<sup>Is.62:11</sup>

Descendant of Abraham: *The promises were spoken to Abraham and to his seed. Scripture does not say “and to seeds,” meaning many people, but “and to your seed,” meaning one person, who is Christ.*<sup>Gal.3:16</sup>

Descendant of Judah: *The sceptre will not depart from Judah, nor the ruler's staff from between his feet, until he comes to whom it belongs*<sup>Gen.49:10</sup>

Descendant of David *‘The LORD declares to you that the LORD himself will establish a house for you: When your days are over and you rest with your ancestors, I will raise up your offspring to succeed you, your own flesh and blood, and I will establish his kingdom. He is the one who will build a house for my Name, and I will establish the throne of his kingdom forever. I will be his father, and he will be my son.’*<sup>2Sam.7:11-14</sup>

Place of birth: *But you, Bethlehem Ephrathah, though you are small among the clans of Judah, out of you will come for me one who will be ruler over Israel.*<sup>Mic.5:2</sup>

Date of ministry: *From the time the word goes out to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until the Anointed One, the ruler, comes, there will be seven ‘sevens,’ and sixty-two ‘sevens.’*<sup>Dan9:26</sup>

(69 weeks = 69×7years = 483 years—the decree to rebuild Jerusalem = BC455 + 483years = 25AD);

His birth and childhood: *The virgin will conceive and give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders.*<sup>Is.7:4;9:6-7</sup> *When Israel was a child, I loved him, and out of Egypt I called my son.*<sup>Hos.11:1</sup>

His ministry: *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the nations, by the Way of the Sea, beyond the Jordan... For to us a child is born, to us a son is given, and the government will be on his shoulders. And he will be called Wonderful Counsellor, Mighty God, Everlasting Father, Prince of Peace. Of the greatness of his government and peace there will be no end. He will reign on David's throne and over his kingdom, establishing and upholding it with justice and righteousness from that time on and forever.*<sup>Is.9:1-7</sup>

*A bruised reed he will not break, and a smouldering wick he will not snuff out...*<sup>Is.42:1-4</sup>

*The Spirit of the Lord is upon me.*<sup>Is.61</sup>

*The LORD your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among you, from your fellow Israelites. You must listen to him.*<sup>Dent.18:15</sup>

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His death: <sup>Ps.22;Is.53</sup>

His resurrection: <sup>Ps.16:10</sup>

His ascension. *When you ascended on high, you took many captives; you received gifts from people.* <sup>Ps.68:18</sup> *there before me was one like a son of man, coming with the clouds of heaven. He approached the Ancient of Days and was led into his presence. He was given authority, glory and sovereign power;* <sup>Dan.7:13-14</sup>

### How can we be confident in Jesus' claim to be the Messiah?

Jesus fulfilled the Messianic prophecies.

*Now, fellow Israelites, I know that you acted in ignorance, as did your leaders. But this is how God fulfilled what he had foretold through all the prophets, saying that his Messiah would suffer. Repent, then, and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord, and that he may send the Messiah, who has been appointed for you—even Jesus. Heaven must receive him until the time comes for God to restore everything, as he promised long ago through his holy prophets. For Moses said, 'The Lord your God will raise up for you a prophet like me from among your own people; you must listen to everything he tells you. Anyone who does not listen to him will be completely cut off from their people.' Indeed, beginning with Samuel, all the prophets who have spoken have foretold these days. And you are heirs of the prophets and of the covenant God made with your fathers. He said to Abraham, 'Through your offspring all peoples on earth will be blessed.' When God raised up his servant, he sent him first to you to bless you by turning each of you from your wicked ways."* <sup>Acts.3:17-26</sup>

*The Jews who were there gathered around him, saying, "How long will you keep us in suspense? If you are the Messiah, tell us plainly." Jesus answered, "I did tell you, but you do not believe. The works I do in my Father's name testify about me, but you do not believe because you are not my sheep. My sheep listen to my voice; I know them, and they follow me. I give them eternal life, and they shall never perish; no one will snatch them out of my hand."* <sup>Jn.10:24-28</sup>

Jesus rose from the dead

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures... If there is no resurrection of the dead, then not even Christ has been raised. And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith.* <sup>1Cor.15:3-14</sup>

### What is the basis for our confidence in God?

God's Name (His character—how He has behaved and what he has done) and His Word (the Scriptures—what He has recorded for us to read and study)

*I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.* <sup>Ps.138:2</sup>

*The only accurate way to understand ourselves is by what God is and by what he does for us, not by what we are and what we do for him.* <sup>Rom.12:3</sup>

### How can we be sure that our confidence is real rather than just wishful thinking?

Jesus' resurrection validates Christianity. The resurrection—everything hinges on

*My son, preserve sound judgment and discernment, do not let them out of your sight; they will be life for you, an ornament to grace your neck. Then you will go on your way in safety, and your foot will not stumble; when you lie down, you will not be afraid; when you lie down, your sleep will be sweet. Have no fear of sudden disaster or of the ruin that overtakes the wicked, for the LORD will be your confidence and will keep your foot from being snared.* <sup>Prov.3:21-26</sup>

*The fruit of righteousness will be peace; the effect of righteousness will be quietness and confidence forever.* <sup>Is.32:17</sup>

*But blessed is the man who trusts in the LORD, whose confidence is in him. He will be like a tree planted by the water that sends out its roots by the stream. It does not fear when heat comes; its leaves are always green. It has no worries in a year of drought and never fails to bear fruit.* <sup>Jer.17:7-8</sup>

*You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts. Such confidence as this is ours through Christ*

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*before God. Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God. He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant—not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life. 2Cor.3:3-6*

*His intent was that now, through the church, the manifold wisdom of God should be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly realms, according to his eternal purpose which he accomplished in Christ Jesus our Lord. In him and through faith in him we may approach God with freedom and confidence. Eph.3:10-12*

*I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil.1:3-6*

*Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has gone through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold firmly to the faith we profess. For we do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but we have one who has been tempted in every way, just as we are—yet was without sin. Let us then approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace to help us in our time of need. Heb.4:14-16*

*And now, dear children, continue in him, so that when he appears we may be confident and unashamed before him at his coming. If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him. 1Jn.2:28-29*

*Dear friends, if our hearts do not condemn us, we have confidence before God and receive from him anything we ask, because we obey his commands and do what pleases him. And this is his command: to believe in the name of his Son, Jesus Christ, and to love one another as he commanded us. 1Jn.3:21-23*

*In this way, love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment, because in this world we are like him. 1Jn.4:17*

### Can we still be confident in God if our life appears a failure?

Yes! Our “benchmark” for success, rightness and righteousness is **our testimony of Jesus Christ**, not what Church we belong to, how many people we have spoken to, or like us, or support us or even how much influence we have. Nor is it that we feel good or even believe that we are right

*Now it is required that those who have been given a trust must prove faithful. I care very little if I am judged by you or by any human court; indeed, I do not even judge myself. My conscience is clear, but that does not make me innocent. It is the Lord who judges me. 1Cor.4:2-4*

*But, “Let the one who boasts boast in the Lord.” For it is not the one who commends himself\* who is approved, but the one whom the Lord commends. 2Cor.10:17-18*

*I the LORD do not change. Mal.3:6*

*God is not human, that he should lie, not a human being, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill? Nu.23:19*

*Don't be deceived, my dear brothers and sisters. Every good and perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of the heavenly lights, who does not change like shifting shadows. He chose to give us birth through the word of truth, that we might be a kind of firstfruits of all he created. Jas.1:16-18*

*being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. Phil.21:6*

God has promised that nothing will turn out to be a disaster for those who make Him their dwelling: *If you make the Most High your dwelling—even the LORD, who is my refuge—then no harm will befall you, no disaster will come near your tent. Ps.91:9-10*

For the Believer, ALL things work together for God’s glory and their good

*And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who have been called according to his purpose. For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the likeness of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers. And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. [That's why we can be so sure that every detail in our lives of love for God is worked into*



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*something good. God knew what he was doing from the very beginning. He decided from the outset to shape the lives of those who love him along the same lines as the life of his Son. The Son stands first in the line of humanity he restored. We see the original and intended shape of our lives there in him. After God made that decision of what his children should be like, he followed it up by calling people by name. After he called them by name, he set them on a solid basis with himself. And then, after getting them established, he stayed with them to the end, gloriously completing what he had begun.]Rom.8:28-30*

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**Integrity!** *You didn't lie to people but to God!*<sup>Acts.5:4</sup>

### Questions

Should Christians ever lie? (What about Rahab?)

What is integrity?

Can we have spiritual integrity without moral integrity?

How can we maintain integrity in our Faith?

How can we maintain integrity in our Finances?

How can we maintain integrity in our Friendships?

### Comments

#### Should Christians ever lie? (What about Rahab?)

George Washington was purported to have never told a lie: Apparently when he was only six yearsold Washington accidentally damaged his father's beloved cherry tree with a new hatchet, the boy was driven by his conscience to own up to his actions: *I can't tell a lie, Pa; you know I can't tell a lie. I did cut it with my hatchet.* Washington's father was supposedly then beside himself with pride in his son's rectitude: *Glad am I, George, that you killed my tree; for you have paid me for it a thousand fold. Such an act of heroism in my son, is more worth than a thousand trees.*

People who tell white lies soon become colour blind!

God cannot tell a lie:

*Because God wanted to make the unchanging nature of his purpose very clear to the heirs of what was promised, he confirmed it with an oath. God did this so that, by two unchangeable things in which it is impossible for God to lie, we who have fled to take hold of the hope offered to us may be greatly encouraged. We have this hope as an anchor for the soul, firm and secure.* Heb.6:17-19

Honesty was ingrained in the Old Covenant:

*You shall not give false testimony against your neighbour.* Ex.20:16

*I am the LORD your God. Do not steal. Do not lie. Do not deceive one another. Do not swear falsely by my name and so profane the name of your God. I am the LORD. Do not defraud your neighbour or rob him.* Lev.19:10-13

*Why do you boast of evil, you mighty hero? Why do you boast all day long, you who are a disgrace in the eyes of God? You who practice deceit, your tongue plots destruction; it is like a sharpened razor. You love evil rather than good, falsehood rather than speaking the truth. You love every harmful word, you deceitful tongue! Surely God will bring you down to everlasting ruin:* Ps.52:1-5

*I rejoice in your word like one who discovers a great treasure. I hate and abhor all falsehood, but I love your instructions.* Ps.119:162-163

Honesty is an integral Christianity value and our civilisation depends on honesty (even though some countries have bribery and corruption embedded in their culture).

*But now you must rid yourselves of all such things as these: anger, rage, malice, slander, and filthy language from your lips. Do not lie to each other, since you have taken off your old self with its practices and have put on the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge in the image of its Creator.* Col.3:8-10

*Therefore each of you must put off falsehood and speak truthfully to your neighbour, for we are all members of one body. "In your anger do not sin": Do not let the sun go down while you are still angry, and do not give the devil a foothold.* Eph.4:25-27

*They follow the Lamb wherever he goes. They were purchased from among men and offered as firstfruits to God and the Lamb. No lie was found in their mouths; they are blameless.* Rev.14:4-5

*Blessed are those who wash their robes, that they may have the right to the tree of life and may go through the gates into the city. Outside are the dogs, those who practice magic arts, the sexually immoral, the murderers, the idolaters and everyone who loves and practices falsehood.* Rev.22:14-15

Peter explained that for Christians to lie to people is actually to lie to God

*You have not lied to men but to God.* Acts.5:4

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Non-Christians sometimes are confused with what truth really is:

*Jesus answered, "You say that I am a king. In fact, the reason I was born and came into the world is to testify to the truth. Everyone on the side of truth listens to me." "What is truth?" retorted Pilate. Jn.18:37-38*

But Jesus is Truth:

*Jesus answered: I am the way and the truth and the life. Jn.14:6*

*We are from God, and whoever knows God listens to us; but whoever is not from God does not listen to us. This is how we recognize the Spirit of truth and the spirit of falsehood. 1Jn.4:6*

To deny Jesus is the Christ is biggest lie:

*I do not write to you because you do not know the truth, but because you do know it and because no lie comes from the truth. Who is the liar? It is the man who denies that Jesus is the Christ. Such a man is the antichrist—he denies the Father and the Son. No one who denies the Son has the Father; whoever acknowledges the Son has the Father also. 1Jn.2:21-23*

Sometimes Believers lie, either out of guilt, embarrassment, shame or fear—but there is a way back through repentance:

*Is anything too hard for the LORD? I will return to you at the appointed time next year, and Sarah will have a son."*

*Sarah was afraid, so she lied and said, "I did not laugh." But he said, "Yes, you did laugh." Gen.18:14-15*

*When the servant girl saw him there, she said again to those standing around, "This fellow is one of them." Again he denied it. After a little while, those standing near said to Peter, "Surely you are one of them, for you are a Galilean."*

*He began to call down curses, and he swore to them, "I don't know this man you're talking about." Mk.14:69-71*

**However, sometimes lies are commended**

We must distinguish between the appearance and the substance, between what people call "facts" or "truth" and their spiritual significance. Who can work as a conspirator in the Underground church and always speak what is generally called "truth"? When I introduced myself, I did it under a cover-name. The one with whom I was speaking might be an informer. If asked by someone where I was yesterday, a factually correct answer might bring many people into great trouble. Today again the interrogator told me: "You are a Christian, and a pastor. Your religion obliges you to tell us the whole truth." I had my own thoughts about this. If I had complied with his demands, ether brethren would have been arrested. Nobody can be a leader in the Underground church without re-evaluating the notion of truth. R.Wumbrand, *Sermons In Solitary Confinement*.

**Rahab**

*By faith the prostitute Rahab, because she welcomed the spies, was not killed with those who were disobedient. Heb.11:31*

*But the woman had taken the two men and hidden them. She said, "Yes, the men came to me, but I did not know where they had come from. At dusk, when it was time to close the city gate, they left. I don't know which way they went. Go after them quickly. You may catch up with them." (But she had taken them up to the roof and hidden them under the stalks of flax she had laid out on the roof.) Josh.2:4-6*

**Man of God**

*The old prophet answered, "I too am a prophet, as you are. And an angel said to me by the word of the LORD: 'Bring him back with you to your house so that he may eat bread and drink water.' " (But he was lying to him.) So the man of God returned with him and ate and drank in his house. 1Kgs.13:18-19*

**What is integrity?**

Integrity is moral soundness; the quality of being honest and having strong moral principles that you refuse to change! Our character should be able to stand up to scrutiny.

**Can we have spiritual integrity without moral integrity?**

Christianity is a heart-religion where God sees the intention of our heart

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*But the LORD said to Samuel, "Do not consider how handsome or tall he is. I have not chosen him. I do not look at the things people look at. Man looks at how someone appears on the outside. But I look at what is in the heart." 1Sam.16:7*

*My son Solomon, always remember the God of your father. Serve him with all your heart. Do it with a mind that wants to obey him. The LORD looks deep down inside every heart. He understands the real reasons for everything you think. If you look to him, you will find him. 1Chron.28:9*

The way we handle our material wealth will determine how God will trust us with spiritual wealth! (Material wealth can be money, assets, work, our own personality—in fact anything that has a value on it).

*Whoever can be trusted with very little can also be trusted with much, and whoever is dishonest with very little will also be dishonest with much. So if you have not been trustworthy in handling worldly wealth, who will trust you with true riches? And if you have not been trustworthy with someone else's property, who will give you property of your own? Lk.16:10-12*

If we don't live out our Christian life (our Christ-life) practically, our spiritual life has little meaning. *We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother. 1Jn.4:19-21*

*You have heard that it was said, 'Do not commit adultery.' But here is what I tell you. Do not even look at a woman in the wrong way. Anyone who does has already committed adultery with her in his heart. If your right eye causes you to sin, poke it out and throw it away. Your eye is only one part of your body. It is better to lose it than for your whole body to be thrown into hell. Matt.5:27-29*

*I may speak in the languages of humans and of angels. But if I don't have love, I am a loud gong or a clashing cymbal. I may have the gift to speak what God has revealed, and I may understand all mysteries and have all knowledge. I even have enough faith to move mountains. But if I don't have love, I am nothing. I may even give away all that I have and give up my body to be burned. But if I don't have love, none of these things will help me. 1Cor.13:1-3*

But if we do live out our life practically, our spiritual life has great meaning

*But Christ is faithful as the Son over God's house. And we are his house, if indeed we hold firmly to our confidence and the hope in which we glory. Heb.3:6*

*Don't have anything to do with godless stories and silly tales. Instead, train yourself to be godly. Training the body has some value. But being godly has value in every way. It promises help for the life you are now living and the life to come. 1Tim.4:7-8*

We must keep a good reputation with God and also with outsiders

*"To the angel of the church in Sardis write: These are the words of him who holds the seven spirits of God and the seven stars. I know your deeds; you have a reputation of being alive, but you are dead. Wake up! Strengthen what remains and is about to die, for I have not found your deeds complete in the sight of my God. Remember, therefore, what you have received and heard; obey it, and repent. But if you do not wake up, I will come like a thief, and you will not know at what time I will come to you. Rev.3:1-3*

*Here is a trustworthy saying: If anyone sets his heart on being an overseer, he desires a noble task. Now the overseer must be above reproach... He must not be a recent convert, or he may become conceited and fall under the same judgment as the devil. He must also have a good reputation with outsiders, so that he will not fall into disgrace and into the devil's trap. 1Tim.3:1-7*

### **How can we maintain integrity in our Faith?**

We must build ourselves up in the faith

*Dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ said was going to happen. They told you, "In the last days, some people will make fun of the truth. They will follow their own ungodly longings." [They are the people who separate you from one another. They do only what comes naturally. They are not led by the Holy Spirit. Dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith. Let the Holy Spirit guide and help you when you pray. Jude 17-20*

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We must “*walk the talk*” by living out our faith in practical ways and being ready to share the Good News as opportunities arise

*Pray that I may proclaim it clearly, as I should. Be wise in the way you act toward outsiders; make the most of every opportunity. Let your conversation be always full of grace, seasoned with salt, so that you may know how to answer everyone. Col.4:4-6*

We should always live as Believers in Christ—like Christ Himself

*Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble. Do not repay evil with evil or insult with insult. On the contrary, repay evil with blessing, because to this you were called so that you may inherit a blessing... But in your hearts revere Christ as Lord. Always be prepared to give an answer to everyone who asks you to give the reason for the hope that you have. But do this with gentleness and respect, keeping a clear conscience, so that those who speak maliciously against your good behaviour in Christ may be ashamed of their slander. 1Pet.3:8-16*

We must stay in fellowship with the Holy Spirit

*Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your mouths, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen. And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, with whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. Eph.4:29-30*

### How can we maintain integrity in our Finances?

Recognise that all we have is from God

*Our God, we thank you and praise your wonderful name. But who am I and who are my people that you enable us to give so generously? Everything comes from you. We give you only what has come from your hands. 1Chron.29:13-14  
But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, Deut.8:18*

Don't be manipulated in what you do but follow the Holy Spirit's leading along with your own conscience.

*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. As it is written: “They have freely scattered their gifts to the poor; their righteousness endures forever.” Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God. This service that you perform is not only supplying the needs of the Lord's people but is also overflowing in many expressions of thanks to God. <sup>2Cor.9:6-12</sup>*

### How can we maintain integrity in our Friendships?

Choose your friends carefully

*Bad company corrupts good character. <sup>1Cor.15:33</sup>*

*A righteous man is cautious in friendship, but the way of the wicked leads them astray. <sup>Pron.12:26</sup>*

*Do not make friends with a hot-tempered man, do not associate with one easily angered. <sup>Pron.22:24</sup>*

*Don't you know that friendship with the world is hatred towards God? Anyone who chooses to be a friend of the world becomes an enemy of God. <sup>Jas.4:4-5</sup>*

Discern the difference between fellowship of the spirit (fellow Believers) and fellowship of the soul (acquaintances). Our closest friends should be people who will have a spiritually good influence on us

*One who has unreliable friends soon comes to ruin, but there is a friend who sticks closer than a brother. <sup>Prov.18:24</sup>  
“As the Father has loved me, so have I loved you. Now remain in my love. If you keep my commands, you will remain in my love, just as I have kept my Father's commands and remain in his love. I have told you this so that my joy may be in you and that your joy may be complete. My command is this: Love each other as I have loved you. Greater love*

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*has no one than this: to lay down one's life for one's friends. You are my friends if you do what I command. I no longer call you servants, because a servant does not know his master's business. Instead, I have called you friends, for everything that I learned from my Father I have made known to you. You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that will last—and so that whatever you ask in my name the Father will give you. This is my command: Love each other.* Jn.15:9-17

But we should still make friends (acquaintances) with others whilst still maintaining our integrity:  
*I tell you, use worldly wealth to gain friends for yourselves, so that when it is gone, you will be welcomed into eternal dwellings.* Lk.16:9

Jesu mixed with unbelievers and even ungodly people:

*Then Levi held a great banquet for Jesus at his house, and a large crowd of tax collectors and others were eating with them. But the Pharisees and the teachers of the law who belonged to their sect complained to his disciples, “Why do you eat and drink with tax collectors and sinners?”* Lk.5:29-30

*The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, ‘Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.’* Lk.7:34

*When Jesus reached the spot, he looked up and said to him, “Zacchaeus, come down immediately. I must stay at your house today.” So he came down at once and welcomed him gladly. All the people saw this and began to mutter, “He has gone to be the guest of a sinner.”* Lk.19:5-7

And we too should mix with unbelievers

*If an unbeliever invites you to a meal and you want to go, eat whatever is put before you without raising questions of conscience.* 1Cor.10:27

But we should be careful to maintain a standard of holiness. If our Christian friends don't live up to God's expectation of moral holiness, we should part company before we are dragged down with their unbelief:

*I wrote a letter to you to tell you to stay away from people who commit sexual sins. I didn't mean the people of this world who sin that way or who always want more and more. I didn't mean those who cheat or who worship statues of gods. In that case you would have to leave this world! But here is what I am writing to you. You must stay away from anyone who claims to be a believer but who does those things. Stay away from anyone who commits sexual sins or who always wants more and more things. Stay away from a person who worships statues of gods or who tells lies about others. Stay away from anyone who gets drunk or who cheats. Don't even eat with a person like that. Is it my business to judge those outside the church? Aren't you supposed to judge those inside the church? God will judge those outside. Scripture says, “Get rid of that evil person!”* 1Cor.5:9-13

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They were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly. <sup>Acts.4:31</sup>

### Questions

Are we responsible for other people's actions?

Can we repent on behalf of someone else?

Explain what Jesus meant by: *I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say. By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty.* <sup>Matt.12:36-37</sup>

Explain what Paul meant by *Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.* <sup>Rom.12:17-19</sup>

What does the phrase "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" mean to you?

What does spiritual maturity mean to you?

### Comments

#### Are we responsible for other people's actions?

No! We and are not responsible for other people's actions

*The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: 'The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die.* <sup>Ezek.18:1-4</sup>

But we are responsible for how we respond to others and for how we personally behave. *For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each of us may receive what is due us for the things done while in the body, whether good or bad.* <sup>2Cor.5:10</sup>

We are also responsible for what we say: *Good people do the good things that are in them. But evil people do the evil things that are in them. I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say. By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty.* <sup>Matt.12:35-37</sup>

#### Can we repent on behalf of someone else?

Repentance means "change your mind" (Gk) or "return" (Heb.) and is a personal action. Although we can apologise on behalf of other people, we cannot repent on behalf of someone else because we they are responsible for their own mind.

*Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, [Or from useless rituals] and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.* <sup>Heb.6:1-3</sup>

There is a movement called "Identificational Repentance" (IR) which promotes repentance on behalf of countries and people groups. Although it appears to be godly, it is actually in opposition to the New Covenant and shows an ignorance of the Gospel. The aim of IR is to disarm satan by "removing the legal-spiritual basis" through which people are blinded to the gospel. This is ignores the evidence that Jesus disarmed the devil at Calvary.

*But God gave you new life together with Christ. He forgave us all of our sins. He wiped out the written Law with its rules. The Law was against us. It opposed us. He took it away and nailed it to the cross. He took away the weapons of the powers and authorities. He made a public show of them. He won the battle over them by dying on the cross.* <sup>Col.2:13-15</sup>

The Bible teaches that in the days which proceed the return of Christ there will be world-wide difficulties and the Church will be increasing marginalised. However, this is not a mistake on God's part or ours, but through it He is preparing a people for eternity. We look forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness will dwell. By contrast, IR teaches that "the task of the Church is to clean up this planet, environmentally as well as morally and spiritually, so that it can become Christ's eternal home" (Roger Forster, Whose Earth, Manchester, Sept. 18, 1993)

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The other major error with IR is their failure to understand that God does not deal with nations now (although God did deal with nations before Pentecost—see Daniel). Everyone has to make their own repentance before God and there is now no distinction between any race, gender or status:

*So in Christ Jesus you are all children of God through faith, for all of you who were baptized into Christ have clothed yourselves with Christ. There is neither Jew nor Gentile, neither slave nor free, nor is there male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. If you belong to Christ, then you are Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.* <sup>Gal.3:26-29</sup>

The only distinction now is between belief and unbelief in Jesus:

*Whoever believes in him is not condemned, but whoever does not believe stands condemned already because they have not believed in the name of God's one and only Son.* <sup>Jn.3:18</sup>

The greatest sin of all is unbelief and what we generally call “sins” are manifestations of unbelief.

*“Are you still so dull?” Jesus asked them. “Don't you see that whatever enters the mouth goes into the stomach and then out of the body? But the things that come out of a person's mouth come from the heart, and these defile them. or out of the heart come evil thoughts—murder, adultery, sexual immorality, theft, false testimony, slander. These are what defile a person; but eating with unwashed hands does not defile them.”* <sup>Matt.15:16-20</sup>

Unbelief is actually the unforgiveable sin because without faith (belief) we cannot please God or have any victory in our life:

*This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only the one who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. [For every child of God defeats this evil world, and we achieve this victory through our faith. And who can win this battle against the world? Only those who believe that Jesus is the Son of God.]* <sup>NLT Jn.5:4-5</sup>

True repentance brings restoration but false repentance only brings condemnation.

*Even if I caused you sorrow by my letter, I do not regret it. Though I did regret it—I see that my letter hurt you, but only for a little while—yet now I am happy, not because you were made sorry, but because your sorrow led you to repentance. For you became sorrowful as God intended and so were not harmed in any way by us. Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death. See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern, what readiness to see justice done.* <sup>2Cor.7:8-11</sup>

*Or do you show contempt for the riches of his kindness, forbearance and patience, not realizing that God's kindness is intended to lead you to repentance? But because of your stubbornness and your unrepentant heart, you are storing up wrath against yourself for the day of God's wrath, when his righteous judgment will be revealed. God “will repay each person according to what they have done.” To those who by persistence in doing good seek glory, honour and immortality, he will give eternal life. But for those who are self-seeking and who reject the truth and follow evil, there will be wrath and anger.* <sup>Rom.2:4-8</sup>

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. Instead he is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.* <sup>2Pet.3:9</sup>

**Explain what Jesus meant by:** *I can guarantee that on judgment day people will have to give an account of every careless word they say. By your words you will be declared innocent, or by your words you will be declared guilty.* <sup>Matt.12:36-37</sup>

All our sins are forgiven and God will never count them against us:

*However, to the one who does not work but trusts God who justifies the ungodly, their faith is credited as righteousness. David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the one to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: “Blessed are those whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the one whose sin the Lord will never count against them.”* <sup>Rom.4:5-8</sup>

*as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.* <sup>Ps.3:12</sup>

However, we will still have to give an account for our life. At the Judgement Day, our entrance into heaven will be based on what Jesus has done but we will still be judged for what we have done



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*Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. The earth and the heavens fled from his presence, and there was no place for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Another book was opened, which is the book of life. The dead were judged according to what they had done as recorded in the books. The sea gave up the dead that were in it, and death and Hades gave up the dead that were in them, and each person was judged according to what they had done. Then death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. The lake of fire is the second death. Anyone whose name was not found written in the book of life was thrown into the lake of fire. **Rev.20:11-15***

**Explain what Paul meant by Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.** <sup>Rom.12:17-19</sup>

We should let God deal with our personal problems but that does not remove our obligation to support the Government's (and also the Church's) Law and Order system as they are God's delegated authority.

*Every person should obey the government in power. No government would exist if it hadn't been established by God. The governments which exist have been put in place by God. Therefore, whoever resists the government opposes what God has established. Those who resist will bring punishment on themselves... The government is God's servant working for your good... People in the government are God's servants while they do the work he has given them.* <sup>Rom.13:1-6</sup>

*Make the Master proud of you by being good citizens. Respect the authorities, whatever their level; they are God's emissaries for keeping order. It is God's will that by doing good, you might cure the ignorance of the fools who think you're a danger to society. Exercise your freedom by serving God, not by breaking the rules. Treat everyone you meet with dignity. Love your spiritual family. Revere God. Respect the government.* <sup>2Pet.2:13-17</sup>

We should not hold any grudges against anyone

*Do not repay anyone evil for evil. Be careful to do what is right in the eyes of everyone. If it is possible, as far as it depends on you, live at peace with everyone. Do not take revenge, my dear friends, but leave room for God's wrath, for it is written: "It is mine to avenge; I will repay," says the Lord.* <sup>Rom.12:17-19</sup>

*For if you forgive other people when they sin against you, your heavenly Father will also forgive you. But if you do not forgive others their sins, your Father will not forgive your sins.* <sup>Matt.6:14-15</sup>

But we can and should allow the Law to protect us

*As they stretched him out to flog him, Paul said to the centurion standing there, "Is it legal for you to flog a Roman citizen who hasn't even been found guilty?"* <sup>Acts.22:25</sup>

*Paul answered: "I am now standing before Caesar's court, where I ought to be tried. I have not done any wrong to the Jews, as you yourself know very well. If, however, I am guilty of doing anything deserving death, I do not refuse to die. But if the charges brought against me by these Jews are not true, no one has the right to hand me over to them. I appeal to Caesar!"* <sup>Acts.25:10-11</sup>

**What does the phrase "Baptism of the Holy Spirit" mean to you?**

*Baptism means saturation, washing or immersion. The Baptism of the Holy Spirit literally means the saturation of the Holy Spirit. This is a filling to overflowing.*

*"Let anyone who is thirsty come to me and drink. Whoever believes in me, as Scripture has said, rivers of living water will flow from within them." By this he meant the Spirit, whom those who believed in him were later to receive. Up to that time the Spirit had not been given, since Jesus had not yet been glorified.* <sup>Jn.7:37-39</sup>

But the Baptism of the Holy Spirit is not just an experience but a relationship with the Holy Spirit. At conversion the Holy Spirit comes to dwell within us

*Therefore I want you to know that no one who is speaking by the Spirit of God says, "Jesus be cursed," and no one can say, "Jesus is Lord," except by the Holy Spirit.* <sup>1Cor.12:3</sup>

*For we know, brothers and sisters loved by God, that he has chosen you, because our gospel came to you not simply with words but also with power, with the Holy Spirit and deep conviction.* <sup>1Thess.1:4-5</sup>

At the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, He flows out of us

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*All of them were filled with the Holy Spirit and began to speak in other tongues as the Spirit enabled them.*<sup>Acts.2:4</sup>

*And they were all filled with the Holy Spirit and spoke the word of God boldly.*<sup>Acts.4:31</sup>

And the result of being filled with the Holy Spirit is much more than speaking boldly or even speaking in tongues. The early British Pentecostals made a Declaration in 1909 that the Baptism of the Holy Spirit included these seven results: **1.** The Consciousness of the Deity of our Lord Jesus Christ; **2.** The Consciousness of our "Dwelling in Him"; **3.** Divine Illumination concerning His Word and Will; **4.** The Testimony of Jesus; **5.** The Three-fold Conviction of the World by the Spirit in us (*He reproves the World of Sin, of Righteousness and of Judgment*); **6.** Our continual guidance into the deep things of God; **7.** The continual glorification of Christ (*to the exclusion of self*).

### What does spiritual maturity mean to you?

Maturity means *complete, full, wanting in nothing*. Of course, none of us will reach the state of perfection here on earth but we can all aspire to it and work towards maturity. We can only mature as we fellowship with other Believers— as we take our place in with the Body of Christ (the gathering of Believers) and so Christians who isolate themselves will never become mature.

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread [that is, enjoying the company of other Believers] and to prayer.*<sup>Acts.2:42</sup>

Maturity is standing firm in our faith, not blown around by fads or novelties.

*So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ. Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ. From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.*<sup>Eph.4:11-16</sup>

Maturity understands that Christ is in us.

*To them God has chosen to make known among the Gentiles the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory. He is the one we proclaim, admonishing and teaching everyone with all wisdom, so that we may present everyone fully mature in Christ.*<sup>Col.1:27-28</sup>

*We do, however, speak a message of wisdom among the mature, but not the wisdom of this age or of the rulers of this age, who are coming to nothing. No, we declare God's wisdom, a mystery that has been hidden and that God destined for our glory before time began.*<sup>1Cor.3:6-7</sup>

Maturity is knowing God and being completely sure about what He wants from us.

*Epaphras sends greetings. He is one of you. He serves Christ Jesus. He is always praying hard for you. He prays that you will stand firm in holding to all that God has in mind for us. He prays that you will continue to grow in your knowledge of what God wants you to do. He also prays that you will be completely sure about it.*<sup>Col.4:12</sup>

Maturity understands the teaching about righteousness and has a good working knowledge of the basic Christian doctrines.

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to make it clear to you because you no longer try to understand. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us move beyond the elementary teachings about Christ and be taken forward to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about cleansing rites, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so.*<sup>Heb.5:11-6:3</sup>

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**What do you have to give?** *But I'll give you what I have. In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth...* Acts 3:6

### Questions

What has God given for us: 1) to keep; 2) to share?

What is the difference between ownership and stewardship?

What is the greatest gift we can receive?

What is the greatest gift we can give to others?

Do the principles of God's Kingdom only work for Believers or do they work for unbelievers?

Can non-Christians give anything of spiritual value?

Can we give as a Believer if we don't have a generous attitude?

### Comments

**What has God given for us: 1) to keep; 2) to share?**

God gives us both bread to eat and seed to sow—we need to keep our bread for ourselves and sow our seed (give to others)

*Now he who supplies seed to the sower and bread for food will also supply and increase your store of seed and will enlarge the harvest of your righteousness. [11] You will be enriched in every way so that you can be generous on every occasion, and through us your generosity will result in thanksgiving to God.* 2Cor.9:10-11

### 1) Keep

#### Faith

*They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience. They must first be tested; and then if there is nothing against them, let them serve* 1Tim.3:9-10

*What you heard from me, keep as the pattern of sound teaching, with faith and love in Christ Jesus.* 2Tim.1:13

#### God's Commands

*In fact, this is love for God: to keep his commands.*

#### Spiritual fervour

*Never be lacking in zeal, but keep your spiritual fervour, serving the Lord. Be joyful in hope, patient in affliction, faithful in prayer.* Rom.12:11-12

#### Unity of the Spirit

*As a prisoner for the Lord, then, I urge you to live a life worthy of the calling you have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.* Eph.4:1-3

### 2) Share

#### Gospel

*We loved you so much that we were delighted to share with you not only the gospel of God but our lives as well,* 1Thess.2:8

#### Encouragement

*After the reading from the Law and the Prophets, the synagogue rulers sent word to them, saying, "Brothers, if you have a message of encouragement for the people, please speak."* Acts.13:15

*I long to see you so that I may impart to you some spiritual gift to make you strong— [12] that is, that you and I may be mutually encouraged by each other's faith.* Rom.1:11

*Therefore encourage one another and build each other up, just as in fact you are doing.* 1Thes.5:11

#### Practical support

*Share with the Lord's people who are in need. Practice hospitality.* Rom.12:13

*Command them to do good, to be rich in good deeds, and to be generous and willing to share. In this way they will lay up treasure for themselves as a firm foundation for the coming age, so that they may take hold of the life that is truly life.* 1Tim.6:18-19

*He who has been stealing must steal no longer, but must work, doing something useful with his own hands, that he may have something to share with those in need.* Eph.4:28

### What is the difference between ownership and stewardship?

Ownership is what belongs to us—we can do what we like with our possessions;

Stewardship is what we are looking after for others—we are held accountable because it is in our trust.

To become a Christian, we must confess that Jesus is Lord—we acknowledge that He is our Owner and Master. We recognize that all we own has been given to us in trust.

*Our God, we thank you and praise your wonderful name. But who am I and who are my people that you enable us to give so generously? Everything comes from you. We give you only what has come from your hands.* <sup>1Chron.29:13-14</sup>

*You may say to yourself, “My power and the strength of my hands have produced this wealth for me.” But remember the LORD your God, for it is he who gives you the ability to produce wealth, and so confirms his covenant, which he swore to your ancestors, as it is today.* <sup>Deut.8:17-18</sup>

Stewards should be faithful:

*This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.* <sup>1Cor.4:1-2</sup>

*Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.* <sup>2Pet.4:10</sup>

### What is the greatest gift we can receive?

**Eternal life**—eternal life is God's life in us and it comes as a package which includes His characteristics and especially love

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.* <sup>Gal.5:22-23</sup>

*And yet I will show you the most excellent way. If I speak in the tongues of men or of angels, but do not have love, I am only a resounding gong or a clanging cymbal. If I have the gift of prophecy and can fathom all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I have a faith that can move mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing. If I give all I possess to the poor and give over my body to hardship that I may boast, but do not have love, I gain nothing. Love is patient, love is kind. It does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonour others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails... And now these three remain: faith, hope and love. But the greatest of these is love.* <sup>1Cor.13:1-13</sup>

### What is the greatest gift we can give to others?

We can't give eternal life but we can give the **message of eternal life**—but it must be packaged in the fruit of the Spirit (God's personality) and especially love.

*And we have seen and testify that the Father has sent his Son to be the Saviour of the world. If anyone acknowledges that Jesus is the Son of God, God lives in them and they in God. And so we know and rely on the love God has for us. God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. This is how love is made complete among us so that we will have confidence on the day of judgment: In this world we are like Jesus. There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love. We love because he first loved us. Whoever claims to love God yet hates a brother or sister is a liar. For whoever does not love their brother and sister, whom they have seen, cannot love God, whom they have not seen. And he has given us this command: Anyone who loves God must also love their brother and sister.* <sup>1Jn.4:14-21</sup>

### Do the principles of God's Kingdom only work for Believers or do they work for unbelievers?

God's principles (such as gravity and seasons) are universal

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*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. Matt.5:44-45*

But without faith nothing has any spiritual value.

*And without faith it is impossible to please God, because anyone who comes to him must believe that he exists and that he rewards those who earnestly seek him. Heb.11:6*

Many organisations and individuals give generously to good causes and to those in need—but that does not give them any credit with God

*And now, brothers and sisters, we want you to know about the grace that God has given the Macedonian churches [the Philippians]. In the midst of a very severe trial, their overflowing joy and their extreme poverty welled up in rich generosity. For I testify that they gave as much as they were able, and even beyond their ability. Entirely on their own, they urgently pleaded with us for the privilege of sharing in this service to the Lord's people. And they exceeded our expectations: They gave themselves first of all to the Lord, and then by the will of God also to us. 2Cor.8:1-5*

*Yet it was good of you to share in my troubles. Moreover, as you Philippians know, in the early days of your acquaintance with the gospel, when I set out from Macedonia, not one church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving, except you only; for even when I was in Thessalonica, you sent me aid more than once when I was in need. Not that I desire your gifts; what I desire is that more be credited to your account. Phil.4:14-17*

### Can non-Christians give anything of spiritual value?

Not until they give their heart to God!

*The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit. 1Cor.2:14*

### Can we give as a Believer if we don't have a generous attitude?

Yes and No! We can give a but not as mature Believer

Believers can give stingily but that is not the giving of a mature Believer.

*Remember this: Whoever sows sparingly will also reap sparingly, and whoever sows generously will also reap generously. Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. 2Cor.9:6-8*

A mature Believer is victorious—an overcomer. Jesus asked John to write to the 7 Churches in Asia to about maturity—overcoming

*He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches. To him who overcomes, I will give the right to eat from the tree of life, which is in the paradise of God. Rev.2:7*

*This is love for God: to obey his commands. And his commands are not burdensome, for everyone born of God overcomes the world. This is the victory that has overcome the world, even our faith. Who is it that overcomes the world? Only he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God. 1Jn.5:3-5*

However, we are not called to be a “soft touch”—our resources are not ours to squander because we are stewards.

*Better think this one through from the beginning. God is kind, but he's not soft. Rom.2:4TM*

*For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to make ourselves a model for you to follow. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “If a man will not work, he shall not eat.” 2Thess.3:7-10*

As Believers we should give in a considered way, not under compulsion but as an appreciation of what God has done for us—Christian giving is an act of worship

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They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. <sup>Acts.2:42</sup>

### Questions

What do you understand by “*the apostle’s teachings*”? (give some Bible references)

What is “*fellowship*”? (explain your answer)

What do you think is meant by “*breaking of bread*”? (explain your answer)

Why is *prayer* important?

### Comments

#### What do you understand by “*the apostle’s teachings*”? (give some Bible references)

The teachings that the early apostles taught. The word “*apostle*” literally means “*sent*”

*Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger [apostle] greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.*<sup>Jn.13:16-17</sup>

*There was a man sent [apostled] from God whose name was John. He came as a witness to testify concerning that light, so that through him all might believe. He himself was not the light; he came only as a witness to the light.*<sup>Jn.1:6-8</sup>

Jesus is the great apostle

*Therefore, holy brothers and sisters, who share in the heavenly calling, fix your thoughts on Jesus, whom we acknowledge as our apostle and high priest.*<sup>Heb.3:1</sup>

Jesus originally designated of His 12 Disciples as apostles

*Jesus called his disciples to him and chose twelve of them, whom he also designated apostles.*<sup>Lk.6:13</sup>

*The wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*<sup>Rev.21:14</sup>

Judas died and Matthias took his place:

*“Lord, you know everyone’s heart. Show us which of these two you have chosen to take over this apostolic ministry, which Judas left to go where he belongs.” Then they cast lots, and the lot fell to Matthias; so he was added to the eleven apostles.*<sup>Acts.1:24-26</sup>

Jesus sent (apostled) 72 other disciples

*Lord appointed seventy-two others and sent them two by two ahead of him to every town and place where he was about to go.*<sup>Lk.10:1</sup>

Paul was also an apostle:

*For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God.*<sup>1Cor.15:9</sup>

There were also other apostles:

*But when the apostles Barnabas and Paul heard of this, they tore their clothes and rushed out into the crowd, shouting: “Friends, why are you doing this? We too are only human, like you.”*<sup>Acts.14:14-15</sup>

*Paul, Silas and Timothy... We were not looking for praise from people, not from you or anyone else, even though as apostles of Christ we could have asserted our authority.*<sup>1Thess.1:1-2:6</sup>

*Greet Andronicus and Junia, my fellow Jews who have been in prison with me. They are outstanding among the apostles, and they were in Christ before I was.*<sup>Rom.16:7</sup>

For some to be false apostles who deceived Believers, there must have been many more than the original Disciples:

*For if someone comes to you and preaches a Jesus other than the Jesus we preached, or if you receive a different spirit from the one you received, or a different gospel from the one you accepted, you put up with it easily enough. But I do not think I am in the least inferior to those “super-apostles.” I may not be a trained speaker, but I do have knowledge. We have made this perfectly clear to you in every way... And I will keep on doing what I am doing in order to cut the ground from under those who want an opportunity to be considered equal with us in the things they boast about. For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself*

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*masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*<sup>2Cor.11:4-15</sup>

*To the angel of the church in Ephesus write:... I know your deeds, your hard work and your perseverance. I know that you cannot tolerate wicked men, that you have tested those who claim to be apostles but are not, and have found them false.*<sup>Rev.2:2</sup>

**The teaching of the apostles that is specifically recorded include: The Resurrection of Jesus; Unity of the Church; Warnings of division.** However, the whole of the Church's doctrine is built on the Apostles' teachings

*Consequently, you are no longer foreigners and strangers, but fellow citizens with God's people and also members of his household, built on the foundation of the apostles and prophets, with Christ Jesus himself as the chief cornerstone. In him the whole building is joined together and rises to become a holy temple in the Lord. And in him you too are being built together to become a dwelling in which God lives by his Spirit.*<sup>Eph.2:19-22</sup>

### The Resurrection of Jesus

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.*<sup>2Tim.2:8</sup>

Without the resurrection Christianity is a delusion and a deceit

*And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost.*<sup>1Cor15:14-18</sup>

But Christ has been raised and His resurrection confirms our resurrection.

*But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep.*<sup>1Cor.15:20</sup>

### Unity of the Church

*In reading this, then, you will be able to understand my insight into the mystery of Christ, which was not made known to men in other generations as it has now been revealed by the Spirit to God's holy apostles and prophets. This mystery is that through the gospel the Gentiles are heirs together with Israel, members together of one body, and sharers together in the promise in Christ Jesus.*<sup>Eph.3:4-6</sup>

*The body is a unit, though it is made up of many parts; and though all its parts are many, they form one body. So it is with Christ.*<sup>1Cor.12:12</sup>

*until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*<sup>Eph.4:13</sup>

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace.*<sup>Eph.4:3</sup>

*I in them and you in me. May they be brought to complete unity to let the world know that you sent me and have loved them even as you have loved me.*<sup>Jn.17:23</sup>

### Warnings of division

*But, dear friends, remember what the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ foretold. They said to you, "In the last times there will be scoffers who will follow their own ungodly desires." These are the men who divide you, who follow mere natural instincts and do not have the Spirit. But you, dear friends, build yourselves up in your most holy faith and pray in the Holy Spirit. Keep yourselves in God's love as you wait for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ to bring you to eternal life.*<sup>Jude.17-21</sup>

*Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles. First of all, you must understand that in the last days scoffers will come, scoffing and following their own evil desires. They will say, "Where is this 'coming' he promised? Ever since our fathers died, everything goes on as it has since the beginning of creation." But they deliberately forget that long ago by God's word the heavens existed and the earth was formed out of water and by water. By these waters also the world of that time was deluged and destroyed. By the same word the present heavens and earth are reserved for fire, being kept for the day of judgment and destruction of ungodly men.*<sup>2Pet.3:1-7</sup>

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**The warnings of divisions are given so we can be prepared and remain steadfast in our faith**  
*I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*<sup>1Jn.16:33</sup>

*For such men are false apostles, deceitful workmen, masquerading as apostles of Christ. And no wonder, for Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve.*<sup>2Cor.11:13-15</sup>

*herefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Do not let anyone who delights in false humility and the worship of angels disqualify you for the prize. Such a person goes into great detail about what he has seen, and his unspiritual mind puffs him up with idle notions. He has lost connection with the Head, from whom the whole body, supported and held together by its ligaments and sinews, grows as God causes it to grow. Since you died with Christ to the basic principles of this world, why, as though you still belonged to it, do you submit to its rules: "Do not handle! Do not taste! Do not touch!"? These are all destined to perish with use, because they are based on human commands and teachings. Such regulations indeed have an appearance of wisdom, with their self-imposed worship, their false humility and their harsh treatment of the body, but they lack any value in restraining sensual indulgence.*<sup>Col.2:16-23</sup>

### What is “fellowship”? (explain your answer)

#### Common-union

Fellowship literally means a *sharing* or *communion* (*common-union*) and we have a **common union with God and His people**. We have a **common union with God the Father**: *And our fellowship is with the Father and with his Son, Jesus Christ.*<sup>1Jn.1:3</sup> We have a **common union with God the Son**: *God is faithful, who has called you into fellowship with his Son, Jesus Christ our Lord.*<sup>1Cor.1:9</sup> We have a **common union with God the Holy Spirit**: *May the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.*<sup>2Cor.13:14</sup> And we have a **common union with God's people**: *We proclaim to you what we ourselves have actually seen and heard [about Jesus] so that you may have fellowship with us.*<sup>1Jn.1:3</sup> In Christian fellowship there an interaction with the Holy Spirit who releases joy, peace and hope—there is a “leaping for joy” (like Mary and Elizabeth): *As soon as the sound of your greeting reached my ears, the [Holy Spirit within me] leaped for joy. Blessed are those who have believed that what the Lord has said to them will be accomplished!*<sup>Lk.1:42-44</sup>

*May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him, so that you may overflow with hope by the power of the Holy Spirit.*<sup>Rom.15:13</sup>

#### Partnership

*As for Titus, he is my partner [someone who is in fellowship] and fellow worker among you; as for our brothers, they are representatives [apostles] of the churches and an honour to Christ.*<sup>2Cor.8:23</sup>

*For he and all his companions were astonished at the catch of fish they had taken, and so were James and John, the sons of Zebedee, Simon's partners. Then Jesus said to Simon, "Don't be afraid; from now on you will catch men." So they pulled their boats up on shore, left everything and followed him.*<sup>Lk.5:9-11</sup>

#### Participation

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation [fellowship] in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.*<sup>1Cor.10:16-17</sup>

The peace or fellowship offering of the OT was effectively a shared meal with God—the fat parts of the animal were consumed on the altar of the Lord but the meat was consumed by the worshipers in a meal before God. This is the only kind of offering in which common worshipers partook of the meat of the animal. When there was a series of offerings that included a peace offering, the peace offering was always offered last because it expressed the fact that all was well between God and his worshipers.



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*From the fellowship offering he is to bring a sacrifice made to the LORD by fire: its fat, the entire fat tail cut off close to the backbone, all the fat that covers the inner parts or is connected to them, both kidneys with the fat on them near the loins, and the covering of the liver, which he will remove with the kidneys. The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made to the LORD by fire... The priest shall burn them on the altar as food, an offering made by fire, a pleasing aroma. All the fat is the LORD's.*<sup>Lev.3:9-16</sup>

*These are the regulations for the fellowship [peace] offering a person may present to the LORD: If he offers it as an expression of thankfulness, then along with this thank offering he is to offer cakes of bread made without yeast and mixed with oil, wafers made without yeast and spread with oil, and cakes of fine flour well-kneaded and mixed with oil... The meat of his fellowship offering of thanksgiving must be eaten on the day it is offered; he must leave none of it till morning.*<sup>Lev.7:11-15</sup>

### What do you think is meant by “*breaking of bread*”? (explain your answer)

Enjoying the company of others around a meal

*On the first day of the week we came together to break bread. Paul spoke to the people and, because he intended to leave the next day, kept on talking until midnight.*<sup>Acts.20:7</sup>

*“We have here only five loaves of bread and two fish,” they answered. “Bring them here to me,” he said. And he directed the people to sit down on the grass. Taking the five loaves and the two fish and looking up to heaven, he gave thanks and broke the loaves. Then he gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the people.*<sup>Matt.14:17-19</sup>

*Then he took the seven loaves and the fish, and when he had given thanks, he broke them and gave them to the disciples, and they in turn to the people. They all ate and were satisfied.*<sup>Matt.15:36-37</sup>

*So he went in to stay with them. When he was at the table with them, he took bread, gave thanks, broke it and began to give it to them. Then their eyes were opened and they recognized him, and he disappeared from their sight. They asked each other, “Were not our hearts burning within us while he talked with us on the road and opened the Scriptures to us?”*<sup>Lk.24:29-32</sup>

Of course, when we meet as Believers it is natural to remember Jesus and to give thanks for His death as we eat and drink together:

*Is not the cup of thanksgiving for which we give thanks a participation in the blood of Christ? And is not the bread that we break a participation in the body of Christ? Because there is one loaf, we, who are many, are one body, for we all share the one loaf.*<sup>1Cor.10:16-17</sup>

But the tradition of “*breaking of bread*” as the Communion ceremony that we have today was not part of the early Church’s tradition. But however we break bread, let’s keep enjoying fellowship around a meal—and remember Jesus as we share together.

### Why is *prayer* important?

Without communication there can be no relationship. Prayer is our communication with God and essential to our relationship with God

God doesn’t **need** our prayers because He is All Sufficient—but He does **want** our prayers because He made us to fellowship

There are many sorts of prayers but the Believer’s prayer is always mixed with thanksgiving and praise and results in peace

*Do not be anxious about anything, but in everything, by prayer and petition, with thanksgiving, present your requests to God. And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.*<sup>Phil.4:6-7</sup>

*I urge, then, first of all, that petitions, prayers, intercession and thanksgiving be made for all people—for kings and all those in authority, that we may live peaceful and quiet lives in all godliness and holiness. This is good, and pleases God our Saviour, who wants all people to be saved and to come to a knowledge of the truth.*<sup>1Tim.2:1-4</sup>

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*Praise be to the LORD God, the God of Israel, who alone does marvellous deeds. Praise be to his glorious name forever; may the whole earth be filled with his glory. Amen and Amen. This concludes the prayers of David son of Jesse.*<sup>Ps.72:18-20</sup>

James Montgomery (author of *Angels from the realms of glory*) describes prayer:

*Prayer is the soul's sincere desire, uttered or unexpressed;  
the motion of a hidden fire that trembles in the breast.  
Prayer is the simplest form of speech that infant lips can try,  
prayer the sublimest strains that reach the Majesty on high.  
Prayer is the Christian's vital breath, the Christian's native air,  
his watchword at the gates of death: he enters heaven with prayer.  
Prayer is the contrite sinner's voice, returning from his ways;  
while angels in their songs rejoice, and cry, 'Behold, he prays!  
The saints in prayer appear as one, in word and deed and mind;  
while with the Father and the Son sweet fellowship they find.  
Nor prayer is made on earth alone: the Holy Spirit pleads,  
and Jesus on the eternal throne for sinners intercedes.  
O Thou by whom we come to God, the Life, the Truth, the Way,  
the path of prayer thyself hast trod: Lord, teach us how to pray!*

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## Questions

*But the greatest of these is love.<sup>1Cor.13:13</sup>*

1. Describe what you understand by “to love God”.
2. What does it mean to respect God?
3. What does it mean to follow Jesus?
4. What does it mean to love others?
5. What does it mean to not to be fearful.

## Comments

### 1 Describe what you understand by “to love God”.

The nearest equivalent to loving God is the Marriage relationship where the spouse promises to *respect him, love him, comfort him, honour and keep him, in sickness and in health and, forsaking all other, keep only unto him as long as you both shall live? Thus “to love God” means to respect God, to communicate with God (through prayer and praise), to honour God and to share our life with God (we call this “fellowship”).* And of course, we do this joyfully, cheerfully and willingly, as well as passionately, personally, purposefully and powerfully.

### 2 What does it mean to respect God?

**Synonyms** of “*respect*” include: regard; reverence; revere; honour; appreciate; esteem.

**Antonyms** of “*respect*” include: contempt; disrespect; disregard; scorn.

To respect God means to honour God and His values and behaving within the accepted rules of Christian conduct. This also includes honouring the Government: *We render loyalty to Her Majesty’s Government as far as conscience and morality permit.*

*Let everyone be subject to the governing authorities, for there is no authority except that which God has established. The authorities that exist have been established by God. Consequently, whoever rebels against the authority is rebelling against what God has instituted, and those who do so will bring judgment on themselves. Rom.13:1-2*

AoG Ministerial Code of Ethics include:

#### Responsibilities to Self

1. *I will maintain my physical and emotional health through regular exercise, good eating habits, and the proper care of my body.*
2. *I will nurture my devotional life through a regular time of prayer, reading of the Scriptures and meditation.*
3. *I will continue to grow intellectually through leadership study and comprehensive reading.*
4. *I will manage my time well by properly balancing personal obligations, church duties, and family responsibilities.*
5. *I will be honest and responsible in my finances by paying all debts on time, giving generously to the Lord's work and to worthwhile causes, and living a Christian lifestyle.*
6. *I will be truthful in my speech, never plagiarizing another's work, exaggerating the facts, abusing personal experiences, or communicating gossip.*
7. *I will seek to be Christ-like in attitude and action toward all persons regardless of race, social class, religious beliefs, or position of influence within the church and community.*

#### Responsibilities to the Community

1. *I will consider my primary responsibility to be a leader of my congregation and will never neglect ministerial duties in order to serve in the community.*
2. *I will accept reasonable responsibility for community service, recognising the minister has a public ministry.*
3. *I will support public morality in the community through responsible prophetic witness and social action.*
4. *I will obey the laws of my government unless they require my disobedience to the law of God.*
5. *I will practice Christian citizenship without engaging in political activities that are unethical, unbiblical or unwise.*

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### 3 What does it mean to follow Jesus?

To follow Jesus means to obey Him, putting His reputation before our reputation

*Then Jesus spoke to his disciples. He said, 'If anyone wants to follow me, he must say no to himself. He must pick up his cross and follow me. If he wants to save his life, he will lose it. But if he loses his life for me, he will find it.'* <sup>Matt.16:24-25</sup> *But first, be concerned about his kingdom and what has his approval. Then all these things will be provided for you.* <sup>Matt.6:33</sup>

### 4 What does it mean to love others?

Loving God puts us under an obligation to love others. *Owe nothing to anyone—except for your obligation to love one another. If you love your neighbour, you will fulfil the requirements of God's law. For the commandments say, "You must not commit adultery. You must not murder. You must not steal. You must not covet." These—and other such commandments—are summed up in this one commandment: "Love your neighbour as yourself." Love does no wrong to others, so love fulfils the requirements of God's law.* <sup>Rom.13:8-10</sup>

*Anyone who claims to be in the light but hates his brother is still in the darkness. Whoever loves his brother lives in the light, and there is nothing in him\* to make him stumble. But whoever hates his brother is in the darkness and walks around in the darkness; he does not know where he is going, because the darkness has blinded him.* <sup>1Jn.2:9-11</sup> *Do not be surprised, my brothers, if the world hates you. We know that we have passed from death to life, because we love our brothers. Anyone who does not love remains in death. Anyone who hates his brother is a murderer, and you know that no murderer has eternal life in him.* <sup>1Jn.3:13-15</sup>

*We love because he first loved us. If anyone says, "I love God," yet hates his brother, he is a liar. For anyone who does not love his brother, whom he has seen, cannot love God, whom he has not seen. And he has given us this command: Whoever loves God must also love his brother.* <sup>1Jn.4:19-21</sup>

### 5 What does it mean to not to be fearful.

God has commanded us not to be afraid because He is with us

*Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.* <sup>Josh.1:9</sup>

*"I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world."* <sup>Jn.16:33</sup>

*God has poured his love into our hearts. He did it through the Holy Spirit, whom he has given to us. At just the right time Christ died for ungodly people. He died for us when we had no power of our own. It is unusual for anyone to die for a godly person. Maybe someone would be willing to die for a good person. But here is how God has shown his love for us. While we were still sinners, Christ died for us. The blood of Christ has made us right with God.* <sup>Rom.5:5-9</sup>

*And now we reciprocate God's love: We love because God loved us first.* <sup>1Jn.4:19</sup>

God's love is perfect love and it drives out all fear.

*No fear exists where his love is. Rather, perfect love gets rid of fear, because fear involves punishment. The person who lives in fear doesn't have perfect love.* <sup>1Jn.4:19</sup>

*Even though I walk through the darkest valley, I will fear no evil, for you are with me; your rod and your staff, they comfort me.* <sup>Ps.23:4</sup>

*"Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have summoned you by name; you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and when you pass through the rivers, they will not sweep over you. When you walk through the fire, you will not be burned; the flames will not set you ablaze. For I am the LORD your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior;* <sup>Is.43:1-3</sup>

## Questions

**Christ the Lord is risen today—Hallelujah!**

**1 Should we allow tradition (even Church tradition) to influence our Christian doctrine or beliefs?**

**2 How strictly should we shape our values and traditions on the Bible?** (cf our Statement of Faith: *We believe that the Bible is... the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice* and the Elim Statement of Faith: *We believe the Bible is the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.*)

**3 Should we mix pagan tradition with our Christian tradition?**

(for example, Easter is named after *Eostre*, a Germanic spring goddess; most of the names of the days of the week are named after pagan gods)

**4 Are there any examples of Christian festivals in the Bible?**

**5 How was Jesus' return to life different from Lazarus' return to life?**

**6 Why is Jesus' resurrection so pivotal to the Christian faith?**

**7 What insight about our future can we gain from Jesus' resurrection?**

## Comments

**1 Should we allow tradition (even Church tradition) to influence our Christian doctrine or beliefs?**

No, not our doctrine or beliefs but it is ok for tradition to influence our practices if they don't compromise our faith. For instance music, clothes, food, etc.

For instance, music. The Reformation saw a re-emergence of congregational worship. Luther believed that, in worship, God's people should sing hymns, Zwingli thought they should not sing at all, and Calvin took the middle ground: they should sing—but they should only sing directly from God's Word. Calvin saw "*hymns of human composure*" as unfit for the sacred assembly. Part of the difference between Luther and Calvin stemmed from their response to the Mass. "*Picture in your mind a huge kettle filled to the brim with Roman doctrine and worship practice. Luther reached in to remove whatever was unbiblical and kept the rest; Calvin dumped out the contents and started over again, placing in the pot only what the Scripture warranted. This was the beginning of the regulative principle of worship.*"

The 1689 London Baptist Confession:

*But the acceptable way of worshipping the true God is instituted by himself, and so limited by his own revealed will, that he may not be worshipped according to the imaginations and devices of men, nor the suggestions of Satan, under any visible representations, or any other way not prescribed in the Holy Scriptures. (LBC 22.1–7)*

John Fawcett, an English Baptist pastor in the mid-1700's summarized this characteristically Baptist conviction:

*No acts of worship can properly be called holy, but such as the Almighty has enjoined. No man, nor any body of men have any authority to invent rites and ceremonies of worship; to change the ordinances which he has established; or to invent new ones . . . The divine word is the only safe directory in what relates to his own immediate service. The question is not what we may think becoming, decent or proper, but what our gracious Master has authorized as such. In matters of religion, nothing bears the stamp of holiness but what God has ordained.*

We have the Holy Spirit residing within us to lead us.

**2 How strictly should we shape our values and traditions on the Bible?**

(Statement of Faith. AoG: *We believe that the Bible is... the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice.*

Elim: *We believe the Bible is the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.*)

(See also answers to question 1)

**3 Should we mix pagan tradition with our Christian tradition?**

(for example, Easter is named after *Eostre*, a Germanic spring goddess; most of the names of the days of the week are named after pagan gods)

Christmas trees, Christmas and Easter Festival food are not anti-Christian but

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Paul was not worried about travelling in a ship named after pagan gods

*After three months we put out to sea in a ship that had wintered in the island. It was an Alexandrian ship with the figurehead of the twin gods Castor and Pollux. Acts.28:11*

Pagan gods are not deities as there is only one God

*For there is one God and one mediator between God and men, the man Christ Jesus, who gave himself as a ransom for all men—the testimony given in its proper time. 1Tim.2:5-6*

*There is one body and one Spirit—just as you were called to one hope when you were called—one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all. Eph.4:4-6*

*We know that an idol is nothing at all in the world and that there is no God but one. For even if there are so-called gods, whether in heaven or on earth (as indeed there are many “gods” and many “lords”), yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live. 1Cor.8:4-6*

*Is God the God of Jews only? Is he not the God of Gentiles too? Yes, of Gentiles too, since there is only one God. Rom.3:29-30*

However, we should not give the false gods any credence or honour

*The sorrows of those will increase who run after other gods. I will not pour out their libations of blood or take up their names on my lips. Ps.16:4*

*Be careful to do everything I have said to you. Do not invoke the names of other gods; do not let them be heard on your lips. Ex.23:13*

The devil is still roaring and seeking to devour

*Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. 1Pet.5:8-9*

### 4 Are there any examples of Christian festivals in the Bible?

There are plenty of Jewish festivals in the OT but I haven't found any Christian festivals—only scriptures that say they are obsolete and that they have been fulfilled by Jesus!

*And having disarmed the powers and authorities, he made a public spectacle of them, triumphing over them by the cross. Therefore do not let anyone judge you by what you eat or drink, or with regard to a religious festival, a New Moon celebration or a Sabbath day. These are a shadow of the things that were to come; the reality, however, is found in Christ. Col.2:15-17*

*You are observing special days and months and seasons and years! I fear for you, that somehow I have wasted my efforts on you. Gal.4:10-11*

*The law is only a shadow of the good things that are coming—not the realities themselves. Heb.10:1*

*One person considers one day more sacred than another; another considers every day alike. Each of them should be fully convinced in their own mind. Whoever regards one day as special does so to the Lord. Rom.14:5-6*

### 5 How was Jesus' return to life different from Lazarus' return to life?

Jesus would never die again—he was raised immortal

*For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God. Rom.6:9-10*

### 6 Why is Jesus' resurrection so pivotal to the Christian faith?

*And if Christ has not been raised, our preaching is useless and so is your faith... And if Christ has not been raised, your faith is futile; you are still in your sins. Then those also who have fallen asleep in Christ are lost. <sup>1Cor15:14-18</sup>*

### 7 What insight about our future can we gain from Jesus' resurrection?

*They were greatly disturbed because the apostles were teaching the people and proclaiming in Jesus the resurrection of the dead. <sup>Acts.4:2</sup> But Christ has indeed been raised from the dead, the firstfruits of those who have fallen asleep. <sup>1Cor.15:20</sup>*

31/03/2021

## Questions

1. Who are the family of God?
2. What are the distinctive traits of God's family?
3. Can you be a member of God's family and not a member of a Church family?
4. Can you be a member of a Church family and not a member of God's family?
5. What are some of the responsibilities and privileges of Church membership?
6. Should non-Church members be permitted to take part in Church activities?
7. What authority do Church leaders have over the congregation (members and non-members)?
8. What accountability should there be for Church leaders?
9. What accountability should there be for Church members?
10. What accountability should there be for non-Church members?

## Comments

### 1 Who are the family of God?

All humanity is the family of God in a general sense because God created us in His image *the son of Adam, the son of God.*<sup>Lk3:38</sup>

*From one man he has made every nation of humanity to live all over the earth. He has given them the seasons of the year and the boundaries within which to live. He has done this so that they would look for God, somehow reach for him, and find him. In fact, he is never far from any one of us. Certainly, we live, move, and exist because of him. As some of your poets have said, 'We are God's children.' So if we are God's children, we shouldn't think that the divine being is like an image made from gold, silver, or stone, an image that is the product of human imagination and skill.*<sup>Ads.17:26-29</sup>

But God is the Father of Christians in a very distinct and direct way that is different from the rest of mankind.

*Some people did accept him. They believed in his name. He gave them the right to become children of God. To be a child of God has nothing to do with human parents. Children of God are not born because of human choice or because a husband wants them to be born. They are born because of what God does.*<sup>Jn. 1:10-13</sup>

*'Who is my mother, and who are my brothers?'* Pointing to his disciples, Jesus said, *'Here are my mother and my brothers. For whoever does the will of my Father in heaven is my brother and sister and mother.'*<sup>Mat.12:48-50</sup>

It is those who are born again (from above) who are God's real family—His spiritual family.

*I tell you the truth, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless he is born of water and the Spirit. Flesh gives birth to flesh, but the Spirit gives birth to spirit. You should not be surprised at my saying, 'You must be born again.'*<sup>Jn.3:5-7</sup>  
*So also Abraham "believed God, and it was credited to him as righteousness." Understand, then, that those who have faith are children of Abraham. Scripture foresaw that God would justify the Gentiles by faith, and announced the gospel in advance to Abraham: "All nations will be blessed through you." So those who rely on faith are blessed along with Abraham, the man of faith.*<sup>Gal.3:6-9</sup>

*A person is not a Jew who is one only outwardly, nor is circumcision merely outward and physical. No, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly; and circumcision is circumcision of the heart, by the Spirit, not by the written code. Such a person's praise is not from other people, but from God.*<sup>Rom.2:28-29</sup>

### 2 What are the distinctive traits of God's family?

The distinctives of God's family are the distinctives of God Himself—the fruit of the Spirit.

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law.*<sup>Gal.5:22-23</sup>

*'The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.'*<sup>Ex.34:6-7</sup>

Like Father, like son!

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*Both the one who makes men holy and those who are made holy are of the same family. So Jesus is not ashamed to call them brothers... Since the children have flesh and blood, he too shared in their humanity... For this reason he had to be made like his brothers in every way, in order that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in service to God, and that he might make atonement for the sins of the people. Because he himself suffered when he was tempted, he is able to help those who are being tempted.*<sup>Heb.2:11-18</sup>

*Jesus answered: "Don't you know me, Philip, even after I have been among you such a long time? Anyone who has seen me has seen the Father. How can you say, 'Show us the Father'? Don't you believe that I am in the Father, and that the Father is in me?"*<sup>Jn.14:9-10</sup>

### 3 Can you be a member of God's family and not a member of a Church family?

Yes! BUT it is not God's plan for us to be isolated from the family

*God is in his holy temple. He is a father to those whose fathers have died. He takes care of women whose husbands have died. God gives lonely people a family. He sets prisoners free, and they go out singing.*<sup>Ps.68:5-6</sup>

*Whoever isolates himself seeks his own desire; he breaks out against all sound judgment.*<sup>Pron.18:1</sup>

### 4 Can you be a member of a Church family and not a member of God's family?

Yes! BUT only God knows who are really His.

*Jesus answered, "Those who have had a bath need only to wash their feet; their whole body is clean. And you are clean, though not every one of you." For he knew who was going to betray him, and that was why he said not every one was clean.*<sup>Jn.13:10-11</sup>

*Be on the watch for false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inside they are cruel wolves. By their fruits you will get knowledge of them... "Not everyone who says to me, 'Lord, Lord,' will enter the kingdom of heaven, but only he who does the will of my Father who is in heaven. Many will say to me on that day, 'Lord, Lord, did we not prophesy in your name, and in your name drive out demons and perform many miracles?' Then I will tell them plainly, 'I never knew you. Away from me, you evildoers!'"*<sup>Matt.7:15-23</sup>

*"The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' "An enemy did this," he replied. "The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' "No," he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may root up the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'*<sup>Matt.13:27-30</sup>

### 5 What are some of the responsibilities and privileges of Church membership?

- ✓ taking an active part in the work and worship of the Church according to our ability and circumstances;
- ✓ relating into the Church's system of Pastoral Care;
- ✓ prayerfully contributing to the unity, encouragement and fellowship of the Church;
- ✓ showing a Scriptural regard for those in positions of leadership;
- ✓ being prepared to live by the accepted rules of Christian conduct.

### 6 Should non-Church members be permitted to take part in Church activities?

Yes they can but they should not take an active public leadership role. Those who have publicly stated that the congregation is their spiritual home should be the ones to publicly represent that congregation. Non-Church members may actively participate in the Church life—they are encouraged to pray publicly, to encourage and edify others. They can share in the Lord's Table (Communion)—we should examine ourself not others.

*So then, whoever eats the bread or drinks the cup of the Lord in an unworthy manner will be guilty of sinning against the body and blood of the Lord. Everyone ought to examine themselves before they eat of the bread and drink from the cup. For those who eat and drink without discerning the body of Christ eat and drink judgment on themselves.*<sup>1Cor.11:27-29</sup>

### 7 What authority do Church leaders have over the congregation (members and non-members)?



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Church Leaders have the responsibility for facilitating the Church Services and for providing Pastoral Care for the Congregation (whether members or not). But they don't have the authority outside the Church activities—**unless requested**. They are not responsible for what people do in their personal lives, only for what they teach—they should not lord it over others.

*Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, because it is by faith you stand firm. [Not that we have dominion over your faith, but we are helpers of your joy: for by faith you stand.]<sup>2Cor.1:24</sup>*

*Don't imagine us leaders to be something we aren't. We are servants of Christ, not his masters. We are guides into God's most sublime secrets, not security guards posted to protect them. The requirements for a good guide are reliability and accurate knowledge. [This is how one should regard us, as servants of Christ and stewards of the mysteries of God. Moreover, it is required of stewards that they be found faithful.]<sup>1Cor.4:1-2</sup>*

**However, Church Leaders have moral and legal obligations.** For example, if they suspect someone may be abused or in danger, (or is an abuser or is putting others in danger) they have a moral legal duty and responsibility to notify the appropriate Civil authorities (whether or not they agree to it or not)—see our **Safeguarding Policy**.

The Church Leaders' authority is the authority of a family where Jesus is the Chief Shepherd—it is Jesus who has the ultimate authority.

*Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade.<sup>1Pet.5:2-4</sup>*

Church ministry is a calling not just a job and “ministers” are “servants”.

*I have set you an example that you should do as I have done for you. Very truly I tell you, no servant is greater than his master, nor is a messenger greater than the one who sent him. Now that you know these things, you will be blessed if you do them.<sup>1n.13:15-17</sup>*

### 8 What accountability should there be for Church leaders?

Within our Church, I am accountable to the other Church Leaders and I am also accredited by AoG (which is renewed annually). We have a Complaints Procedure that explains how to make a complaint (including if the complaint is about me). Last year we have had to address a complaint about the Church and Ray read out a statement on behalf of the Church Leadership to the Church congregation (this statement was put together in consultation with the Operation Manager of AoG). Paul lists some standards for Church leaders see 1Tim.3 and Titus 2

### 9 What accountability should there be for Church members?

At the very least, we expect Church members to be prepared to live by the accepted rules of Christian conduct. That does not mean we can never make mistakes but there are clear standards of Christian conduct that we believe are important for us to maintain a credible witness. Church members who don't want to live by our standards will not be allowed to represent our Church or to have a public role in the Church activities.

*Obey your leaders and submit to their authority. They keep watch over you as men who must give an account. Obey them so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no advantage to you. Pray for us. We are sure that we have a clear conscience and desire to live honourably in every way. I particularly urge you to pray so that I may be restored to you soon. May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may he work in us what is pleasing to him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever. Amen.<sup>Heb.13:17-21</sup>*

*For it is no business of mine to be judging those who are outside; but it is yours to be judging those who are among you; As for those who are outside, God is their judge. So put away the evil man from among you.<sup>1Cor.5:12-13</sup>*

### 10 What accountability should there be for non-Church members?

There is little accountability for non-Church members other than advice and encouragement to live by the accepted rules of Christian conduct.

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*In my letter I said to you that you were not to keep company with those who go after the desires of the flesh; But I had not in mind the sinners who are outside the church, or those who have a desire for and take the property of others, or those who give worship to images; for it is not possible to keep away from such people without going out of the world completely: But the sense of my letter was that if a brother had the name of being one who went after the desires of the flesh, or had the desire for other people's property, or was in the way of using violent language, or being the worse for drink, or took by force what was not his, you might not keep company with such a one, or take food with him. For it is no business of mine to be judging those who are outside; but it is yours to be judging those who are among you; As for those who are outside, God is their judge. So put away the evil man from among you.*<sup>1Cor.5:9-13</sup>

However, these responsibilities and privileges are not irksome or tiresome but they should be a joy because we have so much in common.

*live a life worthy of the calling we have received. Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as we were called to one hope when we were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*<sup>Eph.4:1-6</sup>

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All the days of our life!

### Questions

1. In what way is God a Shepherd to us?
2. What does God protect us from?
3. How does God protect us?
4. What is spiritual rest?
5. How does God guide us?
6. What is the Biblical antidote to fear?
7. How can we have hope in the valley of the shadow of death?
8. What does it mean to have God's goodness and love to follow us all the days of our life?

### Comments

#### 1 In what way is God a Shepherd to us?

Like a Shepherd, God protects us and provided for us. He is with us and communes with us.

Geneva Translation prefaces Psalm 23 with:

*Because the Prophet had proved the great mercies of God at divers times, and in sundry manners, he gathereth a certain assurance, fully persuading himself that God will continue the very same goodness towards him forever.*

*Know that the LORD is God. It is he who made us, and we are his; we are his people, the sheep of his pasture.*Ps.100:3

*I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.* Jn.10:11

*I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me—just as the Father knows me and I know the Father—and I lay down my life for the sheep.*Jn.10:14-15

#### 2 What does God protect us from?

God protects us from our enemies.

*Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings.*1Pet.7-9

*For he must reign until he has put all his enemies under his feet. The last enemy to be destroyed is death. For he "has put everything under his feet."*1Cor.15:25-27

*So I counsel younger widows to marry, to have children, to manage their homes and to give the enemy no opportunity for slander. Some have in fact already turned away to follow Satan.*1Tim.5:14-15

#### 3 How does God protect us?

God protects us by being with us and by giving us wisdom to apply our knowledge of Him

**His rod and staff are his methods of protection and guidance.**

**"Rod"** is our protection. Rod is also translated "club," "tribe" and "sceptre" and stands for God's authority. *A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre [rod] will rise out of Israel.*<sup>Nu.24:17</sup> *Your throne, O God, will last for ever and ever; a sceptre of justice will be the sceptre of your kingdom.*<sup>Ps.45:6</sup>

**"Staff"** is God's guidance which is the Word of God. Staff comes from the word meaning "trust," "lean," "rest," "support."

*Woe to those who go down to Egypt for help, who rely on horses, who trust in the multitude of their chariots and in the great strength of their horsemen, but do not look to the Holy One of Israel, or seek help from the LORD.*<sup>Is.31:1</sup>

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight.*<sup>Pron.3:5-6</sup>

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God's promises are His Blessings. When the Israelites entered the Promised Land the mana stopped because the blessings started! When we accept the promises of God (note: promises are different from presumptions), we live in the blessings of God and we don't need to put our hope in a possible "Miracle"! Actually, all of God's provisions are miracles because a Miracle is when God does something that we can't do ourselves! To walk in God's Word, Will and Way is far better than to live our lives waiting and hoping that God may do something for us.

*Some time later, Jesus went up to Jerusalem for a feast of the Jews. Now there is in Jerusalem near the Sheep Gate a pool, which in Aramaic is called Bethesda and which is surrounded by five covered colonnades. Here a great number of disabled people used to lie—the blind, the lame, the paralyzed. One who was there had been an invalid for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and learned that he had been in this condition for a long time, he asked him, "Do you want to get well?" "Sir," the invalid replied, "I have no one to help me into the pool when the water is stirred. While I am trying to get in, someone else goes down ahead of me." Then Jesus said to him, "Get up! Pick up your mat and walk." At once the man was cured; he picked up his mat and walked.*Jn.5:1-9

We are Kingdom people, living by the principles of the New Covenant.

*Therefore, since we are receiving a kingdom that cannot be shaken, let us be thankful, and so worship God acceptably with reverence and awe, for our "God is a consuming fire."*<sup>Heb.12:28-29</sup>

### 4 What is spiritual rest?

Spiritual rest is rest for our spirits—having peace with God and a clear conscience

*This is what the LORD says: "Stand at the crossroads and look; ask for the ancient paths, ask where the good way is, and walk in it and you will find rest for your souls. But you said, 'We will not walk in it.'*Jer.6:16

*Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light."*Matt.11:29-30

### 5 How does God guide us?

**God guides us by the Holy Spirit and the Holy Scriptures**

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*Col.3:15-16

### 6 What is the Biblical antidote to fear?

**The antidote to fear is faith**

*There is no fear in love. But perfect love drives out fear, because fear has to do with punishment. The one who fears is not made perfect in love.*1Jn.4:18

*For you did not receive a spirit that makes you a slave again to fear, but you received the Spirit of sonship. And by him we cry, "Abba, Father." The Spirit himself testifies with our spirit that we are God's children.*Ro.8:15-16

*For God did not give us a spirit of timidity [fear], but a spirit of power, of love and of self-discipline.*2Tim.1:7

### 7 How can we have hope in the valley of the shadow of death?

Being aware that God is with us

Being aware that God goodness and mercy (love) is following us

*What person can live and not die? Who can escape the power of the grave?*Ps.89:48

*Good people pass away; the godly often die before their time. But no one seems to care or wonder why. No one seems to understand that God is protecting them from the evil to come.*Is.57:1.

*There's a proper time and way for people to do everything. That's true even though a person might be suffering greatly. No one knows what lies ahead. So who can tell a person what's going to happen? You can't stop the wind from blowing. And you don't have the power to decide when you will die.*Eccl.8:6-8

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*What is more impractical than working hard all your life and getting paid with nothing more than an expensively framed death certificate? Cf Rom.6:21*

*Everyone will die someday. Those who are still living should really think about that.Eccl.7:2*

*And just as it is destined that each person dies only once and after that comes judgment, so Christ died only once as a sacrifice to take away the sins of many people. He will come again but not to deal with our sins again. This time he will bring salvation to all those who are eagerly waiting for him.Heb.9:27-28*

### **8 What does it mean to have God's goodness and love to follow us all the days of our life?**

God's goodness and mercy (love) is His character and so that means that God is with us all the days of our life.

*God has said, "Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can man do to me?"Heb.13:5-6*

*And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.Matt.28:20*

To know that God is for us and is with us, makes us feel good and gives us a sense of well-being. It is impossible to trust God without a feel-good factor and a sense of well-being.

17/03/2021

## Pentecost—the beginning of the Church.

### Questions

If the Church began on Pentecost, what were the Believers called before then?

Is there a difference between the OT saints and the NT saints?

If Jesus is building His Church, why are there so many divisions and disputes in the Church?

What should Christian songs and hymns be about?

How important are the Psalms in the Church?

If the Church is the gathering of believers, should we allow unbelievers to take part in Church activities?

How can we deliberate at Church? (*Deliberate* means *discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration.*)

### Comments

#### If the Church began on Pentecost, what were the Believers called before then?

First of all, we need to remember that God only has ONE people

*There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*<sup>Eph.4:4-6</sup>

The OT Believers were called “*saints*” (or *faithful people*) and “*people of God*”.

*May your priests, LORD God, be clothed with salvation, may your faithful people rejoice in your goodness.*<sup>2Chron.6:41</sup>

*May your priests, O LORD God, be clothed with salvation, may your saints rejoice in your goodness.*<sup>2Chron.6:41</sup>

*For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God.*<sup>Heb.4:8-9</sup>

#### Is there a difference between the OT saints and the NT saints?

##### Yes and No!

**Yes, there is a difference** because they were not born-again—the new birth was introduced by Jesus:

*Jesus replied, “Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again.”*<sup>Jn.3:3</sup>

**No, there is no difference** because all are saved by faith not by the law or works

*Now then, why do you try to test God by putting on the necks of Gentiles a yoke that neither we nor our ancestors have been able to bear? No! We believe it is through the grace of our Lord Jesus that we are saved, just as they are.*<sup>Acts.15:10-11</sup>

*These were all commended for their faith, yet none of them received what had been promised, since God had planned something better for us so that **only together with us** would they be made perfect.*<sup>Heb.11:39-40</sup>

In Christ, all people groups are citizens of heaven because Jesus has become our Peace.

*Therefore, remember that formerly you who are Gentiles by birth and called “uncircumcised” by those who call themselves “the circumcision” (which is done in the body by human hands)—remember that at that time you were separate from Christ, excluded from citizenship in Israel and foreigners to the covenants of the promise, without hope and without God in the world. But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far away have been brought near by the blood of Christ. For he himself is our peace, who has made the two groups one and has destroyed the barrier, the dividing wall of hostility, by setting aside in his flesh the law with its commands and regulations. His purpose was to create in himself one new humanity out of the two, thus making peace, and in one body to reconcile both of them to God through the cross, by which he put to death their hostility. He came and preached peace to you who were far away and peace to those who were near. For through him we both have access to the Father by one Spirit.*<sup>Eph.2:11-18</sup>

#### If Jesus is building His Church, why are there so many divisions and disputes in the Church?

**Because we are human—with our own distinct personalities.**

The early Church had disagreements:

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*In those days the number of believers was growing. The Jews who followed Greek practices complained against the Jews who followed only Jewish practices. They said that the widows of men who followed Greek practices were not being taken care of. They weren't getting their fair share of food each day.*<sup>Acts.6:1</sup>

Even Paul and Barnabas had disagreements:

*Barnabas and Paul strongly disagreed with each other. So they went their separate ways.*<sup>Acts.15:39</sup>

Doctrinal divisions have been around from the beginning

*I appeal to you, brothers, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another so that there may be no divisions among you and that you may be perfectly united in mind and thought.*<sup>1Cor.1:10</sup>

*First, I hear that there are divisions among you when you meet as a church, and to some extent I believe it. But, of course, there must be divisions among you so that you who have God's approval will be recognized!*<sup>1Cor.11:18-19</sup>

### **We are not yet completely sanctified**

*For by one sacrifice he has **made perfect** forever those who **are being made holy**.*<sup>Heb.10:14</sup>

*You also, like living stones, **are being built** into a spiritual house to be a holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.*<sup>1Pet.2:5</sup>

### **We only know in part this side of eternity**

*Now we see but a poor reflection as in a mirror; then we shall see face to face. Now I know in part; then I shall know fully, even as I am fully known.*<sup>1Cor.13:12</sup>

### **We can disagree without being divisive. A divisive person is self-condemned:**

*But avoid foolish controversies and genealogies and arguments and quarrels about the law, because these are unprofitable and useless. Warn a divisive person once, and then warn him a second time. After that, have nothing to do with him. You may be sure that such a man is warped and sinful; he is self-condemned.*<sup>Tit.3:9-11</sup>

*I urge you, brothers, to watch out for those who cause divisions and put obstacles in your way that are contrary to the teaching you have learned. Keep away from them. For such people are not serving our Lord Christ, but their own appetites. By smooth talk and flattery they deceive the minds of naive people. Everyone has heard about your obedience, so I am full of joy over you; but I want you to be wise about what is good, and innocent about what is evil.*<sup>Rom.16:17-19</sup>

### **What should Christian songs and hymns be about?**

#### **God is a Trinity and all 3 Persons of the Godhead are to be revered in worship but Christian songs should be predominately about Christ.**

Christian worship extols what Jesus was, what Jesus is, what Jesus did, and what Jesus does. Jesus is the reason we worship and so we should direct our attention to the person and work of Jesus Christ! Like Isaac Watts (1674–1748) when we sing Psalms, we should make “*David speak like a Christian*”, i.e. we should interpret the OT in the light of the NT and focus on the New Covenant, on our new-birth, our redemption, the forgiveness of sins (rather than just atonement—which means “covering”). Jesus has already come, He has already died “once for all” .

*Or don't you know that all of us who were baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? We were therefore buried with him through baptism into death in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead through the glory of the Father, we too may live a new life. For if we have been united with him in a death like his, we will certainly also be united with him in a resurrection like his. For we know that our old self was crucified with him so that the body ruled by sin might be done away with, that we should no longer be slaves to sin—because anyone who has died has been set free from sin. Now if we died with Christ, we believe that we will also live with him. For we know that since Christ was raised from the dead, he cannot die again; death no longer has mastery over him. The death he died, he died to sin once for all; but the life he lives, he lives to God.*<sup>Rom.6:4-10</sup>

Our hymns and worship songs should be of a “*manly faith, where dogma, prayer, and praise are interwoven with much skill... the key-note of which is Hope.*”

#### **“An Open Letter to Praise Bands”:**

**1. If we, the congregation, can't hear ourselves, it's not worship.** Christian worship is not a concert. In a concert (a particular "form of performance"), we often expect to be overwhelmed by

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sound, particularly in certain styles of music. In a concert, we come to expect that weird sort of sensory deprivation that happens from sensory overload, when the pounding of the bass on our chest and the wash of music over the crowd leaves us with the rush of a certain aural vertigo. And there's nothing wrong with concerts! It's just that Christian worship is not a concert. Christian worship is a collective, communal, congregational practice--and the gathered sound and harmony of a congregation singing as one is integral to the practice of worship. It is a way of "performing" the reality that, in Christ, we are one body. But that requires that we actually be able to hear ourselves, and hear our sisters and brothers singing alongside us. When the amped sound of the praise band overwhelms congregational voices, we can't hear ourselves sing--so we lose that communal aspect of the congregation and are encouraged to effectively become "private," passive worshipers.

**2. If we, the congregation, can't sing along, it's not worship.** In other forms of musical performance, musicians and bands will want to improvise and "be creative," offering new renditions and exhibiting their virtuosity with all sorts of different trills and pauses and improvisations on the received tune. Again, that can be a delightful aspect of a concert, but in Christian worship it just means that we, the congregation, can't sing along. And so your virtuosity gives rise to our passivity; your creativity simply encourages our silence. And while you may be worshipping with your creativity, the same creativity actually shuts down congregational song.

Worship leaders, if you look out over the congregation and you see that we are not singing with you, something has gone wrong. Are you jamming alone up there for extended periods of time? Are you changing well-known melodies just enough to surprise us and make us hesitant to sing out, and/or adding flair that we can't follow? Are you choosing soloistic songs with complicated melodies rather than musically simple ones designed for group singing?

The best thing you can do is to consider carefully the purpose of your role as you make your decisions for each service. You have the noble position of enabling all of us to draw together as one before God to express our love and honour through a powerful medium. If you can keep that goal in mind—the goal of enabling the congregation to worship—and ruthlessly shed anything, however musically tempting, that doesn't advance that goal, we will thank you.

### **True Worship: Acknowledging Authority and Power**

*Martin Luther (taken from Treasury of Daily Prayer):*

[Worship] is not a function of the mouth but of the whole body. It is to bow the head, bend the body, fall on the knees, prostrate one's self, and so forth, and to do such things as a sign and acknowledgment of an authority and power greater than self. Just as people bow in one form or another in silence before secular princes and lords, and just as popes, bishops, abbots, and people generally, have themselves honoured and adored by bowing and kneeling, and so forth. Such outward adoration of the bending of the body is what the Scriptures really mean by worship. We read in the Scriptures that worship or adoration is rendered outwardly both to God and to kings without distinction, just as bowing and kneeling are still rendered outwardly both to God and to men.

From this understanding of outward worship you will also understand what Christ meant by true spiritual worship. It is the adoration or bowing of the heart, so that from the bottom of your heart you are to thereby show and confess yourself to be God's subordinate creature who owes all to Him. For from this you see that true worship can only arise from faith; it is faith's sublime activity with respect to God. For no one is able to offer such heartfelt confession, adoration, bending, and bowing of the heart (or whatever you want to call it) before God in his heart, unless he unwaveringly believes and holds God Almighty to be his Lord and Father, from whom he receives and will receive all good things, and through whom, without any merit or worthiness on his part, he is redeemed and preserved from all sins and evil.

### **How important are the Psalms in the Church?**



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Psalms are important because they are Scripture and Psalms were used by the early Church—BUT they are not NT (even though some Psalms foretell NT truths in prophesy). So we need to balance the majesty of the Psalms' description of God with the wonder of redemption in Christ.

***All Scripture is God-breathed*** and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting and training in righteousness, so that the servant of God may be thoroughly equipped for every good work.<sup>2Tim.3:16-17</sup>

But David and the other Psalmists of the OT only knew by experience the Old Covenant (they saw the New Covenant in their spirit and prophesied about it but they never actually experienced it).

*Jesus replied, "If I glorify myself, my glory means nothing. My Father, whom you claim as your God, is the one who glorifies me. Though you do not know him, I know him. If I said I did not, I would be a liar like you, but I do know him and obey his word. Your father Abraham rejoiced at the thought of seeing my day; he saw it and was glad." "You are not yet fifty years old," they said to him, "and you have seen Abraham!" "Very truly I tell you," Jesus answered, "before Abraham was born, I am!"*<sup>Jn.8:54-58</sup>

*Isaiah said this because he saw Jesus' glory\* and spoke about him.*<sup>Jn.12:41</sup>

*By faith Moses, when he had grown up, refused to be known as the son of Pharaoh's daughter. He chose to be mistreated along with the people of God rather than to enjoy the fleeting pleasures of sin. He regarded disgrace for the sake of Christ as of greater value than the treasures of Egypt, because he was looking ahead to his reward.*<sup>Heb.11:24-26</sup>

*But blessed are your eyes because they see, and your ears because they hear. For truly I tell you, many prophets and righteous people longed to see what you see but did not see it, and to hear what you hear but did not hear it.*<sup>Matt.16:16-17</sup>

**If the Church is the gathering of believers, should we allow unbelievers to take part in Church activities?**

**Non-Christians cannot worship God** because they do not have the Spirit of God.

*Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again... Very truly I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God unless they are born of water and the Spirit.*<sup>Jn.3:3-5</sup>

*Yet a time is coming and has now come when the true worshipers will worship the Father in the Spirit and in truth, for they are the kind of worshipers the Father seeks. God is spirit, and his worshipers must worship in the Spirit and in truth.*<sup>Jn.4:23-24</sup>

*The person without the Spirit does not accept the things that come from the Spirit of God but considers them foolishness, and cannot understand them because they are discerned only through the Spirit.*<sup>1Cor.2:14</sup>

**However, non-Christians can praise God**—they can say good words about Him even if they don't believe in Him

*The centurion, seeing what had happened, praised God and said, "Surely this was a righteous man."*<sup>Lk.23:47</sup>

We should discern but we are not called to judge

*Watch out for false prophets. They come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ferocious wolves. By their fruit you will recognize them.*<sup>Matt.7:15-16</sup>

**Do not judge, and you will not be judged.**<sup>Lk.6:37</sup>

However, we will judge after the resurrection

*Do you not know that we will judge angels?*<sup>1Cor.6:3</sup>

**Actually we don't really know who is a genuine Christian, who is an almost Christian or who is a pretend Christian!**

*The owner's servants came to him and said, 'Sir, didn't you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?' 'An enemy did this,' he replied. The servants asked him, 'Do you want us to go and pull them up?' 'No,' he answered, 'because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.'*<sup>Matt.13:27-30</sup>

God's Word is not bound or limited and so I have no problem with asking people who are borderline Believers or even un-believers to participate in public worship services but I would want people without accepted Christian credential to take a lead in public Worship.

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*But God's word is not chained.*<sup>2Tim.2:9</sup>

**How can we deliberate at Church?** (*Deliberate means discourse or debate with action taken after careful consideration.*)

Our Sunday services are not set up for interactive deliberations but we can still deliberate by listening and deciding to change by putting God's Word into practice. Pre-lockdown we had refreshments afterwards to facilitate interactive fellowship and discussions. Our Bible Studies are set up for interactive deliberations, where we can discuss, question and share together.

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**Don't just sit there—do something!**

**Questions**

1. What do you think Mary and Martha got right and what did they get wrong? (*Lk.10:39-42*)
2. How can we put the “*Selah*” (from the Psalms) into practice?
3. Do we have to understand something to accept it as true? (give examples)
4. What Christian truths do you reflect on most? (give examples)
5. How can we give ourself a spiritual check-up? (*2Cor.13:5*)
6. What should we be doing as we wait on God and wait for Jesus to return?

**Comments**

**What do you think Mary and Martha got right and what did they get wrong? (*Lk.10:39-42*)**

Mary was right to sit at Jesus’ feet and Martha was right to prepare the hospitality. But Martha was wrong not to see her work as worship. Maybe Mary should have been more thoughtful and helped her sister as well as enjoying Jesus’ fellowship. They both got it right and both got it wrong!

We should be both practical and spiritual. We need food and someone has to prepare it but for the Believer, ALL work is spiritual. However, we need to spend time appreciating God’s presence.

*To be in Your Presence, to sit at Your feet where Your love surrounds me and makes me complete:*

*This is my desire O Lord, this is my desire. This is my desire O Lord, this is my desire.*

*I'll rest in Your Presence, not rushing away. I'll cherish each moment, here I will stay:*

*You are my Desire O Lord, You are my Desire...*

If we fail to grasp the awesomeness of God’s Presence, we need to

*Examine ourselves to see whether we are still in the Christian faith. Test yourselves! Don't you recognise that you are people in whom Jesus Christ lives*

A song we used to sing regularly

*Just one glimpse of His glory Just one touch of His hands*

*And I will never be the same, cause His spirit keeps flowing through my veins.*

*We sing glory to the Father, glory to the Son. Holy Spirit fill us up till we are one.*

*Like a fire burn inside us, consuming every pain.*

*And as we lift our voice (hands) in worship, we will never be the same.*

**How can we put the “*Selah*” (from the Psalms) into practice?**

“*Selah*” is meditating on what we have read. We need to have a good general understanding of God’s Word but we should also reflect on individual portions of God’s Word—bite-sized meals that are full of spiritual nutrition.

*“Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the law my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the LORD your God will be with you wherever you go.”<sup>Josh.1:7-9</sup>*

*Blessed is the one who does not walk in step with the wicked or stand in the way that sinners take or sit in the company of mockers, but whose delight is in the law of the LORD, and who meditates on his law day and night. That person is like a tree planted by streams of water, which yields its fruit in season and whose leaf does not wither—whatever they do prospers.<sup>Ps.1:1-3</sup>*

*I will remember the deeds of the LORD; yes, I will remember your miracles of long ago. I will consider all your works and meditate on all your mighty deeds.” Your ways, God, are holy. What god is as great as our God? You are the God who performs miracles; you display your power among the peoples.<sup>Ps.77:11-14</sup>*

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*Great is the LORD and most worthy of praise; his greatness no one can fathom. One generation commends your works to another; they tell of your mighty acts. They speak of the glorious splendour of your majesty—and I will meditate on your wonderful works. They tell of the power of your awesome works—and I will proclaim your great deeds. They celebrate your abundant goodness and joyfully sing of your righteousness. The LORD is gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and rich in love. The LORD is good to all; he has compassion on all he has made.*<sup>Ps.145:3-9</sup>

**Do we have to understand something to accept it as true? (give examples)**

**No!** I understand very little of subjects such as electricity, www, medicine, types of food, disease, etc., but I know them to be true and I utilise that knowledge for my benefit.

I understand very little of God and who He really is—but what He has recorded in the Bible is clear enough for me to be able to accept as true and to utilise it for my benefit:

*If you declare with your mouth, “Jesus is Lord,” and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, “Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame.”*<sup>Rom.10:9-11</sup>

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.*<sup>2Tim.2:8</sup>

*yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*<sup>1Cor.8:6</sup>

*He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*<sup>1Tim.3:16</sup>

**What Christian truths do you reflect on most? (give examples)**

**Salvation**

*I waited patiently for the LORD; he inclined to me and heard my cry. He drew me up from the pit of destruction, out of the miry bog, and set my feet upon a rock, making my steps secure. He put a new song in my mouth, a song of praise to our God.*<sup>Ps.40:1-3</sup>

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve.*<sup>1Cor.15:3-5</sup>

**God’s character**

*Praise the LORD, my soul; all my inmost being, praise his holy name. Praise the LORD, my soul, and forget not all his benefits—who forgives all your sins and heals all your diseases, who redeems your life from the pit and crowns you with love and compassion, who satisfies your desires with good things so that your youth is renewed like the eagle’s. The LORD works righteousness and justice for all the oppressed. He made known his ways to Moses, his deeds to the people of Israel: The LORD is compassionate and gracious, slow to anger, abounding in love. He will not always accuse, nor will he harbour his anger forever; he does not treat us as our sins deserve or repay us according to our iniquities. For as high as the heavens are above the earth, so great is his love for those who fear him; as far as the east is from the west, so far has he removed our transgressions from us.*<sup>Ps.103:1-12</sup>

**God’s creation:**

*O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth! Your glory is sung above the heavens... When I look at your heavens, the creation of your fingers, the moon and the stars that you have set in place—what is a mortal that you remember him our the Son of Man that you take care of him? You have made him a little lower than yourself. You have crowned him with glory and honour. You have made him rule what your hands created. You have put everything under his control: all the sheep and cattle, the wild animals, the birds, the fish, whatever swims in the currents of the seas. O LORD, our Lord, how majestic is your name throughout the earth!*<sup>Ps.8</sup>

*Creation was subjected to frustration but not by its own choice. The one who subjected it to frustration did so in the hope that it would also be set free from slavery to decay in order to share the glorious freedom that the children of God will have. We know that all creation has been groaning with the pains of childbirth up to the present time. However, not only creation groans. We, who have the Spirit as the first of God’s gifts, also groan inwardly. We groan as we eagerly wait for our adoption, the freeing of our bodies from sin. We were saved with this hope in mind.*<sup>Rom.8:21-24</sup>

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### How can we give yourself a spiritual check-up? (2Cor.13:5)

Regularly ask yourself these questions:

*Do I enjoy God, His Word and His people?*

*Do I have the assurance that God is good, His Word is true and it works in my life?*

### Occasionally read through the Westminster Catechism

The Westminster Shorter Catechism consists of 107 Q&A. I was completed in 1647 by the Westminster Assembly and continues to serve as part of the doctrinal standards of many Presbyterian churches.

#### Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, and to enjoy him for ever.

*1 Cor. 10:31; Rom. 11:36; Ps. 73:25-28.*

#### Q. 2. What rule hath God given to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him?

A. The Word of God, which is contained in the Scriptures of the Old and New Testaments, is the only rule to direct us how we may glorify and enjoy him.

*2 Tim. 3:16; Eph. 2:20; 1 John 1:3-4.*

#### Q. 3. What do the Scriptures principally teach?

A. The Scriptures principally teach, what man is to believe concerning God, and what duty God requires of man.

*2 Tim. 1:13; 2 Tim. 3:16.*

#### Q. 4. What is God?

A. God is a Spirit, infinite, eternal, and unchangeable, in his being, wisdom, power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth.

*John 4:24; Job 11:7-9; Ps. 90:2; Jas. 1:17; Ex. 3:14; Ps. 147:5; Rev. 4:8; 15:4; Ex. 34:6-7.*

#### Q. 5. Are there more Gods than one?

A. There is but one only, the living and true God.

*Deut. 6:4; Jer. 10:10.*

#### Q. 6. How many persons are there in the Godhead?

A. There are three persons in the Godhead; the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost; and these three are one God, the same in substance, equal in power and glory.

*1 John 5:7; Matt. 28:19.*

#### Q. 7. What are the decrees of God?

A. The decrees of God are, his eternal purpose, according to the counsel of his will, whereby, for his own glory, he hath foreordained whatsoever comes to pass.

*Eph. 1:4,11; Rom. 9:22-23.*

#### Q. 8. How doth God execute his decrees?

A. God executeth his decrees in the works of creation and providence.

*Ps. 148:8; Isa. 40:26; Dan. 4:35; Acts 4:24-28, Rev. 4:11*

#### Q. 9. What is the work of creation?

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A. The work of creation is, God's making all things of nothing, by the word of his power, in the space of six days, and all very good.

*Gen. 1; Heb. 11:3.*

### **Q. 10. How did God create man?**

A. God created man male and female, after his own image, in knowledge, righteousness, and holiness, with dominion over the creatures.

*Gen. 1:26-28; Col. 3:10; Eph. 4:24.*

### **Q. 11. What are God's works of providence?**

A. God's works of providence are, his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures, and all their actions.

*Ps. 145:17; Ps. 104:24; Isa. 28:29; Heb. 1:3; Ps. 103:19; Matt. 10:29-31.*

### **What should we be doing as we wait on God and for Jesus to return?**

#### **Preaching, teaching, testifying anywhere and everywhere in the world**

*He said to them, "Go into all the world and preach the gospel to all creation."<sup>Mk.16:15</sup>*

*All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. Therefore go and make disciples of all nations...<sup>Matt.28:18-19</sup>*

#### **Welcoming other Believers and serving God**

*The believers themselves report the kind of welcome you gave us. They tell about how you turned away from statues of gods to serve the living and true God. They tell about how you are waiting for his Son to come from heaven. God raised him from the dead. He is Jesus. He saves us from God's anger, and his anger is sure to come.<sup>1Thess.1:9-10</sup>*

#### **Staying in fellowship with God, His Word and His people**

*They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer. Everyone was filled with awe at the many wonders and signs performed by the apostles. All the believers were together and had everything in common. They sold property and possessions to give to anyone who had need. Every day they continued to meet together in the temple courts. They broke bread in their homes and ate together with glad and sincere hearts, praising God and enjoying the favour of all the people. And the Lord added to their number daily those who were being saved.<sup>Acts.2:42-47</sup>*

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## Is your Cave a place of Custody or a Cathedral?

### Questions

What do you consider to be the basic truths of the Truth (our salvation)?

Which activities at our Church are the most effective in refreshing your mind about the truths of our faith?

What does it mean to *take refuge in the shadow of God's wings*.<sup>Ps.57.1?</sup>

What does *my heart is steadfast*<sup>Ps.57:7</sup> mean?

Is there a difference between a moan and a groan?

Define "praise".

What does the Bible say about praise?

### Comments

#### **What do you consider to be the basic truths of the Truth (our salvation)?**

The traditional Creeds (from Latin *credo* meaning *I believe*) were compiled to cover the basics truths of our salvation. The Apostles' Creed is the earliest of the Christian Creeds (dating back to the C2<sup>nd</sup>) and is still widely used today by a number of Christian denominations of Western tradition including the Roman Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Presbyterian, Moravian, Methodist and Congregational Churches. When the Apostles' Creed was drawn up, the chief enemy was Gnosticism, which denied that Jesus was truly Man and the emphases of the Apostles' Creed reflect this.

#### **The Apostles' Creed:**

1. I believe in God the Father almighty, creator of heaven and earth.
2. I believe in Jesus Christ, his only Son, our Lord.
3. He was conceived by the power of the Holy Spirit and born of the Virgin Mary.
4. Under Pontius Pilate, He was crucified, died, and was buried.
5. He descended to the dead. On the third day he rose again.
6. He ascended into heaven and is seated at the right hand of the Father.
7. He will come again to judge the living and the dead.
8. I believe in the Holy Spirit,
9. the holy Catholic Church, the communion of saints,
10. the forgiveness of sins,
11. the resurrection of the body,
12. and the life everlasting.

#### **Some Biblical "Creeds" that describe the basic truths of the Christian Faith**

*Remember Jesus Christ, raised from the dead, descended from David. This is my gospel.*<sup>2Tim.2:8</sup>

*yet for us there is but one God, the Father, from whom all things came and for whom we live; and there is but one Lord, Jesus Christ, through whom all things came and through whom we live.*<sup>1Cor.8:6</sup>

*For what I received I passed on to you as of first importance: that Christ died for our sins according to the Scriptures, that he was buried, that he was raised on the third day according to the Scriptures, and that he appeared to Cephas, and then to the Twelve. After that, he appeared to more than five hundred of the brothers and sisters at the same time, most of whom are still living, though some have fallen asleep. Then he appeared to James, then to all the apostles, and last of all he appeared to me also, as to one abnormally born.*<sup>1Cor.15:3-8</sup>

*He appeared in the flesh, was vindicated by the Spirit, was seen by angels, was preached among the nations, was believed on in the world, was taken up in glory.*<sup>1Tim.3:16</sup>

*If you declare with your mouth, "Jesus is Lord," and believe in your heart that God raised him from the dead, you will be saved. For it is with your heart that you believe and are justified, and it is with your mouth that you profess your faith and are saved. As Scripture says, "Anyone who believes in him will never be put to shame."*<sup>Rom.10:9-11</sup>

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**Which activities at our Church are the most effective in refreshing your mind about the truths of our faith?**

Reading the Psalms together, watching the Visual Bible, Bible Study using questions about the Sermon

**What does it mean to “take refuge in the shadow of God’s wings.”<sup>Ps.57:1?</sup>**

The phrase is used several times in Scripture

*How priceless is your unfailing love, O God! People take refuge in the shadow of your wings<sup>Ps.36:7</sup>*

*Have mercy on me, my God, have mercy on me, for in you I take refuge. I will take refuge in the shadow of your wings until the disaster has passed.<sup>Ps.57:1-2</sup>*

*Hear my cry, O God; listen to my prayer. From the ends of the earth I call to you, I call as my heart grows faint; lead me to the rock that is higher than I. For you have been my refuge, a strong tower against the foe. I long to dwell in your tent forever and take refuge in the shelter of your wings.<sup>Ps.61:1-4</sup>*

*May the LORD repay you for what you have done. May you be richly rewarded by the LORD, the God of Israel, under whose wings you have come to take refuge.<sup>Ruth.2:12</sup>*

There are 2 ways of looking at this.

**A mother hen protecting her chicks**

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.<sup>Matt.23:37</sup>*

*Jerusalem, Jerusalem, you who kill the prophets and stone those sent to you, how often I have longed to gather your children together, as a hen gathers her chicks under her wings, and you were not willing.<sup>Lk.13:34</sup>*

*The owl will nest there and lay eggs, she will hatch them, and care for her young under the shadow of her wings.<sup>Is.34:15</sup>*

**The Ark of the Covenant**

God said He would meet with Moses under the wings of the cherubim on the cover (lit. atonement) of the Ark.

*Have them make a chest out of acacia wood. Make it three feet nine inches long and two feet three inches wide and high. Cover it inside and outside with pure gold. Put a strip of gold around it... Make its cover out of pure gold. The cover is the place where sin will be paid for. Make it three feet nine inches long and two feet three inches wide. Make two cherubim out of hammered gold at the ends of the cover. Put one cherub on each end of it. Make the cherubim as part of the cover itself. The cherubim must have their wings spread up over the cover. The cherubim must face each other and look toward the cover. Place the cover on top of the chest. I will give you the tablets of the covenant. Put them into the chest. The chest is the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. I will meet with you above the cover between the two cherubim that are over the ark. There I will give you all of my commands for the people of Israel.<sup>Ex.25:10-22</sup>*

*The cherubim were above the ark. God showed his glory there. The cherubim spread their wings over the place where sin was paid for. But we can't deal with those things more completely now.<sup>Heb.9:5</sup>*

**It was under these wings that sin was paid for:**

*Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him. He got the tablets of the covenant. He placed them in the ark. He put the poles through its rings. And he put the cover on it. The cover was the place where sin is paid for. Moses brought the ark into the holy tent. He hung the curtain to screen the ark where the tablets of the covenant are kept. Moses did it as the LORD had commanded him.<sup>Ex.40:19-21</sup>*

The Ark disappeared during the time of the Exile under Nebuchadnezzar and was never seen again (which has led to lots of speculation and films). That Ark was integral to the Old Covenant and has no place in the New Covenant:

*“Then people will not talk about the ark of the covenant of the LORD anymore. It will never enter their minds. They will not remember it. The ark will not be missed. And another one will not be made. At that time they will call Jerusalem The Throne of the LORD. All of the nations will gather together there. They will go there to honour me. They will no longer do what their stubborn and evil hearts want them to do.<sup>Jer.3:16-17</sup>*



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Anyway that Ark was only a copy—the real place where sin was paid for and where God showed His glory is in God's temple in heaven

*Then God's temple in heaven was opened. Inside it the wooden chest called the ark of his covenant could be seen. There were flashes of lightning, rumblings and thunder, an earthquake and a great hailstorm.*<sup>Rev.11:19</sup>

### **What does “my heart is steadfast”<sup>Ps.57:7</sup> mean?**

**“Steadfast” means:** Loyal, faithful, committed, devoted, dedicated, dependable, reliable, steady, true, constant, staunch, trusty, firm, determined, resolute, stalwart, stout, relentless, implacable, single-minded, unchanging, unwavering, unhesitating, unfaltering, unswerving, unyielding, unflinching, inflexible, uncompromising.

When we say that our heart is steadfast, we are saying that we are totally committed to following Jesus

*Then he said to them all: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross daily and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will save it. What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, and yet lose or forfeit their very self? Whoever is ashamed of me and my words, the Son of Man will be ashamed of them when he comes in his glory and in the glory of the Father and of the holy angels... No one who puts a hand to the plough and looks back is fit for service in the kingdom of God.”*<sup>Lk.9:23-26;62</sup>

*Then Jesus said to his disciples, “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul? For the Son of Man is going to come in his Father's glory with his angels, and then he will reward each person according to what they have done.”*<sup>Matt.16:24-26</sup>

### **Is there a difference between a moan and a groan?**

**Yes and no! They may sound the same but they can be quite different.**

If a moan is a grumble then it is a denial of God's authority but if a moan is groan then it is an expression of discomfort or pain

#### **Grumbling and moaning**

*We should not test the Lord, as some of them did—and were killed by snakes. And do not grumble, as some of them did—and were killed by the destroying angel. These things happened to them as examples and were written down as warnings for us, on whom the fulfilment of the ages has come. So, if you think you are standing firm, be careful that you don't fall! No temptation has seized you except what is common to man. And God is faithful; he will not let you be tempted beyond what you can bear. But when you are tempted, he will also provide a way out so that you can stand up under it.*<sup>1Cor.10:9-13</sup>

*You too, be patient and stand firm, because the Lord's coming is near. Don't grumble against one another, brothers and sisters, or you will be judged. The Judge is standing at the door!*<sup>Jas.5:8-9</sup>

*At this the Jews began to grumble about him because he said, “I am the bread that came down from heaven.” They said, “Is this not Jesus, the son of Joseph, whose father and mother we know? How can he now say, ‘I came down from heaven’? Stop grumbling among yourselves,” Jesus answered. No one can come to me unless the Father who sent me draws him, and I will raise him up at the last day. It is written in the Prophets: ‘They will all be taught by God.’ Everyone who listens to the Father and learns from him comes to me.”*<sup>Jn.6:41-45</sup>

#### **Groaning and moaning**

*Like the blind we grope along the wall, feeling our way like people without eyes. At midday we stumble as if it were twilight; among the strong, we are like the dead. We all growl like bears; we moan mournfully like doves. We look for justice, but find none; for deliverance, but it is far away.*<sup>Is.59:10-11</sup>

*All our days pass away under your wrath; we finish our years with a moan. Our days may come to seventy years, or eighty, if our strength endures; yet the best of them are but trouble and sorrow, for they quickly pass, and we fly away.*<sup>Ps.90:9-10</sup>

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*Because of this I will weep and wail; I will go about barefoot and naked. I will howl like a jackal and moan like an owl. For Samaria's plague is incurable; it has spread to Judah. It has reached the very gate of my people, even to Jerusalem itself.*<sup>Micah.1:8-9</sup>

*Abandon your towns and dwell among the rocks, you who live in Moab. Be like a dove that makes its nest at the mouth of a cave. "We have heard of Moab's pride—how great is her arrogance!—of her insolence, her pride, her conceit and the haughtiness of her heart. I know her insolence but it is futile," declares the LORD, "and her boasts accomplish nothing. Therefore I wail over Moab, for all Moab I cry out, I moan for the people of Kir Hareseth. I weep for you, as Jazer weeps, you vines of Sibmah."*<sup>Jer.48:28-32</sup>

*For we know that all creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. And we believers also groan, even though we have the Holy Spirit within us as a foretaste of future glory, for we long for our bodies to be released from sin and suffering. We, too, wait with eager hope for the day when God will give us our full rights as his adopted children, including the new bodies he has promised us. We were given this hope when we were saved. (If we already have something, we don't need to hope for it. But if we look forward to something we don't yet have, we must wait patiently and confidently.) And the Holy Spirit helps us in our weakness.*<sup>Rom.8:22-26</sup>

### **Define "praise".**

To understand the meanings of some words used to describe praise will help us to know how to praise. Hebrew has more than 37 different words & derivatives for praise **but they all basically mean to say good things about someone/something. Eulogy** (Gk: good word) **Benediction** (Latin: good word). In OT praise is always active & demonstrative.

**Hallel:** used approx. 160 times in OT. To shine, boast, celebrate, commend (especially beauty), sing, be clear, laud; implies unashamed use of voice in demonstration of what you think of God. (Complete abandonment of self because we are in love (with God) as in marriage; head over heels in love) Ps.22:23

**Tehillah:** used approx. 57 times. To sing or laud; derived from hallal & usually means the singing of Halls. It is perceived as involving music, especially singing. It is the praise that God inhabits, implying that God has responded & is enthroned in the midst of tehillah praise Ps.22:3 & 25

**Yadah:** (Judah) used approx. 120 times in OT. Thankful expression of praise from root word meaning to throw out the hand; hence to lift up hands. (hands are an extension of our personalities.) [God loves it, flesh hates it and devil is devastated by it] Ps.9:1 Ps.52:9

**Barak:** used approx. 330 times in OT. To kneel bless salute praise. Ps.96:2 Of all the words for praise, this is the only one that infers some kind of silence. To praise God (barak) is to enthrone Him as Lord - to kneel before Him (Ps.95:6 kneel); thus when He no longer has pre-eminence in our lives, we praise (barak) someone or something else—this is called a curse (see Job 1:5 where "barak" is translated "curse").

**Zamar:** 40 times: to make music, lit to pluck the strings & sing praises accompanied by that music. (Gk Psalms) Ps.47:7

**Towdah:** used approx. 30 times. Thanksgiving. A sacrifice of praise or thanks before receiving the manifestation - a total agreement with the Word. It is an act of faith beyond which God moves to bring deliverance. Also implies lifting of hands; in Leviticus it is used in connection with offering of thanksgiving which has already been examined for purity. (Lev.7:12/13/15 Lev.22:29) Ps.50:23

**Shabach:** approx. 7 times. To commend, triumph, glory, shout Ps.63:3

### **What does the Bible say about praise?**

God is worthy of praise Ps.18:3; Ps.145:3; 2Sam.22:4

God creates praise Is.57:18-19

God has ordained praise Ps.8:1-2

God is our praise Deut.10:21

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God is the theme of our praise Ps.22:25  
God formed us to praise Him Is.43:21  
God is enthroned on our praises Ps.22:3  
God the Father is to be praised Luke10:21;Eph.1:3  
Jesus is to be praised 2Cor.11:31  
Praise is glorious Ps.66:2  
Praise is good Ps.92:1  
Praise honours God Ps.50:23  
Praise is for everyone Ps.103:21; Ps.117:1  
Praise is for everywhere Ps.113:3  
Praise is forever Ps.52:9; Ps.71:6; Rom.1:25; Rom.9:5  
Praise is a garment we put on Is.61:3  
Praise is for happy people Jas.5:13  
Praise is passionate Ps.9:1; Ps.86:12; Ps.138:1  
Praise is personal Ps.42:5/11; Ps.43:5  
Praise is corporate Ps.22:22; Ps.44:8; Ps.67:3  
Praise is a sacrifice Heb.13:15  
Praise is a free-will offering Ps.54:6; Ps.119:108  
Praise is fitting Ps.33:1; Ps.147:1  
Praise prepares a way for God to show His salvation Ps.50:23  
Praise defeats the enemy Ps.149:6-9; 2Chron.20:21-22  
Praise is audible Ps.66:8; Jer.31:7;  
Praise is loud Ps.26:7; Luke 17:15 Luke 19:37  
Praise is to be always on our lips Heb.13:15; Ps.34:1  
Praise can be spoken Lk.2:28  
Praise can be in tongues Acts10:46  
Praise can be sung Ps.9:2; 1Chron.16:9; Neh.12:46  
Praise can be with music Ps.33:2; Ps.40:3; Ps.150:3  
Praise can be with dancing Ps.149:3;Ps.150:4  
Praise awaits God in Zion Ps.65:1

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What kind of people ought you to be? <sup>2Pet.3:11</sup>

### Questions

What does “You ought to live holy and godly lives”<sup>2Pet.3:11</sup> mean to you?

What does “God anointed Jesus with the oil of joy”<sup>Heb.1:8-9</sup> mean?

How can we have the same attitude as Jesus<sup>Phil.2:5</sup>?

Find an example from Scripture where God’s grace is greater than the law.

What does it mean to you to “be blessed”?

God has already given us everything we need for life and godliness,<sup>2Pet.1:3</sup> so why do we have to “make every effort” to add to it<sup>2Pet.1:5</sup>?

What can we do to “make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him”?<sup>2Pet.3:11</sup>

### Comments

What does “You ought to live holy and godly lives”<sup>2Pet.3:11</sup> mean to you?

God is Spirit and we are human (flesh). God made us flesh and expects us to look after the flesh (the natural part of our life—our soul and our body) and keep it holy.

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ. The one who calls you is faithful, and he will do it.*<sup>1Thess.5:23-24</sup>

Our spiritual part (our spirit) is already holy

*For you have been born again, not of perishable seed, but of imperishable [incorruptible], through the living and enduring word of God.*<sup>1Pet.1:23</sup>

*Whoever is united with the Lord is one with him in spirit.*<sup>1Cor.6:17</sup>

We must make our spirit dominate the rest of us

*Why, my soul, are you downcast? Why so disturbed within me? Put your hope in God, for I will yet praise him, my Saviour and my God.*<sup>Psa.45:5</sup>

**God told Adam to work the Garden and care for it.**

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work [cultivate] it and take care of it.*<sup>Gen.2:15</sup>

The word “work” is also translated “worship”:

*Worship the LORD your God, and his blessing will be on your food and water. I will take away sickness from among you,*<sup>Ex.23:5</sup>

**This shows that our daily work is not in conflict with our Christian walk. Work is “holy” and wholesome.**

*In the name of the Lord Jesus Christ, we command you, brothers and sisters, to keep away from every believer who is idle and disruptive and does not live according to the teaching\* you received from us. For you yourselves know how you ought to follow our example. We were not idle when we were with you, nor did we eat anyone's food without paying for it. On the contrary, we worked night and day, labouring and toiling so that we would not be a burden to any of you. We did this, not because we do not have the right to such help, but in order to offer ourselves as a model for you to imitate. For even when we were with you, we gave you this rule: “The one who is unwilling to work shall not eat.”<sup>2Thess.3:6-10</sup>*

**(Obviously we should look after those who can’t look after themselves such as “widows and orphans” i.e. those who are vulnerable and in distress**

*Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress and to keep oneself from being polluted by the world.*<sup>Jas.1:27</sup>

*For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me.’ Then the righteous will answer him, ‘Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you?’*

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*When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' The King will reply, 'Truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me.'*<sup>1Matt.25:35-40</sup>

**What does “God anointed Jesus with the oil of joy”<sup>Heb.1:8-9</sup> mean?**

**It means that Jesus was happy, contented and a joy to be with—and it was His ministry to make others joyful too** (as He preached in Cana.<sup>Lk.4:14-18</sup>)

*The Spirit of the Sovereign LORD is on me, because the LORD has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to bind up the broken-hearted, to proclaim freedom for the captives and release from darkness for the prisoners, to proclaim the year of the LORD's favour and the day of vengeance of our God, to comfort all who mourn, and provide for those who grieve in Zion—to bestow on them a crown of beauty instead of ashes, the oil of joy instead of mourning, and a garment of praise instead of a spirit of despair. They will be called oaks of righteousness, a planting of the LORD for the display of his splendour.*<sup>Is.61:1-3</sup>

*Happy (blessed) are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven. Happy (blessed) are those who mourn, for they will be comforted. Happy (blessed) are the meek, for they will inherit the earth. Happy (blessed) are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they will be filled.*<sup>Matt.5:3-5</sup>

**Jesus was very sociable and enjoyed his food and drink**

*For John the Baptist came neither eating bread nor drinking wine, and you say, 'He has a demon.' The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and you say, 'Here is a glutton and a drunkard, a friend of tax collectors and sinners.' But wisdom is proved right by all her children.*<sup>1Lk.7:33-35</sup>

**However, Jesus was never a glutton or a drunkard—that was people criticising Jesus and justifying their rejection of Him.**

*If someone has a stubborn and rebellious son who does not obey his father and mother and will not listen to them when they discipline him, his father and mother shall take hold of him and bring him to the elders at the gate of his town. They shall say to the elders, “This son of ours is stubborn and rebellious. He will not obey us. He is a glutton and a drunkard.” Then all the men of his town are to stone him to death. You must purge the evil from among you. All Israel will hear of it and be afraid.*<sup>Deut.21:18-21</sup>

**Gluttony and drunkenness are not compatible with the Christian faith**

*But now I am writing you that you must not associate with anyone who calls himself a brother but is sexually immoral or greedy, an idolater or a slanderer, a drunkard or a swindler. With such a man do not even eat. What business is it of mine to judge those outside the church? Are you not to judge those inside?*<sup>1Cor.5:11-12</sup>

*Do you not know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of God? Do not be deceived: Neither the sexually immoral nor idolaters nor adulterers nor male prostitutes nor homosexual offenders nor thieves nor the greedy nor drunkards nor slanderers nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. And that is what some of you were. But you were washed, you were sanctified, you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ and by the Spirit of our God.*<sup>1Cor.6:9-11</sup>

*Some of you say, “Everything is permitted for me.” But not everything is good for me. Again some of you say, “Everything is permitted for me.” But I will not be controlled by anything. Some of you say, “Food is for the stomach. And the stomach is for food.” But God will destroy both of them. The body is not meant for sexual sins. The body is meant for the Lord. And the Lord is meant for the body. By his power God raised the Lord from the dead. He will also raise us up. Don't you know that your bodies belong to the body of Christ?*<sup>1Cor.6:12-15</sup>

**How can we have the same attitude as Jesus<sup>Phil.2:5</sup>?**

**Christians are born from above and so they have the same spiritual nature as Jesus—**

*Do not be like them, for your Father knows what you need before you ask him. This, then, is how you should pray: Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name...*<sup>Matt.6:8-9</sup>

*Yet to all who received him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God—children born not of natural descent, nor of human decision or a husband's will, but born of God.*<sup>Jn.1:12-13</sup>

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**However we need to mature in our personality**—our thinking and attitude so the Fruit of the Spirit (the personality of Jesus) is displayed

*For this very reason, make every effort to add to your faith goodness; and to goodness, knowledge; and to knowledge, self-control; and to self-control, perseverance; and to perseverance, godliness; and to godliness, mutual affection; and to mutual affection, love. For if you possess these qualities in increasing measure, they will keep you from being ineffective and unproductive in your knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>2Pet.1:5-8</sup>

*The acts of the flesh are obvious: sexual immorality, impurity and debauchery; idolatry and witchcraft; hatred, discord, jealousy, fits of rage, selfish ambition, dissensions, factions and envy; drunkenness, orgies, and the like. I warn you, as I did before, that those who live like this will not inherit the kingdom of God. But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, forbearance, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control. Against such things there is no law. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. Since we live by the Spirit, let us keep in step with the Spirit.*<sup>Gal.5:19-25</sup>

*Therefore, as God's chosen people, holy and dearly loved, clothe yourselves with compassion, kindness, humility, gentleness and patience. Bear with each other and forgive whatever grievances you may have against one another. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity. Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God.*<sup>Col.3:12-16</sup>

**Find an example from Scripture where God's grace is greater than the law.**

*The law was added so that the trespass might increase. But where sin increased, grace increased all the more, so that, just as sin reigned in death, so also grace might reign through righteousness to bring eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord.*<sup>Rom.5:20-21</sup>

**Paul**

*For I am the least of the apostles and do not even deserve to be called an apostle, because I persecuted the church of God. But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect.*<sup>1Cor.15:9-10</sup>

**David**

Moabites were not allowed under the law to even enter the Assembly of God—down to the 10<sup>th</sup> generation but King David was 4<sup>th</sup> generation Moabite!!

*I see him, but not now; I behold him, but not near. A star will come out of Jacob; a sceptre will rise out of Israel. He will crush the foreheads of Moab, the skulls of all the sons of Sheth.*<sup>Nu.24:17</sup>

*No Ammonite or Moabite or any of his descendants may enter the assembly of the LORD, even down to the tenth generation. For they did not come to meet you with bread and water on your way when you came out of Egypt, and they hired Balaam... to pronounce a curse on you. However, the LORD your God would not listen to Balaam but turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the LORD your God loves you. Do not seek a treaty of friendship with them as long as you live.*<sup>Deut.23:3-6</sup>

*Now Elimelech, Naomi's husband, died, and she was left with her two sons. They married Moabite women,<sup>Ruth.1:3-4</sup> The women said to Naomi: "Praise be to the LORD, who this day has not left you without a kinsman-redeemer. May he become famous throughout Israel! He will renew your life and sustain you in your old age. For your daughter-in-law, who loves you and who is better to you than seven sons, has given him birth." Then Naomi took the child, laid him in her lap and cared for him. The women living there said, "Naomi has a son." And they named him Obed. He was the father of Jesse, the father of David.<sup>Ruth.4:14-17</sup>*

**What does it mean to you to "be blessed"?**

**Primarily to be blessed means the forgiveness of sins**

*David says the same thing when he speaks of the blessedness of the man to whom God credits righteousness apart from works: "Blessed are they whose transgressions are forgiven, whose sins are covered. Blessed is the man whose sin the Lord will never count against him."*<sup>Rom.4:6-8</sup>

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**Everything other blessing is a direct result of having our sins forgiven**—such as peace with God, eternal life. There is the general Grace of God that applies to all people (believers and unbelievers alike) such as the blessings of enjoying life, good health, etc.

*But I tell you, love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, that you may be children of your Father in heaven. He causes his sun to rise on the evil and the good, and sends rain on the righteous and the unrighteous. [46] If you love those who love you, what reward will you get? Are not even the tax collectors doing that? And if you greet only your own people, what are you doing more than others? Do not even pagans do that? Be perfect, therefore, as your heavenly Father is perfect.*<sup>Matt.5:44-48</sup>

*God did this so that they would seek him and perhaps reach out for him and find him, though he is not far from any one of us. For in him we live and move and have our being.' As some of your own poets have said, 'We are his offspring.'*<sup>Act.17:27-28</sup>

**God has already given us everything we need for life and godliness,**<sup>2Pet.1:3</sup> **so why do we have to “make every effort” to add to it?**<sup>2Pet.1:5</sup>

**Maturity cannot be accumulated or stored because it is a relationship with God.**

*We have much to say about this, but it is hard to explain because you are slow to learn. In fact, though by this time you ought to be teachers, you need someone to teach you the elementary truths of God's word all over again. You need milk, not solid food! Anyone who lives on milk, being still an infant, is not acquainted with the teaching about righteousness. But solid food is for the mature, who by constant use have trained themselves to distinguish good from evil. Therefore let us leave the elementary teachings about Christ and go on to maturity, not laying again the foundation of repentance from acts that lead to death, and of faith in God, instruction about baptisms, the laying on of hands, the resurrection of the dead, and eternal judgment. And God permitting, we will do so. It is impossible for those who have once been enlightened, who have tasted the heavenly gift, who have shared in the Holy Spirit, who have tasted the goodness of the word of God and the powers of the coming age, if they fall away, to be brought back to repentance, because to their loss they are crucifying the Son of God all over again and subjecting him to public disgrace.*<sup>Heb.5:11-6:6</sup>

If we don't keep adding to what God has given us we will lose it

*He replied, 'I tell you that to everyone who has, more will be given, but as for the one who has nothing, even what they have will be taken away.'*<sup>Lk.19:26</sup>

**What can we do to “make every effort to be found spotless, blameless and at peace with him”?**<sup>2Pet.3:11</sup>

**Intentionally cultivate our relationship with God and stay in fellowship with Him, His Word and His people.**

Our work or “effort” is not trying to believe but keeping our belief active and alive!

*What must we do to do the works God requires?” Jesus answered, “The work of God is this: to believe in the one he has sent.”*<sup>Jn.6:28-29</sup>

Although the work that God requires is just to believe, there are some practical things that God expects us to do—such as pray, praise, proclaim and fellowship.

We need to make every effort to pray.

We need to make every effort to praise (it is not enough to think nice thoughts about God, we need to say them as well).

We need to make every effort to proclaim (it is only as we share what we believe that we understand our faith.<sup>Phile.1:6</sup>).

We need to make every effort to fellowship (it is not enough to just **think about** Church, we need to actually **be** Church).

We should make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit.

*Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace. There is one body and one Spirit, just as you were called to one hope when you were called; one Lord, one faith, one baptism; one God and Father of all, who is over all and through all and in all.*<sup>Eph.4:3-6</sup>

17/02/2021

## The Last Days

### Questions

Do you think that natural events (like earthquakes and famine) or man-made events (like wars) are judgements from God on mankind?

What was the “age” that Jesus’ referred to? *See Matt.24:3*

What were the signs of the end of that age?

Are there any signs for Jesus’ return given in the Bible?

What is so important about the “today” mentioned Hebrews?

What is so important about “that day” which Peter and Paul mention in their letters?

What guidance are we given concerning Jesus’ return?

### Comments

***1 Do you think that natural events (like earthquakes and famine) or man-made events (like wars) are judgements from God on mankind?***

**In the OT, God used natural and man-made events as judgement—He even intentionally sent some of them as direct punishments.**

*Then the LORD said to Moses, “Get up early in the morning, confront Pharaoh and say to him, ‘This is what the LORD, the God of the Hebrews, says: Let my people go, so that they may worship me, or this time I will send the full force of my plagues against you and against your officials and your people, so you may know that there is no one like me in all the earth. For by now I could have stretched out my hand and struck you and your people with a plague that would have wiped you off the earth. But I have raised you up for this very purpose, that I might show you my power and that my name might be proclaimed in all the earth. You still set yourself against my people and will not let them go. Therefore, at this time tomorrow I will send the worst hailstorm that has ever fallen on Egypt, from the day it was founded till now.’”*<sup>Ex.9:13-18</sup>

*“If you remain hostile toward me and refuse to listen to me, I will multiply your afflictions seven times over, as your sins deserve. I will send wild animals against you, and they will rob you of your children, destroy your cattle and make you so few in number that your roads will be deserted. “If in spite of these things you do not accept my correction but continue to be hostile toward me, I myself will be hostile toward you and will afflict you for your sins seven times over. And I will bring the sword on you to avenge the breaking of the covenant. When you withdraw into your cities, I will send a plague among you, and you will be given into enemy hands.”*<sup>Lev.26:21-25</sup>

**However, God always does what is right—even in the OT:**

*Far be it from you to do such a thing—to kill the righteous with the wicked, treating the righteous and the wicked alike. Far be it from you! Will not the Judge of all the earth do right?”*<sup>Gen.18:25</sup>

**And God will use circumstances to get our attention and even to speak to us—even today:**

*For God does speak—now one way, now another—though no one perceives it... “Or someone may be chastened on a bed of pain with constant distress in their bones, so that their body finds food repulsive and their soul loathes the choicest meal. Their flesh wastes away to nothing, and their bones, once hidden, now stick out.”*<sup>Job.33:14-21</sup>

*Therefore, in order to keep me from becoming conceited, I was given a thorn in my flesh, a messenger of Satan, to torment me. Three times I pleaded with the Lord to take it away from me. But he said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for my power is made perfect in weakness.” Therefore I will boast all the more gladly about my weaknesses, so that Christ’s power may rest on me.”*<sup>2Cor.12:7-9</sup>

**However, when Jesus came, everything changed.**

Jesus divided history (*what we call BC/ AD*) and there is a vast difference between OT and NT—predominately the Holy Spirit!

*On that day his feet will stand on the Mount of Olives, east of Jerusalem, and the Mount of Olives will be split in two from east to west, forming a great valley, with half of the mountain moving north and half moving south... On that day there will be neither sunlight nor cold, frosty darkness. It will be a unique day—a day known only to the LORD—with no distinction between day and night. When evening comes, there will be light.[8] On that day living*



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*water will flow out from Jerusalem, half of it east to the Dead Sea and half of it west to the Mediterranean Sea, in summer and in winter.*<sup>Zech.14:4-8</sup>

In the OT God dealt with nations but in the Kingdom of God under the New Covenant, God deals with individuals.

*Jesus replied, "Very truly I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God unless they are born again."*<sup>Jn.3:3</sup>

*The word of the LORD came to me: "What do you people mean by quoting this proverb about the land of Israel: 'The parents eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, you will no longer quote this proverb in Israel. For everyone belongs to me, the parent as well as the child—both alike belong to me. The one who sins is the one who will die."*<sup>Ez.18:1-4</sup>

*Now there were some present at that time who told Jesus about the Galileans whose blood Pilate had mixed with their sacrifices. Jesus answered, "Do you think that these Galileans were worse sinners than all the other Galileans because they suffered this way? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish. Or those eighteen who died when the tower in Siloam fell on them—do you think they were more guilty than all the others living in Jerusalem? I tell you, no! But unless you repent, you too will all perish."*<sup>Lk.13:1-5</sup>

### **2 What was the "age" that Jesus' coming would end? See Matt.24:3**

**The Age was the OT era with all of the trapping of Judaism—the Temple worship with priests, rituals, sacrifices, holy days, etc.**

*"So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand), then let those who are in Judea flee to the mountains. Let the one who is on the housetop not go down to take what is in his house, and let the one who is in the field not turn back to take his cloak. And alas for women who are pregnant and for those who are nursing infants in those days! Pray that your flight may not be in winter or on a Sabbath."*<sup>Matt.24:15-20</sup>

This statement was obviously meant to be understood by Matthew's readers (*let the reader understand*). Josephus records that in 66AD General Cestius invaded Jerusalem and the Temple precincts and eventually set up the Roman insignia as an object of worship. Cestius then inexplicably withdrew from Jerusalem for three days in which time all remaining Christians fled the city. The period between 66AD, when the siege of Jerusalem commenced, and 42 months later when it ended in 70AD, was indeed a time of great tribulation for Israel. The horrors of their suffering were described by Josephus. They were forced to endure starvation and famine, disease and pestilence, treachery, and even cannibalism. During this time the Romans bombarded them with flaming missiles the weight of which were around 25 kilograms each (a "talent" weight, note Revelation 16:21) which randomly killed the inhabitants of Jerusalem. At one point the blood was flowing so high from under the gates of Jerusalem that Josephus said it was as high as the horses' bridles (note Revelation 14:20). As gruesome and as abhorrent as the Holocaust of WW2 was, this time described as Christ was indeed Great Tribulation. It was especially the most horrid thing that happened to the Jewish people during the Old Covenant age.

### **The New Covenant made the Old Covenant obsolete**

*"The days are coming, declares the Lord, when I will make a new covenant with the people of Israel and with the people of Judah. It will not be like the covenant I made with their ancestors when I took them by the hand to lead them out of Egypt, because they did not remain faithful to my covenant, and I turned away from them, declares the Lord. This is the covenant I will establish with the people of Israel after that time, declares the Lord. I will put my laws in their minds and write them on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. No longer will they teach their neighbour, or say to one another, 'Know the Lord,' because they will all know me, from the least of them to the greatest. For I will forgive their wickedness and will remember their sins no more." By calling this covenant "new," he has made the first one obsolete; and what is obsolete and outdated will soon disappear*<sup>Heb.8:8-13</sup>

**However, there was a period (40 years—a "generation") when the 2 Covenants overlapped and the Temple with its trappings was still functioning:**

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*When they heard this, they praised God. Then they said to Paul: "You see, brother, how many thousands of Jews have believed, and all of them are zealous for the law. They have been informed that you teach all the Jews who live among the Gentiles to turn away from Moses, telling them not to circumcise their children or live according to our customs. What shall we do? They will certainly hear that you have come, so do what we tell you. There are four men with us who have made a vow. Take these men, join in their purification rites and pay their expenses, so that they can have their heads shaved. Then everyone will know there is no truth in these reports about you, but that you yourself are living in obedience to the law... The next day Paul took the men and purified himself along with them. Then he went to the temple to give notice of the date when the days of purification would end and the offering would be made for each of them."<sup>Acts.21:20-26</sup>*

### **3 What were the signs of the end of that (OT) age?**

**The signs of the end of the OT age was the destruction of the Temple**

*So when you see the abomination of desolation spoken of by the prophet Daniel, standing in the holy place (let the reader understand),*

### **4 Are there any signs for Jesus' return given in the Bible?**

**No! Although there are no signs we are clearly told to be ready.**

*Now, brothers and sisters, about times and dates we do not need to write to you, for you know very well that the day of the Lord will come like a thief in the night. While people are saying, "Peace and safety," destruction will come on them suddenly, as labour pains on a pregnant woman, and they will not escape. But you, brothers and sisters, are not in darkness so that this day should surprise you like a thief. You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness. So then, let us not be like others, who are asleep, but let us be awake and sober."<sup>1Thess.5:1-6</sup>*

*Listen, I tell you a mystery: We will not all sleep, but we will all be changed—in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed."<sup>1Cor.15:51-52</sup>*

### **5 What is so important about the "today" mentioned Hebrews?**

**So long as it is "Today" we can call on the Name of the Lord and be saved. "Today" we can encourage others. "Today" we must watch our hearts**

*See to it, brothers and sisters, that none of you has a sinful, unbelieving heart that turns away from the living God. But encourage one another daily, as long as it is called "Today," so that none of you may be hardened by sin's deceitfulness. We have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original conviction firmly to the very end."<sup>Heb.3:12-14</sup>*

**"Today" we can enter God's rest (enjoy the benefits of God's salvation)**

*Therefore since it still remains for some to enter that rest, and since those who formerly had the good news proclaimed to them did not go in because of their disobedience, God again set a certain day, calling it "Today." This he did when a long time later he spoke through David, as in the passage already quoted: "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts." For if Joshua had given them rest, God would not have spoken later about another day. There remains, then, a Sabbath-rest for the people of God; for anyone who enters God's rest also rests from their works, just as God did from his. Let us, therefore, make every effort to enter that rest, so that no one will perish by following their example of disobedience."<sup>Heb.4:6-11</sup>*

### **6 What is so important about "that day" which Peter and Paul mention in their letters?**

**"That day"**

**God will protect us**

*Yet this is no cause for shame, because I know whom I have believed, and am convinced that he is able to guard what I have entrusted to him until that day."<sup>2Tim.1:12</sup>*

**God will give us mercy**

*May the Lord grant that he will find mercy from the Lord on that day! You know very well in how many ways he helped me in Ephesus."<sup>2Tim.1:18</sup>*

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### God will give us a crown or righteousness

*Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.*<sup>2Tim.4:8</sup>

### We can look forward to that day

*You ought to live holy and godly lives as you look forward to the day of God and speed its coming. That day will bring about the destruction of the heavens by fire, and the elements will melt in the heat. But in keeping with his promise we are looking forward to a new heaven and a new earth, where righteousness dwells.*<sup>2Pet.3:11-13</sup>

### 7 What guidance are we given concerning Jesus' return?

#### Stay alert and be ready:

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come.*<sup>Mk.13:32-33</sup>

*The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray.*<sup>1Pet.4:7</sup>

*It will be good for those servants whose master finds them ready, even if he comes in the middle of the night or toward daybreak.*<sup>Lk.12:38</sup>

#### Beware of anyone who predicts the time of Jesus' coming:

Hippolytus of Rome and Sextus Julius Africanus (C3<sup>rd</sup>) concluded that Christ would return and that the end of the world would occur in 500A.D. Their method for interpreting the Book of Revelation was shown to be demonstrably wrong, yet, for many church leaders, it seems to have sown the idea that the goal of interpreting the Book of Revelation was to determine how it predicted events for their lifetime. It's worth noting that shortly after this speculation about the Book of Revelation, the Church Council at Nicaea, Turkey formulated the Nicene Creed, which was, and is, universally accepted by Christians. Understanding this creed is important because it makes a very clear and important statement about what the early Church believed about the return of Christ. *"He shall come again with glory to judge both the quick (living) and the dead, whose kingdom shall have no end."*

This statement declares:

- 1. Jesus Christ will return.**
- 2. Jesus Christ's return will coincide with His judgment of all the living and the dead.**
- 3. After Jesus Christ's judgment of all people, He will rule in a world where evil, injustice, and sin are banished.**

This early eschatology (doctrine of last things) was simple and clear!

Futile predictions of Jesus Christ's return have abounded—and here are a few of them:

Pope Sylvester II (999 – 1003) declared that the Book of Revelation revealed that the return of Christ and the end of the world would take place on January 1<sup>st</sup> 1000 A.D. When this came and went, his interpretation was changed to January 1<sup>st</sup> 1033 (to allow for the date of Christ's crucifixion).

*"The world will not last past 1734."* Nicholas of Cusa, 1401-1464

*"The second coming will take place in the year 1533."* Melchior Hofmann, 1531

*"The last day is at hand. My calendar has run out. I know nothing more in my Scriptures."* Martin Luther, 1532

John Wesley somehow interpreted *time, times and half a time*,<sup>Rev.12:14</sup> to mean that the return of Christ and the millennium would commence in 1836!

*"Only if the Bible is in error am I wrong, and I say that unequivocally. There is no way Biblically that I can be wrong; and I say that to every preacher in town."* Edgar C. Whisenant, "88 Reasons Why The Rapture Is In 1988", Nashville, 1988

*"I predict the absolute fullness of man's operation on planet Earth by the year 2000 A.D. Then Jesus Christ shall reign from Jerusalem for 1000 years."* Lester Sumrall, "I Predict 2000 A.D." 1990

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## How good is your memory?

*Dear friends, this is now my second letter to you. I have written both of them as reminders to stimulate you to wholesome thinking. I want you to recall the words spoken in the past by the holy prophets and the command given by our Lord and Saviour through your apostles.*<sup>2Pet.3:1-2</sup>

## Questions

**What is our conscience?**

**How can we maintain a good conscience?**

**What steps can we take to make sure we don't shipwreck our faith?**

**What can we do to keep our mind alert?**

**What can we do to keep our spirit in tune with God?**

**How can we synchronise our mind and spirit?**

**Is there a distinction between sacred and secular activities?**

## Comments

*What is our conscience?*

**Our conscience is our moral compass and the meeting place of soul and spirit.** We are made in God's image and our conscience is unique to humans—animals are not created in God's image and so they have no conscience. Animals live by the “*law of the jungle*” because this life is all they have and when they kill and eat other animals, they are not being cruel or hurtful because they have no moral compass—for them there is no right or wrongs. And that is why God has instructed us to eat animals (but not humans)!

*“Don't you see that nothing that enters a person from the outside can defile them? For it doesn't go into their heart but into their stomach, and then out of the body.” (In saying this, Jesus declared all foods clean.)*<sup>Mk.7:18-19</sup>

*They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.*<sup>1Tim.4:3-5</sup>

*I am convinced, being fully persuaded in the Lord Jesus, that nothing is unclean in itself. But if anyone regards something as unclean, then for that person it is unclean. If your brother or sister is distressed because of what you eat, you are no longer acting in love. Do not by your eating destroy someone for whom Christ died. Therefore do not let what you know is good be spoken of as evil. For the kingdom of God is not a matter of eating and drinking, but of righteousness, peace and joy in the Holy Spirit, because anyone who serves Christ in this way is pleasing to God and receives human approval. Let us therefore make every effort to do what leads to peace and to mutual edification. Do not destroy the work of God for the sake of food. All food is clean, but it is wrong for a person to eat anything that causes someone else to stumble. It is better not to eat meat or drink wine or to do anything else that will cause your brother or sister to fall.*<sup>Rom.14:14-21</sup>

When animals die that is the end of them

*But these men blaspheme in matters they do not understand. They are like brute beasts, creatures of instinct, born only to be caught and destroyed, and like beasts they too will perish.*<sup>2Pet.2:12</sup>

*Yet these people slander whatever they do not understand, and the very things they do understand by instinct—as irrational animals do—will destroy them.*<sup>Jude.10</sup>

But unlike animals, every human will have to give an account of their life to God, their Creator and Judge.

*For you have spent enough time in the past doing what pagans choose to do—living in debauchery, lust, drunkenness, orgies, carousing and detestable idolatry. They are surprised that you do not join them in their reckless, wild living, and they heap abuse on you. But they will have to give account to him who is ready to judge the living and the dead.*<sup>1Pet.4:3-5</sup>

*But you, LORD Almighty, who judge righteously and test the heart and mind,*<sup>Jer.11:20</sup>

*then the Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment. This is especially true of those who follow the corrupt desire of the flesh and despise authority.*<sup>2Pet.2:9-10</sup>

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Now there is in store for me the crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will award to me on that day—and not only to me, but also to all who have longed for his appearing.<sup>2Tim.4:8</sup>

See, the Lord is coming with thousands upon thousands of his holy ones to judge everyone, and to convict all of them of all the ungodly acts they have committed in their ungodliness, and of all the defiant words ungodly sinners have spoken against him.<sup>Jude.14-15</sup>

But you have come to Mount Zion, to the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem. You have come to thousands upon thousands of angels in joyful assembly, to the church of the firstborn, whose names are written in heaven. You have come to God, the Judge of all, to the spirits of the righteous made perfect, to Jesus the mediator of a new covenant, and to the sprinkled blood that speaks a better word than the blood of Abel.<sup>Heb.12:22-24</sup>

### **How can we maintain a good conscience?**

#### **Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people!**

Paul had been responsible for the imprisonment and murder of many Christians, but he was able to deal with his conscience:

Paul looked straight at the Sanhedrin and said, “My brothers, I have fulfilled my duty to God in all good conscience to this day.”<sup>Acts.23:1</sup>

Some people have seared their consciences:

The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.<sup>1Tim.4:1-2</sup>

So a clear conscience doesn't prove that we are right—only God can justify us!

My conscience is clear, but that doesn't prove I'm right. It is the Lord himself who will examine me and decide.<sup>1Cor.4:4</sup>

We should work at keeping our conscience clear by submitting to authorities:

I have the same hope in God as these men themselves have, that there will be a resurrection of both the righteous and the wicked. So I strive always to keep my conscience clear before God and man.<sup>Acts.24:15-16</sup>

Therefore, it is necessary to submit to the authorities, not only because of possible punishment but also as a matter of conscience.<sup>Rom.13:4</sup>

#### **Stay sensitive to the Holy Spirit:**

I speak the truth in Christ—I am not lying, my conscience confirms it through the Holy Spirit.<sup>Rom.9:1</sup>

#### **Have a good grasp of sound doctrine—good theology makes easy Christianity!**

In the same way, deacons are to be worthy of respect, sincere, not indulging in much wine, and not pursuing dishonest gain. They must keep hold of the deep truths of the faith with a clear conscience.<sup>1Tim.3:8-9</sup>

#### **Live out our doctrine with action and truth**

Dear children, let us not love with words or speech but with actions and in truth. This is how we know that we belong to the truth and how we set our hearts at rest in his presence: If our hearts condemn us, we know that God is greater than our hearts, and he knows everything.<sup>1Jn.3:18-20</sup>

#### **Live in the consciousness of conversion:**

This is an illustration for the present time, indicating that the gifts and sacrifices being offered were not able to clear the conscience of the worshiper. They are only a matter of food and drink and various ceremonial washings—external regulations applying until the time of the new order. But when Christ came as high priest of the good things that are now already here, he went through the greater and more perfect tabernacle that is not made with human hands, that is to say, is not a part of this creation... The blood of goats and bulls and the ashes of a heifer sprinkled on those who are ceremonially unclean sanctify them so that they are outwardly clean. How much more, then, will the blood of Christ, who through the eternal Spirit offered himself unblemished to God, cleanse our consciences from acts that lead to death, so that we may serve the living God!<sup>Heb.9:9-14</sup>

#### **Be baptised as a Believer.**

Whoever believes and is baptized will be saved, but whoever does not believe will be condemned.<sup>Mk.16:16</sup>

In [Noah's ark] a few people, eight in all, were saved through water, and this water symbolizes baptism that now saves you also—not the removal of dirt from the body but the pledge of a good conscience toward God. It saves you by

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*the resurrection of Jesus Christ, who has gone into heaven and is at God's right hand—with angels, authorities and powers in submission to him.*<sup>1Pet.3:20-22</sup>

*Let us draw near to God with a sincere heart and with the full assurance that faith brings, having our hearts sprinkled to cleanse us from a guilty conscience and having our bodies washed with pure water.*<sup>Heb.10:22</sup>

### **What steps can we take to make sure we don't shipwreck our faith?**

**Watch who we spend time with!** There some people—even Christians—who are ignorant of God. Do not be misled: "Bad company corrupts good character." Come back to your senses as you ought, and stop sinning; for there are some who are ignorant of God—I say this to your shame.<sup>1Cor.15:33-34</sup>

Although God has given us a pure heart, we must avoid disorder, division and disunity:

*I want you to command certain people not to teach things that aren't true. Command them not to spend their time on stories that aren't completely true. They must not waste time on family histories that never end. Things like that cause people to argue instead of doing God's work. His work is done by faith. The goal of this command is **love, which comes from a pure heart and a good conscience and a sincere faith.** Some have wandered away from those teachings. They would rather talk about things that have no meaning. They want to be teacher of the law. And they are very sure about that law. But they don't know what they are talking about... Timothy, my son, I give you this instruction in keeping with the prophecies once made about you, so that by following them you may fight the good fight, **holding on to faith and a good conscience.** Some have rejected these and so have shipwrecked their faith.*<sup>1Tim.1:3-7;18-19</sup>

### **The deception of false teaching can shipwreck faith**

*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron. They forbid people to marry and order them to abstain from certain foods, which God created to be received with thanksgiving by those who believe and who know the truth. For everything God created is good, and nothing is to be rejected if it is received with thanksgiving, because it is consecrated by the word of God and prayer.*<sup>1Tim.4:1-5</sup>

### **What can we do to keep our mind alert?**

There are practical steps to take like regular physical and mental exercise, sensible diet, enough sleep. But our mind is closely linked with our spirit and a Christian must look after both

*May God himself, the God of peace, sanctify you through and through. May your whole spirit, soul and body be kept blameless at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.*<sup>1Thess.5:23</sup>

*For the word of God is living and active. Sharper than any double-edged sword, it penetrates even to dividing soul and spirit, joints and marrow; it judges the thoughts and attitudes of the heart.*<sup>Heb.4:12</sup>

*Dear friend, I pray that you may enjoy good health and that all may go well with you, even as your soul is getting along well.*<sup>3]n.2</sup>

### **What can we do to keep our spirit in tune with God?**

#### **Remember our Creator now—don't wait until we are older**

*Remember your Creator in the days of your youth, before the days of trouble come... Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the duty of all mankind. For God will bring every deed into judgment, including every hidden thing, whether it is good or evil.*<sup>Ecc.12:1-14</sup>

#### **See life in the light of eternity**

*But about that day or hour no one knows, not even the angels in heaven, nor the Son, but only the Father. Be on guard! Be alert! You do not know when that time will come. It's like a man going away: He leaves his house and puts his servants in charge, each with their assigned task, and tells the one at the door to keep watch. Therefore keep watch because you do not know when the owner of the house will come back—whether in the evening, or at midnight, or when the rooster crows, or at dawn. If he comes suddenly, do not let him find you sleeping. What I say to you, I say to everyone: 'Watch!'*<sup>Mk.13:32-37</sup>

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*The end of all things is near. Therefore be alert and of sober mind so that you may pray. Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms. If anyone speaks, they should do so as one who speaks the very words of God. If anyone serves, they should do so with the strength God provides, so that in all things God may be praised through Jesus Christ. To him be the glory and the power for ever and ever. Amen.*<sup>1Pet.4:7-11</sup>

*Therefore, with minds that are alert and fully sober, set your hope on the grace to be brought to you when Jesus Christ is revealed at his coming.*<sup>1Pet.1:13</sup>

### Pray

*And pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people.*<sup>Eph.6:18</sup>

### Stay humble

*Humble yourselves, therefore, under God's mighty hand, that he may lift you up in due time. Cast all your anxiety on him because he cares for you. Be alert and of sober mind. Your enemy the devil prowls around like a roaring lion looking for someone to devour. Resist him, standing firm in the faith, because you know that the family of believers throughout the world is undergoing the same kind of sufferings. And the God of all grace, who called you to his eternal glory in Christ, after you have suffered a little while, will himself restore you and make you strong, firm and steadfast. To him be the power for ever and ever. Amen.*<sup>1Pet.5:6-11</sup>

### ***How can we synchronise our mind and spirit?***

#### **Keep our mind focused on the good and the pure**

*Finally, brothers and sisters, whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy—think about such things. Whatever you have learned or received or heard from me, or seen in me—put it into practice. And the God of peace will be with you.*<sup>Phil.4:8-9</sup>

### ***Is there a distinction between sacred and secular activities?***

**For the Christian, we have one life not two lives**—we are to seek God's kingdom first and foremost

*But seek first his kingdom and his righteousness, and all these things will be given to you as well.*<sup>Matt.6:33</sup>

Even the mundane becomes holy in God's kingdom

*On that day HOLY TO THE LORD will be inscribed on the bells of the horses, and the cooking pots in the LORD's house will be like the sacred bowls in front of the altar. Every pot in Jerusalem and Judah will be holy to the LORD Almighty, and all who come to sacrifice will take some of the pots and cook in them. And on that day there will no longer be a Canaanite in the house of the LORD Almighty.*<sup>Zech.14:20-21</sup>

*Then the altar will be most holy, and whatever touches it will be holy.*<sup>Ex.29:37</sup>

*To the pure, all things are pure, but to those who are corrupted and do not believe, nothing is pure. In fact, both their minds and consciences are corrupted. They claim to know God, but by their actions they deny him. They are detestable, disobedient and unfit for doing anything good.*<sup>Tit.1:15-16</sup>

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**God is not fair!** *The Lord knows how to rescue the godly from trials and to hold the unrighteous for punishment on the day of judgment.*<sup>2Pet.2:9</sup>

### Questions

1. Explain simply what God's Grace means.
2. Explain simply what God's Mercy means.
3. Explain simply why God has to forgive sin (rather than just forget it).
4. What is death?
5. How does our spiritual life help us now while we are here on earth?
6. How can difficulties help discipline us?

### Comments

#### 1 Explain simply what God's Grace means.

Grace (Gk. *charis*) literally means "to rejoice" and is variously translated as: blessing, concession, credit, favour, gift, gratitude, thankfulness. **Grace is a favour done without expectation of return.**

*From the fullness of his grace we have all received one blessing after another. [Out of his fullness we have all received grace in place of grace already given. ·Because he was full of grace and truth, from him we all received one gift after another (this could mean abundant grace or that the grace under Christ replaced grace under the law).]*<sup>Jn.1:16</sup>

*We all live off his generous bounty, gift after gift after gift. We got the basics from Moses, and then this exuberant giving and receiving, This endless knowing and understanding—all this came through Jesus, the Messiah.*<sup>TM</sup>

*There are different kinds of gifts [grace], but the same Spirit. There are different kinds of service [ministry], but the same Lord. There are different kinds of working [energies], but the same God works all of them in all men.*<sup>1Cor.12:4-6</sup>

#### Grace is God's character:

*The LORD, the LORD, the compassionate and gracious God, slow to anger, abounding in love and faithfulness, maintaining love to thousands, and forgiving wickedness, rebellion and sin.*<sup>Ex.34:6-7</sup>

When God saves us, He gives us what we don't deserve (eternal life)—that is Grace!

*Grace, mercy and peace from God the Father and Christ Jesus our Lord.*<sup>1Tim.1:2</sup>

#### This is seen at Calvary

*-Love and faithfulness meet together; righteousness and peace kiss each other. Faithfulness springs forth from the earth, and righteousness looks down from heaven.*<sup>Ps.85:10-11</sup>

#### 2 Explain simply what God's Mercy means.

##### Mercy means pity, compassion, love.

*Surely goodness and mercy [faithfulness; faithful love; unfailing love; loving kindness] shall follow me all the days of my life, and I shall dwell in the house of the LORD forever.*<sup>Ps.23:5-6</sup>

When God forgives us, He doesn't give us what we deserve (punishment for our sins)—that is Mercy!

*Praise be to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ! In his great mercy he has given us new birth into a living hope through the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, and into an inheritance that can never perish, spoil or fade.*<sup>1Pet.1:3-4</sup>

#### 3 Explain simply why God has to forgive sin (rather than just forget it).

##### Sin caused man's death and God had to revoke death in order for us to live

*And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."*<sup>Gen.2:16-17</sup>

##### Jesus (the Word made human) was the only person who could die physically without death having any hold over him

*Jesus Christ, who is the faithful witness, the firstborn from the dead, and the ruler of the kings of the earth. To him who loves us and has freed us from our sins by his blood, and has made us to be a kingdom and priests to serve his God and Father—to him be glory and power for ever and ever! Amen... "Do not be afraid. I am the First and the*



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*Last. I am the Living One; I was dead, and now look, I am alive for ever and ever! And I hold the keys of death and Hades.*<sup>Rev.1:5-6;17-18</sup>

*Men of Israel, listen to this! Jesus of Nazareth was a man who had God's approval. God did miracles, wonders and signs among you through Jesus. You yourselves know this. Long ago God planned that Jesus would be handed over to you. With the help of evil people, you put Jesus to death. You nailed him to the cross. But God raised him from the dead. He set him free from the suffering of death. It wasn't possible for death to keep its hold on Jesus... David saw what was ahead. So he spoke about the Christ rising from the dead. He said that the Christ would not be left in the grave. His body wouldn't rot in the ground. God has raised this same Jesus back to life. We are all witnesses of this. Jesus has been given a place of honour at the right hand of God. He has received the Holy Spirit from the Father. This is what God had promised. It is Jesus who has poured out what you now see and hear. David did not go up to heaven. But he said, "The Lord said to my Lord, "Sit at my right hand. I will put your enemies under your control." So be sure of this, all you people of Israel. You nailed Jesus to the cross. But God has made him both Lord and Christ.*<sup>Acts.2:22-36</sup>

### **God cannot "forget" but He does forgive. Forgiveness cleans the stain of sin**

*"Come now, let us reason together," says the LORD. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*<sup>Is.1:18</sup>

*Cleanse me with hyssop, and I will be clean; wash me, and I will be whiter than snow.*<sup>Ps.51:7</sup>

*Then one of the elders asked me, "These in white robes—who are they, and where did they come from?" I answered, "Sir, you know." And he said, "These are they who have come out of the great tribulation; they have washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb."*<sup>Rev.7:13-14</sup>

### **We are unable to help ourselves but God saved us because of His great love**

*We who are Jews by birth and not sinful Gentiles know that a person is not justified by the works of the law, but by faith in Jesus Christ. So we, too, have put our faith in Christ Jesus that we may be justified by faith in Christ and not by the works of the law, because by the works of the law no one will be justified.*<sup>Gal.2:15-16</sup>

*All of us also lived among them at one time, gratifying the cravings of our flesh and following its desires and thoughts. Like the rest, we were by nature deserving of wrath. But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved. And God raised us up with Christ and seated us with him in the heavenly realms in Christ Jesus,*<sup>Eph.2:3-6</sup>

## **4 What is death?**

Death is separation. Physical death is separation of soul and spirit from body. Spiritual death is separation of soul and spirit from God. Adam was told that he would die if he disobeyed God but actually lived another 930 years. However, he did die spiritually because he was separated from God. Since then, all of Adam's descendants are born separated from God

*And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die."*<sup>Gen.2:16-17</sup>

*But the LORD God called to the man, "Where are you?" He answered, "I heard you in the garden, and I was afraid because I was naked; so I hid."*<sup>Gen.3:9-10</sup>

*Altogether, Adam lived 930 years, and then he died.*<sup>Gen.5:5</sup>

*As for you, you were dead in your transgressions and sins, in which you used to live when you followed the ways of this world and of the ruler of the kingdom of the air, the spirit who is now at work in those who are disobedient.*<sup>Eph.2:1-2</sup>

*When you were dead in your sins and in the uncircumcision of your sinful nature, God made you alive with Christ. He forgave us all our sins, having cancelled the written code, with its regulations, that was against us and that stood opposed to us; he took it away, nailing it to the cross.*<sup>Col.2:13-14</sup>

*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all men, because all sinned—for before the law was given, sin was in the world. But sin is not taken into account when there is no law. Nevertheless, death reigned from the time of Adam to the time of Moses, even over those who did not sin by breaking a command, as did Adam, who was a pattern of the one to come.*<sup>Rom.5:12-14</sup>

## 5 How does our spiritual life help us now while we are here on earth?

### Being right with God puts us at peace with God—and ourselves.

*For Christ himself has brought peace to us. He united Jews and Gentiles into one people when, in his own body on the cross, he broke down the wall of hostility that separated us. He did this by ending the system of law with its commandments and regulations. He made peace between Jews and Gentiles by creating in himself one new people from the two groups. Together as one body, Christ reconciled both groups to God by means of his death on the cross, and our hostility toward each other was put to death. He brought this Good News of peace to you Gentiles who were far away from him, and peace to the Jews who were near. Now all of us can come to the Father through the same Holy Spirit because of what Christ has done for us.*<sup>Eph.2:14-18</sup>

*But those who live in accordance with the Spirit have their minds set on what the Spirit desires. The mind governed by the flesh is death, but the mind governed by the Spirit is life and peace. The mind governed by the flesh is hostile to God; it does not submit to God's law, nor can it do so. Those who are in the realm of the flesh cannot please God. You, however, are not in the realm of the flesh but are in the realm of the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God lives in you. And if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, they do not belong to Christ.*<sup>Rom.8:5-9</sup>

### This spiritual and emotional harmony is conducive to our well-being (including our physical health).

*When a man's ways are pleasing to the LORD, he makes even his enemies live at peace with him.*<sup>Pron.16:7</sup>

*As much as it is possible, live in peace with everyone. Don't take revenge, dear friends. Instead, let God's anger take care of it.*<sup>Rom.12:18-19</sup>

*Great peace have they who love your law, and nothing can make them stumble.*<sup>Ps.119:165</sup>

### Dependant prayer channels God's direction into our life

*Commit your way to the LORD; trust in him and he will do this: He will make your righteousness shine like the dawn, the justice of your cause like the noonday sun.*<sup>Ps.35:5-6</sup>

*Commit to the LORD whatever you do, and your plans will succeed. The LORD works out everything for his own ends—even the wicked for a day of disaster.*<sup>Pron.16:3-4</sup>

*Trust in the LORD with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways acknowledge him, and he will make your paths straight. Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the LORD and shun evil. This will bring health to your body and nourishment to your bones.*<sup>Pron.3:5-8</sup>

*Although a wicked man commits a hundred crimes and still lives a long time, I know that it will go better with God-fearing men, who are reverent before God. Yet because the wicked do not fear God, it will not go well with them, and their days will not lengthen like a shadow.*<sup>Ecd.8:12-13</sup>

*He who sacrifices thank offerings honours me, and he prepares the way so that I may show him the salvation of God.*<sup>Ps.50:23</sup>

## 6 How can difficulties help discipline us?

### Difficulties wean us off our own confidence and help us trust God better

*You were shown these things so that you might know that the LORD is God; besides him there is no other. From heaven he made you hear his voice to discipline you.*<sup>Deut.4:35-36</sup>

*Blessed is the man whom God corrects; so do not despise the discipline of the Almighty. For he wounds, but he also binds up; he injures, but his hands also heal.*<sup>Job.5:17-18</sup>

*Blessed is the man you discipline, O LORD, the man you teach from your law; you grant him relief from days of trouble, till a pit is dug for the wicked. For the LORD will not reject his people; he will never forsake his inheritance.*<sup>Ps.94:12-14</sup>

*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And you have forgotten that word of encouragement that addresses you as sons: "My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines those he loves, and he punishes everyone he accepts as a son." Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as sons. For what son is not disciplined by his father? If you*

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*are not disciplined (and everyone undergoes discipline), then you are illegitimate children and not true sons. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of our spirits and live! Our fathers disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it. Therefore, strengthen your feeble arms and weak knees. "Make level paths for your feet," so that the lame may not be disabled, but rather healed.*<sup>Heb.12:4-13</sup>

27/01/2021

Excuse me, do you speak Bible?

**Questions:**

**How can we be confident about the Bible's accuracy?**

**What does *All Scripture is inspired by God*<sup>2Tim.3:16</sup> mean?**

**Are translations of the Bible inspired (or just the original manuscripts)?**

**Explain simply the difference between *Plenary Inspiration* and *Mechanical Inspiration*.**

**Give some examples from the Bible where the writer's own personality is clearly seen.**

**Give some examples from the Bible where not every detail was recorded?** (see Jn.20:30-31 and also Corbett's comment on *exhaustive* and *particular* genealogies in Scripture.)

**Give some examples of *similes and metaphors* in the Bible.**

A metaphor is a figure of speech that is used to make a comparison between two things that aren't alike but do have something in common. Unlike a simile, where two things are compared directly using *like* or *as*, a metaphor's comparison is more indirect, usually made by stating something *is* something else. A metaphor is very expressive; it is not meant to be taken literally. You may have to work a little to find the meaning in a metaphor.

For example: *Her tears were a river flowing down her cheeks.* Rivers and tears aren't very alike. One is a body of water in nature, while the other can be produced by our eyes. They do have one thing in common, though: both are *a type of water that flows*. A metaphor uses this similarity to help the writer make a point. As a river is so much larger than a few tears, the metaphor is a creative way of saying that the person is crying a lot. There are so many tears that they remind the writer of a river. This makes reading more interesting.

The Difference Between Similes and Metaphors: Similes are another way to compare two different things, but a simile does so more directly, using the words *like* or *as*. For example: *Her tears flowed like a river down her cheeks.* In this case, the simile tells the reader that the tears are similar to a river, but not the same. A metaphor, on the other hand, says that something is something else; that is, the girl's tears are equal to a river. A metaphor is not exactly true. It's meant to be understood as a figure of speech, not a factual statement.

**Comments:**

**How can we be confident about the Bible's accuracy?**

The theology of Biblical inspiration was not formerly developed until about 1580—before this, the inspiration of the books within the Canon were taken for granted. Although the Bible includes different sorts of writings, including history, prose, poetry, prophecy, its purpose is to record of His plan of salvation through Jesus Christ for all mankind.

*You diligently study the Scriptures because you think that by them you possess eternal life. These are the Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*<sup>Jn.5:39-40</sup>

Within this purpose, we accept that Scripture is totally accurate and take seriously the warnings in Scripture about altering its text:

*Every word of God is flawless; he is a shield to those who take refuge in him. Do not add to his words, or he will rebuke you and prove you a liar.*<sup>Prov.30:5-6</sup>

*I warn everyone who hears the words of the prophecy of this book: If anyone adds anything to them, God will add to him the plagues described in this book. And if anyone takes words away from this book of prophecy, God will take away from him his share in the tree of life and in the holy city, which are described in this book.*<sup>Rev.21:18-19</sup>

Archaeological finds of ancient manuscripts and other associated material all confirm the accuracy of the Bible c.f. *Dead Sea Scrolls*. Also the *Cyrus Cylinder*. The text of the Cyrus Cylinder claims that King Nabonidus put his first-born son (Belshazzar) in charge of Babylon as regent, thus Belshazzar's right-hand man would be the third ruler:

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*At Belshazzar's command, Daniel was clothed in purple, a gold chain was placed around his neck, and he was proclaimed the third highest ruler in the kingdom.*<sup>Dan.5:29</sup>

(cf Joseph was Pharaoh's right-hand man and 2<sup>nd</sup> ruler:

*Then Pharaoh said to Joseph, "Since God has made all this known to you, there is no one so discerning and wise as you. You shall be in charge of my palace, and all my people are to submit to your orders. Only with respect to the throne will I be greater than you." ...He had him ride in a chariot as his second-in-command, and people shouted before him, "Make way!" Thus he put him in charge of the whole land of Egypt.*<sup>Gen.41:39-43</sup>

**What does *All Scripture is inspired by God*<sup>2Tim.3:16</sup> mean?**

All Scripture means all Scripture but the real question is, what is scripture? The word "Scripture" means to write (with the same root as "script" and "scribe". The Scripture we have today was agreed upon by at the Council of Rome (AD 382), but that did not make it Scripture—they only agreed that the writings that were already accepted as Scripture were actually Scripture. Apart from the Apocrypha, our Bible has remained the unchanged since it was first agreed upon. (The KJV originally included the Apocrypha until it was removed in 1885.)

Jesus said that Scripture was trustworthy:

*If he called them 'gods,' to whom the word of God came—and the Scripture cannot be broken—*<sup>Jn.10:35</sup>

*But how then would the Scriptures be fulfilled that say it must happen in this way?*<sup>2Matt.26:54</sup>

*Today this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing.*<sup>Lk.4:21</sup>

*And beginning with Moses and all the Prophets, he explained to them what was said in all the Scriptures concerning himself.*<sup>Lk.24:27</sup>

*Then he opened their minds so they could understand the Scriptures.*<sup>Lk.24:45</sup>

*After he was raised from the dead, his disciples recalled what he had said. Then they believed the Scripture and the words that Jesus had spoken.*<sup>Jn.2:22</sup>

*so that Scripture would be fulfilled.*<sup>Jn.17:12,24,28,36</sup>

Peter included Paul's writing as Scripture

*Bear in mind that our Lord's patience means salvation, just as our dear brother Paul also wrote you with the wisdom that God gave him. He writes the same way in all his letters, speaking in them of these matters. His letters contain some things that are hard to understand, which ignorant and unstable people distort, as they do the other Scriptures, to their own destruction.*<sup>2Pet.3:15-16</sup>

**Contrast our view with this leaflet.** (*The Local Preachers' Department of the Methodist Church. 1967*)

### WHAT IS THE BIBLE ?

A Local Preacher must know his Bible. This means knowing what is in it. But it also means understanding what is in it. And this is impossible without some clear ideas of what the Bible is.

### The Bible Is Not Infallible

Many people in other ages (and a few in our age, sometimes called 'fundamentalists') thought that it was. They believed that every single word was literally, and infallibly, true. But a thorough examination of the Bible exposes this view as false. For example, Moses is credited with the authorship of Deuteronomy, a book that recounts his death. Again, there are two quite different accounts of the way in which Saul first met David. (1Sam.16.14ff. and 17.55ff.). There are many other examples. Again, a knowledge of how people in those days communicated truth shows it to be a quite inadequate way of looking at the Bible. For example, the story of the expulsion of Adam and Eve from the Garden of Eden shows the consequences of men and women insisting on doing what they want rather than doing what God tells them. But the supposition that the human race began literally with two people in a beautiful garden bristles with difficulties. So we do not regard the Bible as a book that has dropped down from heaven, written by the finger of God.

### **The Subject Of The Bible**

The Bible tells us about God's ways with men. That is its subject. Not science nor geography nor military campaigns, though they, and many other subjects, are in varying degrees involved. The Bible is a book about religion. Its theme is how God deals with men. If we want to know about that we go to the Bible. For other subjects we must turn to the appropriate authorities. For example, if we want to know who is responsible for the creation of the world we can turn to Genesis. But if we want a scientific account of how the world came to be what it is we must turn to the scientific books.

### **The Bible Was Written By Men**

Not by God. The men who wrote it were men of spiritual insight who saw more clearly than most what God was doing for man and with man. Consequently God was able to speak (i.e. convey truth) through them. This is what we mean when we say that the writers of the Bible were inspired. They were still men; prophets, psalmists, historians, poets, scribes, editors and the rest were fallible men. But what God has to say to man comes through them. And there it is, in the Bible.

### **There Is Progress In The Bible**

Not a steady progress in the sense that every page gives a more mature conception of religion than the previous page. The Bible is not as simple as that! It is not true either that the first things to be written or spoken appear first in our Bibles. But there is progress in the Bible from that which is crude and primitive to that which is refined and developed. For example, compare the attitude of the Psalmist towards his enemies with the attitude of Jesus towards his. The culmination of this progress is Jesus Christ.

### **Christ Is Central To The Bible**

The Old Testament prepares the way for him. God chose the Jews to be his people, and when the right moment came, Christ was born. His life, death, resurrection and ascension, recorded in the four Gospels, are the climax of the Bible. Out of them came the Church, which continues his ministry in the world. (See the Acts and the Epistles). Everything in the Bible centres upon Christ.

### **The Bible Was Compiled By The Church**

The Church accepted the Scriptures of the Jews as the Old Testament and chose the books which make up the New Testament. The choice of the latter was determined by whether the book was read regularly in the Church and by whether it was written by an apostle or had the authority of an apostle behind it.

### **The Bible Is The Word Of God**

This sums up what has been said so far. The Bible is not a record of the literal words of God. But in and through the various books of the Bible God speaks to his people. It is his Word to us. It is as we, God's people, respond to that Word in faith that a proper relationship is established between us and our Father.

### **What Do We Do With The Word Of God ?**

Three things:—

#### **We read it**

(1) In our private devotions. Using notes, like those provided by the Bible Reading Fellowship (148 Buckingham Palace Road, London, S.W.1) and under the guidance of the Holy Spirit we read our daily passage from the Bible and out of it God speaks to us personally.

(2) In Church. We can use either the Methodist Lectionary (a Lectionary is a systematic plan for reading the Bible) which can be obtained for 4d. from the Epworth Press (25-35 City Road, London, E.C.1) or some other Lectionary, like The Calendar and

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Lectionary edited by Ronald C. Jasper, Oxford University Press (7/6). An alternative is to read passages that are relevant to the season of the Christian year and therefore to the theme of the service. There should be a lesson from both the Old and New Testaments in a normal service which is not Holy Communion.

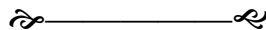
### We study it

For the Local Preachers' Connexional Examinations we study it with the prescribed textbooks. (The Department will send you a Syllabus of Studies if you don't already possess one). But study of the Bible does not stop there. Every Local Preacher should always be studying the Bible. The indispensable aid is a reliable commentary on the book of the Bible which is being studied. Part of this commentary will be what is called Introduction, i.e. discussing questions about the authorship and date of the book and the circumstances in which it was written. The rest will be explanation of the text of the book itself. The Local Preachers' Department is always ready to arrange for help to be given to Local Preachers in their Bible study.

### We preach it

A sermon is not the occasion for talking about our ideas and our convictions nor for passing on good advice. The purpose of a sermon, in Christian worship, is to expound the Word of God. That is to say, under the guidance of the Holy Spirit, to explain the meaning of a passage of Scripture and to point out its significance and relevance to the life of the people of God in the world today. This is Biblical preaching, and through it God speaks to men. To be called to do this is a great privilege and responsibility.

Remember then, that the preacher has to read, study and preach



### Are translations of the Bible inspired (or just the original manuscripts)?

**AoG** Statement of Faith *We believe that the Bible (i.e. the Old and New Testaments excluding the Apocrypha), is the inspired Word of God, the infallible, all sufficient rule for faith and practice.*

**ELIM** Statement of Faith: *We believe the Bible, as originally given, to be without error, the fully inspired and infallible Word of God and the supreme and final authority in all matters of faith and conduct.*

We believe that the original Scriptures were inspired, but we also believe that the breath (life) of God is in the meaning of the words so that the Holy Spirit's life is not limited to the physical words of the original Scriptures, c.f. the Muslim view of the Quran (which they consider to be the Word incarnate and so cannot be translated or it would be corrupted).

*For nothing is impossible with God. [For no word from God will ever fail. No word of God is void of power.]<sup>Lk.1:37</sup>*

**When Wycliff (C14<sup>th</sup>) translated the Bible into English he introduced these words and phrases into our language:** Female, sex, Sodom and Gomorrah, childbearing, wrinkle, affliction, graven image, needlework, consume, firstfruits, cast, grasp, horror, shibboleth, problem, affinity, mutter, seer, zealous, botch, scrape, wordy, contradiction, glory, bundle, treasure, childbearing, feel, doubtful, irrevocable, ministry, liquid, transfer, mystery, interpretation, interpret, reap the whirlwind, puberty, salt of the earth, city set on a hill, ye of little faith, doctrine, keys of the kingdom, born again, argument, ecstasy, exorcist, civility, crime, adoption, conscience, all things to all men, excellent, ambitious, liberty, legacy, communication, allegory, persuasion, offense; offend, quiet, root of all evil, uncertainty, novelty, quick and the dead, plague.

**When Tyndale (C16<sup>th</sup>) translated the Bible into English he introduced these words and phrases into our language:** brother's keeper, land of Nod, pillar of salt, full of days, coat of many colours, nurse, stranger in a strange land, Jehovah, Passover, sin of the fathers, eye for eye, scapegoat, eat, drink, and be merry, viper, no man can serve two masters, judge not, blind lead the blind, seventy times seven, beautiful, housetop, thirty pieces of silver, broken-hearted, fisherman, cast the first

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stone, stiff-necked, sorcerer, uproar, undergird, ungodly, castaway, suffer fools gladly, infidel, two-edged sword, seashore, busybody, alpha and omega, rose-coloured.

### Some Printers Errors (*not Translators*)

**The Printers Bible 1702:** *Printers (instead of Princes) have persecuted me.*<sup>Ps.119.161</sup>

**The Place-Makers Bible 1562:** *Blessed are the place-makers (instead of the peace-makers).*<sup>Matt.5.9</sup>

**The Bug Bible 1551:** *Thou shalt not be afraid for the bugges by night (instead of terror).*<sup>Ps.91.5</sup>

**The Treacle Bible 1568:** *Is there no treacle (instead of balm) in Gilead?*<sup>Jer.7.22</sup>

**The Unrighteous Bible:** *Know ye not that the unrighteous shall inherit (instead of not inherit) the kingdom or God.*<sup>1Cor.6.9</sup>

**The Wicked Bible 1631:** *Do commit adultery (instead of do not).*<sup>Ex.20.14</sup> (The printer was fined £300 for omitting the word not. All copies were ordered to be destroyed by Charles 1.)

**The Breeches Bible:** *They sewed fig leaves together and made themselves breeches (instead of aprons).*<sup>Gen.3.7</sup>

**The Murderers Bible 1801:** *There are murderers (instead of murmurers).*<sup>Jude 16</sup> *Let the children first be killed (instead of filled).*<sup>Mk.7:27</sup>

**The Ears to Ears Bible 1810:** *He that bath ears to ears, (instead of hear) let him hear.*<sup>Matt.11.15</sup>

**The Vinegar Bible 1717:** *The parable of the vinegar (instead of vineyard) in the headline.*<sup>Lk.20</sup>

**The Wife-hater Bible 1810:** *If any man come to me and hate not... his own wife (instead of life) also.*<sup>Lk.14.26</sup>

### Explain simply the difference between *Plenary Inspiration* and *Mechanical Inspiration*.

*Mechanical Dictation/ Verbal Inspiration:* God commanded men to write verbatim the very words He uttered.

*Natural Inspiration:* the product of highly intelligent men

*Partial Inspiration:* only some parts of the Bible are inspired

*Plenary Inspiration:* Although written by men, the Holy Spirit was the Author of Scripture.<sup>2Tim.3:16</sup> The Holy Spirit took the personalities, experiences, emotions and poetic talents of various people and used them to precisely express God's revelation to man. Within the inspiration process of their writings God was able to take the creative abilities of these authors and inspire them to produce the perfect Word of God:

*The law of the LORD is perfect, refreshing the soul. The statutes of the LORD are trustworthy, making wise the simple. The precepts of the LORD are right, giving joy to the heart. The commands of the LORD are radiant, giving light to the eyes. The fear of the LORD is pure, enduring forever. The decrees of the LORD are firm, and all of them are righteous. They are more precious than gold, than much pure gold; they are sweeter than honey, than honey from the honeycomb. By them your servant is warned; in keeping them there is great reward.*<sup>Ps.19:7-11</sup>

The result of this process was that we now have a Bible that often exposes the heart, emotions, and trials of its authors. We find this throughout the Psalms of David and the epistles of Paul. Within this theory, the inspiration of God's Word is more concerned about conveying the mind of God through the literary expression of its authors, than it is about the mechanical dictating of precise words.

### Give some examples from the Bible where the writer's own personality is clearly seen.

David's remorse: *Have mercy on me, O God, according to your unfailing love; according to your great compassion blot out my transgressions. Wash away all my iniquity and cleanse me from my sin.*<sup>Ps.51:1-2</sup>

Luke investigated the events of Jesus' life and wrote them down as an historical record:

*Many have undertaken to draw up an account of the things that have been fulfilled among us, just as they were handed down to us by those who from the first were eyewitnesses and servants of the word. Therefore, since I myself have carefully investigated everything from the beginning, it seemed good also to me to write an orderly account for you, most excellent Theophilus, so that you may know the certainty of the things you have been taught.*<sup>Lk.1:1-4</sup>



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Luke was also a Doctor which is why he records lots of physical healings:

*Our dear friend Luke, the doctor,* <sup>Col.4:14</sup>

Paul's style of writing is clearly identified in his letters and because the Book of Hebrews is so different, he is unlikely to be the author—it was probably Barnabas.

**Give some examples from the Bible where not every detail was recorded?** (see Jn.20:30-31 and also Corbett's comment on *exhaustive* and *particular* genealogies in Scripture.)

*Jesus performed many other signs in the presence of his disciples, which are not recorded in this book. But these are written that you may believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing you may have life in his name.* <sup>Jn.20:30-31</sup>

*This is the disciple who testifies to these things and who wrote them down. We know that his testimony is true. Jesus did many other things as well. If every one of them were written down, I suppose that even the whole world would not have room for the books that would be written.* <sup>Jn.21:24-25</sup>

Matthew misses out *Joash, Amaziah, Azariah* in his genealogy:

*Jehoram, Uzziyah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh,* <sup>Matt.1:8-10</sup>

*Jehoram, Ahaziah, Joash, Amaziah, Azariah, Jotham, Ahaz, Hezekiah, Manasseh.* <sup>1Chron.3:11-13</sup>

**Give some examples of *similes* and *metaphors* in the Bible.**

**Similes.** The Kingdom of God is like...

*The kingdom of heaven is like treasure hidden in a field. When a man found it, he hid it again, and then in his joy went and sold all he had and bought that field. Again, the kingdom of heaven is like a merchant looking for fine pearls. When he found one of great value, he went away and sold everything he had and bought it.* <sup>Matt.13:44-46</sup>

**Metaphors.**

*I am the bread of life.* <sup>Jn.6:35 Jn.6:41,48,51</sup>

*I am the light of the world* <sup>Jn.8:12; 9:5</sup>

*I am the gate/door* <sup>Jn.10:7,9</sup>

*I am the good shepherd.* <sup>Jn.10:11; 11:14</sup>

*I am the resurrection and the life* <sup>Jn.11:25</sup>

*I am the way and the truth and the life.* <sup>Jn.14:6</sup>

*I am the true vine* <sup>Jn.15:1,5</sup>

*I am the Alpha and the Omega* <sup>Rev.1:8; 21:6; 22:13</sup>

*I am the Living One* <sup>Rev.1:18</sup>

*I am the Root and the Offspring of David and the bright Morning Star.* <sup>Rev.22:16</sup>

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**How good is your eyesight?** *Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress...The people walking in darkness have seen a great light.*<sup>Is.9:1-2</sup>

### Questions

**Why do you think that both our soul and our spirit are called the “heart”?**

**Does God turn every bad thing into a good thing?**

**What can we do if we feel gloomy or in a dark place?**

**How can we ensure that the Scriptures shine in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts?**

### Comments

**Why do you think that both our soul and our spirit are called the “heart”?**

Our physical heart is the seat of our life as it pumps blood around our body—if it stops, we are dead! **So, the seat of our mental life (soul)—our personality, emotions is called our “heart”** (i.e. good heart, cold heart, hard heart).

*I will praise you, O LORD, with all my heart; I will tell of all your wonders. I will be glad and rejoice in you; I will sing praise to your name, O Most High.*<sup>Ps.9:1-2</sup>

*I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the hope to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints, and his incomparably great power for us who believe.*<sup>Eph.1:18-19</sup>

*Peter answered: “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness and pray to the Lord. Perhaps he will forgive you for having such a thought in your heart. For I see that you are full of bitterness and captive to sin.”*<sup>Acts.8:20-23</sup>

*“Men, why are you doing this? We too are only men, human like you. We are bringing you good news, telling you to turn from these worthless things to the living God, who made heaven and earth and sea and everything in them. In the past, he let all nations go their own way. Yet he has not left himself without testimony: He has shown kindness by giving you rain from heaven and crops in their seasons; he provides you with plenty of food and fills your hearts with joy.” Even with these words, they had difficulty keeping the crowd from sacrificing to them.*<sup>Acts.15:15-18</sup>

**Also, the seat of our spiritual life (our God-consciousness) is called our “heart”**

*I remembered my songs in the night. My heart mused and my spirit inquired.*<sup>Ps.77:6</sup>

*Create in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me... The sacrifices of God are a broken spirit; a broken and contrite heart, O God, you will not despise.*<sup>Ps.51:10;17</sup>

**Heart can sometimes mean both spirit and soul**

*The LORD your God will circumcise your hearts and the hearts of your descendants, so that you may love him with all your heart and with all your soul, and live.*<sup>Deut.30:6</sup>

*“You stiff-necked people, with uncircumcised hearts and ears! You are just like your fathers: You always resist the Holy Spirit! Was there ever a prophet your fathers did not persecute? They even killed those who predicted the coming of the Righteous One. And now you have betrayed and murdered him—you who have received the law that was put into effect through angels but have not obeyed it.”*<sup>Acts.7:51-53</sup>

**God is our source of life**

*How priceless is your unfailing love! Both high and low among men find refuge in the shadow of your wings. They feast on the abundance of your house; you give them drink from your river of delights. For with you is the fountain of life; in your light we see light.*<sup>Ps.36:7-9</sup>

*My people have committed two sins: They have forsaken me, the spring of living water, and have dug their own cisterns, broken cisterns that cannot hold water.*<sup>Jer.2:13</sup>

**And so we are to love God with all our heart (soul and spirit)**

*Jesus replied: ‘Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’*<sup>Matt.22:37</sup>

**We are also to hide God’s Word in our heart** (the seat of our emotion and our also our God-consciousness): *How can a young man keep his way pure? By living according to your word. I seek you with all my*

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*heart; do not let me stray from your commands. I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you.*<sup>Ps.119:9-11</sup>

*Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path.*<sup>Ps.119:105</sup>

God restores life to us when keep our heart repentant and humble:

*The high and lofty one who lives in eternity, the Holy One, says this: "I live in the high and holy place with those whose spirits are contrite and humble. I restore the crushed spirit of the humble and revive the courage of those with repentant hearts.*<sup>Is.57:15</sup>

### Does God turn every bad thing into a good thing?

**No!** But in every circumstance of life, God works for the God of Christians (those who love God).

God's purpose is not that we have an easy or comfortable life but that we might become like Jesus:

*We know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him. He appointed them to be saved in keeping with his purpose. God planned that those he had chosen would become like his Son. In that way, Christ will be the first and most honoured among many brothers.*<sup>Rom8:28-29</sup>

*And we all, who with unveiled faces contemplate the Lord's glory, are being transformed into his image with ever-increasing glory, which comes from the Lord, who is the Spirit.*<sup>2Cor.3:18</sup>

*Dear friends, now we are children of God, and what we will be has not yet been made known. But we know that when he appears, we shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is. Everyone who has this hope in him purifies himself, just as he is pure.*<sup>1Jn.3:2-3</sup>

**God's purposes for mankind is that they should be saved**

*The Lord is not slow in keeping his promise, as some understand slowness. He is patient with you, not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance.*<sup>2Pet.3:9</sup>

**God plans the bad things in life to save others:**

*You planned to harm me. But God planned it for good. He planned to do what is now being done. He wanted to save many lives.*<sup>Gen.50:20</sup>

*From heaven You pronounced judgment. The earth feared and grew quiet when God rose up to judge and to save all the lowly of the earth. Selah Even human wrath will praise You; You will clothe Yourself with their remaining wrath.*<sup>Ps.76:8-10</sup>

### What can we do if we feel gloomy or in a dark place?

**We need to pay attention to God's Word** because it will dispel our darkness when it shines in our hearts:

*And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*<sup>1Pet.1:19</sup>

*Anxiety in a man's heart weighs him down, but a good word makes him glad.*<sup>Pron.12:25</sup>

**Remember, God's Word is primarily Jesus, but Scripture is God's record about Jesus:**

*And the Father who sent me has himself testified concerning me. You have never heard his voice nor seen his form, nor does his word dwell in you, for you do not believe the one he sent. You study the Scriptures diligently because you think that in them you have eternal life. These are the very Scriptures that testify about me, yet you refuse to come to me to have life.*<sup>Jn.5:37-40</sup>

**God's Name and His Word are equal—equally important and equally to be honoured:**

*I will bow down toward your holy temple and will praise your name for your love and your faithfulness, for you have exalted above all things your name and your word.*<sup>Ps.138:2</sup>

**This is another reminder that we need to maintain a good name because we are Christ's Ambassadors:**

*We are therefore Christ's ambassadors, as though God were making his appeal through us. We implore you on Christ's behalf: Be reconciled to God.*<sup>2Cor.5:20</sup>

*A good name is better than expensive perfume, and the day you die is better than the day you're born.*<sup>Ecd.7:1</sup>

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*My son, do not forget my teaching, but keep my commands in your heart, for they will prolong your life many years and bring you peace and prosperity. Let love and faithfulness never leave you; bind them around your neck, write them on the tablet of your heart. Then you will win favor and a good name in the sight of God and man.*<sup>Pron.3:1-4</sup>

*A good name is more desirable than great wealth. Respect is better than silver or gold. The rich and the poor have this in common: the LORD is the maker of them all. Sensible people foresee trouble and hide from it, but gullible people go ahead and suffer the consequence.*<sup>Pron.22:1-3</sup>

**How can we ensure that the Scriptures shine in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in our hearts?**

### **Pay attention to the Scriptures!**

*And we have the word of the prophets made more certain, and you will do well to pay attention to it, as to a light shining in a dark place, until the day dawns and the morning star rises in your hearts.*<sup>1Pet.1:19</sup>

Some of God's promises are straightforward and clear—such as:

*As the Scripture says, "Anyone who trusts in him will never be put to shame." For there is no difference between Jew and Gentile—the same Lord is Lord of all and richly blesses all who call on him, for, "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord will be saved."*<sup>Rom.10:11-13</sup>

*"Never will I leave you; never will I forsake you." So we say with confidence, "The Lord is my helper; I will not be afraid. What can mere mortals do to me?"*<sup>1Heb.13:5-6</sup>

But many of God's promises are conditional, not automatic—they don't all apply to every person (even Christians) and in every circumstance.

***But for you who revere my name, the sun of righteousness will rise with healing in its wings. And you will go out and leap like calves released from the stall. Then you will trample down the wicked; they will be ashes under the soles of your feet on the day when I do these things,***<sup>Mal.4:2-3</sup>

***To him who overcomes and does my will to the end, I will give authority over the nations—'He will rule them with an iron sceptre; he will dash them to pieces like pottery'—just as I have received authority from my Father. I will also give him the morning star. He who has an ear, let him hear what the Spirit says to the churches.***<sup>Rev.2:26-29</sup>

### **God promised no more gloom because a great light (Jesus) has appeared:**

*Nevertheless, there will be no more gloom for those who were in distress. In the past he humbled the land of Zebulun and the land of Naphtali, but in the future he will honour Galilee of the Gentiles, by the way of the sea, along the Jordan—The people walking in darkness have seen a great light; on those living in the land of the shadow of death a light has dawned.*<sup>Is.9:1-2</sup>

*You are all children of the light and children of the day. We do not belong to the night or to the darkness.*<sup>1Thess.5:6</sup>

*Those who are wise will shine like the brightness of the heavens, and those who lead many to righteousness, like the stars for ever and ever.*<sup>Dan.12:3</sup>

**But God hasn't promised there will be no more gloom but rather that we don't have to live in the gloom.** A few verses before that prophecy, God states that people WILL live in gloom if they don't speak according to the Word of God (i.e. oppose God and His Word):

*To the law and to the testimony! If they do not speak according to this word, they have no light of dawn. Distressed and hungry, they will roam through the land; when they are famished, they will become enraged and, looking upward, will curse their king and their God. Then they will look toward the earth and see only distress and darkness and fearful gloom, and they will be thrust into utter darkness.*<sup>Is.8:20-22</sup>

If we are going to finish our life in victory as overcomers, **we must stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people.** There is no other way and there is no short-cut—we have to keep on **doing the same routine things such as praise, prayer and partnering.** We need to do this publicly as congregations and also privately as individuals.

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Make every effort to add to your faith...<sup>2Pet.1:5</sup>

### Questions

Explain simply the 3 Rs of Christianity: Repentance, Remission of sins and Righteousness

Why is isolation so damaging (both mentally and spiritually)?

How can we be sure that we are not deceived?

How can we best remind one another to add to our faith and that we have been forgiven our past sins: *I will always remind you of these things. I'll do it even though you know them. I'll do it even though you now have deep roots in the truth. I think it is right for me to remind you.*<sup>2Pet.1:12-13</sup>

### Comments

Explain simply the 3 Rs of Christianity: Repentance, Remission of sins and Righteousness

**Repentance.** The Greek word is *metanoia* which means a *change of mind*.

We should be convinced of our own beliefs:

*If you need wisdom, ask our generous God, and he will give it to you. He will not rebuke you for asking. But when you ask him, be sure that your faith is in God alone. Do not waver, for a person with divided loyalty is as unsettled as a wave of the sea that is blown and tossed by the wind. Such people should not expect to receive anything from the Lord. Their loyalty is divided between God and the world, and they are unstable in everything they do.*<sup>Jas.1:5-8</sup>

But we should also be prepared to look at the Truth and align our views to God's view. Contrast this with a bigot who is intolerant of any ideas other than their own.

Repentance from sin is different from remorse (which is feeling sorry for being found out!)—true repentance changes lives but leaves no scars:

*Produce fruit in keeping with repentance.*<sup>Matt.3:8</sup>

*Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret, but worldly sorrow brings death.*<sup>2Cor.7:10</sup>

**True repentance from sin will always include:**

**Acknowledgement** of the wrong.

**Apology** for the wrong. **Action** of determination to change.

**Appreciation** of God's forgiveness.

**Attitude** of grace, gratitude and gentleness towards God and people.

Our repentance (change of mind) should also include our view of God: God is love;<sup>1Jn.4:16</sup> He loves the world,<sup>Jn.3:16</sup> He loves the Church<sup>Eph.5:25</sup> and He also loves us individually.<sup>Gal.2:20</sup> He is not angry with us anymore<sup>Is.54:9</sup> because He has forgiven our sins:

*LORD, who is a God like you? You forgive sin. You forgive your people when they do what is wrong. You don't stay angry forever. Instead, you take delight in showing your faithful love to them.*<sup>Micah 7:18</sup>

So let's change our minds to believe what God believes and then say what God says: *You should think in the same way Christ Jesus does.*<sup>Phil.2:5</sup>

*Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind (or let your way of thinking be completely changed). Then you will be able to test and approve what God's will is—his good, pleasing and perfect will.*<sup>Rom.12:2</sup>

**Remission of Sins.** *Then opened he their mind, that they might understand the scriptures; and he said unto them, Thus it is written, that the Christ should suffer, and rise again from the dead the third day; and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in his name unto all the nations, beginning from Jerusalem.*<sup>Lk.24:25-47</sup>

**Remission** means *dismissal* or *release* and is also translated *forgiveness* or *freedom*:

*The Spirit of the Lord is on me, because he has anointed me to proclaim good news to the poor. He has sent me to proclaim **freedom** for the prisoners and recovery of sight for the blind, **to set** the oppressed **free**, to proclaim the year of the Lord's favour.*<sup>Lk.4:18-19</sup>

**God has dismissed our sins from us and we are no longer joined to them.**

*For his unfailling love toward those who fear him is as great as the height of the heavens above the earth. He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.*<sup>Ps.103:111-112</sup>

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### Yes those of us who believe in Jesus Christ are free from our sins!

Therefore, my friends, I want you to know that through Jesus the forgiveness of sins is proclaimed to you. Through him everyone who believes is set free from every sin, a justification you were not able to obtain under the law of Moses.<sup>Acts 13:38-39</sup>

**Righteousness.** The English word means “**right-wise-ness**” - we are right with God and wise about it (i.e. we are acting upon the information).

### How are we “right with God”?

Christ didn't have any sin. But God made him become sin for us. So we can be made right with God because of what Christ has done for us.<sup>2Cor. 5:21</sup>

But now God has shown us how to become right with him. The Law and the Prophets give witness to this. It has nothing to do with obeying the law. We are made right with God by putting our faith in Jesus Christ. That happens to all who believe. It is no different for the Jews than for anyone else. Everyone has sinned. No one measures up to God's glory. The free gift of God's grace makes all of us right with him. Christ Jesus paid the price to set us free. God gave him as a sacrifice to pay for sins. So he forgives the sins of those who have faith in his blood.<sup>Rom. 3:21-25</sup>

Nearing the end of his life William Booth was asked 'What are the things which threaten Christianity in the coming years?' He replied, 'I consider the chief danger to Christianity to be: Religion without the Holy Ghost, Christianity without Christ, Forgiveness without Repentance, Salvation without regeneration, Politics without God, Happiness without holiness and heaven without Hell!'

### Why is isolation so damaging (both mentally and spiritually)?

Mental health problems are linked to stress and the easiest way to alleviate stress is to socialise.

God created us to be sociable—to live in families:

The LORD God said, ‘It is not good for the man to be alone. I will make a helper who is just right for him.’<sup>Gen. 2:18</sup>  
A father to the fatherless, a defender of widows, is God in his holy dwelling. God sets the lonely in families, he leads forth the prisoners with singing; but the rebellious live in a sun-scorched land.<sup>Psa. 68:5-6</sup>

Church is the basis for our spiritual family, a secure setting where we can love and care for one another, both practically and spiritually.

When you come together, everyone has a hymn, or a word of instruction, a revelation, a tongue or an interpretation. All of these must be done for the strengthening of the church.<sup>1Cor. 14:26</sup>

When we isolate ourselves from other Christians we oppose good sense (and God-sense).

A man who isolates himself seeks his own desire; He rages against all wise judgment. A fool has no delight in understanding, But in expressing his own heart. When the wicked comes, contempt comes also; And with dishonour comes reproach. [A person who isn't friendly looks out only for himself. He opposes all good sense. A foolish person doesn't want to understand. He takes delight in saying only what he thinks.]<sup>Pron. 18:1-3</sup>

**To Wesley:** Sir, You wish to serve God and go to heaven. Remember you cannot serve Him alone; you must therefore find companions or make them. The Bible knows nothing of solitary religion.

John Wesley the Methodist, *The Methodist Booked Concern*, 1903

### How can we be sure that we are not deceived?

Deception works because people believe the lie to be true. Not everything that is “spiritual” is from God—some spiritual activities are from the devil and some “spiritual” people are his servants:

Satan himself masquerades as an angel of light. It is not surprising, then, if his servants masquerade as servants of righteousness. Their end will be what their actions deserve. I repeat: Let no one take me for a fool.<sup>2Cor. 11:14-16</sup>

You belong to your father, the devil, and you want to carry out your father's desire. He was a murderer from the beginning, not holding to the truth, for there is no truth in him. When he lies, he speaks his native language, for he is a liar and the father of lies. Yet because I tell the truth, you do not believe me! Can any of you prove me guilty of sin? If I am telling the truth, why don't you believe me? He who belongs to God hears what God says. The reason you do not hear is that you do not belong to God.<sup>Jn. 8:44-47</sup>

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### We are led by the Holy Spirit

*Those who are led by the Spirit of God are children of God.*<sup>Rom.8:14</sup>

**So listen to your Holy Spirit enlivened conscience (but be aware that the conscience can be seared):**

*The Spirit clearly says that in later times some will abandon the faith and follow deceiving spirits and things taught by demons. Such teachings come through hypocritical liars, whose consciences have been seared as with a hot iron.*<sup>1Tim.4:1-2</sup>

**Here are some simple yet salient safeguards that will stop us being deceived:**

**Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people.**

*“God opposes the proud but gives grace to the humble.” Submit yourselves, then, to God. Resist the devil, and he will flee from you. Come near to God and he will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded. Grieve, mourn and wail. Change your laughter to mourning and your joy to gloom. Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will lift you up.*<sup>Jas.4:6-10</sup>

**Test what people say and do against the tried and tested teaching of Scripture as taught by the Believers over generations—a new revelation is likely to be a fake revelation!**

*Dear friends, do not believe every spirit, but test the spirits to see whether they are from God, because many false prophets have gone out into the world.*<sup>1Jn.4:1</sup>

**Look at the person’s character**

**Do they have the personality of the Holy Spirit and are they settled in their faith?**

*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness and self-control? But you, O man of God, flee these things and pursue righteousness, godliness, faith, love, patience, gentleness. Fight the good fight of faith, lay hold on eternal life, to which you were also called and have confessed the good confession in the presence of many witnesses.*<sup>1Tim.6:11-12</sup>

**Do they have the peace of Christ AND the Word of God dwelling them?**

*Let the peace of Christ rule in your hearts, since as members of one body you were called to peace. And be thankful. Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly as you teach and admonish one another with all wisdom, and as you sing psalms, hymns and spiritual songs with gratitude in your hearts to God. And whatever you do, whether in word or deed, do it all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through him.*<sup>Col.3:15-17</sup>

**How can we best remind one another to add to our faith and that we have been forgiven our past sins:** *I will always remind you of these things. I'll do it even though you know them. I'll do it even though you now have deep roots in the truth. I think it is right for me to remind you.*<sup>2Pet.1:12-13</sup>

**Be like Christ!**

*But thanks be to God, who always leads us in triumphal procession in Christ and through us spreads everywhere the fragrance of the knowledge of him. For we are to God the aroma of Christ among those who are being saved and those who are perishing. To the one we are the smell of death; to the other, the fragrance of life. And who is equal to such a task? Unlike so many, we do not peddle the word of God for profit. On the contrary, in Christ we speak before God with sincerity, like men sent from God.*<sup>2Cor.2:14-17</sup>

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Make every effort to add to your faith...<sup>2Pet.1:5</sup>

### Questions

1. If God wants us to enjoy life, how do you explain the pain, hurt and hate in the life of people in general?
2. If God wants us to enjoy life, how do you explain the pain, hurt and hate in the life of Christians?
3. How do we make Christianity work for us?
4. How can we add to our faith?
5. In what way does trouble help develop our faith?
6. How can we rely on the Holy Spirit more?

### Comments

#### 1. Does God want us to enjoy life? If so, how do you explain the pain, hurt and hate in the life of people in general?

The Westminster Shorter Catechism is a catechism written in 1646 and 1647 by the Westminster Assembly, a synod of English and Scottish theologians and laymen intended to bring the Church of England into greater conformity with the Church of Scotland. The assembly also produced the Westminster Confession of Faith and the Westminster Larger Catechism. A version without Scripture citations was completed on 25 November 1647 and presented to the Long Parliament, and Scripture citations were added on 14 April 1649.

#### Q. 1. What is the chief end of man?

**A. Man's chief end is to glorify God, [a] and to enjoy him for ever. [b]**

[a]. Ps.86:9; Is.60:21; Rom.11:36; 1Cor.6:20; 10:31; Rev.4:11

[b]. Ps.16:5-11; 144:15; Is.12:2; Lk.2:10; Phil.4:4; Rev.21:3-4

*LORD, you alone are my portion and my cup; you make my lot secure. The boundary lines have fallen for me in pleasant places; surely I have a delightful inheritance. I will praise the LORD, who counsels me; even at night my heart instructs me. I keep my eyes always on the LORD. With him at my right hand, I will not be shaken. Therefore my heart is glad and my tongue rejoices; my body also will rest secure, because you will not abandon me to the realm of the dead, nor will you let your faithful one see decay. You make known to me the path of life; you will fill me with joy in your presence, with eternal pleasures at your right hand.*<sup>Ps.16:5-11</sup>

*Blessed is the people of whom this is true; blessed is the people whose God is the LORD.*<sup>Ps.144:15</sup>

*Surely God is my salvation; I will trust and not be afraid. The LORD, the LORD himself, is my strength and my defence; he has become my salvation.*<sup>Is.12:2</sup>

*But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people."*<sup>Lk.2:10</sup>

*Rejoice in the Lord always. I will say it again: Rejoice!*<sup>Phil.4:4</sup>

*And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Look! God's dwelling place is now among the people, and he will dwell with them. They will be his people, and God himself will be with them and be their God. He will wipe every tear from their eyes. There will be no more death or mourning or crying or pain, for the old order of things has passed away."*<sup>Rev.21:3-4</sup>

*(On this mountain he will destroy the shroud that enfolds all peoples, the sheet that covers all nations; he will swallow up death forever. The Sovereign LORD will wipe away the tears from all faces; he will remove his people's disgrace from all the earth.)*<sup>Is.25:7-8</sup>

Enjoyment of God should not be understood in terms of the "flesh" (flesh means anything of now but not of heaven—i.e. food, employment, marriage, pastime, etc.). The Koran speaks of a paradise of pleasure, where there are riches in abundance and red wine served in golden chalices. Though heaven is compared to a feast and encompassed by pearls and precious stones, yet these metaphors are only helps to our faith, and to show us that there is superabundant joy and happiness in the highest heaven—they are not carnal but spiritual delights. Our enjoyment will be in the perfection



## Deal Pentecostal Church Bible Studies 2021

of holiness, in seeing the pure face of Christ, in feeling the love of God, in conversing with heavenly spirits; which will be proper for the soul, and infinitely exceed all carnal voluptuous delights.

*I eagerly expect and hope that I will in no way be ashamed, but will have sufficient courage so that now as always Christ will be exalted in my body, whether by life or by death. For to me, to live is Christ and to die is gain. If I am to go on living in the body, this will mean fruitful labour for me. Yet what shall I choose? I do not know! I am torn between the two: I desire to depart and be with Christ, which is better by far; but it is more necessary for you that I remain in the body. Convinced of this, I know that I will remain, and I will continue with all of you for your progress and joy in the faith, so that through my being with you again your boasting in Christ Jesus will abound on account of me.*<sup>Phil.1:20-26</sup>

### **Yes, God does want us to enjoy life—but on His terms!**

*Go, eat your food with gladness, and drink your wine with a joyful heart, for God has already approved what you do. Always be clothed in white, and always anoint your head with oil. Enjoy life with your wife, whom you love, all the days of this meaningless life that God has given you under the sun—all your meaningless days. For this is your lot in life and in your toilsome labour under the sun. Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with all your might.*<sup>Ecc.9:7-10</sup>

*A person can do nothing better than to eat and drink and find satisfaction in their own toil. This too, I see, is from the hand of God, for without him, who can eat or find enjoyment? To the person who pleases him, God gives wisdom, knowledge and happiness, but to the sinner he gives the task of gathering and storing up wealth to hand it over to the one who pleases God.*<sup>Ecc.2:24-27</sup>

### **In the beginning God made everything very good**

*So God created mankind in his own image, in the image of God he created them; male and female he created them. God blessed them ... God saw all that he had made, and it was very good. And there was evening, and there was morning—the sixth day.*<sup>Gen.1:27-31</sup>

### **Sin and death entered through disobedience:**

*Therefore, just as sin entered the world through one man, and death through sin, and in this way death came to all people, because all sinned.*<sup>Rom.5:12</sup>

*The LORD God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the LORD God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but you must not eat from the tree of the knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat from it you will certainly die."*<sup>Gen.2:15-17</sup>

### **Now, we reap the result of Adam's sin plus the result of our own sin!**

*So the LORD God said to the serpent, "Because you have done this, "Cursed are you above all livestock and all wild animals! You will crawl on your belly and you will eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity [fear, terror] between you and the woman, and between your offspring and hers; he will crush your head, and you will strike his heel." To the woman he said, "I will make your pains in childbearing very severe; with painful labour you will give birth to children. Your desire will be for your husband, and he will rule over you." To Adam he said, "Because you listened to your wife and ate fruit from the tree about which I commanded you, 'You must not eat from it,' "Cursed is the ground because of you; through painful toil you will eat food from it all the days of your life. It will produce thorns and thistles for you, and you will eat the plants of the field. By the sweat of your brow you will eat your food until you return to the ground, since from it you were taken; for dust you are and to dust you will return."*<sup>Gen.3:14-19</sup>

### **A fool is someone who ignores God**

*The fool says in his heart, "There is no God."*<sup>Ps.41:1;53:1</sup>

*But God said to him, 'You fool! This very night your life will be demanded from you. Then who will get what you have prepared for yourself?' This is how it will be with whoever stores up things for themselves but is not rich toward God. [Yes, a person is a fool to store up earthly wealth but not have a rich relationship with God; That's what happens when you fill your barn with Self and not with God.]*<sup>Lk.12:20-21</sup>

### **Fools get spiritually tired:**

*A fool's work wearies him;*<sup>Ecc.10:15</sup>

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### 2. If God wants us to enjoy life, how do you explain the pain, hurt and hate in the life of Christians?

#### Jesus came to restore our relationship with God and give us rest

*“Today salvation has come to this house, because this man, too, is a son of Abraham. For the Son of Man came to seek and to save what was lost.”! [For the Son of Man came to find and restore the lost.]<sup>Lk.19:9-10</sup>*

*Come to me, all you who are weary and burdened, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn from me, for I am gentle and humble in heart, and you will find rest for your souls. For my yoke is easy and my burden is light.<sup>Matt.11:28-30</sup>*

Not all pain, hurt and hate is the direct result of our sin (although some might be) because we still live in a world of sin and sickness—and neither are we exempt from the effects of sin.

*As he went along, he saw a man blind from birth. His disciples asked him, “Rabbi, who sinned, this man or his parents, that he was born blind?” “Neither this man nor his parents sinned,” said Jesus, “but this happened so that the works of God might be displayed in him. [Neither has this man sinned nor his parents but let the works of God be manifested in him. I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day.]<sup>Jn.9:1-3</sup>*

### 3. How do we make Christianity work for us?

Stay in fellowship with God, His Word and His people. Build our faith and add to our faith.

### 4. How can we add to our faith?

Stay close to God through His Word and His people. Keep prayer as a sweet communion and enjoy God.

### 5. In what way does trouble help develop our faith?

Trouble keeps us relying on God

*My fellow believers, when you have many kinds of troubles, you should be full of joy because you know that these troubles test your faith, and this will give you patience, perseverance and endurance. And let your patience show itself perfectly in what you do and finish its work. Then you will be completely mature and will have everything you need.<sup>Jas.1:2-4</sup>*

*In your struggle against sin, you have not yet resisted to the point of shedding your blood. And have you completely forgotten this word of encouragement that addresses you as a father addresses his son? It says, “My son, do not make light of the Lord's discipline, and do not lose heart when he rebukes you, because the Lord disciplines the one he loves, and he chastens everyone he accepts as his son.” Endure hardship as discipline; God is treating you as his children. [Put up with hard times. God uses them to train you. He is treating you as children.] For what children are not disciplined by their father? If you are not disciplined—and everyone undergoes discipline—then you are not legitimate, not true sons and daughters at all. Moreover, we have all had human fathers who disciplined us and we respected them for it. How much more should we submit to the Father of spirits and live! They disciplined us for a little while as they thought best; but God disciplines us for our good, in order that we may share in his holiness. No discipline seems pleasant at the time, but painful. Later on, however, it produces a harvest of righteousness and peace for those who have been trained by it.<sup>Heb.12:4-11</sup>*

### 6. How can we rely on the Holy Spirit more?

Involve the Holy Spirit in our daily conversation, thoughts and decisions. Stay focused on God, His Will and Kingdom

*Our Father in heaven, may your name be honoured. May your kingdom come. May what you want to happen be done on earth as it is done in heaven...<sup>Matt.6:9-10</sup>*

When the Holy Spirit becomes embedded with our spirit, His personality becomes our personality and maturity is relying on the Holy Spirit in the good times as well as in the tough times! Spiritual fellowship is reliance on the Holy Spirit and will only fully develop as we fellowship with other people who have the Holy Spirit—New Covenant Believers.